



Farmington River Coordinating Committee

REPRESENTATIVES

Barkhamsted

Mario Santoro
Roger Behrens

Canton

Matt Vinick

Colebrook

Alison Jassen
Tom Stanton

Hartland

Dan Bowler

New Hartford

Alison Murdock

CT DEEP

Peter Arrestad
Matt Goclowski

FRAA

Torrey Collins
Derrick Kirkpatrick

FVTU

Jim Buchok
Tom Carpenter

FRWA

Laura Hart
Kaitlin Cole

MDC

Jim Randazzo

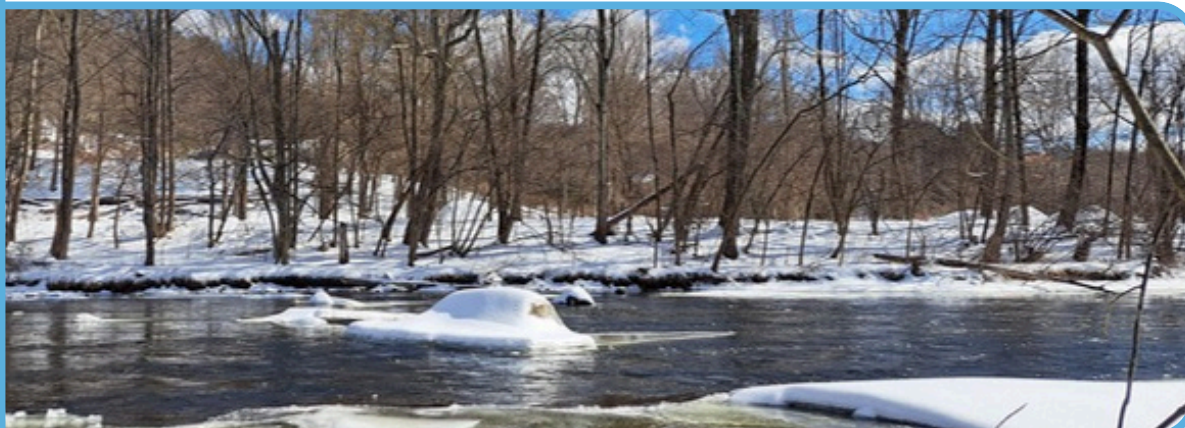
National Park Service

Andrew Petitdemange
Lauren Bonatakis

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025

Partnership Wild & Scenic River
Designated in 1994



FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Greetings:

The past year was full of uncertainty and concern for our Country's continuing commitment to support the National Park Service and protect its Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers. We now are reassured that the FRCC will carry on with its mission, knowing that Congress has recognized the program's merit and has committed to sustain its funding.

Through partnerships with the National Park Service, local, regional and State of Connecticut stakeholders, the FRCC has fostered a spirit of cooperation to safeguard the river's remarkable scenic, recreational, environmental, and historic values. This annual report highlights significant ways the committee has supported and implemented stewardship and education initiatives to ensure proper care of the Farmington River's outstanding resources.

In 1874, John Muir noted, "Uncle Sam seldom manifests any disposition to look very far into the future". We think John Muir would be pleased with our vision and accomplishments. The environmental, recreational and economic benefits for protecting our river are self evident. We are always looking upstream to see what is heading our way. Like a fine home, the river needs constant attention and is dependent on a tireless commitment.

We are fortunate to play a part in that commitment to help ensure that the Upper Wild and Scenic Farmington River will remain protected and add beauty and vitality to our towns for generations to come. Enjoy the river with its large preserved watershed and superb State Forests. Look attentively upstream and always feel free to share your thoughts and ideas with us.

Roger Behrens
FRCC Chair



Read on to learn about the programs and projects FRCC has funded and participated in during the fiscal year 2025 (October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025).

Annual Report written by Laura Hart, Conservation Director of the Farmington River Watershed Association on behalf of the Farmington River Coordinating Committee 2026

Learn more at FarmingtonRiver.org

A PARTNERSHIP WILD & SCENIC RIVER: PROTECTING THE UPPER FARMINGTON RIVER

The Upper Farmington is among the first “Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers.” Protection comes from federal, state and local town governments and other organizations with a vested interest in the health of the river, from its initial designation in 1994, protecting 14 river miles. The designated section is now 15.1 miles long on the Upper Farmington River – from the Goodwin Dam (aka Hogback) in Hartland to the confluence with the Nepaug River in Canton. The additional 1.1 miles were added in 2019, under the Dingell Act. Our river provides clean water, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Every year, thousands of people tube, canoe, kayak, and fish the waters of the Farmington River and visit the parks, forests and historic sites that dot the river's edge. It is critical that we work together to protect this natural beauty.

The Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC) is an advisory body that was created when the river was designated to coordinate management activities, by implementing the Upper Farmington River Management Plan. The purpose is to promote long term protection of the Wild & Scenic Farmington River through the existing town, state and federal authorities. The Committee is made up of representatives of the five river-fronting towns (Hartland, Colebrook, Barkhamsted, New Hartford, and Canton), the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA), the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), the National Park Service (NPS), the Farmington River Angler's Association (FRAA), and the Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited (FVTU), who joined the committee in 2022.

The FRCC office is located at the historic Squire's Tavern, in Peoples State Forest in Pleasant Valley, CT. FRCC focuses on Resource Stewardship, Education & Outreach, Land Protection, and Grants. Read on to learn about the projects FRCC was involved in and grants awarded in 2025. The financials on page 10 correspond to the federal fiscal year of October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025.

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

FRCC's Resource Stewardship subcommittee meets monthly to discuss resource protection and stewardship concerns, challenges, and opportunities and bring grant proposals and ideas in line with the Management Plan to the full committee. Some areas of focus in 2025 were invasive plant removals, hemlock woolly adelgid control, water quality monitoring which included a new nutrient study, and stream reconnection work in Ratlum Brook. Land Protection Grants were awarded to the Towns of Hartland and Colebrook for updating their Natural Resource Inventories and to the Northwoods Land Conservancy. **FRCC's Resource Stewardship total was \$100,440.73**

See pages 3-6 for details.

EDUCATION and OUTREACH

FRCC's Education and Outreach subcommittee meets monthly to discuss educational programs, projects, outreach events, publications, and opportunities and bring grant proposals and ideas in line with the Management Plan to the full committee. This funded the River Steward Program, printing the new Jr. River Ranger booklets, hosting the annual FRCC Open House, and updating educational signage and maps. **FRCC's Education & Outreach total was \$60,478.80.**

See page 8 for details.

GRANTS

As part of its effort to support local endeavors and enhance protection of the upper Farmington River and its watershed, the FRCC offers small grants for applicable projects. Project focus can range from riverbank to watershed level. FRCC funded educational events and research projects.

\$33,172.99 was funded via the FRCC grants program.

See pages 7 and 9 for details.

INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT

FRCC works with the CT DEEP Foresters to determine the best locations to continue the control of invasive plant species in the three State Forests that border the Farmington River: American Legion State Forest, Peoples State Forest, and Nepaug State Forest.

FRCC funded \$16,000 for mechanical cutting and cut surface herbicide application on 6.4 acres in Peoples State Forest at the North Salmon Facility, Whittemore Recreation Area, and South Matthies Grove. The targeted invasive plant species were Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), shrub honeysuckles (*Lonicera spp.*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), and winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*).

FRCC plans to continue working with CT DEEP with follow-up control and management at other priority locations along the river. FRCC hired Christian Allyn to present on Japanese Knotweed Management ideas for the Upper Farmington River and show examples of work in the Housatonic River Corridor.

FRCC hired botanist, Betsy Corrigan, to host educational workshops with the River Steward Team. One workshop was during the River Stewards Family Day, where she led invasive plant ID walks and discussed invasive plant issues and control strategies with the Stewards and the public. Another workshop included an invasive plant control day with the River Stewards along West River Road focusing on mugwort and Japanese stiltgrass, discussing and demonstrating eradication strategies and management options, in addition to plant biology.

HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID CONTROL

The Peoples, American Legion, and Nepaug State Forests are extensive watershed forests bordering the Farmington River, and are important for natural diversity, wildlife, and recreation. These forests have a large eastern hemlock component, critical for wildlife habitat, thermoregulation, and filtering of the streams that feed the river.

FRCC has been working with Dr. Carole Cheah, Research Entomologist with the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, since 2021 to control the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) through the release of *Sasajiscymus tsugae*, a beetle that exclusively predares on HWA. Native Eastern Hemlock is susceptible and severely impacted by HWA, especially when stressed by drought and other insect pests. Hemlocks are critical for bank stabilization and cold-water temperatures in our tributaries and river. It looked bleak in the '90s, but there has been improvement in the health of hemlocks since Dr. Cheah's research began, and continued work will help to further improve the health of our forests and water quality.

In 2025, FRCC funded \$12,625 for the release of 5,000 beetles in targeted areas with high infestations of HWA. All release sites had been extensively pre-scouted for suitable HWA populations during the winter and early spring. Report is available at farmingtonriver.org.

SITES IN 2025

- Sandy Brook, in Colebrook, flanked by Algonquin State Forest and the Kitchell Wildlife Sanctuary
- Howells and Thorne Brooks, draining western portions of Tunxis State Forest
- Beaver Brook and Beaver Brook Meadow, and other minor feeder brooks in the Peoples State Forest which drain into Lake McDonough, MDC
- American Legion State Forest brooks which drain into the Farmington River
- feeder brooks draining into the Farmington River within the Nepaug State Forest
- East Mountain Brook, draining and proximal to New Hartford Land Trust properties
- Cherry Brook which drains the Pratt Preserve, at the Canton Land Conservation Trust
- Jim Brook by the Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton
- MDC and state WMA riparian forest by the Nepaug River
- preserves with hemlocks under HWA threat: North Woods Land Conservancy



WATER QUALITY MONITORING

FRCC supports water monitoring for the upper Farmington River and tributaries through a contract with the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA), to cover a portion of supplies, mileage, and staff time at \$25,520. FRWA has been collecting data since 2004. The program's objectives are to: document high quality waters for protection and preservation; measure inputs from tributaries to the Farmington River; establish a database for use in documenting future changes in water quality; identify impairments and locate potential preservation & restoration opportunities; educate and involve residents in waterbody protection; inform a cohesive understanding of the entire Farmington River watershed in CT; and, reveal trends relative to changing climate and precipitation patterns via long term monitoring.

Polluted stormwater runoff (nonpoint source pollution) is the primary water quality concern in the watershed. FRWA's data can show sites of concern, and lead to potential restoration efforts. Through the program contract with FRCC, FRWA shares all data with FRCC in an annual written report and presentation, and shares all data with CT DEEP, uploads to EPA's Water Quality Portal, and helps educate watershed residents. FRWA follows protocols in our CT DEEP-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan. All data submitted to the CT DEEP is used to evaluate assessed waters for the Integrated Water Quality Report (IWQR) which is submitted to the EPA every two years. Details on FRCC funded monitoring of the following parameters continue on page 5.

NUTRIENT STUDY

FRCC provided a grant of \$4,224 to FRWA for a nutrient study. This study was watershed wide, with the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee funding the lower river portion of this study.

The study came about as a result of FRWA's cyanobacteria research on Rainbow Reservoir in Windsor, with findings of excess nutrient pollution. A total of 24 sampling sites were selected including upstream and downstream locations of eight Water Pollution Control Facilities (WPCFs) discharging above Rainbow Reservoir and tributaries likely to contribute high nutrient loads. Tributaries were identified using UConn CLEAR's Local Watershed Assessment Tool, focusing on upland and riparian land use, particularly agricultural areas. Sixteen sites were associated with WPCFs and eight were tributaries with agricultural, golf course, or residential land uses. Each site was sampled three times—before, during, and after a qualifying storm event.

In the Upper Farmington River, sites included upstream and downstream of the Winsted, New Hartford, and Canton WPCFs, as well as the Still River and Cherry Brook confluences. Cherry Brook generally had low nutrient levels, except for elevated Total Phosphorus following storm events. The Still River showed elevated pre-storm values and nutrient flushing, while Winsted WPCF exhibited higher downstream Total Nitrogen, Total Dissolved Phosphorus, and Total Phosphorus. Lower downstream values at New Hartford reflected dilution from branch convergence rather than discharge conditions. All WPCFs operate under NPDES permits, though some are expired or in draft form; most lack Total Nitrogen limits, and Canton and New Hartford lack Total Phosphorus limits. Data were submitted to CT DEEP for statewide nutrient management programs.



Read the water quality and nutrient study reports at frwa.org/resources

BACTERIA

Nineteen sites were monitored in the upper river watershed for bacteria. The West Branch Farmington River and Farmington River in New Hartford consistently have low *E. coli* values with the West Branch Farmington River in Riverton being undetectable on 5/28/25. Winsted, the center of Winchester, has a higher percentage of impervious surfaces leading to increases in *E. coli* values in the Mad River and Still River. Morgan Brook remained low in *E. coli*. FRWA's bacteria results are updated biweekly during the summer on Connecticut River Conservancy's Is It Clean? website: www.isitclean.us

TEMPERATURE

FRWA monitors for temperature at fifteen sites in the upper river watershed with three sites on the river and twelve sites on tributaries, five of which are also conductivity loggers. Almost all tributary temperatures were considered cool, with Rugg Brook in Winsted being cold and an Unnamed Tributary to the Farmington River on FRWA Frey property in New Hartford and Still River in Winsted being warm. The West Branch Farmington River just downstream Hogback Dam remains the coldest location monitored by FRWA over the last eight years.

CHLORIDE/CONDUCTIVITY

Eight sites were monitored for chloride in the upper river watershed and are considered excellent to good conditions except Jim Brook in Canton which had a chloride spike during winter storms. FRCC funded a grant to FRWA for \$9,605 to expand the conductivity program which allows continuous monitoring of conductivity which is calculated into approximate chloride for comparison to the EPA and CT DEEP's chloride standards.

FARMINGTON RIVER WATERSHED WATER QUALITY REPORT 2025

FARMINGTON RIVER
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
749 HOPMEADOW STREET
SIMSBURY, CT 06070

Protecting the Farmington River - For You, For All, Forever



Read the water quality and nutrient study reports at frwa.org/resources

Bacteria data is uploaded to isitclean.us



Clockwise from top:
deploying data loggers;
using a multiparameter
meter; lab analysis; sampling

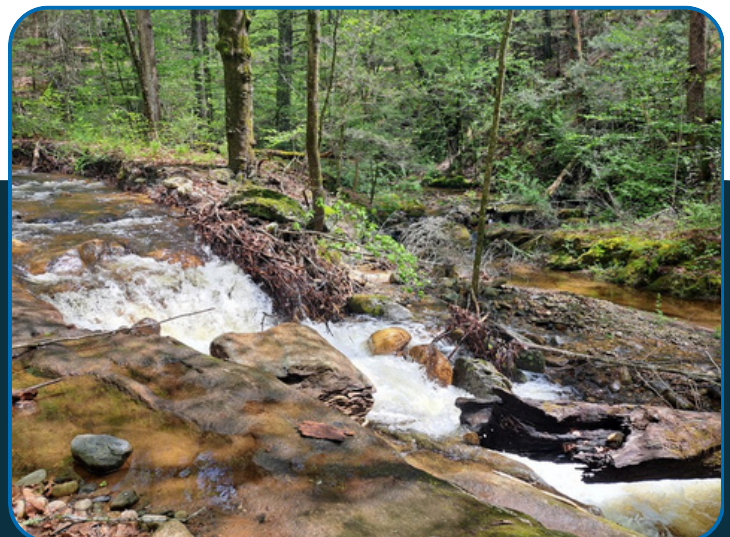
ROAD STREAM CROSSINGS

FRCC funds FRWA to conduct surveys of road-stream crossing (culvert) conditions within the upper watershed in order to determine structural integrity, as well as the ability of passage for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Road-stream crossing assessments can be useful in determining which crossings may pose a threat to public safety during storm events, and they also provide insight into the ability of aquatic organisms such as diadromous fish to move throughout the watershed. FRWA performs these assessments using the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) protocols and contributes its findings to the NAACC database. FRCC and FRWA are continuing to work with Trout Unlimited (TU)'s Program Director NY/CT and CT Project Manager and the local municipalities to address severe barriers on cold-water habitat tributaries by creating preliminary designs for culvert replacements on Ratlum Brook and its tributaries.

In 2025 FRCC, TU, FRWA, the Town of New Hartford, and CT DEEP came together to look at the issues of a failed culvert on an old Town access road, no longer used. This partnership and grant funding from FRCC gave TU and partners time to meet on site and for the Ratlum Brook Reconnection Project.

The project goal is to reconnect Ratlum Brook to the East Branch Farmington River to support native and wild trout recovery. The objectives are to develop a monitoring strategy that would effectively connect, conserve, and restore habitat quality and resiliency for trout in the Ratlum Brook watershed; collect the necessary data to identify reconnection and restoration projects that would improve stream conditions; and complete surveys and conceptual designs at two priority locations to support future fundraising and advance projects toward implementation. Final deliverables from TU included supporting FRWA with landowner and community outreach, grant proposals, and local, state, and federal permitting; preparing a data summary, subwatershed assessment, and watershed map; developing a monitoring plan and conducting one summer monitoring data collection effort; completing a watershed-wide road crossing survey with management recommendations; and producing one priority conceptual-level culvert and dam removal and restoration design with a cost estimate, including a cost comparison between culvert replacement and removal. Monitoring efforts included developing a river-specific monitoring plan and working with CT DEEP Fisheries staff to collect fish data throughout the watershed. FRCC funded \$26,500 to TU and \$2,742.50 to FRWA for this project.

FRCC plans to continue working with partners on this project. TU and FRWA will continue to seek grant funds to move to the next phases.



Culvert removal project located on Ratlum Brook. The culvert has been completely washed out and the stream diverted to the old Town road bed.

GRANTS and LAND PROTECTION

As part of our effort to support local endeavors and enhance protection of the Upper Farmington River, FRCC offers grants up to \$15,000 for applicable projects from the riverbank to the watershed level. FRCC Land Protection Program supports conservation and restoration of the river and land protection within the five riverfront towns. Some of the projects FRCC supported this year are listed below.

BARKHAMSTED

FRCC continued to support the **River Day** school event, this year with a \$5,380 grant. The event was held at the Riverton Fairgrounds in September with 400 youth from the local elementary schools of Barkhamsted, Hartland, Colebrook, and Norfolk. Each student was also given the new Junior River Ranger booklet.

FRCC gave a grant of \$1,200 to the **10th Annual Barkhamsted Earth Day Nature Festival** held in Peoples State Forest, with both FRCC and the Farmington River Stewards tabling at the event.

COLEBROOK

FRCC continued to help fund expenses for the Town of Colebrook to update and expand the **Natural Resource Inventory** to be included in the next Colebrook Town Plan of Conservation and Development. Researchers are looking into lichens, birds, moths and butterflies, weather, geology, plants, aquatic resources, and conducting mapping for this project. The total grant is for \$7,000, but \$3,670 was paid out this fiscal year.

HARTLAND & BARKHAMSTED

FRCC completed the grant to the North Woods Land Conservancy to protect the **Boscoe B Property** for \$4,197 this fiscal year.

HARTLAND

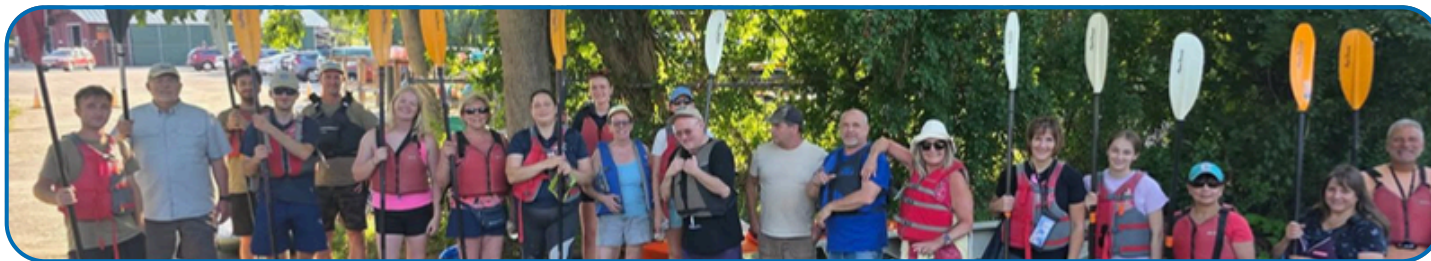
FRCC funded \$4,475 to the Town of Hartland to complete an update of the **Natural Resource Inventory**, to be included in the next Hartland Town Plan of Conservation and Development.

NEW HARTFORD

FRCC provided a grant of \$1,000 for the New Hartford Land Trust to host **Riparian Rhapsody** live theater performance at the 1st New Hartford River Rocks event. FRCC also provided \$2,000 to the Town for the **New Hartford River Rocks** event, and the River Steward Team tabled at the event.

FRCC provided a grant of \$695 the Collinsville Canoe & Kayak's **2nd Annual Paddling Film Festival** held at Brewery Legitimus for the local paddling community, with proceeds going to FRWA.

FRCC funded a **Water Quality monitoring station** at \$3,637 that FVTU and FRAA installed behind UpCountry Sportfishing on the Farmington River. It is collecting temperature data and will be collecting conductivity and pH data.



RIVER STEWARD PROGRAM

The FRCC River Steward Program is a flagship program created for FRCC by Stephan Bastrzycki in 2015. FRCC funds the program at \$56,000 in 2025. Donna Bastrzycki, Stephan's wife and the Barkhamsted Recreation Director, generously continues to volunteer with this program. With Stephan running this seasonal program, FRCC had 6 river stewards from May 31st through August 17th. Three of the stewards were new to the program, while the other three returned from past years.

A large portion of the stewards' time is spent engaging river recreationists, both at the river and at local events, and setting a good example of proper river etiquette. Outreach efforts by the water include educating area visitors about water safety, access points, pack out what you pack in, and how users can become stewards of the area. This engagement is done from shore and also on the water. The stewards have access to FRCC's own inflatable kayaks, tubes supplied by Farmington River Tubing, and kayaks provided by Collinsville Canoe and Kayak. Both these partners have been very supportive of the steward program over the years and offer their equipment to the stewards free of charge.

The stewards also continued user counts at Satan's Kingdom State Recreation Area. This data is very important as no one else is tracking both paid and independent tubers through this section of river. There were some high counts, reaching over 500 total users per hour on a couple days. The data also shows that even though there was some warm weather in June with favorable flows for tubing, the number of people on the water is still fairly low compared to July and August.

Stephan additionally assisted with FRCC's goals through the following actions throughout the year:

- Representing the FRCC on the Nepaug Trails Committee
- Working with CT DEEP to install 2 kiosks in Nepaug State Forest
- Staffing a booth at the 100 Year Anniversary of Peoples Forest
- Created a video for inclusion in the FRWA Wild and Scenic Film Fest
- Create new monofilament container signage and install of signs
- Revision of the GIS map for the water trail brochure
- Recommendation letters for past river stewards



STATISTICS & DATA

- 1344 - Total paid hours for the 6 Assistant Stewards
- 65 - Total volunteer hours
- 1310 - Estimated # of people engaged
- 95 - # of garbage bags of litter picked up
- Areas with the most litter: Satan's Kingdom (especially independent take out), Whittemore and both East and West River Road

NEW WATER TRAIL MAPS AND SIGNS

FRCC's Education and Outreach subcommittee worked to update the Water Trail Map and Brochure. FRCC also updated the monofilament recycling receptacle signs.

PWSR CONFERENCE

Every other year all the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers come together to learn, share, and collaborate. The Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Gathering in 2024 was at Jay Peak Resort near the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Wild & Scenic Rivers in VT, October 21-23. FRCC sponsored two FRWA staff members to attend.

FRCC OPEN HOUSE

FRCC hosted the Annual FRCC Open House Event at Squire's Tavern in October 2024 with an art exhibit from the Upper Farmington River, live music from The Travelin' Trout, and a large gathering of river folk.

EARTH DAY COOPERATIVE FARMINGTON RIVER CLEANUP

FRCC participated in the Earth Day River Cleanup, organized by the Farmington River Anglers Association, and in partnership with the FRWA and FVTU. The cleanup was a great success with volunteers filling a large dumpster full of trash collected along the river from below Hogback Dam to Collinsville.

FARMINGTON RIVER QUILT PROJECT

The Quilt was shown at the Kellogg Environmental Center in Derby, July 2025, and its first joint show with the newly created Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Quilt at Kingswood Oxford School in West Hartford in September. To see the entire quilt virtually visit FarmingtonRiverquilt.org.



New Water Trail Map



Fishing Line receptacle signs



Farmington River Quilt Project



FRAA and Partners River Cleanup

ANNUAL REPORT 2025—OVERVIEW OF EXPENDITURES

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP TOTAL - \$100,440.73

- \$29,112.50 - Invasive Species Programs
- \$25,520.00 - Water Quality Monitoring Programs
- \$12,341.73 - Land Protection Assistance
- \$33,466.50 - Upper Watershed Resilience

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH TOTAL - \$60,478.80

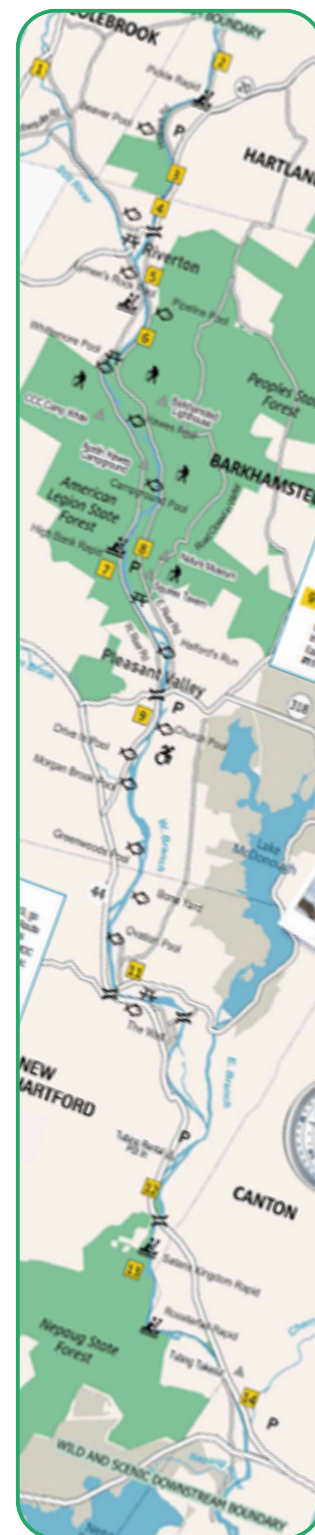
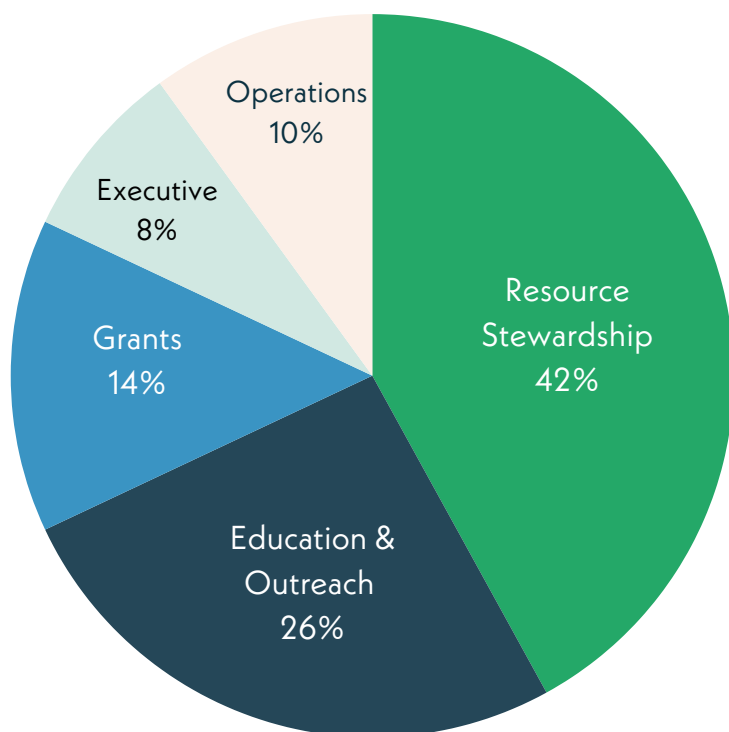
- \$54,818.83 - River Steward Program
- \$5,659.97 - Outreach

GRANTS - \$33,172.99

EXECUTIVE OTHER - \$19,018.39

- \$1,018.39 - Organizational development
- \$18,000.00 - Program Assistance

OPERATIONS TOTAL- \$23,722.38



The federal fiscal year is 10/1/2024 to 9/30/25. Fiscal year 2025 total direct \$217,743.29* and \$19,090 indirect *Note that some of these funds were carried over from fiscal year 2024.



Farmington River Coordinating Committee

FRCC's mission is to promote long-term protection of the Upper Farmington River by:

- Bringing interested parties together on a regular basis
- Stimulating cooperation and coordination among the parties
- Providing a forum to discuss and resolve issues
- Coordinating implementation of the Upper Farmington River Management Plan



Photo: Wild & Scenic Farmington River in Hartland