



Farmington River Watershed Association Executive Director

Location: Simsbury, CT

Overview of the River and the Association

Every year, thousands of people canoe, kayak and fish the waters of the Farmington River, as well as visit the state parks, forests and historic mills that dot the river's edge. Recreational value, rare wildlife, outstanding fisheries and a rich history are some of the outstanding features of the Farmington. In August 1994, Congress added 14 miles of the Farmington River's West Branch to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This exciting milestone in the river's history recognizes the Farmington's beauty and character, and ensures that it will be enjoyed by generations to come.

Founded in 1953 by concerned local residents to address the critical water quality problems of that era, the Farmington River Watershed Association ("FRWA"), is a 501c(3) nonprofit that works with federal, state and local governments, business and industry, and with people in the watershed's 33 communities to protect this beautiful river and its surrounding landscape. Although led by professional staff, FRWA relies on members, volunteers, other nonprofits, government agencies and business, all of who offer expertise, funds, time, and other assistance to protect the watershed. Areas of focus for FRWA include water quality, water allocation, habitat restoration, recreation, open space, and wetland and floodplain protection

Overview of Programs

FRWA is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring the Farmington River and its watershed – for you, for all, forever. FRWA accomplishes this mission through the following activities:

- **Research and Stewardship** – FRWA's research and mapping projects assist planners, policymakers, watershed residents and river users. Its ongoing water quality monitoring provides information that complements the work of other agencies. FRWA also engages in hands-on stewardship such as fish habitat restoration, reduction of storm water runoff, and re-vegetating streambanks with native plants.
- **Education** – FRWA offers tailored school programs; online lesson plans that complement the state standards; river guides with up-to-date information on boating, fish and wildlife, historic features and geologic structures; a quarterly newsletter reporting on current river issues and opportunities to get involved in the work; canoe trips with archaeologists, botanists, ecologists, historians, and ornithologists; river cleanups, when hundreds of volunteers collect and recycle trash found along the river and its tributaries; and salmon stocking in conjunction with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Atlantic Salmon Restoration Project.

- **Advocacy** – FRWA proactively advocates on behalf of the river and the watershed. Over the years, FRWA played a pivotal role in securing a Wild & Scenic Designation for 14 miles of the Upper Farmington and is now advocating the same for the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook. FRWA has served on Science & Technical Subcommittee of the Connecticut State Water Planning Council as well as on the Board of Rivers Alliance of Connecticut to be actively engaged on ways to better manage freshwater supplies. FRWA also proactively advocates for issues that arise and encourages the development and implementation of well thought-out local land use regulations.

FRWA's operating budget has averaged approximately \$400,000 over the last three years, and the organization employs five staff members, including the executive director, at its Simsbury, CT headquarters. The executive director reports to a volunteer board of directors currently comprised of 13 members who are community, environmental, and business leaders from communities of the watershed.

Executive Transition

For the last six years, FRWA has been very well-led by its executive director who recently resigned to pursue a new professional opportunity. A four-member search committee of the board has assumed the responsibility of managing the search.

Strategic Opportunities and Challenges

High priorities for the executive director of FRWA include:

- Managing effectively and efficiently the daily operations for a mission-driven, \$400,000 nonprofit, and empowering a team of dedicated professionals committed to protecting the Farmington River and its watershed.
- Through grants, individual giving, corporation donations, and events, raising the annual and long-term funds needed to sustain FRWA's operations.
- Leveraging the 60+ year history of a well-respected, credible and highly regarded organization to advocate fiercely and proactively for the river and its watershed throughout the 33 communities touched by the Farmington River.
- Partnering with local, CT and federal agencies as well as other nonprofits and volunteers, since a collaborative effort is needed to achieve FRWA's mission.
- Growing and diversifying FRWA's membership to increase funding and to ensure long-term sustainability.
- Working respectfully, inclusively and collaboratively with FRWA's professional staff to create a cohesive team that capitalizes on collective strength and joint accomplishments.
- Increasing public awareness of FRWA beyond its core supporters, most particularly to a younger and more diverse audience to grow active participation and financial support.
- Supporting the board of directors to expand membership and engagement, accessing their expertise and connections and solidifying their personal and financial commitments to FRWA.

Desired Credentials/Profile of the Ideal Candidate

- A minimum of three years of senior leadership, or equivalent experience
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred
- Interest in and knowledge of conservation, ecology or water science preferred

Skills and Experience

Conservation Champion and Advocate

As the leader of a mission-driven nonprofit committed to preserving, protecting, and restoring the river and its watershed, the leader must be a conservation champion, willing and able to advocate fiercely and persuasively on behalf of the community, board, staff, members and volunteers, and most importantly the river. The leader must be willing to speak truth to power and be adept at making factual, scientific, economic and ecological arguments to champion conservation, preservation and the appropriate use of the river.

Politically Savvy Communicator, Networker and Collaborator

The executive director must be a consummate communicator, savvy networker and honest broker on behalf of FRWA, able to communicate equally well with local, CT, and federal agencies and officials, community and business leaders, members, donors and residents. The leader also must possess exceptionally strong interpersonal skills to form and sustain mutually supportive and beneficial relationships. In addition, the leader must be a compelling spokesperson and presenter who can promote and advocate for FRWA and its work, grow interest in partnering with FRWA and champion its successes.

Experienced Administrator

As the agency's chief executive and administrative officer, the leader will be responsible for overseeing the organization's programs, operations, finances, facilities and staff, efficiently aligning and maximizing resources to achieve FRWA's strategic goals and empowering, coaching and supporting an experienced, strong and committed staff. The leader will also serve as the primary liaison to the board of directors to expand membership as well as to grow each member's commitment to effective governance and fundraising.

Effective Fundraiser

The executive director must execute a broad-based fundraising program across a range of funding sources, including membership dues, individual donations, corporate giving and foundation and government grants. The leader must be eager, poised and proactive in assuming the executive director's role in fundraising, utilizing available and developing new relationships to achieve significant fundraising results. Experience with grant writing is a highly valued skill set.

Accessible Team Leader with Integrity

The next executive director must be a cohesive and collaborative team leader with integrity, someone who values and capitalizes on the collective strength and wisdom of FRWA's staff. The leader must also be an honest broker to individuals and organizations partnering with FRWA, being unfailingly accessible to FRWA's diverse residents and supporters.

Candidate Guidelines

This search is being conducted by TSNE MissionWorks' Executive Transitions Program with Transition Consultant John Tarvin. All submissions will be acknowledged and are confidential. Interested candidates should submit materials to:

<http://www.tsne.org/executive-director-farmington-river-watershed-association>

Please include a resume and a cover letter with salary requirements, information regarding how you learned of the position, and a description of how your qualifications and experience match FRWA's needs and mission. All submissions of candidacy will be accepted until the position is filled. Salary is commensurate with experience, within the framework of the organization's annual operating budget.

FRWA is an equal opportunity employer and actively seeks a diverse pool of candidates.