



Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook

WILD & SCENIC

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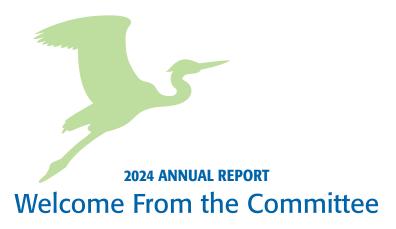
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The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee (LFSWS) proudly presents its Annual Report for the fiscal year October 2023 through September 2024.

Representatives of the nine partner towns and six partner organizations, the LFSWS members, work as a team of appointees. LFSWS's charge is to protect and enhance the federally recognized outstanding resources of the lower Farmington River and the Salmon Brook: Water Quality, Biological Diversity, Recreation, Cultural Landscape, and Geology. This report summarizes what we have done to fulfill our mission. We have spent our federal funding to benefit the two watercourses and reached out to the riverfront communities, explaining our mission and involving our neighbors in protecting the streams.

LFSWS supported several major projects in 2024. These are water quality monitoring, the remediation of the Farmington Land Trust's fishing pier and the hemlock woolly adelgid control effort. These projects are all discussed in more detail in our report as are other smaller efforts, also significant in benefiting local communities.

As I write this message in May, 2025, LFSWS is well into its 2025 fiscal year and is still at work. However, ongoing changes in the federal government mean that the future of funding for all the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers like ours is uncertain. Also, our committee member from the National Park Service, Liz Lacy, has recently taken early retirement. We miss her experience, competence and dedication. The committee hopes to have a new NPS person assigned to us.

In the face of difficulties, LFSWS is determined to remain focused on its mission and to figure out how to continue its work should it face the loss or reduction of federal support.

On behalf of the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee,

Mike Krammen, Chairperson



What is Partnership Wild and Scenic Designation?

A Partnership Wild and Scenic Designation for a waterway is a federal recognition that the waterway has certain "outstandingly remarkable values" that set it apart from other rivers. In 2019, after a 12-year community effort, the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook received their National Wild & Scenic Rivers designation. As a result, more than 60 miles of these watercourses are protected as Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers under the Federal Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.





What is the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee?

The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee (LFSWS) is the advisory river management committee that resulted from the waterways' federal designation in 2019. LFSWS is made up of a town-appointed representative and alternate from each partner town (Avon, Bloomfield, Burlington, East Granby, Farmington, Granby, Hartland, Simsbury and Windsor), representatives from the Farmington River Watershed Association, the Pequabuck River Watershed Association, the Salmon Brook Watershed Association, Stanley Black & Decker, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the National Park Service.



The National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act was enacted in 1968 to protect and preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers are a subset in which communities collaborate with local governments, watershed groups, the National Park Service and other stakeholders.

What is the purpose of the Committee?

The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee's (LFSWS) purpose is to protect the free-flowing character of the watercourses and to protect and enhance the special environmental, cultural and recreational values for which they were designated. The Committee's Management Plan (https://tinyurl.com/LFSWSMP) is the guiding document for LFSWS outreach and educational efforts, research projects, stewardship efforts, and its Small Grants program.

READ MORE on the following pages about our 2024 educational efforts, research projects, stewardship efforts, and Small Grants program.



WATER QUALITY MONITORING Lower Farmington River Watershed, 2024

277 BACTERIA SAMPLES ANALYZED

CONTINUOUS CONDUCTIVITY SITES

102,360 TEMPERATURE DATA POINTS COLLECTED

16 SITES TESTED FOR CHLORIDE

23 SITES TESTED FOR BACTERIA

4 CONTINUOUS TEMPERATURE

61,320 CONDUCTIVITY DATA POINTS RECORDED

2024 Education, Research & Stewardship Projects

Water Quality Monitoring (\$30,000)

Because Water Quality is one of the outstanding resource values for which the river was designated Wild and Scenic, the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee (LFSWS) provides funding for some of the monitoring and related research done by the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA). Good water quality benefits biological diversity and river-related recreation which are both outstanding resource values. Polluted stormwater runoff (nonpoint source pollution) is the primary water quality concern in the watershed. Water quality is particularly important since the upper Farmington River provides the drinking water for Greater Hartford, serving more than 400,000 people. FRWA's data are shared with its partners, including the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), and help to educate watershed residents. To learn more, visit the Farmington River Watershed Water Quality Report 2024 at frwa. org/resources. Projects funded by LFSWS included bacteria (E. coli) counts, continuous temperature monitoring, macroinvertebrate surveys, chloride monitoring and conductivity research on chloride pollution, and cyanobacteria research.









BACTERIA

Twenty-three sites were monitored for bacteria from May to September. In 2024 several exceeded the Water Quality Criteria for bacteria. These data can better inform where there may be higher levels of polluted stormwater runoff and help to determine potential land-based causes behind these factors. Results are updated weekly during the summer on Connecticut River Conservancy's Is It Clean? Website: Is It Clean? | Connecticut River.

WATER TEMPERATURE

FRWA deployed water temperature loggers at four sites in 2024. Loggers record water temperatures hourly throughout the year to monitor in-stream temperatures to document cold water habitat for temperature-sensitive species and to assess long term trends. The data recorded indicate cold water at all sites where the loggers were deployed.



CHLORIDE MONITORING AND CONDUCTIVITY RESEARCH

Sixteen sites were monitored year-round for chloride to determine how locations fare in winter months when road salts are applied, and in summer during high-production times for aquatic plants and animals.

In fiscal year 2023, LFSWS funded FRWA's purchase of continuous conductivity monitors to enable conductivity research in relation to chloride pollution. From November 2023 to August 2024, several locations in the lower river watershed that had been identified as having intermittently high chloride levels were monitored with the new monitors, given that the intermittent high chloride levels suggested that other spikes were probably missed. Seven continuous conductivity loggers were deployed at these locations to record conductivity data every hour. Data showed increases that were previously missed, and approximate chloride was calculated from these datasets. This allowed FRWA to determine that some locations fared well over winter months, and some were worse than expected.



Cyanobacteria Research (\$7,500)

LFSWS supported FRWA through funding for Water Quality interns for cyanobacteria research on Rainbow Reservoir, a 225-acre impoundment on the Farmington River in Windsor. In recent years, cyanobacteria blooms, which have the potential to be toxic and affect water quality, have been recurring in Rainbow Reservoir, impacting the recreational use. The research included sampling Rainbow Reservoir at five sites for algae, nutrients, thermal and oxygen status, chlorophyll and phycocyanin, and sediment physical and chemical features. To read the reports visit frwa.org/resources.



Farmington Land Trust's Fishing Pier Remediation Project (\$28,326)

The Farmington Land Trust's fishing pier was developed with the intent of providing a fishing site accessible to people with limited mobility. Unfortunately, over the years it has presented repeated problems. Located at a bend in the Farmington River near the confluence of the river with Unionville Brook, the pier obstructs the natural flow of the river and has suffered flood damage multiple times, necessitating efforts to remediate the situation. With technical assistance from the National Park Service, provided at no cost to the organization, the Farmington Land Trust (FLT) made the decision to remove the existing pier and ultimately replace it with an ADA accessible viewing platform at a different location. FLT was granted funding for the preparation work for the project, which included mapping, wetland and floodplain delineation and various surveys. A major project, this phase has been primarily focused on the background work for removal of the old pier and the restoration of the riverbank to a more natural state.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Control Project (Ongoing) (\$15,150)

The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee is proud to have the opportunity to continue supporting Dr. Carole Cheah's work protecting hemlocks along the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook and their tributaries. Using a tiny beetle from Japan, S. tsugae, which co-evolved with the hemlock woolly adelgids and eats only hemlock woolly adelgids, Dr. Cheah's program has led to the recovery of hemlocks in treated areas in northwestern Connecticut.

In 2024, with Dr. Cheah's help and supervision, S. tsugae were released in Avon, Bloomfield, Burlington, Granby, Simsbury and Windsor. In both Bloomfield and Simsbury, there were releases to protect hemlock trees on town-owned land. The release in Bloomfield's Farmington River Park was a follow up to the 2023 release after additional infested trees were found there. The releases at Town Forest Park, Ethel Walker Woods and Darling Hilles Forest along Stratton Brook in Simsbury were all at new release sites.

Protecting hemlock trees along rivers and streams is particularly important because they have a substantial role in keeping water temperatures cool enough to support fish and other aquatic organisms. They also provide breeding sites for some species of birds.





Barber Pond Invasive Water Chestnut Pulls (\$7,332.50)

FRWA staff and volunteers, along with volunteers from JAX and KNOX Hartford, removed more than 1,300 pounds of water chestnut from Barber Pond over five pulling events in the summer of 2024. Water chestnut seed corms were counted and measured throughout the season to determine efficacy of herbicidal treatments on seed production, and to inform future management schedules. A total of 239 plants were collected and monitored throughout the season, and 1,327 developing corms were counted and measured.



Barber Pond Monitoring (\$6,032)

FRWA employed a multiparameter water quality meter on Barber Pond to monitor aquatic conditions during herbicidal treatment. Measurements were taken on several dates between June - August 2024, with two dates including measurements throughout Barber Pond at 1-meter increments. FRWA used this data to create depth profiles for several physical and chemical parameters within the pond.















Clockwise: Blue Dasher, Common Whitetail, Eastern Amberwing I, Ebony Jewelwing II, Halloween Pennant, Twelve-spotted Skimmer, and Variable Dancer.



READ THE COMPLETE STUDY ONLINE



Survey of Odonates (Dragonflies and Damselflies) (\$6,545)

"Changes in the Composition of Odonata (Dragonflies and Damselflies) Utilizing the Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Area"

In the spring and summer of 2024, Jay Kaplan, Co-Director of Roaring Brook Nature Center, led a survey of Odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) at fifteen sites along the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook. The survey covered sites which had been previously surveyed between 1991 and 2018. In the 2024 study, Kaplan revisited these sites several times to document what species of the insects were present.

The study revealed considerable variability in whether or not the expected species of the two kinds of insects were found at the sites visited. Based on his knowledge of dragonflies and damselflies, their life cycles and habitat requirements, Mr. Kaplan suggested a number of possible reasons for the changes in species composition. He found that the habitat at some of the sites had changed because of road or bridge construction in the area or change in land use. Some protected sites remained unchanged.

Additionally, changes in weather patterns may have resulted in an earlier emergence of the insects from their breeding locations so that the start date for the work might have meant that he had missed some species that emerged earlier than in past years. His report also points out that the presence of active damsel and dragonflies in a site is highly dependent on weather. The insects are not active in rainy weather and the summer of 2024 was unusually rainy, so it was hard to find an optimal time to survey. Finally, the report notes that both the dragonflies and damselflies have very short lives as flying insects, so that a particular species he and his coworkers expected to find at a given site might have been absent on the day or days the survey was done, but might have been present a day or two later.

The combination of human-caused habitat changes, difficulties caused by weather pattern shifts and by the insects' inherent life cycles strongly suggests the need for more frequent surveys in order to provide a good understanding of the status of dragonfly and damselfly species in the LFSWS area. The complete study, "Changes in the Composition of Odonata (Dragonflies and Damselflies) Utilizing the Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Area," with the species composition found at each site, can be found online under Stewardship: Projects & Publications or by clicking on the QR code, left.

Botanical Surveys (\$4,640)

Bryan Connolly, Associate Professor of Botany at Eastern Connecticut State University, conducted surveys of vascular plants in Nod Brook Wildlife Management Area (NBWMA) located in both Avon and Simsbury and also in Simsbury Wildlife Management Area (SWMA) and in Simsbury's Tariffville Park. The surveys documented native species, including rare plants and invasive species on the land and in the river itself. The purpose of the work was to define "next steps" to prioritize protecting rare native species and to suggest practical strategies for managing the invasive plants.

In terms of species diversity, NBWMA had 103 species of which 21 were invasive. In SWMA, Connolly found 140 species including 22 invasives. Tariffville Park showed the most diversity, having 209 species including 25 invasives. In NBWMA, one previously undocumented rare species was found and was reported to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to be added to the state's Biological Diversity Data Base. In Tariffville Park, Connolly found some "interesting and unusual plants" including Cardinal Flower, Wild Rice and White Turtlehead. Aquatic vegetation was sparse in all three areas, with several invasive species in each location including milfoil and curly pond weed.

The survey results from each of the three sites inform ideas on good management practices for various invasive species and also indicate when an infestation is so extensive or dispersed that management efforts are unlikely to be effective. Recommendations for "next steps" were focused on priority spots within the three sites where invasive control could be achieved and where appropriate management could protect a rare plant or, in one case, improve habitat for an endangered animal at risk of disappearing from the landscape.













East Granby Middle School Fish Release Program (\$2,041)

LFSWS again supported the participation of the 8th grade at East Granby Middle School in Trout Unlimited's program, "Trout in the Classroom." Students, with their teacher's guidance, raised the fish from eggs in the classroom. Because the "chiller," which is essential for maintaining the coldwater temperature trout require, was failing, the cost of a new chiller was also covered under the grant.

On release day, the highlight and culmination of the program is a field trip to the town's Granbrook Park. There, staff from the Farmington River Watershed Association hosted a Habitat Station with students to measure several physical parameters of water quality in Salmon Brook such as temperature, pH, and velocity. They also demonstrated how a multiparameter probe is used to measure dissolved oxygen and turbidity in streams. Volunteers from Trout Unlimited also helped students with macroinvertebrate sampling and introduced them to fly fishing techniques.

Kiosk Panels (\$3,400)

This year LFSWS funded informational panels for three kiosks. The three kiosks, one for Berg Field in Hartland and two for Avon, one in Alsop Meadow and one near the river at the Tillotson Road parking area, were prefabricated in 2022. They were installed in 2024 after the panels were designed and delivered. All three kiosks are two-sided and have identical front panels with a map showing the viewer's location and information about the National Park Service's Partnership Wild and Scenic program. The back panels will be added later, with town-specific Wild and Scenic information. The kiosks were installed in partnership with the local towns' public works departments and William Winchester, a Barkhamsted carpenter who designed and prefabricated the kiosk parts. In the coming years LFSWS hopes to have at least one kiosk and/ or signage in each of the nine LFSWS towns.







McLean Game Refuge Archaeology Project (\$5,000)

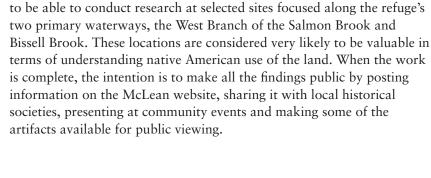
The Mclean Game Refuge has been a site of small-scale archaeology studies since the 1990s because of the strong evidence of the land's use by native Americans. In support of a continued effort to learn more about native American use of the game refuge's land, LFSWS provided funding to McLean for its proposed new archaeological work.

The project was designed to be conducted in phases. The initial phase was to clean, organize, catalogue, and repackage the variety of artifacts found through previous archaeological digs including pottery shards, projectile points, cutting tools and, ancient charcoal from cookfires. In 2024, this phase of the project was completed.

Looking to the future, Mclean Game Refuge's executive director hopes









Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Recreational Uses Study (\$8,700)

One of the special resources for which the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook were designated Wild and Scenic is Recreation. River-related recreation is important to local communities and raises public appreciation for the need to protect water quality and wildlife. The downside of recreational use can be degradation of resources. Aspects of the proposed multi-use trail in Simsbury have raised LFSWS interest in its benefits as well as concerns about some aspects of the project.

In an effort to better understand both current recreational uses of parts of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook and to comprehend the potential impacts of current and future recreational development, LFSWS contracted with Josh Kesling, a conservation ecologist and recreational specialist with substantial on-the-ground experience in his field, who is now an advanced Yale University student. He visited selected sites, focused mainly but not exclusively on the areas that would be affected by the proposed extension of the multi-use trail in Simsbury. The report containing maps and management recommendations is not yet completed, but in a summary statement after his final site visit, the researcher notes that areas with heavy recreational use tend to be impacted by infestations of invasive plant species, resulting in a diminution of good habit for wildlife. LFSWS recognizes that this problem is prevalent not just in the river corridor and has funded several land trust efforts related to invasive control on land trust properties near the watercourses and their tributaries.





Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Quilt Project (\$551)

To raise interest and appreciation of the outstanding resources of the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook, LFSWS funded the development of a series of quilts which resulted in an extension of the upper Farmington River's "Farmington River Quilt Project." MaryPat Leger organized a group of 26 quilt artists, including herself, to portray 20 locations along the Farmington River and 7 locations along Salmon Brook. The 40-footlong Farmington River portion of the quilt is complemented by a 15-foot-long Salmon Brook portion which shows sites on the east and west branches of the brook and its mainstem. Each quilter worked independently using her own creative expression to depict a specific location. Quilters were required to meet the river's entry and exit dimensions of the adjoining quilt panel, enabling the representation of the river to flow with continuity through the combined 55-foot length. Because the design is consistent with the earlier upper Farmington River Wild & Scenic quilt, the upper and lower Farmington quilts can be joined together to form a 90-foot quilt showing 52 distinct pieces of one ecosystem.





Library Displays (\$3,600)

In 2024, LFSWS decided to upgrade the displays previously shown at each designated town's library. Each town has its own locally based display featuring information on the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic program and the special resources relevant to the town. The new design and layout will be shown in town libraries or other locations in 2025.



River Exploration Trips (\$750)

LFSWS funded a series of flat-water paddles for the summer of 2024 to familiarize town representatives, both LFSWS members and members of the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC, the upper river Wild and Scenic group) with most of the Farmington River. The 2-hour paddling trips included river segments from Riverton to the Connecticut River below the Farmington's confluence with it. The purpose of the trips was to broaden the participants' knowledge about the whole river. Boat rentals and shuttle service were provided by Mainstream Canoe in New Hartford and Metacomet Tours in Windsor. Approximately 10 representatives attended each of these trips, with not all attending every trip.



Simsbury Historical Society Geology Talk (\$250)

As one part of its annual series of talks, Simsbury Historical Society organized a presentation of Howard Wright's program, Away From the Sea: Why the Farmington River Flows Northward in Simsbury. The program explained the geology underlying the unusual direction of flow and revealed how the river has affected Farmington River Valley communities for centuries. Howard Wright is Chairman of the Renbrook School Science Department. LFSWS provided the speaker's fee.



Avon Historical Society's Unearthing History (\$3,314)

LFSWS sponsored the third virtual series of lectures about Avon's Brian D. Jones Paleo-Indian archaeology site. The first lecture this year was "The History of Native American Archaeology in Connecticut." The series included a program on plant evidence from the site, addressing what people were eating and where they found it, and concluded with a talk on "Paleo-Indian Discoveries in America." Videos of the events can be found at the Avon Free Public Library's YouTube channel.







Northeast Aquatic Plant Management Society Plant Camp (\$1,200)

LFSWS supported FRWA staff to attend the Northeast Aquatic Plant Management Society (NEAPMS) Plant Camp in New Jersey. Plant Camp is a 3-day symposium to allow professionals hands-on learning about native and invasive aquatic plants. The week was split between classroom sessions and in-field workshops where attendees learned to identify the northeast's common aquatic species. They also had training in how to conduct aquatic plant surveys, in invasive aquatics removal methods, and in other management techniques to help control invasives. FRWA staff can use this knowledge to determine areas of the river with invasive aquatic plants and to work on remediation using the safest and most effective approaches.



River Rally 2024 (\$1,828)

River Rally is the national conference of the River Network (www. rivernetwork.org). Held every two years, it provides educational and networking opportunities for those involved in river conservation. LFSWS funded one of its members to attend and to report back on national rivers issues relevant to the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook. According to the LFSWS representative "several sessions focused on federal, state, and local policies, including the changes made to the Clean Water Act during the 2016-2020 federal administration and their real-world impacts on rivers, lakes, and wetlands." River Rally provided the LFSWS representative with "valuable insights," and "a renewed commitment to local efforts and a broader perspective on national challenges and opportunities in river stewardship."



World Fish Migration Day at Northwest Park

(\$2,500)

The Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) received a grant from LFSWS toward hosting of a World Fish Migration Day event on May 21, 2024 at Northwest Park in Windsor. The purpose was to showcase migratory fish and efforts to restore free-flowing streams across the Long Island Sound region. World Fish Migration Day is celebrated every two years globally. This public event had about 100 attendees. It offered a Farmington River Walk and offered information from non-profit and local partners. A documentary film, Reconnected: Restoring the Rivers of Long Island Sound was shown, followed by a discussion by former dam owners, river experts, and community advocates on the topic of reconnecting river environs.

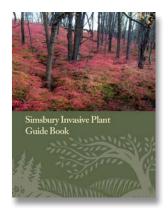
North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) Database Support (\$2,500)

LFSWS contributed funding to the maintenance of the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) data center. NAACC is a network of individuals from universities, conservation organizations, and state and federal natural resource and transportation departments focused on improving aquatic connectivity across a thirteen-state region, from Maine to West Virginia. The database houses assessments of road-stream crossings for aquatic organism passage, which can be used for prioritizing replacement projects to maximize habitat restoration potential.



VISIT THE DATA CENTER





Simsbury Land Trust's Invasive Plant Brochure (\$3,600)

Simsbury Land Trust received funding to help cover the cost of producing and publishing its booklet, *Simsbury Invasive Plant Guide Book*. The guidebook provides information on identification and control of common invasive plants and encourages property owners to remove them from their land to help protect natural habitat. The booklet was mailed to all Simsbury property owners, and shared with schools, libraries and other LFSWS towns.

Simsbury Sustainability Fair

LFSWS participated in the Simsbury Sustainability Committee's first annual Sustainability Fair. Simsbury LFSWS representatives answered questions about the river and gave out brochures about the special resources of the river and brook. Our new Wild & Scenic stickers were popular, especially with young people!





Stormwater Education Stream Table (\$345)

LFSWS purchased a small stream table for use at educational events. FRWA debuted it at the Burlington Public Library for a stormwater education workshop. FRWA staff used the stream table to teach participants about stream hydrology, stormwater pollution, the effects of runoff, and current methods used to increase climate resilience in heavy storm events. The stream table will be available for other events.

Wild and Scenic Film Festival (\$2,000)

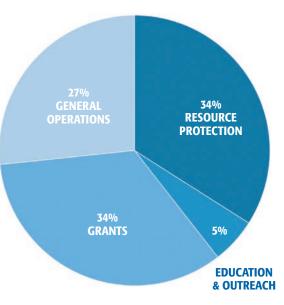
LFSWS was proud to again help host the Wild & Scenic Film Festival along with our partners, FRWA and the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC). In addition to the traditional evening showing of the environmentally oriented Wild and Scenic films, a new event was added, a matinee with family-friendly films and crafts for kids. Over 250 people enjoyed celebrating the river and learning more about the Wild & Scenic designation.



SMALL GRANTS

AT-A-GLANCE

Cyanobacteria Research	\$7,500
East Granby Fish Release	\$2,021
Fishing Pier Remediation	\$28,326
Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Control	\$15,150
McLean Game Refuge Archaeology	\$5,000
Plant Camp	\$1,200
River Exploration Trips	\$750
River Rally 2024	\$1828
Simsbury Historical Society Talk	\$250
Simsbury Land Trust Invasive Plant Guide Book	\$3,600
Stormwater Education Stream Table	\$345
Unearthing History	\$3,314
W&S Film Festival	\$2000
W&S Quilt Project	\$551
World Fish Migration Day	\$2,500



2023-2024 EXPENSES

These numbers represent the funding that the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook provided in Fiscal Year 2023-2024 by various categories. 15 sites surveyed for dragonflies & damselflies

184 native plant species identified in Tariffville Park

2 summer interns hired to work on cyanobacteria research

3 new kiosk panels

9 new library displays

27 picture quilts created of the Farmington River & Salmon Brook scenes

100+ attendees for World Fish Migration Day

250+ people attended the Wild & Scenic Film Festival



In Fiscal Year 2024, LFSWS successfully supported a variety of its own research, conservation, and outreach work in the partnership towns. It also provided grant funding to local organizations for river-related projects consistent with the mission of the Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers program.

