



Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Committee

April, 2017

Status Report to Towns

The Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Committee is now composed of 22 voting members appointed by twelve towns in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed and the Narragansett Tribe. The towns are Charlestown, Exeter, Hopkinton, North Kingstown, Richmond, South Kingstown, West Greenwich and Westerly in RI; North Stonington, Sterling, Stonington, and Voluntown in CT. In addition, representatives from RI Department of Environmental Management, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Save the Bay, Audubon Society of RI, National Parks Service (NPS) and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association serve on the committee.

The Study Committee has assigned classifications (Wild, Scenic, or Recreation) to eleven river segments on the seven rivers under study: Beaver, Chipuxet, Queen/Usquepaugh, Green Falls, Shunock, Wood, and Pawcatuck Rivers. They have determined four overall Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) for the entire watershed: Geology/Hydrology, Exceptional Ecosystems, Cultural/Historic, and Scenic/Recreation. Preservation of these ORVs is the stated goal of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Each segment of the rivers also has their own ORVs.

A website about the Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Study, <http://WPWildRivers.org>, has been developed and a subcommittee is working on outreach materials to let the public know about the project. All information concerning the study, including committee agenda and minutes, rivers' classifications and ORVs, and any reports, will be posted on the website.

Next steps for the Study Committee

- April to December, 2017:
 - Outreach to the general public using the website, posters, fact sheets, library displays, and social media. We will also be conducting a Photo Contest and recreation events, such as paddling tours of watershed, open to the public.
 - Finalize the list of rivers, tributaries and other significant natural resources for inclusion in the NPS Report about the eligibility of the rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

- June, 2017: Conduct workshops with town, state, and federal agencies to discuss the development of a Stewardship Plan for the rivers with the primary goal of identifying major components of plan and any potential concerns with local and state ordinances; establish path forward to complete by spring 2018.

- Sept to December 2017: Presentations to boards and commissions (planning, conservation, recreation, development/zoning, in-land wetland commission, and land trusts) in each town about the Wild and Scenic study process. The goal is to obtain additional feedback on river segment classification and major components of stewardship plan, especially any town specific concerns.
- June 2017 to March 2018: Develop a Stewardship Plan for the watershed in cooperation with the watershed towns, state and federal agencies.
- March to June 2018: Present the NPS recommendation for including the seven rivers of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and the Stewardship Plan to each Town Council or Board of Selectman for approval

Any questions about the Study Committee can be directed to Denise Poyer, Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Coordinator, wpwildrivers@wpwa.org or 401-539-9017.