



FARMINGTON RIVER COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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FRCC Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 19, 2021
Matthies Grove Pavilion, Peoples State Forest

Attendance: Barkhamsted (Mario Santoro, Vice Chair, Roger Behrens, Alternate), Colebrook (Alison Jassen), Hartland (Dan Bowler, Committee Chair), Canton (Matt Vinick, Alternate), CT DEEP (Pete Aarrestad, Representative), FRWA (David Sinish, Committee Treasurer, E&O Subcomm, Chair and Laura Hart, Alternate), Metropolitan District Commission (Jim Randazzo), New Hartford (Alison Murdock, Representative), Stephan Bastrzycki (River Steward), FRAA (Mark Swenson), National Park Service (Andrew Petitdemange, Representative, Liz Lacy, Alternate).

- 1. Regular Meeting called to order at 7:05PM** by Chairman Bowler
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** Sinish requested a change of wording under 4. – Education and Outreach, paragraph 5 to “Sinish and Canton First Selectman Bob Bessel met and discussed *items of current and potential* cooperation.” Draft minutes of March 15, 2021 were consensually approved after change.
- 3. Treasurer’s Report:** Farmington River Watershed Association (fiscal agent of FRCC) staff prepared the Treasurer’s report dated 4/12/2021, presented by Sinish. Beginning total balance was \$56,367.48. The Pat Keener Fund balance comprised \$194.64 of the total and was unchanged during the month. \$5,250 from FRCC checking paid Stephan Bastrzycki River Steward invoice. \$11.75 paid for postage. \$300 paid for FRWA staff to attend conferences from FRCC professional development budget. FRCC checking account ending balance was \$50,611.09 and when added to the Pat Keener Fund the ending total balance was \$50,805.73. The FY2021 NPS budgeted account balance is \$112,500.
- 4. Subcommittee Reports:**
 - a. **Executive:** At the 2/22/21 meeting, the full committee approved to add \$9,500 to the River Steward program for additional stewards and expansion into Canton. Bowler proposed to move \$1,500 from interns, \$2,000 from professional development, and \$6,000 from land protection to cover the increase. Behrens so moved. Sinish seconded.
Bastrzycki noted further additional funds may be needed in consideration of two River Stewards with disabilities. Further discussion later in meeting.

b. **Resource Stewardship:** Hart read R/S minutes from 4/6/21 subcommittee meeting. Full Committee would like to see maps and application from the **Winchester Land Trust** regarding the \$3,000 grant request for surveying the 6.5-acre Highview Drive property before voting. Hart will send out materials to full committee.

Discussion of **New Hartford Gorge Skyway/Trail:** Next step is to send letter to New Hartford. Aarrestad noted Mason Trumble, CT DEEP Deputy Commissioner – Environmental Conservation, should be contacted. Bowler will consider meeting with Trumble at Satan’s Kingdom address FRCC’s concerns, including FRCC’s ORV’s and balance between recreation and natural resource protection. Potential for blue-blazed trail to be relocated closer to the gorge as a hiking only rugged trail, and move bike path further from gorge. Goal should be to connecting New Hartford to Canton as a regional system, avoid gorge.

c. **Education and Outreach:** Sinish reported the **Quilt** is still awaiting locations to open. The **River Access Committee in Canton** has surveyed launch ramps in Avon, Farmington, and Simsbury, and noted they are not necessarily ADA compliant. A Canton riverfront landowner has drafted a Rights and Usage Guide regarding his concern over activities, including noise and trespassing issues.

Monofilament receptacles: Swenson reported and showed the receptacle and signage. Will be added a cap with restricted opening to allow only for monofilament. Logos will include FRAA, FRWA, FRCC, and FRGA (Farmington River Guide Association). Four to be installed, one from each group. FRAA/FRGA to maintain. Approximately \$60 each. After 4 test ones are installed, next year may plan for additional receptacles. Jim Warner, PSF Supervisor, has approved installation of 4 on State Land. Aarrestad requested FRCC share data findings with Brain Hess at DEEP.

Kiosks: Jim Warner, PSF Supervisor, is requesting same, consistent, style. Petitdemange and Bastrzycki reported kiosk assessment; 3-4 salvageable, 3 to replace, 1 new for Whittemore. Behrens noted may be more cost effective to replace rather than repair. Behrens will follow up with Bill Winchester to quote 4 kiosks in different materials (accoya, locust, pressure-treated wood). Murdock will email Behrens for another quote. Bastrzycki will get quote from contractor in Pleasant Valley. Add-ons for maps, etc will be discussed later.

River Messaging: FRCC has contracts with Water Words That Work and Lumi. Water Words is preparing background work and strategy, then Lumi will turn that into messaging. April 22 Brainstorm meeting. Water Words will seeking photos soon. Vinick offered to photograph for categories if needed. Goal target date is Memorial Day Weekend. This may serve as a guide for other rivers (Housatonic, etc) and to be shared with DEEP.

River Stewards: Bastrzycki noted 6 exceptional candidates (1 returning) will be taking the job. Apparel decisions to be made this week. Besides the 6 stewards, Bastrzycki noted two candidates with disabilities. One candidate, Nathan, lives in Canton and could partially help with 1:1 shadowing for his safety. Parents able to drive him. Bastrzycki thinks we could offer his \$500 to \$1000 plus funds to pay for a qualified assistant. Potential for Donna Bastrzycki to assist. To be further discussed. Second candidate, Jim, from New Hartford is independent. Bastrzycki is proposing to have him funded at half the time and half the pay at \$1,560. Hart to check insurance liability via FRWA for all stewards. Sinish moved to hire Jim of New Hartford at half time, \$1,560. Petitdemange seconded. Committee unanimously approved.

Bastrzycki mentioned possibility for infrared counter for Satan’s Kingdom. Cost is \$1,100. No decision made at this time.

5. **New Business/Other:** FRWA to report Water Quality Monitoring 2020 season at May meeting.

6. **Local Updates and Organizational Reports:**

a. **Colebrook:** Jassen reported Tom Mckeon, First Selectman, checked status with Army Corps. No new reports at the gravel operation. No complaints heard at the Town or in the Town minutes. Bowler added he received a call from Scott Eisenlohr, enforcement, on 4/19/21, the quarry contractor must submit water samples order by DEEP for one year. Bowler will share email from Eisenlohr to full committee.

b. **Hartland:** Bowler reported 532 Hogback Road wetland violation. Bowler presented FRCC at Hartland IW meeting. Bowler and Perry visited site with an IW Commissioner. Town has asked contractor for permit application, engineer to review design, and wetland landscaper for replanting with natives. Streambed has been widened and lined with very large riprap. Hart has contacted Army Corps, who is working the DEEP. Awaiting response. Bowler encourages all to use a presentation when speaking with Town officials. To be updated by Hart. Sinish noted River video to be an outreach tool.

c. **Barkhamsted:** Behrens noted FALPS is involved in the canal trail project in Hartland that Gocłowski had mentioned at the 4/6/21 R/S meeting. Would need state approval as a part of American Legion Forest.

d. **New Hartford:** nothing reported

e. **Canton:** nothing reported

f. **MDC:** Randazzo reported an increase in illegal ATV use and dumping of trash on MDC properties. Public demand for recreation properties has increased. Reservoirs are in good shape, despite dry in regards to precipitation. Barkhamsted Reservoir spilling over. Beaches will not be open to the public. Boat launch will be open at a higher price.

g. **DEEP:** Aarrestad noted a new policy charging non-residents higher fee structure, as Passport-to-Parks does not address this. Peoples State Forest is listed. Will charge at ticket booth at Matthies Grove. Farmington River Tubing concession will operate this year with target open date May 29th 2021.

h. **NPS:** Petitdemange reported need to calculate volunteer hours for FRCC. Groundwork did not receive the LISFF grant, but will be using a challenge cost share to supplement funding and plan on still having youth patriciate with River Stewards this summer. Another program is Outdoor Perspectives in New Hartford involved outdoor recreation for youth growth and development. Will be conducting an overnight paddle on the river.

i. **FRAA:** Swenson noted Farmington River Guide Association has 16 guides that have been trained by the ENCON, and ENCON will train the River Stewards on poaching and how to communicate illegal activities to ENCON for increased response. Earth Day River Cleanup has 128 people signed up. 9-3 on 4/24/21. Bottle Bill will include 10-cent per “nipper.” FRAA’s new website is up.

7. **Next Meeting Dates:**

Subcommittee Education and Outreach – Monday, May 3, 6:30PM via Zoom

Subcommittee Resource Stewardship – Tuesday, May 4, 6:30PM via Zoom

Full Committee: May 17, June 21, July 19, August 16 7:00PM

8. **Adjourn:** 9:18PM.