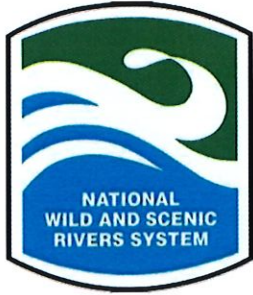


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NOV 12 2020



Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook

Wild and Scenic Committee

TOWN OF AVON
INLAND WETLANDS

Partners:

Town of Avon
Town of Bloomfield
Town of Burlington
Town of East Granby
Town of Farmington
Town of Granby
Town of Hartland
Town of Simsbury
Town of Windsor
Connecticut Department of
Energy & Environmental
Protection
Farmington River
Watershed Association
Pequabuck River Watershed
Association
Salmon Brook Watershed
Association
Stanley Black and Decker
U.S. National Park Service

*
November 20, 2020
Mr. Clifford Thier, Chairman
Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission
Town of Avon, Town Hall
60 West Main Street
Avon, Connecticut 06001

Dear Mr. Thier and Fellow Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Application 768 regarding the proposed map changes for the Blue Fox Run Golf Course. These comments are on behalf of the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee. The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee is the advisory management committee resulting from the designation of the watercourses by the United States Congress in March, 2019. Our mission is to protect and enhance the special values for which the watercourses were designated. The Town of Avon endorsed the designation and has appointed two people as its representatives to the Committee.

The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee urges your continued serious consideration of the issues raised by the applicant's proposed changes to the existing wetlands map. Our concern is the implications of proposed map changes

Long term residents of our area have seen the Farmington River flood the Blue Fox Run site. The area functions as a floodplain. It receives water when the river overflows, and it retains it. This helps prevent downstream flooding and also allows sediments to drop out of the water. It gives the floodplain soils and vegetation a chance to filter the water and remove damaging nutrients and impurities.

According to David R. Vallee, Hydrologist-in-Chief, at the Northeast River Forecast Center of the NOAA/National Weather Service, a changing climate has already resulted in a trend of more frequent and more severe river flooding, particularly in smaller watersheds. He defines those as basins under 800 square miles. The Farmington River's basin is only 609 square miles.

Lavallee says that increased flooding concerns are not only amplified by the small size of a river's watershed, but are most pronounced in areas like the Farmington Valley where there have been significant changes in land use and urbanization. Further exacerbating this trend are ongoing changes in weather patterns. Lavallee points out that the weather data show heavy precipitation events have increased 71% between 1958 and 2012 in the northeastern United States. These events cause increased runoff from the land into the river.

The changes in precipitation patterns and land use, the area's increasing development and the small size of the Farmington River watershed combine to make floodplains in our area more and more valuable in preventing or mitigating flooding and in protecting water quality.

Application 768 offers you the opportunity to make a decision about whether or not future floodwater can flow harmlessly into the existing floodplain or whether the benefits provided by the floodplain will be permanently lost. Residents with homes near the river, recreational river users and wildlife all benefit from the services of an intact floodplain. Please keep this in mind as you deliberate. The IWWC has been generous with its time and effort in considering this application. Thank you very much for your patience and your diligence.

Information in this statement is based on a Powerpoint Mr. Vallee presented at the Connecticut Land Conservation Council Conference in 2018. The Powerpoint can be found at <http://ctfloods.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Vallee-NOAA-ClimateTrendsAndImpactOnFloodBehavior.pdf>.

Sincerely,

Sally S. Rieger, Interim Chairman
Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee