

Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Study Committee

TALKING POINTS - DRAFT

The Study:

- The Study has three main components:
 - Determine if the river is eligible for inclusion in the Wild & Scenic Rivers system by demonstrating it has outstanding natural, cultural or recreational values of regional or national significance (these are the Outstandingly Remarkable Values or ORV's);
 - Determine if the river is suitable for Wild & Scenic designation by substantiating local support and commitment to designation through methods such as town wide votes of support for designation and adoption of locally-based river protection actions; and
 - Develop a river Management Plan with local support that details the strategy for future protection of the area's outstanding values.

The Management Plan:

- The Management Plan aims to achieve a number of objectives:
 - Provide stakeholders with clear recommendations/blueprints of how to protect and enhance the watershed's Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV's)
 - Identify strategies to measure the quality of the ORV's over time.
 - Establish the basis for federal technical and financial assistance if the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook are designated as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- The Plan will be developed in broad collaboration with the local study committee, local land use commissions, community residents, the state, and other stakeholders.
- The management tools recommended in the Plan will rely principally on locally-led and locally-implemented strategies and as such the Plan can be used to help all the stakeholders protect the ORV's regardless of achieving a designation.
- The Plan will contain recommendations only and will not be a regulatory document.

Funding:

- The cost of the Study is entirely covered by the National Park Service.
- History shows that designation helps bring funding to the local communities. The Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers each receive annual appropriations from Congress to assist in implementing Management Plans. In FY '05 the amount was \$151,000 per river.
- Wild & Scenic status has also proven an effective vehicle for leveraging additional funds through other sources and partners at local, state and federal levels.
- The costs of administering a designated Wild & Scenic river are provided for by the National Park Service. Towns are not required nor asked to fund any part of the process.

Participation:

- Citizens will have chances to give input. Once the Study has gathered information and outlined the process, forums, meetings and presentations will be scheduled for your area.
- One of the final actions in the Wild & Scenic Study process is to take a vote at a town meeting in each community to determine public support for designation. These votes are several years away and will be thoroughly advertised to the public.
- Meeting notes and announcements will soon be posted at www.lowerfarmingtonriver.org.

Benefits:

- Designation would likely bring federal technical and financial resources to help enhance and protect the river.
- An economic study on the Upper Farmington has shown that there is an economic benefit to communities that value their rivers and promote them as a recreational tourist destination (study is available via www.frwa.org).
- Designation would prevent federally funded or permitted water resource projects (such as adverse dams or diversions) that would degrade or damage the Outstandingly Remarkable Values identified through the Study.
- The Wild & Scenic Rivers Act requires other federal agencies to respect the protection of identified ORVs and charges the National Park Service and the local wild and scenic committee to review federal actions/decisions to ensure this consistency.
- A Management Plan for the river will be developed as part of the Wild & Scenic Study. This management plan will lay the groundwork for a cooperative partnership between the towns and other stakeholders to protected healthy river systems for generations to come.

Effects of the Study on private land or property rights:

- The Study does not affect private land at all. The study is just that – a study.
- There are not impacts on private property rights that are mandated by Wild & Scenic designation. Respect for private property rights and current land uses are fundamental components of long-term support for river protection.
- 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 regulations.

"Federalization" of the Farmington and/or Salmon Brook:

- There would be no “federalization” or federal control of the river corridor. There is no federal mandate requiring land use controls related to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that will affect how a landowner can use their property.
- In fact, standard language in a “Partnership Wild & Scenic River” designation specifically extinguishes the option for federal land acquisition or condemnation from unwilling sellers.

New regulations or permits:

- There are no new regulations or permits that are required because of Wild & Scenic designation. The federal designation only restricts federally permitted or funded projects that would have a negative effect on the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV's). Local land use would remain subject to existing local and state statutes and processes.
- In the long run, any land use changes would come from a local process and follow the standard processes of public hearings, commission votes and town meetings.

River access or hunting and fishing restrictions:

- Wild & Scenic designation will not affect access rights along the river and will not change hunting or fishing laws.