

FRCC Monthly Meeting

January 26, 2026

FRWA Zoom

Attendees:

Roger Behrens (Chair/Barkhamsted)	Lauren Bonatakis (NPS)
Mario Santoro (Vice Chair/Barkhamsted)	Torrey Collins (FRAA)
Matt Vinick (Treasurer/Canton)	Jim Buchok (FVTU)
Tom Carpenter (Recording Secretary/FVTU)	Stephan Bastryzcki (River Stewards)
Alison Jassen (Resource Chair/Colebrook)	Kaitlin Cole (FRWA)
Dan Bowler (E&O Chair/Hartland)	Doug Roth, New Hartford resident
Laura Hart (FRWA)	

Roger Behrens called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

Prior Minutes

Approved without discussion

Treasurer's Report

- \$5,600 rolled over from the prior fiscal year
- FRCC is in the final year of the 3-year cooperative agreement
- All money must be spent this fiscal year; it cannot roll over to the next cooperative agreement

Subcommittees

Executive

Workplan

- Workplan draft was reviewed in the full committee
- It is for the fiscal year October 2026 to September 2027
- Each Subcommittee reviewed and approved the workplan: Executive, Resource, and E&O
- FRCC's will receive \$210,000, the same as the prior year. Congress passed the interior appropriations bill. It slightly increased the total for Wild & Scenic to the benefit of two other W&S to bring them to parity

Dan Bowler made a motion to approve the proposed budget for 2026-2027. It was 2nd by Allison Jassen

Discussion: None

The motion passed unanimously

Resource

Invasive Species Management

Hemlock Wolly Adelgid

- Carole Cheah has submitted a proposal to treat the Upper Farmington Watershed with 5,000 S. tsugae (beetles) to manage the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid infestation
- Dr. Cheah sent a report regarding the prior application of the beetles to treat HWA
- The hemlocks in the Upper Farmington are showing regrowth

Allison Jassen made a motion for \$12,625 for the purchase of additional beetles for the treatment of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. It was 2nd by Laura Hart

The discussion focused on the use of the beetles to treat the HWA

The motion passed unanimously

Land Protection/Grants

Winchester Land Trust

Winchester Land Trust requested \$20,000 for the Rebillard Forest, preserving 93-acres with approximately 2,482 feet frontage on the Still River. It is for costs associated with acquiring the Rebillard property along the Still River. The total purchase price for the land is \$571,000

Allison Jassen made a motion to approve the \$20,000 grant for the Rebillard Forest. Dan Bowler 2nd the motion

Discussion: None

The motion passed unanimously

Culverts

Ratlum Brook Culvert

Trout Unlimited submitted a proposal for \$15,000 in funding to improve connectivity for the East Branch of the Farmington and Ratlum Brook to improve wild brook trout recovery. John Vander Werff attended the Resource subcommittee meeting to present the proposal and answer questions

The restored connectivity will allow the Eastern Brook Trout to move to deeper pools in Ratlum Brook when water flow rates are low in the East Branch during hotter and drier summer months

Allison Janson made a motion to provide Trout Unlimited \$15,000 for improving connectivity of the Ratlum Brook and the East Branch to support restoring the native brook trout population. Jim Buchok 2nd the motion

Discussion: None

The motion passed unanimously

Education and Outreach

River Stewards

Increasing their pay by \$1.00 per hour. New staff will be paid \$20.00 per hour and returning staff will be paid \$21.00 per hour

Milage reimbursement increased to 72.5¢/mile

ENCONN officers

- 5 officers cover a wide area, including the Upper Farmington River
- Committee members will approach the towns in the Upper Farmington River who have town police forces, Canton and New Hartford, to discuss supporting law enforcement in and around the river
- Look to have the River Stewards to meet with an ENCONN officer

Quilt

- April showing at the CT Convention Center is all set
- It will be displayed April 8-11
- Exploring printing quilt postcards for the local town showings, not the convention
 - Just have a QR code option for the Quilt show
 - Laura to get a quote before deciding upon quantities

Social media reel from the FRWA account of the panels of the quilt with a video

- One reel will be posted each week on Monday
- One section will be featured each week: 52 quilt sections
- Started with section 1 on January 5

Publications

Website Upgrades

- Met with Mike Roy, the person who is designing the new website
- Gave him the ok to update the rest of the website with the improved design

Annual Report

- Laura is working on the 2025 FRCC Annual Report. Roger to write a new cover letter

Outreach

- Stephan attended FALPS New Year's Day hike

New Business

- Robertsville Dam & Power Station
 - Owned by First Light Connecticut Hydro LLC
 - A small dam located on the Still
 - Maybe dams should be on our radar

Town Updates

- Barkhamsted:
 - Planning and Zoning met in January
 - In 2026 they will be working on a new conservation plan
 - The town is looking for a new location for the fire department complex
 - There is an unused forestry headquarters on West River Road north of the senior center
 - The state doesn't want to maintain it but is willing to lease it to the town
- Canton:
 - Canton is reducing their budget for sewer and water
 - We should monitor the situation to understand if there is going to be any impact on the health of the river
 - They are an MS4 town; they need to report to the EPA
- Colebrook: None
- Hartland: None
- New Hartford:
 - Town meeting to discuss the plan of conservation and development
 - They need to release it in February or March

Organization Updates

- MDC: Not present
- CT DEEP: Not present
- NPS: Working on the impact assessment of the West River Road Bank Stabilization for the USACE
- FRWA: None
- FRAA: None
- FVTU:
 - TU is focusing on the Ratlum Culvert Removal. Sandy Brook dam removal is a lower priority
 - Jim is involved in TU's National Native Fish program
 - Salt Watch has 26 volunteers
- River Stewards:
 - Hiring for the Stewards will start next month
 - River Day is being pushed back to September 25, 2026

Upcoming Meetings

- Full committee: 7:00 PM, March 16, April 20 (No meeting in February)
- Subcommittees:
 - Education & Outreach: Monday, March 2, 4:30 PM by Zoom meeting
 - Resource Stewardship: Wednesday, March 4, 4:30 PM by Zoom meeting

Adjourn: 8:07 PM