

# Summary—Principal Findings

## Eligibility

The Wild and Scenic River Study of the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook concludes that the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook are eligible for designation into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System based on their free-flowing condition and the presence of one or more Outstandingly Remarkable Values. The river segment that includes the Rainbow Dam and reservoir is found ineligible for designation. The Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) described in this report are **Geology, Water Quality, Biological Diversity, Cultural Landscape, and Recreation**.

## Classification

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act provides for three possible classifications of eligible river segments: wild, scenic, and recreational. The criteria distinguishing these classifications are based on the degree of human modification of the river and its adjacent shorelines. Based upon the applicable criteria, National Park Service (NPS) has assigned a preliminary classification of “**recreational**” to the segments of the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook that have been found eligible for designation.

## Suitability

The Study concludes that approximately 37 miles of the lower Farmington River and 26.4 miles of the Salmon Brook are currently eligible and suitable for designation.

- Analysis of existing local, state, federal, and non-regulatory protections applicable to the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook are found to adequately protect the rivers consistent with the purposes of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Management Plan developed as a part of the Study provides an appropriate and effective management framework for the long-term management and protection of the watercourses.
- Based upon the official record of endorsement from local governing bodies, citizens, local, and regional

non-governmental organizations, as well as an endorsement from the Connecticut General Assembly and Office of the Governor, it is concluded that there is substantial support for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act based on the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers model.

- A 2.9 mile segment of the Lower Farmington River including the Upper and Lower Collinsville Dams is found presently **unsuitable** for designation based on active pursuit of an FERC license for hydropower generation by the Towns of Canton, Burlington, and Avon.

## Alternatives Considered

This report evaluates two Wild and Scenic River designation alternatives in addition to the ‘no action’ **Alternative A**.

**Alternative B: Full Designation.** This alternative would designate all segments of the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook found to meet the criteria for eligibility and suitability. The total designation length under this alternative is approximately 63.4 miles. This alternative is identified as the environmentally preferable alternative based on providing the maximum protection to free-flowing river values consistent with the purposes of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and based on the documented support of key local, non-governmental, and state river management stakeholders.

**Alternative C: Partial Designation.** This alternative would exclude from designation a 2.2 mile segment of the Lower Farmington River below the Rainbow Dam in Windsor to allow for potential future hydroelectric development in this area. This alternative would also exclude a river segment above the Rainbow Dam to allow for potential future flashboard alterations. The total designation length under this alternative is approximately 61 miles. This alternative is included for consideration based upon plans of the Stanley Black & Decker Company to consider potential hydroelectric development and alterations to flashboards at some point in the future.

### *Additional Study Findings*

#### **Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook Management Plan**

Development of the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook Management Plan (Management Plan or Plan) has been one of the primary tasks of the Wild and Scenic Study Committee (Study Committee or Committee). The Management Plan is the product of an extensive collaborative effort between the Study Committee, local citizens, land use commissioners, and elected officials. The Management Plan contains the vision and strategy for protecting and enhancing the watercourses and the associated outstanding resources.

If the candidate rivers are designated, the Management Plan would serve as the comprehensive river management plan required under Section 3(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA). It functions as a companion document to this Study Report. If the rivers are not added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the Management Plan could still serve to provide state and local protection to these waterways if local stakeholders carry out the recommendations.

#### **Support for Designation**

Between January 2009 and August 2010 the governing bodies of all ten communities abutting the Study area voted to endorse the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic designation and support the implementation of the Management Plan if Wild and scenic designation takes place. In

addition, many of the land use commissions and boards from these communities voted to endorse and support as a part of the community review process leading up to official town votes. Local and regional organizations have provided support letters as well. The Connecticut General Assembly passed legislation and the Governor signed the bill that supports the Wild and Scenic designation and commits the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to participate as a partner in the implementation of the Management Plan if Wild and Scenic designation occurs.

#### **Partnership Wild and Scenic River Designation**

The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Study was conducted based on the established model of the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers, that includes both the upper Farmington River and Eightmile River in Connecticut. It is likewise important that the NPS supports passage of legislation to implement a Wild and Scenic River designation that follows the Partnership Wild and Scenic River legislative model based on the findings of this Study and the record of public support for designation, including: prohibition on federal condemnation of lands; establishment of the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Management Plan as the Comprehensive Plan required by Section 3(d) of the Wild and Scenic River Act.

**Governor Jodi Rell signs State of Connecticut Wild and Scenic Legislation into law**

Photo: Don Rieger

