



FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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DRAFT Regular FRCC Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 18, 2023
Via Zoom

Attendance: Barkhamsted (Roger Behrens, Alternate and Committee Chair and Mario Santoro, Representative, Committee Vice Chair), Hartland (Dan Bowler, Representative), Colebrook (Alison Jassen, Representative, R/S Subcommittee Chair), Canton (Matt Vinick, Representative and Committee Treasurer), New Hartford (Alison Murdock, Representative), FRWA (Laura Hart, Representative), CT DEEP (Matt Gocłowski, Alternate), Metropolitan District Commission (Jim Randazzo, Representative), River Steward (Stephan Bastrzycki), FRAA (Torrey Collins, Representative), FVTU, (Jim Buchok, Representative and Tom Carpenter, Alternate)

Absent: CT DEEP (Pete Aarrestad, Representative), National Park Service (Andrew Petitdemange, Representative)

1. Regular Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM by Chairman Behrens.

2. Approval of Minutes: Draft minutes for the August meeting were approved.

3. Treasurer’s Report: Report presented by Matt Vinick. The budget period ends at the end of September. By moving money from one category to another (usually within the same category) the committee has spent most of the money allocated for this fiscal year. Most funds remaining are already obligated and waiting for reimbursement claims. Total unobligated funds - \$1574.25. Expenditures for this budget period are \$5,918.05 to the New Hartford Land Trust, \$733.00 to FRWA to pay for culvert assessments, payments were made to the River Stewards for a total of \$10,259.80 and Laura Hart was reimbursed \$57.24 from the E&O budget for the quilt supplies, and \$176.99 for a canvas map for the Quilt.

4. Subcommittee reports: The quilt is now displayed at the Legislative Office Building concourse in Hartford. The meeting with Army Corps and NPS took place. The focus was on establishing dialog; however, the Army Corps representatives that attended the meeting do not have the authority to change established procedures. Substantial discussion among FRCC members about the need for a better water flow plan to permit more controlled and planned releases of water particularly to manage flood risk. Jim Randazzo stated that the 10-billion-gallon pool of water is not being used for riparian rights (MDC is using the 3.5BG pool). The Army Corps is not using those pools either to adjust water levels at Colebrook. Concern was expressed that we are in mid-September and the water levels are relatively high historically in hurricane season. Jim Randazzo stated that the Army Corps releases water when the levels are over 708 feet. Historically Army Corps has relied on MDC releases to mitigate flood risk but since these releases have not occurred for the last two or more years water levels in Colebrook are much higher. MDC is just passing water through the Goodwin Dam that comes into Hogback from tributaries and from Army Corps releases since Hogback is being kept at full capacity, and the natural flow requirements. Natural flow requirements are being met by MDC. FRCC members expressed a great

deal of concern over water release variation – creating very high flow conditions and alternating with very low flow conditions.

FRCC members understand that it will take years to move this issue to the personnel levels in Army Corps where change in policy can occur or alternative, the dispute in contractual obligation between MDC and Army Corps over the dam operational and maintenance agreements is resolved. Many members expressed frustration with the situation but there is no apparent solution at this time.

-Executive:

-Resource Stewardship: Water quality monitoring is wrapping up for temperature, bacteria, and other water quality indicators. The reports will be ready for fall.

Jim B. noted that there is concern over the high-water temperatures in the river due to high air temperatures and low water flow. Jim B. also discussed the macroinvertebrate sampling done by Carl Swanson finding a lack of specimens. Conditions such as the high-water flows and then very low water flows may be creating poor conditions for larvae. The president of TU received a complaint from a woman who complained about sandbar formation in the River in Barkhamsted along the upper portion of the river – between Pleasant Vally and Riverton not far from Mathies Grove. Matt G. stated this was likely due to high water flows bringing sand and sediment from tributaries. It is a natural process, and nothing can be done, but also not necessary are bad thing. The Farmington River is generally sediment deprived due to the dams.

Laura reported that Kim Bradley of DEEP contacted her regarding the development of mountain biking trails in Nepaug Forest. She is looking for volunteers to meet with her to review proposed trails. Laura, Matt G. and Stephan plan to meet with her.

In Hartland the culvert near Hogsback at 532 Hogsback Road has been assessed as a severe barrier. A meeting is being planned with Dan Bowler, FRWA, and Andrew to discuss culvert replacement with town officials. Matt G. will also investigate.

-Education and Outreach: The Open House is scheduled for October 5. Travelin' Trout will perform again. They have requested that a \$250 donation be made to Barkhamsted Land Trust. Alison Jassen made a motion to donate \$250 to the Land Trust on behalf of Traveling Trout. Laura seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Dan B. made a motion to provide \$1500 to the Wild and Scenic Film Festival in Collinsville on November 17th. Matt V. seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a discussion about where to put the last two kiosks. There is a consensus that placing one at the tubing take out area would be a good idea. The other one might be near the new Canton boat launch area by the DPW – but another boat launch by CCK has not been acquired by the town of Canton yet. It might be a good idea to ask Canton if they could store the kiosk and which of these two launches the kiosk should be at.

5. New Business/Other: Stephan reported that River Day with the Barkhamsted School Children went well. Information on Wild and Scenic Rivers was presented and children in each grade had a chance to complete an activity – there was a different activity for each grade.

Stephan suggested that FRCC might want to consider updating the junior ranger activity books. There are only 40 to 50 remaining. He also suggested that it might be worth exploring whether it should be a downloadable document.

The Open House will be on October 5th. Volunteers will be needed to hang the photos provided by Rick Warters and Tom Cameron. Everyone who is coming should be generous with bringing food. Dan B, and Stephan will not be present. Laura will send out a sign-up sheet.

6. Local Updates and Organizational Reports

- **Barkhamsted** – FALPS is moving forward with the 100th anniversary celebration of the creation of People’s Forest. They are receiving a \$35000 grant to help fund the creation of a video but will be applying to FRCC for additional financial support.

- **Hartland:** - No report

- **New Hartford:** No report

- **Canton:** The boat launch project has been delayed.

- **Colebrook:** No report

- **River Steward:** There is a need to clear invasive plants from the High Bank Rapids area. It is overgrown.

- **MDC:** None

- **FRWA:** None

- **NPS:** No report

- **DEEP:** There is a 100th anniversary celebration event at the Burlington Fish Hatchery Saturday, September 23rd. There will be food trucks. FRWA and FVTU will be tabling at the event.

On September 28th there is a public comment session and information about the Collinsville Dam removal project.

The survivor strain survival study may occur next week – depending on staffing and temperatures.

- **FRAA:** No report

- **FVTU:** No report.

7. Next Meeting Dates:

Full committee:

October 5 Open House, November 20

- **Subcommittees:**

- **Education & Outreach Mon. October 2 6:30 PM by Zoom meeting**

- **Resource Stewardship Tues. October 3 by Zoom meeting**

8. Adjourn: 8:30 pm