

FRCC Monthly Meeting

May 18, 2026

Hybrid Meeting hosted at Squires Tavern and via Zoom

Attendees:

Roger Behrens (Chair/Barkhamsted)	Jim Randazzo (MDC)
Mario Santoro (Vice Chair/Barkhamsted)	Lauren Bonatakis (NPS)
Tom Carpenter (Recording Secretary/FVTU)	Pete Aarrestad (DEEP)
Alison Jassen (Resource Chair/Colebrook)	Stephan Bastryzcki (River Stewards)
Dan Bowler (E&O Chair/Hartland)	Kaitlin Cole (FRWA)
Doug Roth (New Hartford)	Brad Parlman (prospective Canton representative)
Laura Hart (FRWA)	

Roger Behrens called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM

Prior Minutes

Approved without discussion

Treasurer's Report

- All funding allocated under the 2025–2026 cooperative agreement has been fully committed
- New funding is available on October 1
- The 2026-2027 original budget was \$210,000 and then additional funds were added
 - Total 2026-2027 budget is \$236,000

Subcommittees

Executive

- All information required for renewing the cooperative agreement has been submitted
- We anticipate it should be approved by the US Congress early this year

Resource

Water Quality Monitoring

- Data loggers are being installed and/or swapped out. Bacteria sampling will start in May. Chloride, conductivity, and other conditions are being monitored

Culverts

- The Sandy Brook dam removal project is progressing

New Hartford Culverts

- CT DEEP Long Island Sound Ecosystems Grant was awarded
 - Removal and replacement of a culvert on Bruning Rd. and the removal of a culvert on Ratlum Brook. Both are in New Hartford

- TU to investigate other culverts in the two systems
- FRCC awarded \$41,500 to TU to gather the data necessary to apply for this grant. The funding from the FRCC has been beneficial moving this project forward
- The Town of New Hartford is providing in-kind match for the work on these two culverts
- Winchester Land Trust closed on the Rebillard Forest and Farm, which borders the Still River

Education and Outreach

Quilt

- June showing at the Hurley Building for the New Hartford River Rocks event
 - The committee will set it up on Wednesday, June 3rd
- 2,000 quilt postcards have been printed
 - 1,000 are for FRCC and 1,000 for the Lower Committee
- The link for the quilt video: [Quilt Interviews: New England 2026 - American Quilter's Society](#)
- Discussed the Lower Committee's idea for a roll-up banner, and decided not to have one as the canvases are better suited for the quilt

Publications:

- [Website Upgrades](#): FRCC and the River Stewards sites are live on the same website (WordPress)
 - Stephan and Laura can edit the sites
- [Annual Report](#): Laura is working on the 2025 FRCC Annual Report, Roger to write a new cover letter
- [Collinsville Kiosk Correction](#): waiting on shipment. They'll send an invoice when it ships
 - Laura to ask Colin Sinish if he wants the old one

Outreach

- [River Cleanup](#) April 25 - FRWA, FRAA, and partners
- [Barkhamsted Earth Day Nature Festival](#) April 26 – well attended, Roger made 50 bird houses
- [Collinsville Canoe and Kayak Paddling Film Festival](#) They are still deciding if they want to do it in the fall
- [River Rocks](#) June 20th

US Army Corps of Engineers

- They are interested in using the same kiosk design as the FRCC's kiosks
 - The State originally designed the style of the kiosks
- They are open to hosting another tour of Colebrook for FRCC
 - They are scheduling one be for the Lower; tentative date is June 10
- They are leading a walk on National Trails Day June 6th at 10am

River Stewards

- They will start May 30 and end in the beginning of August
- 6 stewards hired (1 returning, 5 new)
- 3 wanted to have 24 hours per week

- Paddle with the Stewards events at Collinsville Canoe and Kayak
 - June 5th, 6-8pm
 - August 9th, 2-4pm

Other

River Day – Jon Sweeton gave a sincere thank you and said that River Day could not happen without FRCC support

Lighthouse Presentation

- The event was held at the Barkhamsted Senior Center on May 16
- Sponsored by the North Woods Land Conservancy

New Business

- New reps from New Hartford and Canton
 - Doug received approval from New Hartford
 - Brad is still waiting for approval from Canton
- Management plan was last done in 2013
 - It does not need not be updated unless there are major changes

Town Updates

- Barkhamsted:
 - A zoning request for a business on Old County Rd. at Route 44 was not approved
- Canton: None
- Colebrook: None
- Hartland:
 - DEEP Wildlife Division posted “Beware of turtles in the road” signs
 - Dan saved a snapping turtle. Not all heroes wear capes
 - Saplings have grown up in the water at 532 Hogback Road
- New Hartford:
 - New Hartford Land Trust was removing invasives on the Butler Trail

Organization Updates

- MDC:
 - River is in good shape
 - East Branch – Nepaug & McDonough reservoirs are full
 - West flows have been below average. 57 CFS from New Boston
 - Robertsville 120 CFS is being released in the rivers
 - Current elevation in Colebrook is 710.62. It will be taken down a couple feet by the end of June
 - MDC, USACE, & DEEP collaboration on the flow management of the Upper Farmington River is working out well, with DEEP taking the lead role
 - Mass email has not been done on a daily basis. Flows are available on the USGS site
- CT DEEP:
 - They are always concerned about the length and severity of a future drought

- The last DEEP request for a flow augmentation was 10/5/2025
- There was a request for a holdback for the Riverton Fishing Derby from Friday afternoon until Monday morning
- DEEP may augment flows this upcoming weekend to support paddle-based recreation
- Current elevation is 710.6 feet
- NPS:
 - USACE has issued a permit for the West River Road bank stabilization project
 - NPS Social Scientists are investigating using AI
 - May 13 W&S Speaker series
 - NPS is the host with the goal of doing it once a quarter
 - Let Lauren know if you have a topic for a future speaker series event
 - In person NPS W&S meeting
 - They may have two meetings: New England and Mid-Atlantic
 - It won't be in the next fiscal year
 - Experienced workers program – age 55+
 - Currently recruiting candidates with GIS skills and experience in land use analysis
- FRWA: Nothing in addition to what was reported above
- FRAA: Not in attendance
- FVTU:
 - Legislation CT session ended May 6
 - Riparian Area bill funding one person to develop training material for the towns' IWWC- signed into law
 - Rapid Response Program for Certain Aquatic Invasive Species - signed into law
 - Pesticide Reporting Modernization working group – awaiting signature
 - Striped bass, Wildlife Fund and Fish Passage – awaiting signature
- River Stewards: Nothing in addition to what was reported above

Upcoming Meetings

Because the 2025-2026 budget has been obligated, there isn't a need to have any meetings, subcommittees or full committee, in June

- Full committee: 7:00, July 20 (Hybrid), August 17
- Subcommittees:
 - Education & Outreach Monday July 6, 4:30 PM by Zoom meeting
 - Resource Stewardship Wednesday July 8, 4:30 PM by Zoom meeting

Adjourn: 8:48 PM