

# News and Updates on the Fort River



You are receiving this email because of your interest in the Fort River Watershed Association and our work. Please let us know if your interests have changed by replying to this email. Thanks for your support of healthy rivers in our community!

## State of the Fort River 2020



Through existing partnerships, and exciting new programs, the Fort River Watershed Association is preparing to complete a State of the Fort River report for 2020!

By taking a broad look at information on the biological, chemical, and physical condition of the Fort River - past and present - we can better understand the big picture of how healthy the Fort River watershed is today, and what is needed from us for a clean and healthy Fort River for generations to come.

Stay tuned for ways to get involved this summer! We hope you'll be as excited as we are about this work.

In the meantime, please see below an update on some of the exciting programs already underway for this year.

**JOIN US: Public Meeting on Watershed Planning and Water Quality, March 9 at 7PM in Amherst**

The student team from the Conway School will present their preliminary results from an ongoing planning project assessing threats to water quality in the Fort River watershed.

Please join us as we discuss information relating to clean water in our watershed, and solutions to protect our water quality. We invite you to come learn about this project and help guide the students' continued work. The final watershed plan will be of tremendous value for guiding future programs that the Fort River Watershed Association can offer in our community to protect the Fort River watershed. We would be grateful for your input.

**The public meeting will be held on Monday, March 9 from 7-8 pm at Bangs Community Center room 101, in downtown Amherst.**

**All are welcome.**

**Have question about the project, or data to contribute?**

**Contact the student team at [FortRiver2020@csld.edu](mailto:FortRiver2020@csld.edu)**

**the Conway School**

Graduate Program in Sustainable Landscape Planning + Design

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*The Conway School is a graduate program in ecological landscape design and planning. The school's mission is to explore, develop, practice, and teach design of the land that is ecologically and socially sustainable. For more information, visit [csld.edu](http://csld.edu), give us a call (413-369-4044), or send us an email ([info@csld.edu](mailto:info@csld.edu)).*

## **We have \$\$ for Water Quality Sampling in the Fort River!**

The Fort River Watershed Association has received a grant, in collaboration with the Connecticut River Conservancy, to test the water quality in the Fort River for summer 2020. We are really excited about this opportunity! The information we will be able to collect will provide the first quantitative (or, measurable) assessment of water quality in the main stem of the Fort River, and testing will last all summer.

Water samples from Amethyst Brook and Groff Park will be tested

weekly from June through August for bacteria, specifically E. coli. Results will be available to the public through the Connecticut River Conservancy's "[Is it clean/Esta Limpio](https://connecticutriver.us/it-clean)" website, at <https://connecticutriver.us/it-clean>. This website provides real-time information, based on real sampling data, to inform people of the safety for boating and swimming in the river.



While the presence of bacteria is incredibly important to human health, overall water quality is determined by measuring many characteristics of water - living things, as well as physical and chemical properties.

### **Healthy rivers and clean water offer many benefits, such as:**

- Healthy habitat for wildlife and native plants. The Fort River is home to many incredible plants and animals, including the endangered dwarf wedgemussel and several species of migratory fish, like sea lamprey.
- Clean water for swimming, fishing, boating and exploring. Water that is contaminated with bacteria and nutrients can cause sickness for humans and animals.
- Clean water for growing food and doing work. Water flowing in rivers is used to irrigate our crops and replaces water in underground aquifers to recharge the groundwater we pump from wells.
- Clean water for drinking and healthy homes. All of Amherst gets its drinking water from reservoirs draining the Fort River. Other

watershed towns get their drinking water from a combination of surface and groundwater. Cleaner water flowing through the Fort River means healthier drinking water for watershed residents.



Poor water quality can have a negative impact on human health, environmental health and the ways we use our local waterways to sustain our local economy. When we can measure and monitor water quality, we are in the best position to improve and protect our water resources.

**Sampling for bacteria is just one of many programs we hope to prepare for this summer to learn about water quality in the Fort River, and we need your help!**

*If you are interested in volunteering to collect water samples or work with our sapling data, please email us at:  
[fortriverwatershed@gmail.com](mailto:fortriverwatershed@gmail.com)*

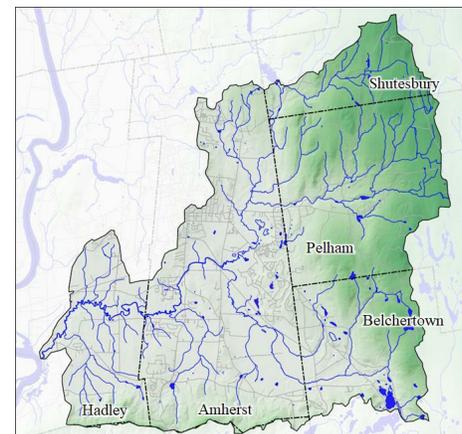
## #FortRiverFacts

The Fort River is the longest Massachusetts tributary of the Connecticut River with free passage for fish and other species. Our community impacts the health of the river and the species living in it. It's a biological treasure in our backyards and we're excited to celebrate it!

Drink water here? The Fort River feeds the drinking water supply for Amherst through 2 reservoirs. The Fort River watershed (the river and the land that drains in to it) run through parts of Amherst, Shutesbury, Pelham, Belchertown and Hadley.

The Fort River is home to several species of freshwater mussel, including one species federally listed as being endangered - the dwarf wedgemussel. Mussels are extremely sensitive to pollution and degraded water quality.

**Map of the Fort River watershed**





Sincerely,

your neighbors at the  
Fort River Watershed Association

**Have updates on what's happening in the watershed?**

*Please send us your local Fort River news at [fortriverwatershed@gmail.com](mailto:fortriverwatershed@gmail.com).*

Photo credits: Ben Barnhart

Map credits: Brian Yellen

The Fort River Watershed Association has partnered with the Connecticut River Conservancy, a local non-profit organization advocating for the Connecticut River watershed since 1952. This working partnership makes us both more effective advocates for our rivers.

For more information on the Connecticut River Conservancy, please visit their website: [www.ctriver.org](http://www.ctriver.org)



Connecticut River  
Conservancy

STAY CONNECTED

