You’re hearing it on every side these days. Nonprofit organizations are bracing for cutbacks in their good work as town, state, and federal funding sources are cut. No doubt you’ve seen calls for your support “now, more than ever,” for your chosen causes.

Here’s some good news: on the river, your support works! Just think about the Bad Old Days of flammable, multi-colored, disease-bearing rivers. And recall that FRWA originated in those Bad Old Days and accomplished quite a lot, against the odds. Today, FRWA still has the special qualities that worked then, and they work now.

FRWA is community-based. It started in the Farmington Valley, in response to what our own river system needs, by local people who loved the river and were willing to protect it. No big institutional overhead, no top-down agenda from elsewhere, just members and volunteers like you, right here on the ground.

FRWA adapts. Threats to rivers change over the years, and we need new tools and techniques to address them. We’re agile enough to track those changes and direct resources toward the most important priorities. (Do you know the biggest present threat to the river’s water quality? Page 3 shows what we’re doing about it.)

You are the power of FRWA. So much of the river’s health depends on what you do, even if you live far from the river. Simple choices add up: Speaking up for river-smart policies and practices like low-impact development and drought ordinances. Mowing the lawn a little higher and skipping the fertilizer. Landscaping with less paving. You’re essential in getting the word out, setting the examples, changing the norms, changing the future! Just as others did in the past.

When FRWA was founded in the 1950s we had no EPA, no DEEP, no Clean Water Act, no Inland Wetlands Act to bolster the local clean-up effort. But there were people like you, who organized and became a force for river protection. Now we have you! Together we can keep our valley’s treasured river in good shape, maybe better than ever. Thank you for giving, and thank you for caring enough to act.
Ready for the Next One?
Local planning can help prepare for thirsty spells.

Remember last summer’s dry wells, dry riverbeds, and dying fish? Now that our state has recovered from the 2016 drought, it all seems like yesterday’s problem. But it’s tomorrow’s problem too. Our climate is tending to more frequent extremes and we can expect similar droughts in future. Lessons learned in 2016 can help us prepare better for the next time. To cite a few:

Give towns a response tool. The 2016 drought hit some communities much harder and sooner than others. But the state could not enforce water use restrictions until the whole state reached a condition of “emergency” or “extreme drought.” (A more regional, flexible response may come with the update of the state’s Drought Plan, now in progress.) And water utilities can’t restrict water use by customers, even if their supplies get low. As a result, the first-hit towns had no mechanism to save water except voluntary conservation—unless they had proactively adopted water conservation ordinances. In 2014, the state provided a model drought ordinance for towns to adapt according to their own needs. A few towns have already done so. It’s a home-rule option to consider.

Plan good communication. An astonishing number of residents were unaware that their water supplies were getting low, whether they were on private wells or using public water utilities. The information was available (see links below), but there’s a need for more effective and timely ways to get that word out to everyone when it’s important to be aware.

Practice routine conservation. When we use common sense about water all the time, then a call to conserve doesn’t come across as a crisis. Do-it-yourself water management can even prevent a crisis. It has other benefits too, like saving money and reducing runoff. There are plenty of options to choose from (see links below). Thanks for caring. Your drought-readiness saves water for fish and wildlife as well as neighbors!

The state’s model ordinance can be found at www.ct.gov. Access via this link: http://bit.ly/2tuC5zR
Water conservation tips are available at: http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/
So Many Ways to be River Smart!
You know some already— others may surprise you.

It’s not hard to figure out. Contaminated water runs off our yards, parking lots, and streets. It goes down storm drains and gets into our rivers and Long Island Sound. It’s the river’s number one pollution problem, AND... we can do something about it! That’s the message of River Smart, an online tool for people who want to take personal action on pollution prevention and want a few pointers. It can be as simple as washing a car on the lawn instead of the driveway, catching a little rain in a flower patch, or letting your grass grow an inch higher.

We’d love to know what actions you take. You can tell us by going to the River Smart website - riversmartct.org and taking the pledge! It’s simple—from the list of options, just check off 4 items that you do, or will do, around your house and yard. All together, our choices can have a large impact on the health of the river and, ultimately, Long Island Sound. Don’t we all want to enjoy some healthy tasting oysters this summer?!

And there’s more to River Smart. If you belong to a group that’s looking for a program or a project, FRWA can work with you. You can have a presentation on organic lawn care, or on planning, designing and installing rain gardens, buffers, and bioswales to capture and filter stormwater. You might even book a field trip on the river or Long Island Sound, to see where your runoff goes and see what lives there. See how water connects us all, and an inspire yourself to be part of the pollution solution! For a River Smart program, workshop, or technical help, email Aimee (apetras@frwa.org) or Laura (lhart@frwa.org).

FRWA’s River Smart program is for individuals, youth programs, classrooms, garden clubs, scout troops, land trusts, other nonprofits and clubs, towns, and community colleges.

Camp Courant’s Junior Leaders at Barkhamsted Reservoir, source of their drinking water in the Farmington River Watershed. We help kids discover the whole river system, and see how their neighborhood is part of it.

Rain gardens collect runoff from hard surfaces and allow it to infiltrate into the ground. Let us design one for you!

Thank YOU for the “River Smart” Program!
Your support enables people to protect and restore the Farmington River through “River Smart” and our many other projects.

Additional support for “River Smart” comes from

Hartford Foundation
Click here for the Long Island Sound Study

www.frwa.org
STREAM BUGS & POND CRITTERS
Sunday, September 24th, 10:00 AM - Noon

Discover the fascinating underwater life of our watershed with FRWA Water Quality Monitoring as we explore Walton Pond and Poplar Swamp Brook at beautiful Winding Trails in Farmington. Spend the morning pond-side and wading in the brook to observe, identify, and marvel at the life histories and ecology of insects and other creatures that inhabit still and flowing waters. Learn how and why we use aquatic insects in our watershed-wide water quality monitoring.

We will provide nets, buckets and expertise; you need only bring your curious mind. We meet at Nature's Porch which is Winding Trails' beautiful certified Connecticut grown building. We will go outdoors rain or shine. Please dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear to wade into shallow water (water shoes, old sneakers, or waders.) This program is open to all ages but children must be accompanied by an adult.

Registration is required by 3 days prior to the event; please register through the Winding Trails website at www.windingtrails.org

Volunteers Needed!
The Annual River Clean-Up Is September 23, 10am to 2pm

Last year, over 200 volunteers pitched in to remove trash from the banks of the Farmington River. Once again, we are securing all the supplies for the big day (gloves and bags), and thanks to local businesses, providing breakfast and lunch offerings for our hard working crews!

We are on the lookout for pick-up trucks or other large vehicles that can help us get trash to the dumpsters donated by Waste Material Trucking Company of Unionville, CT.

So where will you be? We do need lots of volunteers! If you are part of a group that would be interested — Scouts, service organizations, or just a bunch of friends— please get in touch. Or come on your own to meet your fellow river friends and help keep your neighborhood clean. It’s guaranteed to make you feel great! To register, please call FRWA at (860) 658-4442 or email apetras@frwa.org.

See you there!
HELLO TO NEW HELPERS

We welcome Laura Hart as our Project Manager for “River Smart.” A former intern, Laura returns to us with a B.S. from Cornell University, and a M.S. in Sustainability Science from Lund University, Sweden. She enjoys projects that connect people with the environment, whether through education, project development, or communicating in the written word. In her free time she enjoys “hikes, boating, travels, and local brewery visits”!

Welcome also to Doreen McWhirter, our new Project Support Coordinator. Doreen has a degree from the University of Connecticut in Information Systems and has worked in Computer systems support, IT training, database management, marketing and website administration. She is helping with donor management, social media, newsletters, photography and other support tasks. She resides in Granby with her husband, three sons “and a spoiled dog and cat.” She enjoys family time, gardening, photography, boating and winter games of broomball.

At left is our great team of summer interns! Stephen Banulski of West Simsbury (CCSU), Shanelle Haughton of Hartford (University of St. Joseph), and Tommy Griffith of Simsbury (Colby College). Steve and Tommy are inspecting structures that convey streams under roads to see whether they are barriers to fish or may fail in storms. Shanelle is helping organize river outreach programs, especially to new community groups.

Our thanks to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Camp Fire Conservation Fund, and Farmington River Coordinating Committee for supporting interns.

AND FAREWELL TO RIVER FRIENDS

This September, our annual River Clean-up won’t be quite the same. Year after year, we’ve all benefited from Clif Mason’s cheerful presence and unfailing practical assistance as a volunteer. Sadly, that won’t be the case in 2017, as Clif passed away this past New Year’s Eve. We’ll miss his enthusiasm for his beloved Farmington River. He leaves a legacy of cleaner river banks and shared delight in the natural world that he gave to his children, grandchildren and friends.

Thank you, Clif! And thank you to all who gave to FRWA in his memory.

As a prep school teacher at Westminster School in Simsbury and at Loomis Chaffee School in Windsor, Allen R. Beebe spent many years within a stone’s throw of the river where he enjoyed fishing and canoeing with friends. He passed away on January 7. We extend our heartfelt and humble thanks to all the family members and friends who made gifts to the Farmington River Watershed Association in his memory.
Partners and Projects
CT Water Company digs in to protect groundwater.

Our Water Quality and Projects Coordinator, Alisa Phillips-Griggs, keeps thinking that there’s a quiet season for river work, but she hasn’t figured out yet when it happens. As usual, community volunteers have been busy with projects!

One of our partners this past November and May was the Connecticut Water Company. The company wanted to improve the condition of land they own along the river in Farmington off Wannowmassa St., in order to better protect and recharge the aquifer below ground.

Groundwater is a relevant concern for both river organizations and water companies. When it hasn’t rained recently, river flow is maintained in part by water seeping into the riverbed from adjacent ground. When groundwater levels drop, as they might during a prolonged drought or with large water withdrawals from nearby wells, river flow may be impaired. It’s in everyone’s interest to make sure that water can percolate into the ground, either for supplementing river flow or to be pumped back out as drinking water.

Ground that’s well-vegetated is better at absorbing water than packed, bare ground. So FRWA and CT Water teamed up to re-plant the land with grasses, meadowsweet, and winterberry. The new plantings were all native species, which can provide extra benefits such as supporting local insects and the species who depend on them.

At left, Connecticut Water Company staff plant land near the river.

Were you there? Our May beer-tasting fundraiser at Thomas Hooker Brewery was a wonderful time!

We thank all who came, with special thanks to the event sponsors (below left) and all the generous local vendors who donated silent auction items. Thanks too, to Board President David Donaldson for his live music (left), Matt Reichin for auctioneering, and for FRWA mascot Otis the Otter for being pictured in party mode (below)!
Soaring the Valley
Need a break? Take off for a few minutes.

Every summer thousands of people enjoy the Farmington River at ground-level for swimming, boating, tubing, fishing, wildlife viewing and more. Now enjoy it from the air! Drone videographer Christian Robison piloted the aerial camera and revealed the river in its many aspects — wildlife habitat, historic highway, and favorite spot to fish or float. You can get this eagle’s eye view at https://youtu.be/b8YB8qKpZE4.

Once again, we thank the river friends who made the video possible:
Rona Gollub of Simsbury, Sarah Hincks, Joan and Charles Leach, Debbie Leonard, Joe Springman, Corinne Rebillard, Ellen Ciccarillo-Clarke, Jonathan Cotton, Joyce Kennedy Raymes, and three anonymous donors.

Friends Give a Future to the River

Kudos for a much-appreciated gesture...
Last December, FRWA received a surprise gift of appreciated stocks, worth $5,000, to support river projects. On behalf of everyone who cares about the river, we want to extend a HUGE thank-you to those generous and anonymous friends! If you are considering this option and have any questions, feel free to get in touch.

Is the river part of your legacy?
If you are considering a bequest or similar gift and have questions, you are welcome to get in touch to find out more (with no pressure) about FRWA’s Legacy Program.

Contact Eileen (860-658-4442 x205, or efielding@frwa.org) — or send in the request below.

You can foster the next generation of river keepers.

Information and Donation Form

Name: ________________________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: __________________ Zip Code: _____________________________

Phone Number: _____________________________ Email: _______________________________________

Check one:  □ I want to preserve, protect, and restore the river with a gift of (circle amount)
$40    $60    $120    $150    $250    $500    $_____ other amount

□ Send me information about your Legacy Program.

□ Send me your Annual Report.

___ I have enclosed my check payable to FRWA, or please charge my ___ MasterCard or ___Visa.

Card #: _____________________________ Expiration Date: _____________Security Code: ________

Name on Card: _____________________________Signature _____________________________

Please send to: Farmington River Watershed Association, 749 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070.

Credit card gifts can also be made securely at www.frwa.org or phoned in to Aimee Petras at (860) 658-4442 x 201.
Upcoming Events

September 21  -  Natural Lawn Care Workshop - Simsbury Public Library, 6:30 - 8:00 pm.

September 23  -  FRWA Annual River Clean-up: 10 am to 2 pm, various locations

September 24  -  Stream Bugs and Pond Critters, 10 am to 12 pm, Winding Trails, Farmington CT

September 28  -  Natural Lawn Care Workshop - Canton Public Library, 6:30 - 8:00 pm.

October Saville Dam tour in preparation—stay tuned to our emails and website!

Please visit FRWA.org or read more inside about specific events and registration requirements.

You can support the Farmington River by shopping at smile.amazon.com. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to FRWA when you shop on AmazonSmile.