Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook WILD & SCENIC

2025 Annual Report

Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook
WILD & SCENIC

749 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, CT 06070
Phone: 860-658-4442
Fax: 860-651-7519
www.lowerfarmingtonriver.org

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

AVON
Dave Capella
Rachel Slater

BLOOMFIELD
Lucy Erye
Paula Jones

BURLINGTON
Sarah Hincks
Ed Jurkiewicz

EAST GRANBY
Mike Krammen
Paula Saaf

FARMINGTON
Paul Cianci

GRANBY
Maureen Eberly
Bill Salazar

HARTLAND
Sue Murray

SIMSBURY
Steve McDonnell
Sally Rieger
Mike Ryan

WINDSOR
Meghan Cote

FARMINGTON RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
Aimee Petras

PEQUABUCK RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
Mary Moulton

SALMON BROOK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
Dave Tolli

CT DEEP
Bruce Williams

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Liz Lacy
Andrew Petit-de-Mange

STANLEY BLACK & DECKER
Scott Kosswig
Roger Orozco

PHOTO CREDITS: Marc Banks, Tom Cameron, Carole Cheah, Deborah Costolnick, Sarah Faulkner, FRWA staff, Paula Jones, Jay Kaplan, Mary Moulton, Sally Rieger, Paula Saaf, The Nature Conservancy staff, Rick Warters, Bill Winchester

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome From the Committee

The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee (LFSWS) proudly presents its Annual Report for the fiscal year October 2024 through September 2025.

Representatives of the 9 partner towns and 6 partner organizations, the LFSWS members, work as a team of appointees. LFSWS' 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 three major projects in 2025. Because good water quality is especially critical to biological diversity and recreation, water quality monitoring is a high priority in our work. We continued providing funding to the Farmington River Watershed Association for its expansion of the scope, quality, and frequency of water monitoring. Appreciating the desire of Farmington Land Trust (FLT) to remove its well-intentioned but unfortunately located fishing pier, LFSWS provided financial support for the removal and for FLT's careful bank restoration at the pier's former site. In the project, FLT also benefited from technical assistance through the National Park Service (NPS), available at no additional cost because of the Wild & Scenic designation. Finally, LFSWS was proud to support the hemlock woolly adelgid control effort again, which promotes healthy forests for the watershed along the rivers and its tributaries. These projects are discussed in more detail in our report as are other smaller efforts, also significant in benefiting our local communities.

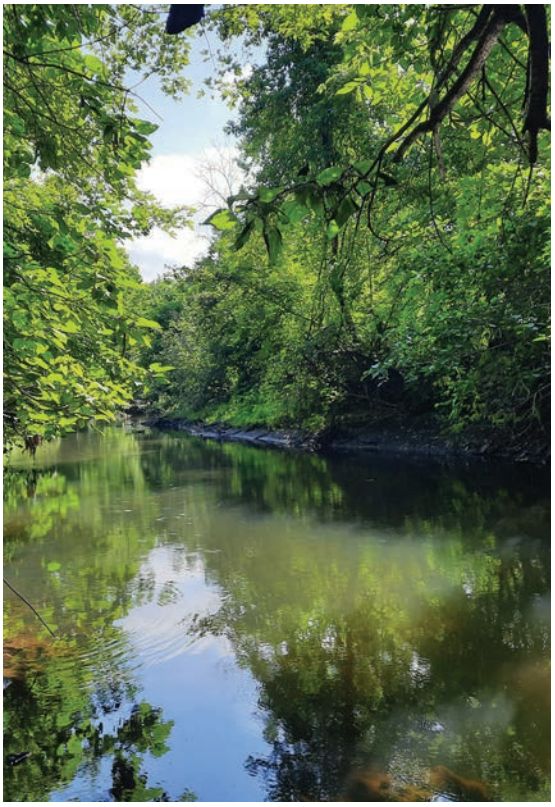
As I write this message in 2026, LFSWS is well into its 2026 fiscal year. We are optimistic that we will continue to receive federal funding going forward to support our conservation and education projects. We are also pleased to have a new NPS representative, Jackie Dias, on our committee. Welcome, Jackie. LFSWS is determined to remain focused on its mission and looks forward to continuing to work cooperatively with its partner towns and organizations

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 & 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 & Scenic Committee?

The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & 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.

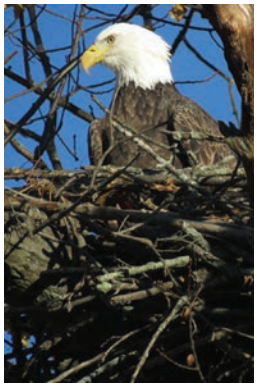
What is the purpose of the Committee?

The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & 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 (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 2025 educational efforts, research projects, stewardship efforts, and Small Grants program.

NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM

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.



Water Quality Monitoring

Lower Farmington River Watershed, 2025

9
conductivity sites

735,840
conductivity data points recorded

15
sites tested for chloride

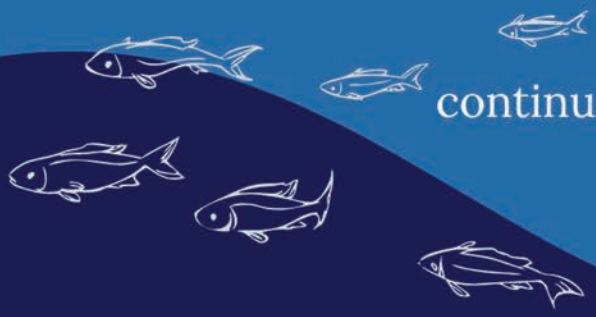
840
chloride data points collected

16
sites tested for nutrients

288
nutrient data points analyzed

23
sites tested for bacteria

229
bacteria samples analyzed



4
continuous temperature sites

332,880
temperature data points

1 Active Cyanobacteria bloom on Rainbow Reservoir in Windsor studied and monitored

Water Quality Monitoring *($30,000)*

Because Water Quality is one of the outstanding resource values for which the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook were designated Wild & Scenic, LFSWS provides funding for the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA) to monitor bacteria (*E.coli*), temperature, and chloride, and perform macroinvertebrate surveys. Additionally, LFSWS provides funding for special research projects including conductivity, nutrients, water level, and cyanobacteria. Forty-one sites are monitored year-round, or during the recreation season. This provides data on a variety of parameters which help determine sources of pollution, habitat suitability for aquatic organisms, and long-term trends in river conditions. This also helps FRWA to plan for needed municipal training, green infrastructure projects, and advocacy efforts to protect and restore the lower Farmington River watershed. *More information about these projects is summarized in this Annual Report and can be read in more detail at FRWA.org/resources.*

BACTERIA

Bacteria levels were typical this year with minimal changes compared to previous years. Twenty-three sites were monitored for bacteria from May to September. Several sites exceeded the Water Quality Criteria for bacteria, including the Pequabuck River in Farmington. However, the Pequabuck the major tributary to the Farmington, which normally is “impaired”, saw improvement in 2025, but did not achieve “unimpaired” status. The Farmington River in East Granby did change from “unimpaired” bacteria values in 2024 to “impaired” in 2025. The status of all other monitored locations remained unchanged from previous years.

WATER TEMPERATURE

FRWA deployed water temperature loggers at nine sites in 2025. Each recorded temperatures throughout the year to document habitat for temperature-sensitive species and to assess trends. Summer average temperatures decreased for Rainbow Brook in Windsor from “warm” to “cool”, while the Farmington River downstream of the Rainbow Dam in Windsor increased from “cool” to “warm”, with a summer average of 22.4°C. All other locations had minor changes in average temperature but did not change their classification.

CHLORIDE

Fifteen sites were monitored for chloride pollution in 2025, using a multiparameter meter. The primary source of chloride pollution in the watershed is road salt application, yet chloride can infiltrate groundwater and appear in waterbodies during drought. Chloride was higher at all sites for both yearly average and maximums. While higher, not all sites were “impaired” for chloride. The Farmington River had higher averages and maximums than previous years with most locations faring well, but in Windsor chloride increased to 180 mg/L, which is of concern. Windsor locations with yearly averages higher than 230 mg/l included Rainbow Brook, Seymour Hollow Brook, and Mill Brook. While averages for chloride do not determine if conditions are sufficient for aquatic life, they give insight into which locations are priorities for potential remediation.

Enhanced Cyanobacteria Research *($6,914)*

Since 2021, FRWA has been studying Rainbow Reservoir to determine the causes of recurrent cyanobacteria blooms which are negatively affecting water quality, recreation, and aquatic organisms. In 2025, FRWA requested funding from LFSWS to expand the study to include nutrients throughout the watershed. Sites above and below the 8 sewage treatment plants on the Farmington River and selected tributaries which seemed likely sources of additional nutrients, particularly phosphorus, were monitored. LFSWS and the upper river's Wild & Scenic committee, the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC), shared the cost of the project which required additional staff time for planning and for the increased sampling. The work verified that the main sources of nutrients come from upstream of the reservoir and helped identify sites where phosphorous inputs need to be reduced.

Rainbow Reservoir Monitoring for Cyanobacteria and Water Levels *($9,761)*

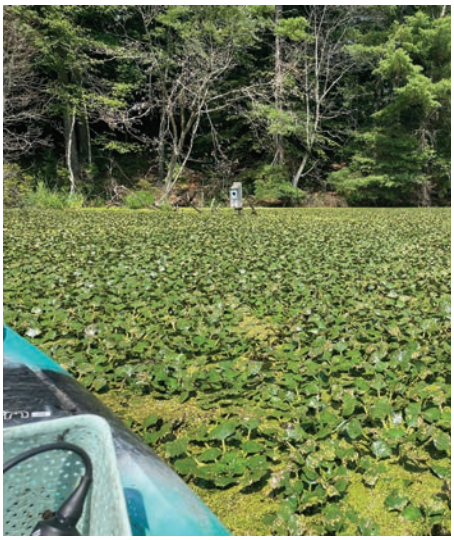
LFSWS provided funding to FRWA for equipment, supplies and staff time for continued monitoring of cyanobacteria in the reservoir and for studying water level changes in the reservoir and in the river below the dam. Since the dam is a hydropeaking facility, water flowing into the impoundment is held to be released at certain times, to generate power only periodically. FRWA staff used trail cameras and water level loggers to measure the extent of the water level changes, which were especially striking in the river below the dam. When water was released from the dam, the downstream water level increased by a little over 1 foot in 15 minutes, and when the release was suddenly stopped, aquatic organisms were left stranded by the reduced flow. In addition to affecting fish and other aquatic organisms, rapid changes in water levels can be dangerous for recreational users. The current functioning of the dam does not protect the Wild & Scenic values for which the Farmington River was designated, especially Water Quality, Biological Diversity and Recreation.

Conductivity Monitoring to Evaluate Chloride Pollution *($13,060)*

FRWA requested LFSWS funding in order to collect more data through its conductivity monitoring program, which began in 2023. There is a strong correlation between conductivity levels and chloride levels. That means higher conductivity indicates larger amounts of chloride (mostly from road salt) in the water. How elevated chloride is and for how long determines which water courses have toxic conditions for aquatic organisms.

Because chloride levels can change rapidly, direct periodic testing will likely miss some episodes of toxic conditions. To work around this problem, FRWA bought 6 conductivity loggers in 2024 and in 2025 requested funding for 5 additional ones to allow more extensive and continuous monitoring of conductivity in streams that were considered likely to have either chronically or acutely high levels of chloride based on earlier data.

FRWA reprogrammed its conductivity loggers to record conductivity every 15 minutes instead of every hour and placed its loggers at 15 sites including in tributaries and at 2 sites in the lower Farmington River itself. With increased monitoring, FRWA was able to determine which sites did not have a chloride problem and which sites had either chronic or acute levels of toxicity. Through this work, 22 acute conditions and 11 chronic conditions were confirmed at monitored sites, most of which were in Windsor.



Water Chestnut Control in Barber Pond *($10,736)*

In 2022, the Connecticut River Conservancy alerted the FRWA to the presence of invasive water chestnut in Barber Pond on Mill Brook, a direct tributary to the Farmington River in Bloomfield. The dam that creates Barber Pond is slated for removal by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). Getting rid of the water chestnut is the only way to prevent its spread into the lower Farmington River when the dam is removed.

In 2023, FRWA began a multiyear program to eliminate water chestnut from the pond. The work involved FRWA staff and volunteers hand-pulling the growing plants and safely moving them offsite. Since the plants produce seeds that remain viable for years, follow-up work has continued to be necessary. In 2024 and again in 2025, with funding from LFSWS, FRWA hired All Habitat Services to apply herbicide twice during the summer. This kills the plants that emerge from germinating seeds. In 2025, FRWA staff and volunteers pulled and composted 1,100 lbs. of water chestnuts prior to the herbicide applications.

FRWA also monitored water quality in the pond and downstream in the brook both years. Both the pond and brook are unfortunately typical of urban waterbodies in the northeast in that they have low levels of dissolved oxygen, high temperatures and relatively high levels of chloride during the summer. These conditions do not support freshwater fish or many other species of aquatic organisms and reflect both the effects of the presence of water chestnuts and ongoing sources of salt pollution. FRWA will continue with hand pulling of water chestnuts until the dam is removed and has planned for 2 more herbicide treatments for 2026.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Management *($4,922)*

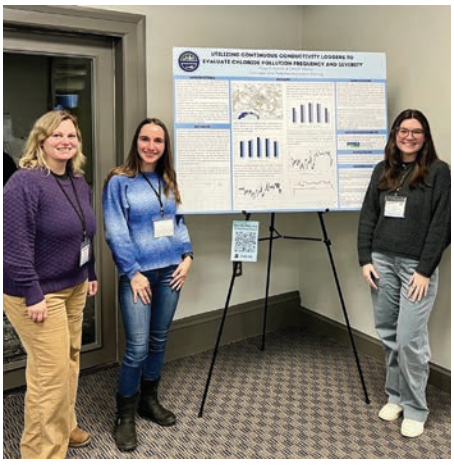
In addition to water chestnut, there are other aquatic invasive plant species in Connecticut including Eurasian watermilfoil, variable leaf milfoil, curly leaf pondweed, watercress and *Hydrilla*. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station has surveyed lakes and ponds for AIS since 2002.

FRWA requested funding to conduct surveys of AIS in 9 areas along lower Farmington River and in 4 ponds in the lower Farmington River watershed. The purpose was to identify areas needing management and to supplement historical data. Results at river sites yielded native assemblages of duckweed, eelgrass, waterweed and watermeal, as well as trace to sparse invasive populations of curly leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil and variable leaf watermilfoil. Pond sites have native assemblages of duckweed, watermeal and coontail. Trace amounts of invasive watermilfoil were found at Nod Brook Wildlife Management Area, and there was watercress in the Farmington River Park Pond. No Hydrilla was found, and no new areas of concern were located.

Northeast Aquatic Biologists Conference *($1,468)*

In 2025, LFSWS funded FRWA staff's attendance at the annual Northeast Aquatic Biologists (NAB) conference. Two staff members presented posters on FRWA's cyanobacteria and water level research at Rainbow Reservoir and Rainbow Dam in Windsor. The posters provided previously unavailable data, and shared information about watershed nutrient inputs.

The staff also attended sessions on ways to improve and expand the scope of water quality monitoring. This led to the purchase and use of new equipment and the application of new approaches to data reporting.



Northeast Aquatic Plant Management Society Annual Conference *($672)*

In 2025, LFSWS sponsored a staff member from FRWA to attend the Northeast Aquatic Plant Management Society's (NEAPMS) 26th annual meeting in Saratoga Springs, New York. The three-day conference included presenters from federal, state, private, and nonprofit organizations, and lectures covered a variety of topics relating to the monitoring and management of aquatic plants, algae, and cyanobacteria. As FRWA learns more about both native and introduced invasive aquatic plants, staff plan to use the information from the conference to identify, monitor and manage invasive aquatic species in the Farmington River and its watershed.

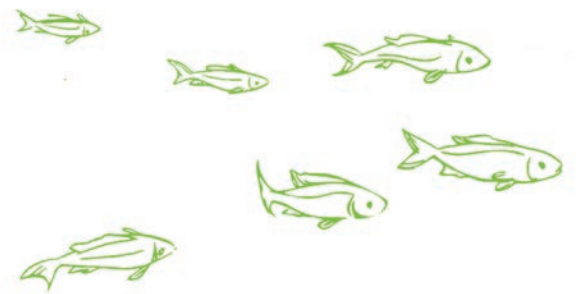
Farmington Land Trust Fishing Pier Removal/Bank Restoration *($34,917)*

The Farmington Land Trust's former fishing pier was intended to make fishing possible for everyone, including people with mobility issues. Unfortunately, the pier flooded repeatedly and obstructed the flow of the river, causing bank erosion. Wanting to eliminate problems inadvertently created by the pier, the land trust undertook its removal, using technical support from the National Park Service and some funding support from LFSWS.

As expected, after the pier was taken out, the damaged riverbank needed restoration. Committed to completing the work, Farmington Land Trust asked for help with funding from LFSWS. LFSWS supported the necessary engineering that preceded the construction of the bank reinforcement. LFSWS also helped cover the cost of the large blocks of native stone that were used for the bank revetement. Native plants will be used to stabilize the land above the rock face.

The 2024 removal of the fishing pier and the 2025 bank restoration together made a substantial improvement to the health of the river and to the experience of visitors. The work represents the largest amount of funding that LFSWS has provided for one project and reflects both the National Park Service's support and the land trust's determination to see the project through to completion.

The land trust intends to provide an accessible observation deck nearby which will be designed and sited to protect the special resources for which the river was designated Wild & Scenic.



Burning Bush

Japanese Barberry

Mugwort

Multiflora Rose

Oriental Bittersweet

Porcelain Berry

Porcelain Berry Management at Pinchot Sycamore Tree Park Simsbury *($1,000)*

In May, LFSWS supported a volunteer Porcelain Berry removal workday at the Pinchot Sycamore Tree Park. Porcelain Berry is a deciduous, woody climbing vine in the Grape family. The bright green leaves are alternate, with three to five lobes. This vine is similar in shape to our native grape species, with bright berries in hues ranging from sky blue to light pink. FRWA staff, Simsbury Land Trust members, and volunteers gathered at the park to remove Porcelain Berry, as well as other invasives. Multiple large, dense clusters of Porcelain Berry vines were growing in the perimeter of the park, attaching themselves to established native trees to obtain more sunlight. The team severed each vine near its base and applied chemical herbicide to each plant using a dauber. Once absorbed by the plants' vascular system, the herbicide treatment kills the remaining plant down to its roots, ensuring that it cannot regrow. The group also cleared Mugwort, Bittersweet, and Barberry from the hillside, protecting the Pinchot Sycamore from encroaching invasives.

Owen Mortimer Invasive Plant Control

($6,285)

In 2025, Simsbury Land Trust completed a 2 year project to control invasive plants on about 3.5 acres of its Owen Mortimer property. The goal was to restore native forest habitat by eliminating the existing understory invasive species, Japanese Barberry, Multiflora rose and Euonymus alata, through an application of herbicide by All Habitat Services. The first treatment was done in late spring of 2024. The second treatment in the spring of 2025 completed the project, but it will be necessary to watch for reinfestation to maintain control.

Farmington Land Trust Invasives Removal at Cowles Parcel *($996)*

In 2025 Farmington Land Trust continued with its work in partnership with Miss Porter's School to control Oriental Bittersweet, Burning Bush (Euonymus alata) and Mugwort at its Cowles Parcel. The Bittersweet vines and Euonymus were hand cut and the Mugwort was rolled with a lawn roller and covered over with black tarps. Following the advice of Mugwort control expert, Dr. Jatinder Aulakh of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the tarps were left in place until the spring of 2026 to allow for 99% control of the rhizomes. This practice avoids regrowth of this stubborn weed.

Fisher Meadows Bittersweet Removal & Forest Mulching

($12,400)

In the spring, LFSWS supported a large-scale invasive plant removal and forest mulching project at Fisher Meadows in Avon. This project was carried out by Ornamentals LLC and lasted 7 days. Targeted invasive species included Oriental Bittersweet, Burning Bush, Privet, Multiflora Rose, Autumn Olive, and Japanese Barberry.

The work section stretched along over one mile of the riverbank and roughly 100 ft into the wood line along this path, covering a total area of around 12 acres. The Ornamentals LLC team mechanically cleared this area of any invasive plants they could find, giving our native species a fighting chance to thrive without being shaded out and outcompeted for resources. Oriental Bittersweet was removed from hundreds of trees, with some mature vines having reached 10-12 inches in diameter. Their removal will significantly improve the health and longevity of the trees at the park, which were being both visibly and physiologically harmed by the tight grips of this quickly climbing vine.

Additionally, a brush mower was used in areas around the bridge to remove younger invasives that were reemerging after previous management by the Town of Avon. This is part of a continued effort to keep this area free of invasives in order to allow the many natives in this rare floodplain forest habitat to thrive again.

Fisher Meadows Volunteer Invasive Removal *($600)*

In June, members of the Avon Land Trust, Avon Recreation and Parks staff, volunteers, FRWA staff, and invasive removal experts from Ornamentals LLC gathered at the Fisher Meadows for an educational workshop and invasive removal work. Volunteers learned how to identify common invasive plants in Fisher Meadows, including Multiflora Rose, Privet, Winged Euonymus, Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Barberry, and Autumn Olive.

Volunteers observed young and mature plants, learning key identification factors for various life stages of the plants. They were also shown the results of a large-scale Bittersweet removal project carried out by Ornamentals LLC a month prior to the volunteer event. They saw how massive Bittersweet vines can grow if left unmanaged and learned about the negative effects they have on our native trees.

The volunteer group focused on removing invasives in the areas along the trail, widening the pathway, and allowing more sunlight to reach young native trees and other plants. The team also worked on removing Barberry and Winged Euonymus from the riverbank where they had taken over. This will allow native plants to return: With root systems capable of reaching deeper into the soil than invasives, a variety of healthy natives in a riparian buffer makes it more effective at preventing erosion and filtering out pollutants and chemicals from runoff. LFSWS helped fund staff who trained the volunteers.

Japanese Barberry Follow-up Study and Additional Barberry Removal *($5,000)*

LFSWS hired Consulting Botanist Bryan Connolly to do a follow-up study at the town of Avon's Fisher Meadows in an area of high floodplain forest where Japanese Barberry had been pulled out between 2007 and 2015. Examining the older of the controlled areas, he found that, given the elapsed time of at least 15 years, the controlled areas had significantly less coverage of Japanese Barberry (17%) than in areas where the Japanese Barberry had not been controlled (82%). These figures are based on his analysis of multiple one meter square plots in the controlled areas vs. uncontrolled areas. Additionally, Connolly found that native plant cover was 50.6 % in the controlled areas vs. 3.84% in uncontrolled areas even though two other species of invasive plants did increase more in the controlled areas than in the uncontrolled areas. Connolly concluded that his "study showed long lasting positive results from the barberry control."

In conjunction with his follow-up study, Connolly worked with volunteers to remove additional Japanese Barberry beyond the original control areas. Before the digging and pulling of additional barberry began, he measured and recorded barberry cover and cover by all other identifiable vascular plants again using multiple one square meter plots.

Winged Euonymus Experimental Removal *($3,000)*

Winged Euonymus, a nonnative invasive shrub, is very common in Fisher Meadows. On one side of the water company service road, Avon Public Works staff had cut or used a small backhoe to clear the area of Euonymus. In the summer of 2025, Bryan Connolly compared plant cover, species composition, and species diversity on the cleared and uncleared sides of the road, examining 50 plots of one square meter each on the two sides of the road.

He found that the cleared side of the road had much greater vegetative cover and much greater species diversity than the uncleared side, with a higher percentage of native plants on the cleared side. Although the vegetation on the cleared side also had more species of invasives, he believes that removal of Euonymus "seems to have more of a positive impact on native species." However, the cutting and digging out of Euonymus needed to be repeated because of its extensive resprouting in the cleared area.

In addition to his survey work, Connolly did two small experiments to see if the problem of resprouting could be reduced. In one experiment he used a butane culinary torch to burn the stems of 11 Euonymus plants and cut 13 plants as a control. This work was done in late July. In late September, of the burned plants, only one had resprouted but nine of the 13 plants that were not burned showed new growth, suggesting that the torch method may well be useful for longer-term control. In the second experiment, he covered the stems of 25 cut Euonymus plants with heavy-weight black plastic bags, following a method used in the mid-West to control buckthorn. In the spring of 2026, he will return to the site and record the data resulting from the experiment.

Follow-up Dragonfly and Damselfly (Odonate) Study *($2,500)*

The dragonfly and damselfly study which Jay Kaplan, Director Emeritus of Roaring Brook Nature Center and others completed in the summer of 2024 showed that the June (early season) dragonflies and damselflies were not found in the expected locations based on studies done in the 1990s and early 2000s. Mr. Kaplan's hypothesis was that generally earlier warmth in the spring was responsible for the absence of the expected species, so instead of beginning the survey work in June, he started his follow-up study in May 2025. The result was that he did find four species that were absent in the 2024 survey. These were the Harlequin Darner, the Brook Snaketail, the Lancet Clubtail and Dusky Clubtail.

Suggestive of the hypothesis that the flight time of some species of odonates has become earlier was that several species were found on dates earlier than the historical data shows. These were the Uhler's Sundragon, the Lancet Clubtail and the Common Baskettail. More research is needed to understand if this is the case. Also, there were other factors that Kaplan noted which could have affected the flight time of some odonates, including the limited time that they live as flying insects, and the unusually wet and cold weather particular to spring, 2024.

READ THE REPORT ONLINE

For more information, find Jay Kaplan"s 2024 and 2025 reports under Projects & Publication at lowerfarmingtonriver.org

East Granby Middle School Fish Release *($1,100)*

LFSWS supported the annual East Granby Middle School's 8th grade field trip to Granbrook Park in East Granby where the students released the salmon and brown trout they had raised from eggs over the winter in the classroom. The CT River Salmon Association provided salmon eggs through its Salmon-in-the-Schools program. The Farmington River chapter of Trout Unlimited, through its program, Trout-in-the-Classroom, donated trout eggs and provided volunteers to help with the April field trip to release the juvenile fish.

The field trip involved several learning stations. At the habitat station, the students worked with the Farmington River Watershed Association staff, using equipment to check various aspects of water quality such as pH and temperature. FRWA staff also demonstrated how to use a multiparameter probe to measure dissolved oxygen and turbidity in streams. Helped by volunteers from Trout Unlimited, the students caught and identified a variety of aquatic macroinvertebrates. The CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection provided a person from its Connecticut Aquatic Resources (CARE) program to give students the opportunity to try fly casting. Together with the classroom program, the field trip teaches students about the environmental needs of salmon and trout and helps develop their appreciation of local natural resources.

READ THE REPORT ONLINE

For more information, find Dr. Cheah's full report under Projects & Publication at lowerfarmingtonriver.org

Protecting Eastern Hemlocks from Hemlock Woolly Adelgids (Ongoing from 2023) *($15,150)*

Working in partnership with Dr. Carole Cheah of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, LFSWS funded the purchase of *S. tsugae* beetles for the third year to manage populations of hemlock woolly adelgids in the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook watersheds. Hemlocks are important because they provide habitat for birds and shade the river and streams, helping to keep the water cool and suitable for aquatic organisms. Without management, hemlock woolly adelgids will likely kill infested trees.

In early spring, Dr. Cheah scouted potential release sites for infested hemlocks, avoiding locations where a polar vortex late in January 2025 had killed off the adelgids. She found suitable locations for May and June releases in Bloomfield, Burlington, Farmington, Granby. Hartland, Simsbury and Windsor. Depending on the town, beetles were released on land trust properties, state parks, town parks and forests, the Burlington Fish Hatchery, and a CT Wildlife Management Area in Windsor.

According to Dr. Cheah, "In 3 years, the LFSWS has funded the release of 22,000 *S. tsugae* in 8 towns in the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook watersheds at 3 state forests, 3 state parks, 1 state WMA, 1 state fish hatchery, state owned water access, 1 extensive private game refuge, 3 town parks, 3 land trusts, commercially-owned open space and on utility-owned open space (Fig. 2). The Connecticut HWA biological release program for the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook, with federal Wild & Scenic funding support, has successfully brought together many diverse stakeholders and partners to collaboratively protect and manage HWA on extensive riparian hemlock forests on a landscape scale, without the use of neonicotinoid chemicals. "

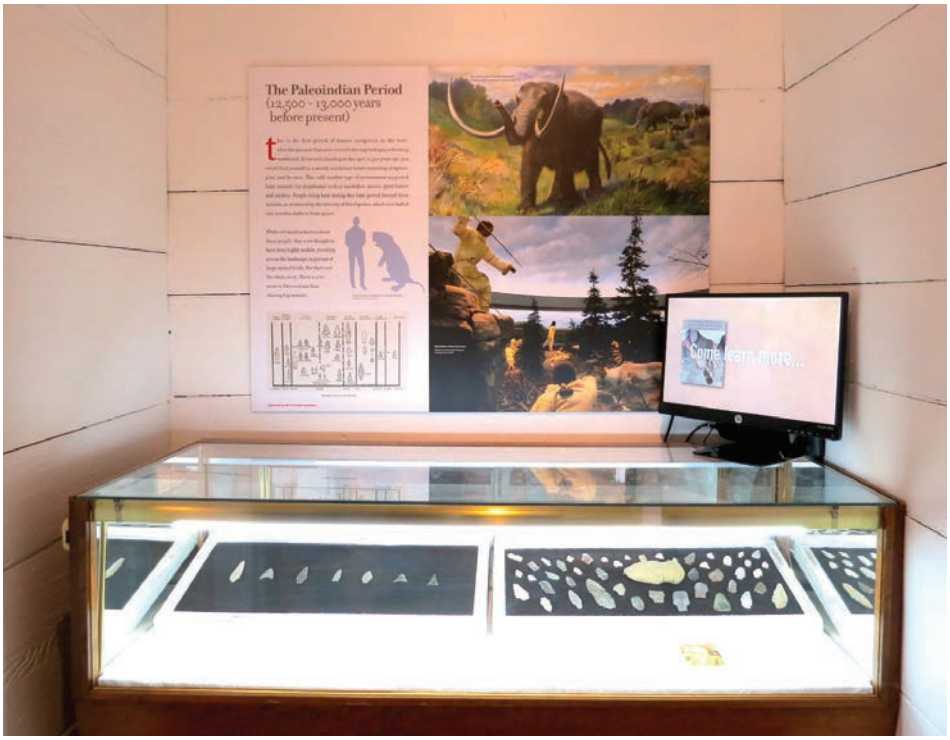
McLean Archaeology Project, Phase 4 *($9,037)* and Report of the Project *($2,600)*

In 2025 LFSWS provided funding for the excavation of four selected sites at McLean Game Refuge. Under the supervision of Dr. Marc Banks, McLean's Forest Rangers excavated the sites, which were on flat terraces. Based on previous studies of places that had been used by Native Americans, these sites were considered likely places that they would have chosen at various times in the past and were likely to be locations where artifacts would be found because of the terrain and the proximity of fresh water sources.

According to Banks, "stone artifacts were recovered at each of the sites. In general, these sites appear to be short-term encampments used by small Native American groups, likely subsets of larger groups with more permanent occupations along the floodplains of the Farmington River." Artifacts included scrapers and various chips and flakes of different kinds of stone remaining from working the stone.

The Farmington River Archaeological Project: 12,000 years of Native History *($946)*

Funded by LFSWS, the Simsbury Historical Society held a program at Simsbury Public Library about the history of indigenous people along the lower Farmington River. The program was intended to provide the audience, especially new residents of the area, with information based on the archaeological record as revealed by excavations in Farmington, Avon, Simsbury, and Barkhamsted. The archaeological record includes finds like the remains of spear points, arrowheads and pots, animal bones, nut fragments, and seeds. Dr. Kenny Feder, emeritus professor of archaeology at Central Connecticut State University and founder of the project, presented the program and answered questions for an audience of about 50 people.



Highlights Reel for the Unearthing History Project *($4,100)*

LFSWS helped fund Avon Historical Society's follow-up to the four year series of programs (2020-2024) on the archaeological discoveries at the Brian D. Jones Paleo-Indian Archaeology site in Avon. Avon Free Public Library hosted the original programs.

Using a video production company, the historical society arranged to produce a 41 minute summary of the highlights of the programs. The video is informative and exciting and gives a potential viewer of the programs the ability to choose which episodes are of interest. The summary video was screened before a public audience at the Avon Senior Center. The new summary video and all the original programs are available on the Avon Historical Society's website: avonhistoricalsociety.org/paleo-indian-site.

WATCH THE VIDEO

Farmington River Quilt Project *($4,542)*

In 2024 the LFSWS voted to fund the completion of the Farmington River Quilt so that the Wild & Scenic segments of both the upper Farmington River and the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook were included in the project. MaryPat Leger coordinated the twenty-six volunteer quilters who completed twenty-seven new panels, 20 depicting scenes in various seasons on the lower Farmington River and 7 along Salmon Brook.

In recognition of the artistic skills and the work of the volunteer quilters, LFSWS funded stipends for each artist. LFSWS also provided permanent plastic panels with descriptions of each scene, and purchased the equipment needed to hang the quilt for display and to store it when it isn't being shown.

In April 2025, the new sections were displayed for the first time at the Winchester Center Congregational Church. In April, the entire quilt was displayed for the first time at the CT Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection's Kellogg Environmental Center in Derby.

In September the entire quilt was shown at the Kingswood Oxford School in West Hartford and is scheduled to be shown in April, 2026 at the Hartford Convention Center. We invite you to view this remarkable artwork as it comes to a location near you.

To learn more about the quilt, visit farmingtonriverquilt.org.

Land Trust Merger Workshop *($400)*

In November, LFSWS supported a land trust workshop organized by FRWA and the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC). It detailed ways land trusts can collaborate, including by merging their organizations, and explained the funding opportunities available for the merger process. The workshop was open to all land trusts in the Farmington River Watershed. The idea was to provide a space for land trusts to ask questions, gain insights, and form connections with other land trusts in their area because they likely share similar goals and challenges.

Aaron Lefland, Deputy Director at CLCC, who provides support to land trusts throughout the merger process, spoke on the overall process and funding opportunities for mergers available through the Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck (PCLB) Foundation's *Building Enduring Land Trusts* (BELT) grant program. Additionally, Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy and North Woods Land Conservancy spoke about their own merger experiences, while detailing the benefits, challenges, funding usage, and other information surrounding their decisions to merge.

Attendees included members of Avon Land Trust, Canton Land Conservation Trust, Farmington Land Trust, Heritage Land Preservation Trust, Farmington River Watershed Association, Connecticut Land Conservation Council, North Woods Land Conservancy, and Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy.

Kiosks and Panels for Granby and Simsbury *($12,533)*

In 2025, LFSWS added informational kiosks to Granby's Salmon Brook Park and Simsbury's Pinchot Sycamore Tree Park. These two new kiosks increased the number of kiosks LFSWS has provided to the partnership towns to five, including the three installed in previous years. The earlier kiosks are in Avon's Alsop Meadows, Avon's Tillotson Road parking area (near Fisher Meadows), and Hartland's Berg Field.

A back panel was added to Hartland's Berg Field kiosk, while the others still only have front panels. The front panels are generic, showing a map with the viewer's location and information on the federally designated Partnership Wild & Scenic program. The back panels are intended to include town-specific Wild & Scenic information. The towns have been essential in helping to decide on the exact locations of their kiosks and in having their Public Works departments do the necessary excavation work and the lifting of the kiosks into position.

Information kiosks can now be found at Alsop Meadows (Avon), Berg Field (Hartland), Pinchot Sycamore Park (Simsbury), Salmon Brook Park (Granby), and Tillotson Road parking area (near Fisher Meadows, Avon).

Farmington River Park Benches and Bridges

($5,805)

LFSWS supported Bloomfield's third request for grant funding for the Farmington River Park to install four additional six-foot benches in the park as well as two pedestrian footbridge/ bog-bridging systems. Three of the new benches are placed around the perimeter of the central grass meadow and pond, and the fourth is at the park entrance near the kiosk. The benches are identical to the three that were placed along the park's Bird Trail in 2023 and are Americans with Disabilities Act accessible, with armrests to facilitate sitting down and standing up. They are made of recycled composite material and will withstand the weather and long-term use. The two new bridges enhance trail accessibility for users as well as reduce off-trail erosion. This project was guided by the Town's Master Plan for the park and was a continuation of earlier phases of work in the park.

River Management Symposium, 2025 *($1,941)*

The River Management Society is a national non-profit organization whose mission is "to support professionals who study, protect and manage North America's rivers." It does so by developing and hosting training workshops and open information-sharing events that enable anyone who works on river conservation to learn from experts and enthusiasts.

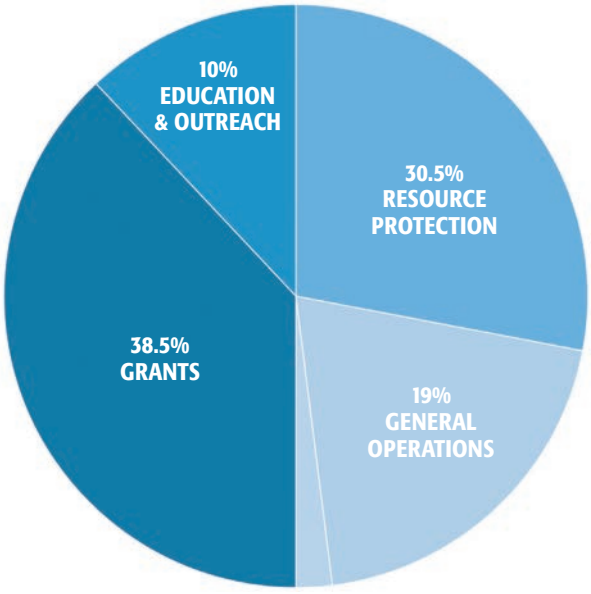
In April of 2025, an LFSWS member was granted funding to attend the annual symposium which was held in Ashland, Oregon. It was focused on restoring rivers for a resilient future, following the largest dam removal project in U.S. history in which four dams were removed from the Klamath River in California and Oregon. Removing these dams opened up over 300 miles of river enabling passage for salmon and other species of fish, and making formerly submerged land available for restoration.

In addition to the educational program, awards were given out, including the RMS award for Community Planner to Liz Lacy, who had been the National Park Service representative to LFSWS since 2019 and who is now retired.

AT-A-GLANCE

SMALL GRANTS

Aquatics Invasive Species (AIS) Management	$4,922
Conductivity Monitoring	$13,060
East Granby Middle School Fish Release	$1,100
Farmington Land Trust Fishing Pier Removal/Bank Restoration	$34,917
Farmington Land Trust Invasives Removal at Cowles Parcel	$996
Farmington River Park Benches and Bridges	$5,805
Fisher Meadows Volunteer Invasive Removal	$600
Highlights Reel for the Unearthing History Project	$4,100
McLean Archaeology Project, Phase 4	$9,037
Report of the Project	$2,600
Nutrient Study	$6,914
Owen Mortimer Invasive Plant Control	$6,285
Rainbow Reservoir Monitoring for Cyanobacteria and Water Level	$9,761
The Farmington River Archaeological Project: 12,000 years of Native History	$946



2024-2025 EXPENSES

These numbers represent the funding that the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook provided in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 by various categories.

8 wastewater treatment plants monitored in nutrient study

1,100 pounds of Water Chestnuts removed and composted

9 river locations & **4** ponds surveyed for aquatic invasive species

22,000 Hemlock biocontrol beetles released over three years

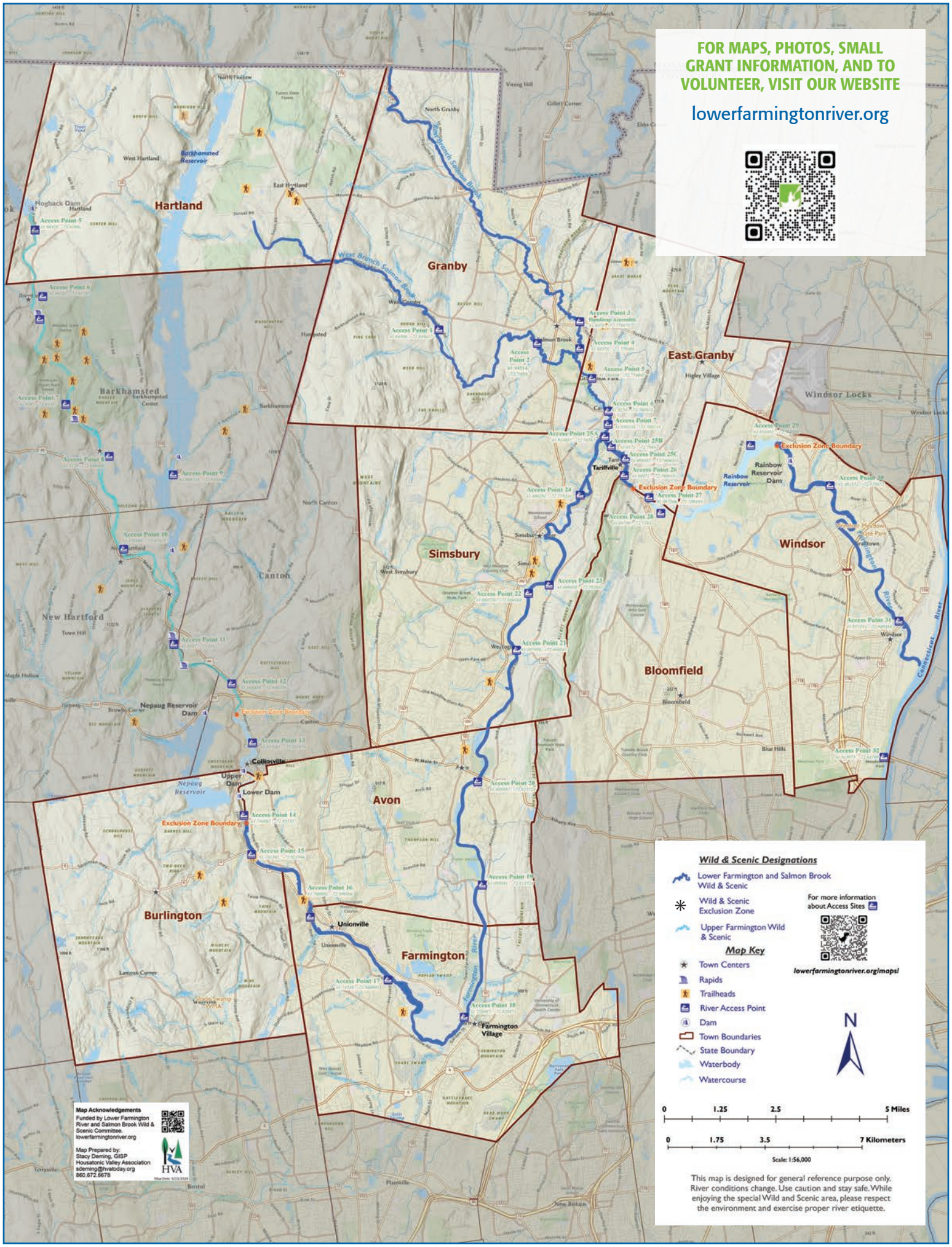
4 archaeological sites excavated

4 Dragonfly species newly documented in follow-up study

2 new Partnership Wild & Scenic kiosks added

4 benches and **2** bridges installed at Farmington River Park

In Fiscal Year 2025, 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.


FOR MAPS, PHOTOS, SMALL GRANT INFORMATION, AND TO VOLUNTEER, VISIT OUR WEBSITE
lowerfarmingtonriver.org
Hartland
Granby
East Granby
Windsor Locks
Barkhamsted
Simsbury
Windsor
Bloomfield
New Hartford
Canton
Avon
Burlington
Farmington
Tariffville
Collinsville
Unionville
Farmington Village
Nepaug Reservoir Dam
Rainbow Reservoir Dam
Barkhamsted Reservoir
Nepaug Reservoir
Rainbow Reservoir
Hogback Dam
Upper Dam
Lower Dam
West Branch Salmon Brook
East Branch Salmon Brook
Salmon Brook
Farmington River
Connecticut River
Exclusion Zone Boundary
Wild & Scenic Designations
Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic
Wild & Scenic Exclusion Zone
Upper Farmington Wild & Scenic
Map Key
Town Centers
Rapids
Trailheads
River Access Point
Dam
Town Boundaries
State Boundary
Waterbody
Watercourse
For more information about Access Sites
lowerfarmingtonriver.org/maps/
N
0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles
0 1.75 3.5 7 Kilometers
Scale: 1:56,000
This map is designed for general reference purpose only. River conditions change. Use caution and stay safe. While enjoying the special Wild and Scenic area, please respect the environment and exercise proper river etiquette.
Map Acknowledgements
Funded by Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee.
lowerfarmingtonriver.org
Map Prepared by:
Stacy Deming, GISP
Housatonic Valley Association
sdeming@hvatoday.org
860.672.6678
HVA