

# Wild & Scenic River Feasibility Study

## Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook

### Frequently Asked Questions

The Farmington River Watershed Association and Salmon Brook Watershed Association have asked the Study towns to support a three-year feasibility study to assess whether the Lower Farmington River (between Canton and Windsor) and the E/W branches of Salmon Brook (see map) might be federally designated as “Wild and Scenic”. The following is presented in a Q&A format to provide information and encourage your feedback and/or questions.

#### ***What is “Wild and Scenic”?***

In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed the “National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act” which made it the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation, and their immediate environments, that possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values, should be protected in free-flowing condition for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. A 14-mile section of the Upper Farmington River (between Colebrook and Canton) was designated as “Wild and Scenic” for its outstanding recreational attributes in 1994.

#### ***Isn't the Wild and Scenic rivers program geared toward large western rivers?***

No. In fact, a subset of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program, helps communities preserve and manage their own river-related resources locally by bringing together State, county, and community managers to preserve the outstanding and remarkable values for which the rivers were protected. Since the Upper Farmington was designated as Partnership Wild and Scenic in 1994, six other Northeastern rivers and brooks have been designated using this New England “home rule” model.

#### ***Why are the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook significant?***

The Lower Farmington River is a unique recreational and natural resource in an increasingly urbanized area of Connecticut. Tariffville Gorge on the Farmington, for example, is a nationally recognized year-round paddling hotspot and site of U.S. Olympic paddling trials in the past. Salmon Brook, is regionally significant for being free-flowing (a.k.a. no major dams), supporting native brook trout populations, and supporting wide-ranging public recreation opportunities from hiking at Tunxis State Forest to picnicking at Granbrook Park.

#### ***How is a River Designated as a National Wild & Scenic River?***

First, local communities along the river would demonstrate support for the concept of a feasibility study. Then, a river must be studied to determine if it is feasible and desirable to become designated. Once Congress has passed legislation authorizing a study, the National Park Service would fund and conduct the study in close consultation and partnership with property owners, local and state governments, and other organizations with a stake in the future of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook. A steering committee with representatives from local interests would be formed to assist with the feasibility study. If the study recommends Wild & Scenic designation, legislation authorizing a Wild and Scenic River designation would have to be passed by Congress and signed by the President.

#### ***When would the Feasibility Study be completed?***

If a feasibility study is authorized by the U.S. Congress, a draft study report with recommendations would be completed and brought to the public for comment in three years.

#### ***How Does the Study Affect My Land?***

It does not. If you perceive any impacts at all, please contact us right away.

#### ***What will happen to my property rights if the river is designated?***

Nothing. Respect for private property rights and current land uses are fundamental components of long-term support for river protection.

#### ***How will my town benefit if this designation occurs?***

Such a designation would likely bring federal technical and financial resources to help enhance and protect the river. Some studies have shown that there is an economic benefit to communities that value their rivers and promote them as a recreational tourist destination (one such study is available on FRWA's website, [www.frwa.org](http://www.frwa.org)).

**Could the Study or designation result in federal restrictions on my property?**

No. The study is only that - - a study. There is no authority for federal land use control associated with a Wild and Scenic designation. Town governments would continue their primary role in establishing and enforcing land-use.

**Would a National Wild and Scenic River designation "federalize" the Farmington and Salmon Brook, resulting in federal control of a corridor along the rivers?**

No. The federal government will not take control of these rivers. There is no federal mandate requiring specific land use controls related to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that will affect how a landowner can use their property.

**How Can I stay Informed About the Study?**

Email updates, mailings, website and public meetings are four good ways. You can also call any of the local study team members (who would be appointed if a feasibility study is authorized) for updates at any time. You are also encouraged to contact town leaders and/or the Farmington River Watershed Association or Salmon Brook Watershed Association for more information.

**LOWER FARMINGTON WILD & SCENIC FEASIBILITY STUDY AREA**

