



Wild & Scenic News

Volume 2, Issue 3

Summer 2005

How Clean is the Upper Farmington River's Water?

FRCC and FRWA Embark on a Water Quality Monitoring Program

The FRCC in collaboration with the FRWA has entered the second year of the Citizen-based Water Quality Monitoring Program. This program was initiated with three goals in mind: 1) to establish a baseline of water quality information in the Wild and Scenic stretch of the Farmington and its key tributaries; 2) track changes in the water quality and/or land use; and 3) involve residents as volunteers and increase their awareness of the everyday actions that affect the health of our streams.

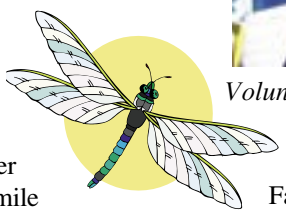
Four components of monitoring will take place:

Stream Walk

In 2004, the Stream Walk program completed visual water quality assessments of the 14-mile Wild and Scenic section of the Farmington River West Branch as well as of the Still River. The Mad River and the Morgan Brook will be assessed in 2005. Stream walks are one the best methods to identify threats to streams, and reduced water quality conditions. One hundred and fifty five (155) areas of concern were discovered by observing buffers, infrastructure, sediment, discolored water, invasive plants and algae in the field. Results have been presented to towns, and FRWA and FRCC have begun the collaborative process of addressing pressing concerns. Lack of vegetated buffers was the top problem identified for the West Branch, and infrastructure (i.e. discharge pipes, waste water treatment plants) was of most concern in the Still River basin. The Still River runs through a number of the most industrial and commercial land uses of the western



Volunteers gather at river's edge to learn to conduct a stream walk survey.



Farmington River Watershed and contained the largest number of areas of concern (43) including sites with discolored water and sediment laden waters.

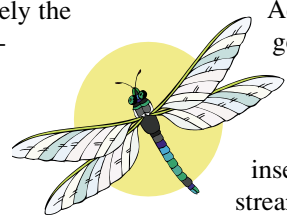
Physical, Chemical and Bacteria Monitoring

With one year of data collected it is difficult to make an overall assessment, but we can report several high bacteria counts following and during rain events. This suggests that "storm water" - i.e. wet weather runoff - is likely the greatest threat to maintaining water quality in the Farmington and its tributaries. FRWA is working with the Farmington Valley Health District to develop and disseminate science-based information on bacteria in the water. Through ongoing monitoring

efforts we hope to better understand the cause of elevated bacteria levels especially during and following rain events, and work toward reducing or keeping bacteria from entering the river. There will be more to come on this as the body of data grows, and the FRCC would like to give special recognition to the MDC laboratory for analyzing water quality samples for this project.

Aquatic Insects Monitoring

Aquatic insects are a particularly good measure of water quality since many are pollutant sensitive, easily collected, and quickly identified. Aquatic insects spend a lifecycle in the same stream section and, therefore, give a water quality history that a single water sample taken at one point in



Continued on page 3

Black Bears Have Returned to Connecticut!

Almost every town in Connecticut has reported bear sightings and the number of sightings is increasing dramatically each year. The Wild and Scenic Farmington River corridor towns, particularly Barkhamsted and Hartland, report many bear sightings. It is exciting to have a large animal return to our woods, but it's important to understand how best to coexist with them.



The average adult male weighs from 150 to 400 lbs and the average female weighs 110 to 200 lbs. That is lot of bear to see strolling through a yard. However, bears are rarely aggressive toward humans. Bears are to be respected, not feared. The Wildlife Division of Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection suggests:

- Do**
- make bird feeders and bird food inaccessible by not using from late March through November.
 - clean and put grills away after use.
 - place garbage cans inside closed garage or shed. Add ammonia to trash to make it unpalatable.

Don't

- intentionally feed bears.
- leave pet food outside.
- add meat or sweets to compost pile.

If you should see a bear when outside:

- Do**
- make your presence known by making noise and waving your arms.
 - walk away slowly if you surprise a bear nearby.
 - report bear, bobcat, and fisher sightings to the DEP at 860-424-333(24 hours/day).



My Lawn is Better than Your Lawn

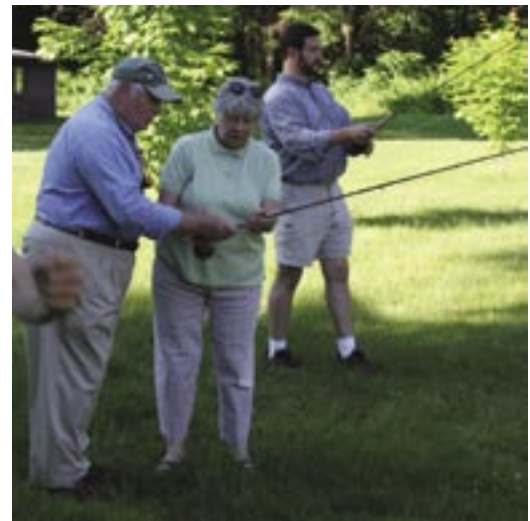
If you are like many people who live along the Farmington River, you take pride in the way your yard looks and spend a lot of time tending to it. There are many good reasons for maintaining a healthy, vegetated area around your home – primarily it keeps soil in place. And lawns, compared to paved areas, allow more water to soak into the ground replenishing the groundwater for future drinking water supplies. Grassy areas are also home to many insects and worms that are food for birds and small mammals. Unfortunately, in our eagerness to have a good-looking yard, we can spoil the water quality in the river, injure or even kill the birds and other critters that may visit us, and consume large amounts of water that mostly evaporates.

Continued on page 4

Educational Summer Outings



Sam Slater, Nicki Hall, Pat Keener and Jean Miller happily go looking for wildflowers on a hike earlier in the summer.



Dick Reynolds of FRAA instructs FRCC chair Pat Keener on how to cast the fly fishing rod.

FRCC is being treated to a series of three educational sessions held just prior to our regular Monday meetings. Each offering is being led by a different committee member and reflects a special interest of the member.

The first workshop was a wildflower walk on May 16th led by Jean Miller, a teacher at Simsbury High School. Jean met participants at the southern terminus of the Henry Buck trail near the American Legion Forest before setting out in search of spring wildflowers.

Although many of the early flowers were past prime due to the leafing out of the forest canopy, Jean was able to point out a number of varieties. Included were the Red and Painted Trilliums, Foamflower, a number of different violets, Solomon's Seal, and the delicate Bishop's Cap. The group also learned that Jack in the Pulpit may not be Jack, but Jill as the male and female flowers are separate.

On June 20th, Dick Reynolds who is also a member of the Farmington River Angler's Assoc., taught participants some

basic fly fishing techniques on the lawn of Squire's Tavern. Although the biggest catch of the day was most likely a clump of clover, participants under Dick's tutelage became quite adept at gently swishing the fine filament of line overhead in casting attempts.

Our third and final session on July 17th will be a paddle on the Farmington looking for birds that reside in and near the aquatic environment. Sam Slater will be the leader for this outing.

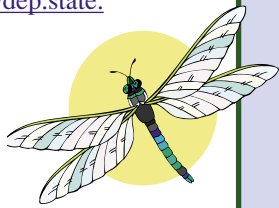
How Clean is the River's Water?

Continued from page 1

time cannot. In 2004, two sites on the Morgan Brook were monitored using the Rapid Bioassessment in Wadeable Streams and Rivers by Volunteer Monitors developed by Mike Beauchene of DEP. The site upstream of Route 44 scored significantly better than the site downstream of Route 44, that had fewer of the pollutant intolerant organisms present. The results are available on DEP's website at <http://dep.state.ct.us/wtr/volunmon/volopp.htm>.

Waste Water Compounds Monitoring

Although wastewater treatment plants are typically good at treating solid waste, there are many pollutants such as pharmaceuticals and household products that may not be treated as effectively. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has done studies across the nation and has found pharmaceuticals, for example, in a very high percentage of rivers tested. With increased questions relating to the environmental "side-effects" of these compounds, and the relatively recent ability of labs to detect levels of these compounds in streams it makes sense to learn if they exist in our local streams. This summer the USGS will collect and analyze samples from sites upstream and downstream of the Winsted Waste Water Treatment Plant which discharges to the Still River. Results will be discussed in the next FRCC Newsletter.



Volunteer opportunities for 2005 still exist for participating in the Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Day on October 15. Those interested in participating can contact Joyce Kennedy Raymes at the FRWA at 860-658-4442 x.202 or jkf@frwa.org.

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 – August 26, 1994. The FRCC is comprised of representatives from each of the five towns adjacent to the Farmington River (Barkhamsted, Canton, Colebrook, Hartland, and New Hartford) as well as 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 - Chris Bailey, 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
- Farmington River Watershed Association – David Sinish, Eric Hammerling, alt.
- Metropolitan District Commission – Tim Anthony
- National Park Service – Jamie Fosburgh, Kevin Case, alt.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT —

Tom Stanton, Colebrook Representative

Tom Stanton was the first chairman of the Farmington River Coordinating Committee when it was formed in 1995 and held that position until 1998. The committee experienced many growing pains during those first few years, but thanks to Tom's calm and reasonable leadership, FRCC persevered as a cooperative and cohesive group.

His long-time interest in the environment led Tom to a degree in water quality monitoring and involvement in the protection and enjoyment of the Farmington River. He is also a fly fisherman. Tom has been a resident of Colebrook since 1991 and is involved with local environmental issues there. He serves on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and continues to represent the town on FRCC.



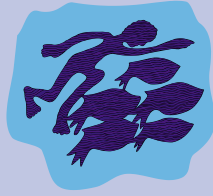
Tom is a member of the Northwest Transit District and has been the director of Vocational Services at LARC in Torrington for twenty-four years. His wife, Susan, also an active member of the Colebrook community, is the chairman of the Board of Education. The Stanton's have two young daughters, Cady and Molly.

Tom's leadership and ongoing service to the Farmington River Coordinating Committee help ensure that the River's special Wild & Scenic values are protected and cherished through FRCC's multi-stakeholder partnership that maintains local control. Tom believes that the Farmington River, a Partnership Wild and Scenic River, is unique in the powerful role that the towns along the corridor have played in the management of the river.

Poem of the River

By Patrick Smith, age 10

Rapids are wild.
Rapids are white.
Rapids are huge,
Either the day or the night.



Rivers are cool.
Rivers are clear,
Rivers are fast,
So remember to steer.

Swimming is fun.
Swimming is neat.
Swimming can just
Defend you from heat.

My Lawn is Better than your Lawn

Here are some facts:

- According to ABC News, a typical gas-powered lawn mower run for one hour produces as much pollution as a 100-mile automobile trip. A smaller lawn can mean less air pollution and less time spent on lawn care.
- Fertilizers can be washed into the river and cause excess algae to grow

which can diminish water quality and contribute to fish kills. Leaving grass clippings on your lawn may be all the fertilizer you need – plant a type of grass that is native to southern New England and use a mulching mower.

- Pesticides can be washed into the river and kill the aquatic insects and fish who live there. Planting a wide strip of native

ground cover and shrubs between your lawn and the river can filter runoff from your lawn before it reaches the river.

- Native grasses, shrubs and trees don't need as much watering, fertilizers, or pesticides because they have adapted to the local environment.

For more information please visit our website, www.farmingtonriver.org.



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

www.farmingtonriver.org

Calendar

August 29 – **FRCC Annual Open House.** Wild and Scenic Photo Exhibit. 4:00 pm–7:30 pm RSVP to FRCC at 379-0282.

September 19 - **Regular FRCC Meeting.** 7:00 pm – Squires Tavern Pleasant Valley

October 1 - **Annual Farmington River Clean-up.** 8:30 am–2:30 pm, various sites, RSVP to FRWA at 658-4442.

October 15 - **Aquatic Insect Sampling Training** with Mike Beauchene, CT DEP 9:00 am - 2:00 pm, Simsbury Farms Apple Barn, RSVP to FRWA at 658-4442.



Continued from page 2

Celebrating Over 10 Years of Wild & Scenic Designation

First Wild & Scenic
Photo Exhibit August 29