



Farmington River News



Celebrate 70 years of protecting the Farmington River Watershed with us!

Activities and Issues in the Farmington River Watershed



70 Years Strong with New Grants and a New Website

In 1953 a group of 70 concerned citizens met at the Ensign-Bickford Toy Building in Simsbury, CT and formed the Farmington River Watershed Association in order to address issues in their watershed. Since then FRWA has exercised leadership in issues including water quality protection, wetland and floodplain preservation, water allocation, land and habitat conservation and recreational usage. FRWA has conducted two studies that have led Congress to pass legislation that protects over 75 miles of waterways in the Farmington River watershed. The Upper Farmington River Wild & Scenic designation was awarded in 1994, which protects the 14 mile segment of river stretching from Colebrook to Canton. The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic designation was awarded in 2019, which protects 61.7 miles of waterways and added 1.1 miles in Canton to the Upper Farmington River designation.

Today FRWA still works to promote an understanding among our members and the citizens of the watershed of the need for conservation. This year we have been awarded a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Long Island Sound Futures Fund to promote the River Smart program in several towns throughout our watershed, which will provide residents with information on how they can reduce stormwater pollution. You can learn more about how to be River Smart at riversmartct.org. We have also received an Aquatic Invasive Species grant from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) to continue researching cyanobacteria blooms on Rainbow Reservoir in 2023. FRWA staff spent the winter compiling our 2022 water quality data to prepare our first ever Farmington River Watershed Water Quality Report, which is published on frwa.org/resources. Also, have you visited our website lately? We've kicked off our 70th year with a new and improved frwa.org, so be sure to visit and stay updated about upcoming FRWA events, programs, publications, and more!

What's Inside:

- page 2
- **Spring 2023 FRWA & Partner Events**
- page 3
- **Spring 2023 FRWA Paddling Events**
- **Spring 2023 FRWA Educational & Research Programs**
- page 4
- **Creature Feature**
- page 5
- **Wild & Scenic Spotlight**
- **Calling All Farmington River Photographers!**
- page 6
- **How Bad Is It?**
- page 7
- **Partner Spotlight**
- **Small Gifts, Big Impacts**

Farmington River Watershed Water Quality Report 2022

Farmington River Watershed Association
749 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, CT 06070



Scan to visit frwa.org/resources and view our 2022 Farmington River Watershed Water Quality Report on our new and improved website!



The Farmington River Watershed Association's Board and Staff

OFFICERS

President

Carol Noble

Vice President

Robin Baran

John Laudati

Treasurer

Brian Freeman

Secretary

Beckie Sahl

DIRECTORS

Ginny Apple

Susan Barney

David Donaldson

Michael Feldman

Ann Jurkiewicz

Andy Kuhlberg

Deborah Leonard

John E. Robinson

Victor Schoen

David Sinish

Marlene Snecinski

Richard Warters

Chris Whelan

STAFF

Executive Director

Aimee Petras

Conservation

Director

Laura Hart

Watershed

Manager

Paige Vichiola

Education &

Outreach

Manager

Heather Geist

FRWA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of the Farmington River and its Watershed through research, education, and advocacy.

Spring 2023 FRWA & Partner Events

"Water's Way" Art Benefit

March 31 - April 23

Reception Saturday, April 1, 4-6PM

Tasting Room Gallery, Lost Acres Vineyard,
80 Lost Acres Road, North Granby, CT

Join FRWA for a sip-and-see that will whet your visual appetite and tease the palate. This group show will include framed original artwork and photos by local artists, and proceeds will be donated to FRWA.

Learn more at lostacresvineyard.com



Farmington River Angler's Association Earth Day Cleanup

Saturday, April 22, 9AM— 1PM, 37 Greenwoods Rd, New Hartford, CT

Hosted by the Farmington River Anglers Association (FRAA) and sponsored by the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC) and FRWA. After party hosted at Brewery Legitimus—283 Main Street, New Hartford, CT

Visit farmingtonriveranglersassociation.org for more information

8th Annual Barkhamsted Earth Day Nature Festival

Sunday, April 30, 12:30-5:00PM

Matthies Grove Pavilion, Peoples State Forest, Barkhamsted, CT

Co-sponsored by the Town of Barkhamsted, Friends of American Legion and Peoples State Forest, and funding from FRCC.

Visit falps.org for more information



"Underwater Wonders" Children's Library Program

Saturday, May 20, 10:30 AM—11:30 AM

Farmington Public Library, 6 Monteith Drive, Farmington, CT

Join FRWA at the library to get up close and personal with some of the bugs and critters that live in our streams! Learn about the important roles that macroinvertebrates play in aquatic ecosystems, the pollution challenges they face, and what we can do to help keep our streams clean and cold so that they can continue to provide healthy habitats.

Register at farmingtonlibraries.org



Scan to register

Virtual Series- Unearthing History: The Discovery of a 12,500 Year Old Paleo-Indian Site Along the Farmington River in Avon, CT

All presentations will be held at 7 PM and are free to attend.

March 23- The LIDAR Revolution in Earth Surface Mapping

April 20- Hunting and Fishing Techniques of the Paleoindian

May 11- The Big Importance of Small Things: Microscopic and Blood Residue Analysis of Ancient Stone Tools

Sponsored by the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee (LFSWS) in partnership with the Avon Land Trust, FRWA, and the Institute for American Indian Studies museum and research center.

Register at avonctlibrary.info



Scan to register



Spring 2023 FRWA Paddling Events

Wildlife Photography Paddling Tour

Date and location to be determined

Join FRWA Board of Directors member and photographer Rick Wartens as he explains some tips and techniques for capturing wildlife shots on the river, followed by a paddling trip to try out your new photography skills!

Invasive Water Chestnut Removals

Multiple dates to be determined, Barber's Pond, Bloomfield, CT

Volunteers needed! We will be partnering with the Connecticut River Conservancy to perform manual removal of invasive water chestnut on Barber's Pond in Bloomfield, CT throughout the late spring and summer.

Visit frwa.org in April for paddling event registration information



Invasive water chestnut on Barber's Pond, Bloomfield, CT

Spring 2023 FRWA Educational & Research Programs

FRWA Joins the Hartland School for Salmon In Schools Program

For the past twelve years students at the Hartland School have been raising salmon from the egg stage to release into Salmon Brook as fry. FRWA will be joining the school this spring to discuss water quality factors that affect stream health, to take a look at some of the other creatures that live in our streams, and to perform water quality assessments where the salmon are being released. Funded by LFSWS with support from the Hartland Land Trust.

Habitat Studies for Fish Passage, Connectivity and Flood Risk

This spring FRWA will be continuing our work assessing road-stream crossings in Connecticut and Massachusetts with our partners at Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited (FVTU) and the Berkshire Clean, Cold, and Connected Restoration Partnership (BCCC). FRWA completed 33 crossing surveys during the fall and early winter of 2022. Data from this work is used to prioritize crossing replacements based on their ability for fish passage as well as for structural integrity and flood risk. We will be accompanying these assessments with temperature and conductivity monitoring. This work is funded by BCCC in Massachusetts and by FRCC and LFSWS in Connecticut.

FRWA Resumes Chloride Monitoring & Cyanobacteria Research

Our spring monitoring will include the final sampling event for our 2022 Winter Salt Watch as well as the kickoff of our 2023 Summer Salt Watch program. We monitor 23 sites in order to track chloride runoff from road salts in winter, and to determine where that chloride goes in summer. We will be reinstalling our HOBO dataloggers to monitor temperatures in 18 locations throughout the watershed, and we will be adding 3 new locations for temperature monitoring in Massachusetts. FRWA temperature data is shared with CT DEEP, and it is used to monitor and identify cold water streams that are suitable for sensitive fish species such as trout. Our Salt Watch and temperature programs are funded by FRCC, LFSWS, and BCCC.

Thanks to an Aquatic Invasive Species grant from CT DEEP, FRWA will resume monitoring of Rainbow Reservoir in Windsor, CT in 2023. Rainbow Reservoir has been experiencing cyanobacteria blooms intermittently since 2019. FRWA's 2021 research suggested that these blooms are a result of excess nutrients from watershed input. Data from this year's research will be used to further understand the nature of these blooms, so that we can assess potential mitigation options. FRWA will also continue monitoring 18 stormwater outfalls in Bristol, CT for a variety of chemical and biological parameters this spring. This work is being done to assist Bristol with their Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements as dictated by the US Environmental Protection Agency. Last but not least, FRWA staff are pleased to welcome back our 2022 seasonal staff member, Ciara Kilkenny, to assist with our water quality monitoring programs, events, and stream crossing assessments.



Creature Feature: American Beaver, *Castor canadensis*

Activity: Beavers are active year-round, however they usually spend most of the winter inside their lodge. They can be spotted any time of day or night, but they are most active at dawn and dusk. Beavers are well known for their ability to create dams from logs and tree branches, and they are considered ecological engineers because of their propensity for creating and enhancing wetlands. Beaver ponds support rich aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems while filtering out nutrients, bacteria, and other contaminants from the water. They also serve as water storage and groundwater recharge areas.

Physical Attributes: The beaver is the largest rodent found in North America. Adults weigh between 30 to 65 pounds and measure from 24 to 36 inches, plus a tail of 12 to 18 inches. They have rich brown fur and a paddle-shaped, scaled, hairless tail. Beavers use their tail as a support when standing, a rudder when swimming and a warning device for other beavers when slapped on the water. Fat also is stored in the tail to provide energy during winter. Male and female beavers do not display sexual dimorphism, which means that their sex cannot be determined in the field, except for nursing females.

Habitat: Beavers inhabit rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, swamps and other wetland areas in forested regions throughout most of North America. They use sticks and mud to construct lodges with underwater entrances and internal dry chambers, where they store food and raise their young. Beavers may also build smaller dens along the waters edge, underneath root masses or in streambanks. Beavers are territorial and will not tolerate other beavers within their colony's home range. However, they have been observed sharing their lodge with muskrats in the winter.

Lifestyle: Beavers show a variety of adaptations that suit their semi-aquatic nature. Their ears and noses contain internal valves to keep out water, a thin membrane protects their eyes while swimming, and they secrete a waterproof oil that they groom into their fur to keep their skin dry. Their lips are located behind their large incisors so that beavers can chew wood underwater. They use their webbed rear feet to propel themselves through the water and they use their tails as a rudder for steering. Their front paws are digitated, not webbed, and they are held close to the body while a beaver swims. A beaver can stay underwater for up to 15 minutes.

Feeding and Family Habits: Beavers are herbivores, preferring to eat leaves, shoots, twigs, roots and outer bark of trees and shrubs. A variety of aquatic plants, like water lilies and pond weeds, and other plants, like sedges and grasses, are consumed during summer. Beaver pairs form permanent monogamous relationships. They mate over the winter and produce 2-4 young, called kits, in May or early June. Surviving offspring may remain with their colony for several years.

Status: Beavers became rare in the northeast US in the 1800s due to demand for pelts and habitat loss from human development. Wildlife laws and forest restoration efforts began in the early 1900s, and beaver populations in our area were once again well established by the 1960s.

The DEEP Wildlife Division provides technical assistance to individuals experiencing problems associated with beaver activity. For more information, contact the Wildlife Division at deep.wildlife@ct.gov or call 860-424-3011

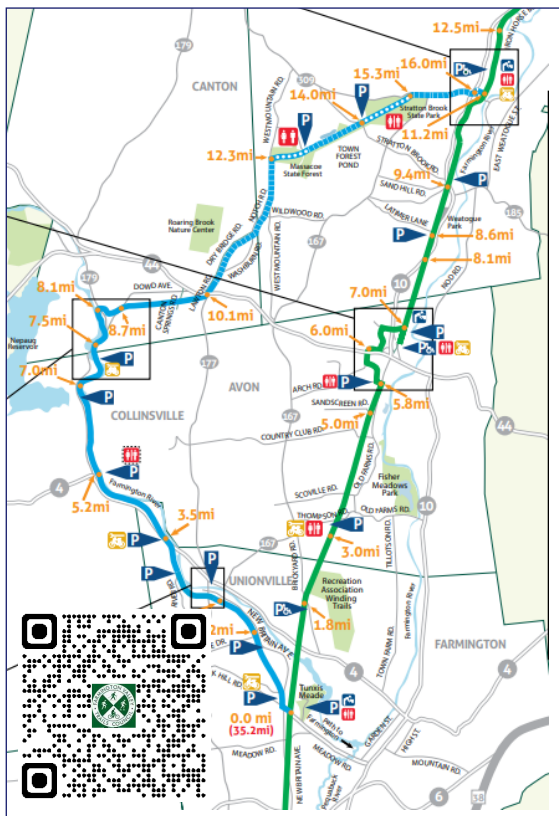


Beaver photos taken by FRWA staff while performing stream crossing surveys in Sandisfield, MA



Wild & Scenic Spotlight: Farmington River Trail– Unionville, Burlington, and Canton, CT

The Farmington River Trail (marked in blue in the image below) diverges from the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Farmington and reconnects in Simsbury, less than half a mile south of FRWA headquarters. Much of the 16.1 mile trail follows the route of the former Central New England railway through Unionville and Burlington before emerging in the charming village of Collinsville. Along the paved path are many areas to stop and take in some views of the Wild & Scenic Farmington River including wildlife, rapids, fly fisherman practicing their craft, and remnants of old mills. Several parking areas are located along the trail, providing handicap access to the trail. Be sure to grab your walking shoes, bicycle, or furry friend and visit the Farmington River Trail this spring.



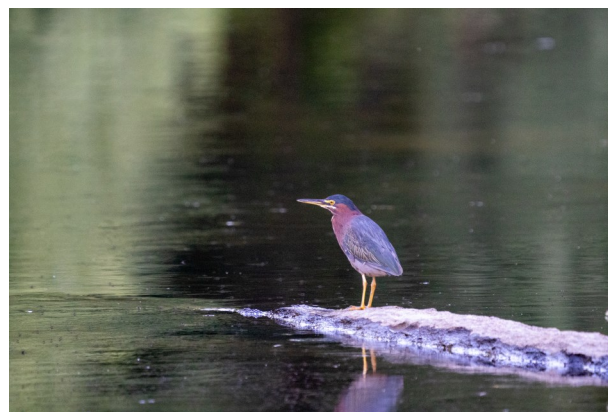
The Farmington River Trail is maintained by the Farmington Valley Trails Council, a non-profit dedicated to advocacy, education, beautification and building multi-use trails in the Farmington Valley of Connecticut. *Scan the QR code or visit fchtrail.org to learn more.*

Calling All Farmington River Photographers!

We're looking for photos that show what our Wild & Scenic Farmington River means to you.

Thirteen images will be selected for a 2024 calendar with proceeds to support the FRWA. We hope you'll share your best images capturing riverscapes, people and recreation, and wildlife along our river and its tributaries in all seasons. Let your imagination be your guide. **Send images to lhart@frwa.org.**

Technical stuff: Selection of images for inclusion in the calendar will be the exclusive responsibility of the FRWA and its staff. All decisions will be final. All photos may be used by the FRWA in support of the organization's mission. As such, they may be used as submitted or edited for use in any print or electronic format, including social media with appropriate photo credit. Otherwise, the photographer retains all rights to all images. By submitting a photo for use by the FRWA, you attest that (1) the photo is yours and is free for use, and (2) any identifiable person in your submission has consented to the publication of their image. Images must be submitted as JPEG files of at least 1700 x 2200 pixels (200 pixels per inch at 8.5" x 11") with a file size of 3.7MP to ensure your work can be presented in its best light.



Green Heron on the Farmington River – Alison Wilcox



How Bad Is It...to mow my lawn short in the springtime?

Many homeowners believe that the perfect lawn includes a neat and closely cropped appearance. However, a short blade will cause grass to divert all of its energy into producing new shoots and leaves, which will prevent the it from building a strong root system. This reduces the plant's capacity for food storage as well as its resistance to drought and heat stress. Most popular turf grasses in the northeast United States are healthiest when allowed to grow to a height of 3.5 to 4 inches. Mowing at this height provides many benefits, including:

- Maintaining a tall grass blade, especially during the forsythia bloom in early to mid May, prevents weed and crabgrass seeds from germinating, which leads to fewer weeds in the lawn.
- Longer grass creates refuge, food, and habitat for pollinators, which leads to increased abundance and diversity of wildlife. Long grass also develops stronger roots that are more tolerant to grubs.
- Tall grass blades shade the soil surface, which prevents evaporation and keeps soil moist. This reduces the need for watering and makes grass more tolerant to drought stress.
- Longer blades contain more surface area for capturing sunlight, which increases rates of photosynthesis. This allows grass to develop a healthy root system that can store more nutrients and water, which lessens the need for fertilizer and maintenance.
- A long blade leads to healthier grass, which can lead to a greener and fuller lawn. Removing the stress of excess mowing means that your turf will fill in weak, patchy areas for a more consistent look.
- Short grass uses its energy resources to grow as quickly as possible. Keeping a longer lawn length will slow down the rate of growth, meaning less work for your mower and subsequently lower fuel costs.



Long grass is happy grass! Maintaining a height of 3-4 inches can result in a greener lawn and provides a variety of other benefits.

#NoMowMay

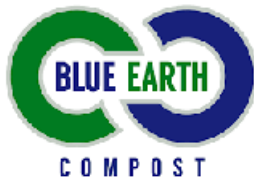
This trend of allowing grasses to grow for the duration of the month of May creates habitat for pollinators and other native wildlife populations. Residents who participate in No Mow May can choose to let their entire lawn grow wild, or they can designate a portion of their lawn to remain wild until June. FRWA challenges you to join No Mow May in 2023!

Want to learn more? Join FRWA for a free Natural Lawn Care Workshop at Winding Trails April 29, 1:30PM to 3:00PM, 50 Winding Trails Drive, Farmington, CT 06032

FRWA is providing a free workshop on ways to manage your lawn without using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Learn methods for mowing, seeding, watering and weed control at our workshop hosted for free at Winding Trails. We will review soil test results, discuss soil chemistry and pH, mowing and watering techniques that will keep your lawn healthy all throughout the growing season. Want to know more about grubs and the reasons why they cause damage to grass? We will also discuss weed identification and management techniques and there will be plenty of time for questions!

FRWA recommends that you submit your soil for testing at UConn's Soil Testing Laboratory prior to attending (not required to attend). Visit <https://soiltesting.cahn.uconn.edu/sampling/> to find soil sampling instructions and the submission form.

Blue Earth Compost: Serving the Farmington River Watershed



Want to compost but don't have the time, space, or expertise? Fill your pail and they'll pick it up and do the dirty work for you. Scan the code or visit blueearthcompost.com today to schedule your FREE two week trial.

Avon • Bloomfield • Canton • Farmington • Simsbury • West Hartford • Windsor





Partner Spotlight– The Berkshire Clean, Cold, and Connected Restoration Partnership

Led by the Housatonic Valley Association, this collaboration was created to increase capacity for organizations in the Hoosic, Housatonic, and Farmington River Watersheds within Berkshire County. Funding and resources from BCCC are enabling us to expand our habitat and water quality research into Massachusetts. This work will allow us to prioritize and implement projects such as stream crossing upgrades that are aimed towards ecological restoration and climate change resiliency.



Small Gift, Big Impacts: Monthly Donations Keep FRWA's Funding Stream Flowing

As a nonprofit we face the challenge of relying on external support to fulfill our mission. We receive variations in funding throughout the year, and our member donations allow us to fill in operational and program expenses during financial lulls. One way to combat this challenge is to call on our devoted body of members to reassess the way that they give. FRWA's secure online donation platform, powered by Qgiv, provides options for recurring donations, so members can opt to donate monthly, quarterly, or even weekly! Setting up a recurring donation is easy, and it can be beneficial for you, our members, as well! By dividing your annual gift into smaller increments you may find that it is easier to fit charitable giving into your budget. A \$10 monthly gift will add up to over \$100 over the course of a year– without straining your bank account!

As a recurring donor you can make it possible for us to plan, budget, and make decisions based on our available resources, ensuring that we can continue our mission without interruption. Recurring gifts support our organization's vital operational expenses—the ones we need to cover in order to continue the work we do to protect the river and its watershed. A steady stream of funding from recurring donors also allows us to respond quickly to environmental emergencies that may come up throughout the watershed.

By becoming a recurring donor, you can:

- contribute to the longevity of your organization by providing regular support.
- give in a sustainable way, with donations that are manageable for your budget.
- see a long-term impact in the projects you donate to.
- avoid marking the calendar to remember to send your gift.
- view, edit or cancel recurring donations easily and without hassle.



Scan the QR code to visit our online donation portal and select a recurring membership!

Amplify your impact- Become a recurring donor today!

Prefer to mail in your gift? Send this slip to the address below.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Check one: ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$125 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$250 ☐ other amount \$ _____

____ I have enclosed my check payable to FRWA, or please charge my ____ MasterCard or ____ Visa.

Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____ CCV _____ Amount \$ _____

Name on Card: _____ Signature _____

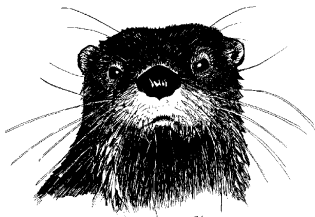
Please send to: **Farmington River Watershed Association, 749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070**

Credit card donations may also be submitted online at frwa.org via our secure online contributions server.



The Farmington River Watershed Association
749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hartford, CT
Permit No. 158



Protecting The Farmington River, For You, For All, Forever.

FRWA Spring 2023 Events

Saturday, April 1- "Water's Way" Art Benefit Reception

(art will be on display from Friday, March 31 to Sunday, April 23)

Saturday, April 22 - Farmington River Angler's Association Earth Day Cleanup

Saturday, April 29 - Natural Lawn Care Workshop at Winding Trails 1:30PM to 3:00PM

Sunday, April 30 - 8th Annual Barkhamsted Earth Day Nature Festival

Saturday, May 20 - "Underwater Wonders" Children's Library Program

To Be Announced - Invasive Water Chestnut Removals at Barber's Pond

More event details inside!

Follow us @frwa_org



Scan the QR code to visit frwa.org, where you can find a full list of our upcoming events with ticket and registration information!



If you would like to go paperless and receive our newsletter by email only, send a message to hgeist@frwa.org