

River Towns Consider Low Impact Development (LID)



By Mario Santoro, FRCC Barkhamsted Representative

In 2009, I was asked by the town to represent the FRCC on the recently formed Low Impact Development (LID) Advisory Committee for Barkhamsted. I agreed, but a number of questions came to my mind:

- What is LID?
- What will this advisory committee do?
- How will this affect the people in Barkhamsted?
- How will it affect the Farmington River?

What I found out...

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is helping local towns to protect the Farmington River and its watershed

through a variety of project grants called "Farmington River Enhancement Grants" (FREG). Ten nearby towns applied and received these grants to review and revise their current land use ordinances to allow and encourage the use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques. Of these towns, Barkhamsted, Colebrook, and New Hartford are along the Wild and Scenic stretch of the Upper Farmington River.

Low Impact Development, or "LID," is a term used to describe a land planning and engineering design approach to manage storm water runoff. It emphasizes conservation and the use of on-site natural features to protect water quality. Site design strategy is intended to maintain or replicate predevelopment hydrology through the use of small-scale controls

integrated throughout the site to manage runoff as close to its source as possible

These practices can be applied to road and driveway construction, to housing or commercial developments, or to managing water and runoff on individual home sites. These LID techniques are often more cost-effective than traditional site engineering solutions and better protect the environment.

The towns' advisory committees are discovering that LID:

- Maintains rural character
- Is wildlife and ecosystem friendly
- Reduces development infrastructure costs
- Maintains ground water quality and quantity for drinking supplies
- Reduces impacts from concentrated storm water runoff.

Barkhamsted's Low Impact Development Advisory Committee, led by our town planner and town engineer, reviewed town regulations and ordinances. Based on what had worked in other towns and what might work best for our town, we developed recommendations to present to the town and its boards for consideration. The recommendations for revised ordinances include:

- Remove outdated restrictions that prevent LID
- Add language to clarify LID
- Add flexibility for people to develop land in ways that benefit water quality the most and harm it the least.



A rain garden, one of the effective components of LID (also illustrated at top of article).

To learn more about LID or Barkhamsted's LID committee, please visit:

<http://barkhamsted.us/BoardsCommissions/LowImpactDevelopmentAdvisoryCommittee/tabid/156/Default.aspx>

Spotlight on New Hartford By Alison Murdock

New Hartford hosts about six of the fourteen miles of the Farmington River that are designated Wild and Scenic. Over the years, the river has provided sustenance, livelihoods, and recreation for the residents of New Hartford and visitors from all over the world. Although geographically the river is located on the northeastern edge of town, it has always been a major focus of our town and defines our village “center.” We have benefited greatly from the presence of the Farmington River and we have a huge stake in maintaining its health and viability.

For at least the past twenty years (since we started the process of earning the Wild & Scenic designation), the people of New Hartford have accomplished many projects to protect and enhance the river and its watershed. Since the designation (August 1994), the FRCC has sponsored, partnered with, and supported us in many of these projects, including:

- Riverbank stabilization in Nepaug State Forest
- Habitat enhancement at Boneyard Pool
- Creating a Natural Resources Inventory for New Hartford



Tubing down the Farmington River at Satan’s Kingdom

- Interpreting, implementing and promoting the River Protection Overlay District zoning regulations
- Working with riverside property owners to help them steward their land
- A study that documents the economic benefits of the Wild & Scenic designation
- The downtown Riverwalk project

- The acquisition of 166 acres on Jones Mountain
- A survey and management plan for control of invasive non-native plants in the riparian corridor
- Eliminating invasive Japanese Stiltgrass from properties along the river in New Hartford Center downtown
- Building a new Sewage Treatment Plant
- Conducting vernal pool and macro-invertebrate studies.

With FRCC’s assistance, the people of New Hartford have been working to keep the Farmington River and its inhabitants and environs healthy, and we have kept it a prime destination for recreation. As more people come to enjoy the river, we reap economic benefits, but we also face additional challenges. The FRCC will continue to be here to help us with those challenges, and to celebrate our successes!

Junior River Ranger Program Coming to the Upper Farmington W&S River!

Have you or your kids ever been involved in the Junior Ranger Program at any of our National Parks? Did you know that there is a Junior River Ranger Program as well on Wild & Scenic rivers? This summer we will be sponsoring a Junior River Rangers program on the Farmington River. Please email us at info@farmingtonriver.org for more information!

Update on Invasive Plant Management By Alison Murdock

In 2010, FRCC began implementing the interdiction recommendations made by botanist Betsy Corrigan and intern Tiffany Caisse in their 2009 Invasive Plant Survey. Corrigan and Caisse, along with local volunteers, spent countless hours pulling Spotted Knapweed in Barkhamsted and burning Japanese Stiltgrass in New Hartford. Other management strategies included smothering the plants with plastic, and mowing. FRCC is also researching the use of goats for control of some species, so don’t be surprised if the riparian corridor is habitat to a new species of animal in the future! For more information – or to volunteer in invasive plant removals, please contact us at info@farmingtonriver.org



Japanese Stiltgrass growing along a road’s edge.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Mario Santoro — FRCC's Barkhamsted Representative

By David Sinish

Mario's involvement with FRCC began with a conversation with the late Pat Keener. She persuaded Mario to attend a few meetings and that led to his current position as the representative for Barkhamsted. Although he is not a professional river person, he sees his contribution on the FRCC as representing the citizens of Barkhamsted and their needs.

Many of Mario's childhood memories center along the Farmington River. His parents' purchase of commercial property along the river opened the door to discovery for Mario and his brother, Tom. Fishing, wading and making fresh water aquariums were some of their activities. As Mario grew older he became involved with the riverfront property maintenance and learned the force of the river as it changed the backyard riverbank and streambed. The family became involved with local zoning laws in order to stabilize the river bank.

Mario's involvement in local water quality and land use issues continues today with his membership on the Low Impact Development (LID) Advisory Committee in Barkhamsted which he sees as a way to appropriately apply zoning



ordinances. (See Mario's LID article on page one.)

Mario is employed by a large insurance company as a business analyst and is responsible for proprietary software systems: gathering requirements, development and working in a group to solve complex issues. The skills that he has in project management, dealing with vendors and being a friendly devil's advocate are very valuable. One of Mario's interests is planting edible landscaping around his home, as can be seen by the number of fruit bushes and trees.

Mario has attended two National River Rally conferences and has found the problems of the upper Farmington to be somewhat minor compared to those of larger rivers. He notes that, fortunately for us, the FRCC's goal is to protect and enhance our river, not rescue a river with urban issues.

Announcing —



— The Upper Farmington River Water Trail Map!

Coming this spring is a waterproof map of "The Upper Farmington – A Wild and Scenic Water Trail." Conceived as a vehicle to emphasize the importance of courtesy to others while on the river, it has expanded to include a large map, river facts and other information, folded into a handy pocket size. It will be distributed widely and available for free.

If you would like your own copy of the new waterproof water trail map, please send us an email at info@farmingtonriver.org.

Who is FRCC?

The Farmington River Coordinating Committee was established when fourteen 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 and from groups noted below. 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 are:

Barkhamsted – Mario Santoro; Roger Behrens, alt.

Canton – Bill Roberts; Cherie Robinson, alt.

Colebrook – Tom Stanton; Edna Travis, alt.

Hartland – Nicki Hall and Sam Slater, alts.

New Hartford – Alison Murdock; Mark Lindquist, alt.

CT DEP – Susan Peterson; Maryann Nusom Haverstock, alt.

Farmington River Anglers Association – Paul Pinette; Tom Karpeichik, alt.

Farmington River Watershed Association – David Sinish; Eileen Fielding, alt.

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

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





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

www.farmingtonriver.org



SCA/AmeriCorps Intern, Tiffany Caisse, Assists FRCC's Efforts

In the last couple of years, FRCC's part-time intern has been Tiffany Caisse of Granby, CT, who attends Westfield State University with a major in Biology. Tiffany has been instrumentally involved in the FRCC's Invasive Plant Management project with our consulting botanist Betsy Corrigan.

This year we received a special deal in which the National Park Service offered us a 10-month, full-time internship/apprenticeship from the Student Conservation Association/AmeriCorps.

We were happy when Tiffany agreed to take some time away from her classes to learn the ropes of being a "river manager" on the Farmington W&S River.

Keep a look out for her in and around the river as the weather allows...she will also be a "river keeper" during the warm months – acting as eyes and ears for the FRCC – and reaching out to visitors and residents up and down the river corridor.

If you would like to learn more about this internship, please email us at info@farmingtonriver.org.

FRCC's Liz Lacy Receives Honor from the Farmington River Angler's Association

The FRAA, at their recent annual banquet, honored FRCC Director Liz Lacy for her work with the FRCC partnership over the past ten years. FRAA president Andy Butler commended Lacy for her steadfast efforts on projects to protect and enhance the Farmington River.



Have You Noticed?

As you explore around the Wild and Scenic stretch of the upper Farmington you will likely come across several Wild & Scenic roofed signs or "kiosks." These are designed to provide you with some additional understanding of the upper river area and notes about the specific location in which the kiosk resides. One side of the kiosk has general information about the Wild & Scenic designation. The other side provides descriptions of wildlife you might see or hear, historical aspects of the site, and other important information. FRCC's Outreach and Education Subcommittee created and installed these kiosks with a great deal of assistance from Walt Landgraf, Pat Keener, and Fred Jones.