



How Well Are the Farmington River Protection Overlay Zoning Regulations Working?

Between 1991 and 1992, the people in the five towns that host 14 miles of the Wild and Scenic Farmington River (Hartland, Colebrook, Barkhamsted, New Hartford and Canton) did a lot of work. In cooperation with the Farmington River Wild and Scenic Study Committee they developed and passed zoning regulations known as the Farmington River Protection Overlay Districts.

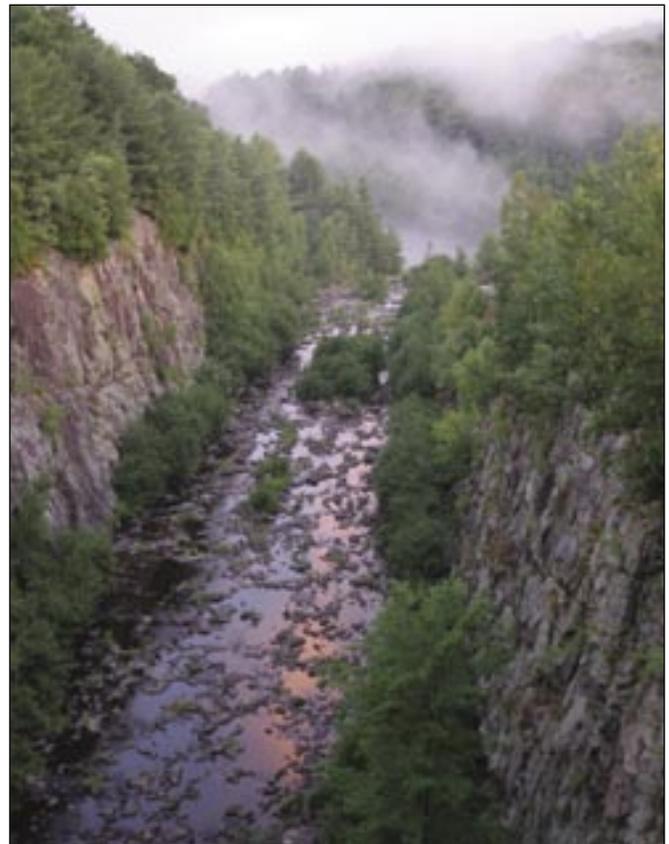
Like the town votes of support for Wild and Scenic River designation, adopting these regulatory measures was a necessary expression of local commitment to the protection of the Farmington River. The overlay districts provide strong local protection, the first of the three levels of river protection – town, state and federal.

First Ever Wild and Scenic Photo Exhibit a Success!

An exhibit of beautifully-crafted photographs illustrating scenes from the Farmington River was the highlight of FRCC's summer open house at Squires Tavern in Pleasant Valley. Photos ranging in subject matter from dreamy summer sunsets, to a lone fly fisherman at Church's Pool, to tubers braving white water, clearly demonstrated the multiple benefits of this resource for our communities. The following are several of the photographers who responded to FRCC's open invitation for submitting photographs: Erik Landgraf from Barkhamsted, Elaine Santoro from New Hartford, Fred Jones from Hartland, Linda Goldsmith from Collinsville, Paul Kramarchyk and Alden Warner from Farmington, and Sarah Hincks from Burlington. The exhibit proved to be immensely popular and was held over for viewing for several weeks at the Tavern.

At right, one photo that appeared in our exhibit, "Hogback Cut" by Fred Jones

The regulations prohibit constructing new buildings, installing septic systems, and excavating sand and gravel in the 100 foot riparian zone. Additionally, the regulations limit the amount of vegetation removal in the zones. There are exceptions to these regulations for activities such as the enlargement of existing structures, for public access or *(Continued on page 2)*



FRCC Partners with the Town of New Hartford to Protect Land on Jones Mountain



The Farmington River Coordinating Committee is very pleased to be able to join in an effort to protect 166 acres on Jones Mountain in New Hartford. This piece of property is a visual backdrop for the town of New Hartford and an important part of the community character. It is located off of Steele Road and includes the summit of Jones Mountain.

The Trust for Public Lands brokered an agreement with the Jones family, who generously agreed to sell the land

for less than its fair market value, and applied for a State Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant. The grant was awarded and New Hartford approved funds from town authorized bonding for open space preservation. FRCC contributed a significant amount

to the project as part of a match challenge from New Hartford Land Trust. Our contribution was instrumental in encouraging other donors to step forward with donations.

The final agreements on the land transaction are being negotiated as this newsletter goes to press. We look forward to celebrating the completion of this landmark cooperative venture!



*View from
Jones
Mountain*

*Photo
courtesy
of the New
Hartford Land
Trust*

Overlay Zoning Regulations *Continued from page 1*

timber harvest or cutting vegetation for “filtered views.” The town zoning commission through a special exception permit must approve exceptions.

The benefits of maintaining undisturbed river shorelines are well-documented and include:

- Less time spent mowing lawn and maintaining yard
- Reduced air conditioning costs if house is shaded by buffer plants
- Less money spent on fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, fuel, and equipment maintenance
- Reduced heating costs if buffer plants provide winter windbreak
- More interesting birds, butterflies, and wildlife to watch
- More stable shoreline: avoid costs of engineering design, permits, bank stabilization
- Cleaner, safer more attractive water for recreation
- Better fishing
- Safer, more reliable drinking water from on-site wells
- Possible tax benefits from conservation easement on buffer

- Better flood protection
- Increased general property value

The Buffer Zones Today

The overlay districts have now been around for over ten years. According to reports from town officials and landowners, most people value the protected riparian zone. However, some difficulties have come up understanding the language in the River Protection Overlay Districts. Questions arise over the interpretation of certain phrases in the regulations, particularly when it comes to vegetation, e.g., Just how much vegetation can be removed by a landowner? Just what is a “filtered view”?

Making matters even more complicated, “grandfathering” allows certain landowners to do some of the things prohibited by the overlay district. One neighbor may think that he or she can have a low, mowed lawn clear down to the river’s edge because the next door neighbor has one. If you look closer, the landowner with the low-cut lawn has had it since before the river districts were voted in.

The optimal amount of vegetation in the buffer zone is pure forest, but many of us who live on the river want to

be able to see it and walk to it without bushwhacking. Some regulations in other areas have come up with ways of defining the term “filtered view.” For instance, in a Michigan regulation “filtered view” is defined this way: the maintenance or establishment of woody vegetation of sufficient density to screen development from the river, to provide for streambank stabilization and erosion control, to serve as an aid to infiltration of surface runoff, and to provide cover to shade the water in a manner which still allows a partial view to the water.

The top photo on page 1 is an example of how a “filtered view” would look. You can still see the river, but there is enough vegetation to “filter” polluted runoff, “filter” sunlight, and to allow birds and animals some habitat. It is attractive from the land and water as well.

FRCC is ready and willing to work with and assist landowners in both understanding the local regulations and in “beefing up” their buffers. If you would like to have an expert visit with you to walk your buffer and offer advice on how to improve your riparian zone, please let us know. Call Liz Lacy at 379-0282 or email: Liz_Lacy@nps.gov.

Good News from Streambanks Report

Milone and MacBroom completed its Streambank Assessment on the Upper Farmington River and presented FRCC a final report late last year. FRCC was pleased to discover that erosion and streambank problems are minimal on the 14-mile Wild and Scenic stretch. However, that is not to say FRCC has no work to do on streambanks! M&M found that many access sites are in need of stabilizing and repair and in its report provided a list of priority sites to be improved. This year FRCC will embark on work at Rooster Rapids in Nepaug State Forest. In cooperation with DEP and the town of New Hartford, FRCC will improve a popular boating access site.

Road Managers Participate in Workshop on Preventing Damage to Wetlands

In December, FRCC sponsored a workshop on Stormwater Management and Soil and Erosion Control for the Public Works Departments (DPWS) in each of the towns along the Wild and Scenic section of the Farmington River. Sean Hayden of the Northwest Conservation District led the workshop that focused on measures that highway departments can take to prevent or repair damage to wetlands and riverways. Sean had prepared for the workshop by interviewing the road managers and other local board members so that he could focus on their particular management issues.

In the spring, Sean will schedule additional meetings with the DPWs as follow-up to the workshop. As part of the course, FRCC offered funding for projects or project tracking systems, and provided each road manager with the "2002 CT Erosion and Sedimentation Control Guidelines" manual. Several participants requested that more workshops like it be arranged each year.



Member spotlight—

Pat Keener, New Hartford Representative

Pat Keener first became involved in river management when she formed and chaired the committee that authored the "Open Space Plan" for the town of New Hartford. This visionary plan was endorsed by the Conservation and Development Commission and ultimately approved by the town of New Hartford. This was one of Pat's proudest accomplishments, as it was the impetus for New Hartford's participation in the development of the Upper Farmington River Management Plan. This eventually led to the creation of the Farmington River Coordinating Committee.

Indeed, Pat has served and continues to serve the town of New Hartford well. Pat is a retired teacher and special education department chairman from Regional School District #7.

She has served two terms as the FRCC chairman. Currently, Pat is chairman of the Outreach and Education Subcommittee where she spends countless hours working on ways to call public attention to the importance of our river. Pat has attended several National



River Rallies and went to Washington D.C. to lobby for "Partnership Rivers." Her thirst for knowledge and interest in the environment led her to complete the "Master Wilderness Conservation Course" conducted by the Connecticut D.E.P. She currently serves on the Inlands Wetlands

Commission and the Town Garage Review Committee for the town of New Hartford.

For eighteen years Pat has lived in New Hartford on the very river she loves and works to protect. She has a son, Jeff, daughters, Terrah and Sheila, and two grandchildren. Her interest in travel has taken her throughout the U.S., Canada and China. Pat enjoys collecting art and is an avid UConn Women's Basketball fan.

Pat Keener's leadership and commitment to the Farmington River Coordinating Committee are invaluable. Her dedication to preserving the environment, an example to us all, stems from her belief that the stewardship of our natural resources is paramount to the well being of future generations.

Who is FRCC?

The Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC) was established when 14 miles of the upper Farmington River were designated as a National Wild & Scenic River on August 26, 1994. The FRCC comprises representatives from each of the five towns adjacent to the Farmington River (Barkhamsted, Canton, Colebrook, Hartland, and New Hartford); representatives from the Farmington River Anglers Association, the Farmington River Watershed Association, the Metropolitan District Commission, the CT Department of Environmental Protection, and the National Park Service. The FRCC embodies an important partnership among the riverfront towns and others to provide stewardship of the Farmington River and its upper watershed.

Visit us at www.FarmingtonRiver.org

Current representatives include:

Barkhamsted – Jean Miller; Mario Santoro, alt.

Canton – Alis Ohlheiser; Diana Hiza, alt.

Colebrook – Tom Stanton

Hartland – Fred Jones; Nicki Hall and Sam Slater, alts.

New Hartford – Pat Keener; Mark Lindquist, alt.

CT Department of Environmental Protection – David Leff; Sally Snyder, alt.

Farmington River Anglers Association – Dick Reynolds; Dan Busa, alt.

Farmington River Watershed Association – David Sinish; Eric Hammerling, alt.

Metropolitan District Commission – Tim Anthony; Carol Youell, alt.

National Park Service – Jamie Fosburgh; Liz Lacy, alt.

Kid's Corner *Featuring Emma Case, Canton*

Our river is not a line of water
It is the song and the life with in it.

Emma Case Age 7-8

Are You Interested in Landscaping with Native Plants and Learning How to Remove Invasives?

A workshop about landscaping with native plants and identifying and managing invasive plants may be offered to homeowners by the Farmington River Coordination Committee. Since invasive plants can be of concern to gardeners, information about their identification, management, and replacement by native plants will be useful. FRCC will offer individual consultation. For further information please contact FRCC at 379-0282.



Farmington River Coordinating Committee
P.O. Box 395
Pleasant Valley, CT 06063

www.farmingtonriver.org

Calendar

Tuesday, April 25 — **FRCC Meeting**, 7pm, Squires Tavern, 100 East River Road, Pleasant Valley

Saturday, June 3 (raindate, 6/4) **Trails Day 2006, Field work: Invasive Plant Removal**. For more information, phone FRCC, 379-0282.

Saturday, June 10 — **Stream Walk Training**, Sessions Woods, Burlington, 8:30-noon. For more information, phone FRWA, 658-4442.

July – September — **FRWA Canoe Trips**. For more information, phone FRWA, 658-4442.



For more information, and for more events, visit our Web site:
www.FarmingtonRiver.org

Promoting Stewardship of the
Farmington Wild & Scenic River