



FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE
100 East River Road – Squire’s Tavern
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Minutes of Regular FRCC Meeting
Monday, May 21, 2012
Squire’s Tavern
100 East River Road, Pleasant Valley

Present: Tim Anthony (MDC Rep); Roger Behrens (Barkhamsted Alt); Dan Bowler (Hartland Rep); Liz Lacy (NPS/FRCC Director); Nick Masi (FRAA Rep); Susan Peterson (CT DEEP Rep/Secretary); Cherie Robinson (Canton Alt/Chair); Mario Santoro (Barkhamsted Rep); Edna Travis (Colebrook Alt/Vice Chair) Tom Stanton (Colebrook Rep)

Guests: Alicea Charamut (Farmington Valley TU); Joan Harn (NPS – Washington, DC Office)

- 1. Call to Order:** Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m.
- 2. Introductions:** Chair Robinson had FRCC members introduce themselves for the benefit of Dan Bowler, the new Hartland representative and Joan Harn, visiting NPS staff from the Washington D.C. Office
- 3. Approval of Minutes of April 30, 2012 meeting:** The minutes were approved without changes.
- 4. Treasurer’s Report:** Lacy gave the update referring to the copy of the report that Treasurer Eileen Fielding had provided. (Fielding was unable to attend the meeting.) As of May 14, the new checking account balance was \$16,720.57; and the new scholarship fund balance was \$2,522.21. Lacy noted that the Hartland Land Trust reimbursed FRCC for overpayment; and FRWA received its first Water Quality project payment. FRCC is trying to spend down the remaining NPS funds under the old cooperative agreement which expires this summer. A new five-year cooperative agreement will be in place later this summer.
- 5. Old Business:**

Resource Stewardship – Anthony, SubCommittee Chair, led the updates:

Invasive Plants Management Project – Anthony noted that both Betsy Corrigan and Hannah Beach, the new part-time invasives coordinator, attended the last subcommittee meeting and got to meet one another. Under a two-year National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, Beach will be coordinating Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAS) throughout the Connecticut River watershed and will be working four hours/week for FRCC (which is also a CISMA). Corrigan summarized her invasives work ideas for the 2012 season. Volunteers are needed. Charamut noted she has people who want to volunteer. Discussed putting more information on invasives on FRCC website, and conducting more outreach to landowners. Corrigan mentioned the need to focus on large species such as: Norway maple, Tree-of-Heaven, and Black Locust. Need to continue attack on Stilt grass.

There was a discussion on whether or not to use herbicides - and if so - on what? where? A licensed applicator would be required, and we would need input from MDC, CT DEEP, etc. Would probably use “Roundup.” Charamut asked if there are any published studies. Peterson suggested inviting Todd Mervosh of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station to a meeting to discuss herbicides and implications. While FRCC is reluctant to use herbicides, it may be the only option for certain species in some instances. Even TNC is using herbicides in selected cases. Need to explore and discuss further. Corrigan also suggested focused application of herbicides such as stump painting. Lacy mentioned a new “Share Point” site which is being managed by Beach for the CISMAs and allows for sharing of information and resources.

There are odd spots where invasives seem to be popping up, and it is conjectured that seeds might be in fill transported and used by road crews for projects. Discussed working with town and State road crews to make them more aware of this concern. Perhaps there needs to be a contract condition with regard to use of fill in more sensitive areas?

Still River – Fielding reported at last subcommittee meeting that NWCC had sought funding for another rain garden. NCD is currently tied up with other spring time events. FRCC has a request for payment from NCD. Lacy said we will pay them directly although they are actually subcontracted to FRWA. Anthony noted we approved funding for the project - the approach is just a little different. NCD needs money up front to move project forward. Lacy said there are some surplus funds that could be shifted over to this project. Anthony said it was good to have MaryAnn Nusom Haverstock (CT DEEP) at a previous subcommittee meeting because it helps consolidate efforts with regard to Winchester/Winsted.

Water Quality – On going. FRCC is making payment to FRWA. On a related note – Anthony said he has not heard of any new discoveries of Didymo, to date. Peterson confirmed.

Vernal Pools – It has been a dry year. However, Corrigan is winding up research and working on the report and final maps with Jeff Bolton (FRWA).

Greenwoods Anglers Trail – Masi said that FRAA held its river cleanup on May 12 and trails cleanup on May 19. The trail was a bit of a “jungle”. They only worked on the west side of the river. It was noted that people can drive all the way from the “Bone Yard” to “Ovation”. Charamut said that the volunteers took out nine bags of trash from below the Collinsville Dam. Much of this was probably post-Hurricane Irene debris.

Education and Outreach – Lacy provided the update as David Sinish, SubCommittee Chair, was not present.

Open House – Has been rescheduled to October 18. (Lacy will be out of town on the original date.)

Website – Discussed adding new section just on invasives, volunteer opportunities, etc. Beach will probably do this.

e-Newsletter – Lacy is trying to work up another short issue which will include pieces on: invasives, call to artists for Open House, and discussion of drought and effects on river.

Interns - Stanton asked about status of interns. Lacy said that Tiffany Caisse had finished up her internship. Jessica Applin has also finished her internship but may continue to help out this summer. Meanwhile, Kate Donovan, a new intern, will be coming on board – probably in mid-June.

Tree Signage Project (at Peoples State Forest) – The E&O subcommittee has recommended funding the grant request for tree signage (**from Gerry Milne, CT DEEP**). The signage would also explain how trees protect the river. Lacy had circulated the grant proposal and everyone had agreed it would be a worthwhile project.

Project “Champions” – Lacy reminded everyone that we want to make sure every project has a “champion” – i.e. electronics, scholarships, etc.

Kiosks – It is cleanup time for kiosks.

Scholarships – There were six applicants. The pool was whittled down to three, and two were selected to receive scholarships. This year’s recipients will be: Bianca Beland (Barkhamsted), and Peter LeDuc (Canton). Both are graduating high school students. David Sinish and Alison Murdock are working on a better way to present the awards. Travis asked about Peterson’s idea of presenting the scholarships as part of graduation (and/or school awards) ceremony. Lacy said that it was too late to pursue that idea this year but it might be a possibility next year.

River Etiquette Package – Water Trail Map – An additional 2700 maps have been printed for just under \$1,000 – but on regular, not waterproof paper. TU is going to split the bill with FRCC, and TU will help circulate copies through avenues such as bait shops, etc. Lacy handed copies of maps out to those who needed them.

Executive – Robinson, SubCommittee Chair, led updates

Management Plan Update – FRCC members have until May 31 to provide feedback to Joyce Kennedy Raymes. If members have limited time to review, then they should concentrate on sections relevant to what you do. Once any additional changes are incorporated, then FRCC members will be bringing the revised document to their respective towns and/or organizations for

further review. Kennedy Raymes is also looking for input on maps. Lacy suggested that perhaps we could spend time during upcoming subcommittee meetings to review maps.

FRCC 2012 Budget and Work Plan – Lacy circulated copies of the 2012 budget and work plan and reviewed it with the Committee. She said we are close to using up 2011 funds and are waiting on the new cooperative agreement to be finalized to access 2012 funds. Until these new funds are in place, we have to hold off on spending for 2012. Once 2012 funds are set, then we can consider additional grant projects – preferably small grant amounts. Theoretically, we are now “in the black”. We got a little money back from grants that did not get used up in their entirety. Lacy asked if - and Anthony felt we should - keep this extra money in grants since that was for what it was originally budgeted.

6. New Business/Other

Sandy Brook Conservation Corridor – Travis said she attended John Anderson’s recent presentation at Aton Forest. Sandy Brook is one of the purest streams in the Farmington watershed. The map of Sandy Brook’s watershed shows towns in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. Eileen Fielding also attended the presentation and had indicated that FRWA was interested in helping to support outreach and education efforts. The presentation pointed out that there are large pieces of land in need of protection, and it is necessary to work with landowners to better manage properties.

It has been suggested that Sandy Brook should be included in the rubric of the Upper Farmington W&S area. Lacy said that this seems like a “no brainer”. Sandy Brook could also be a W&S area on its own. However, Lacy noted that pursuit of W&S designation for Sandy Brook would need to come from the community grassroots level – not from NPS. John Anderson seems concerned that it might not be possible for Sandy Brook to get W&S designation. Peterson reported having had a conversation with Anderson at another meeting about the CT/MA border, and why the Upper Farmington in MA did not get designated when the CT portion got designated. Stanton mentioned the business district along Sandy Brook. He said that now that there is a better understanding of W&S, it is not as threatening as it was in that earlier time period. Therefore, it may now be a better time to designate.

This could be an opportunity to help a town with a cooperative project. Peterson asked about a previous suggestion to invite Anderson to an FRCC meeting to give a presentation. Stanton said that Sandy Brook needs a management plan because of what happens after major storms, etc.

7. Town (and Other Committee Member and Guest) Reports

Barkhamsted – Behrens said he inquired about the new home along the Farmington River in Barkhamsted near Greenwoods on River Rd. He said the new home is not within the high water mark; it is set back just about one hundred feet. Debbie Brydon had measured it, and the deck is within the “L”, and the deck is not actually the portion of the house closest to the river. It is reported that the new house is going to be a B&B for fishermen.

Behrens reported that he checked, and that FRCC is on the Barkhamsted website.

Behrens noted the follow-up on Enders Pond Dam at the April 30 FRCC meeting which he was not able to attend. He said that Enders Pond used to be stocked with fish. He said it was too bad that the water was not released from the pond before the dam breached, so that the dam could have been repaired and the pond refilled. Behrens commented on the erosion situation. Peterson reviewed the information she reported on at the April 30 meeting with regard to feedback from CT DEEP colleagues. (See April 30 meeting minutes.) Peterson said she would provide Behrens with CT DEEP staff contact information so that he could pursue concerns directly with the Agency.

Canton – Robinson said that Bristol Farms has invited Betsy Corrigan to take a look at invasives and develop a management plan for the small portion of riverfront land they own near the confluence with Cherry Brook. Although this area is not currently in the Upper Farmington W&S area, it could become a part of the Upper W&S area if the Lower Farmington W&S legislation passes.

Colebrook – No new updates from town reps. Lacy asked about status of Robertsville Dam hydropower facility (owned by FirstLight Power Resources) with regard to silt issue. Colebrook reps reported that they were told by CT DEEP staff looking into situation that this was a CT DEEP issue and they would take care of it. NCD was also involved and working with them. Peterson wondered if CT DEEP might have a greater role with regard to this facility since the Agency’s responsibilities now include

“energy”. Peterson said she would inquire about status of issue back at CT DEEP. Someone wondered if their might be fisheries concerns when Robertsville flows were low. Should FRWA get involved?

Hartland – Having just joined the FRCC, Bowler said he had no input yet.

FRAA – Masi said they have suspended meetings for the summer and will start-up again in September. (Gone fishin’! ☺)

TU – Charamut said they worked on river clean-up a couple of weeks ago. They are also making headway in their elm tree planting project.

MDC – Anthony reported that they are putting a large logging job below Goodwin Dam on the west side of the river out to bid. Logging will take place on both MDC and private land, and is expected to produce approx. ½ million board feet. The Colebrook Inland Wetland Commission has reviewed the project. Anthony anticipates that the operation will be monitored carefully.

Anthony also reported that river flows are up.

CT DEEP – Peterson said that it was recently announced that Denise Ruzicka - who is currently Director of the Inland Water Resource Division - will be moving over to become the Director of the Planning & Standards Division within the Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse. (The Watershed Management Program which Peterson is in is within the Planning and Standards Division.) Peterson was asked if vacant positions at CT DEEP were being refilled? She said that it is her understanding that only about one in five of empty positions are being refilled in the wake of recent retirements, etc.

NPS – Lacy said she would like to have an orientation for newer FRCC members prior to the next meeting on June 18, at 5:30 p.m. (Addendum: this has been rescheduled to July 2.)

Harn said she appreciated the opportunity to come and see what FRCC does. She also thanked us for what we do. Harn was asked about the type of work she does as part of NPS. She described that she co-leads the NPS W&S Steering Committee, leads the NPS Hydro program in the northeast, and is involved in many other projects in the DC office.

8. Next meeting dates:

- **Full Committee and Pre-Meeting Outings:** June 18; July 16 and Aug. 20
- **SubCommittees (by conference call unless otherwise noted):**
 - **E&O** – June 4, July 2, Aug. 13
 - **RS** – June 5 (face-to-face), July 3, Aug. 14

9. Adjourn: 9:05 p.m.