

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council

Kick-Off Meeting Minutes



May 22, 2019, 6 pm to 8 pm

WPWA Campus, 203 Arcadia Road, Hope Valley, RI 02832

In Attendance: Charlestown: Neil Wardley; Exeter: Peter Lacouture, Nan Qunilan; Hopkinton: Michael Warner; Narragansett Indian Tribe: Cassius Spears Jr; North Kingstown: Ahren Cohen; North Stonington: Madeline Jeffery, Richard Seager; Richmond: Pete August; South Kingstown: Dennis Migneault and guest Bill McCusker; Sterling: Roger Gibson, Kim Gunn; Stonington: Fred Wagner, Brian Bottaro; West Greenwich: Chris Grube, Pat Lardner; Westerly: Jon Ericson; RI DEM: Cathy Sparks; CT DEEP: Eric Thomas; NPS: Jamie Fosburgh, Sarah Bursky; Save the Bay: Dave Prescott; WPWA: Joe MacAndrew; Council Coordinator: Kassi Archambault.

Meeting Called to Order at 6:06

Introduction/ Orientation: (1 Hr)

1. Each member introduce themselves, include background/expertise, interest and what they'd like to accomplish with the Stewardship Council
 - a. Members had a one on one conversation, introducing themselves and meeting someone. As a whole group, each person introduced the individual they conversed with.
 - b. Consistently, members' objectives with the Council and personal interests included education and outreach, paddling opportunities, town connections, geological and biological interests. JON, PLEASE ADD if you heard additional themes in personal interests or background.
2. Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinator, Kassi Archambault, presents past accomplishments of the Study Committee and overall goals of Stewardship Council
 - a. Group discussed many questions and ideas on protecting and enhancing rivers when a project within a ¼ mile is being considered. This will become an agenda item, or a committee.
 - b. A project within a ¼ mile of the river must be reviewed by the Council and NPS when federal dollars or permitting is involved. Projects may also be positive ones, such as to conserve land alongside a WSR. The Council has interest in being proactive with the towns to find projects early, and to make towns and agencies aware of this Wild and Scenic River protection. Eventually, such bodies will be aware and bring their project to our or NPS's attention.

Minutes – none

Financial Report (20-30 Min)

1. Kassi explains allocation and fiscal sponsor of Budget.
 - a. Budget Explanation:

Appropriations from Congress to NPS Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers. There are 1011 miles of rivers designated nationwide. Each group last year were given 100,000-300,000. The full budget 3.57mil.

NPS signs a contract with a local non-profit. Our fiscal agent is WPWA. WPWA assumes responsibility and risk, pays WPWA accountant to do transactions etc 10%. The Coordinators salary is mostly funded through this.

Council decides on how funds are spent. Through our project criteria and then choosing our short and long term projects, Council will vote on how to and what to spend funding on. A consensus is always best. Keep

in mind, NPS wants to see pictures of smiling kids or outstanding projects. This will ensure us decent funding in the future...or better! So, let's keep this in mind when designing what we will complete in our first year.

Budget lines were shown and explained. Focus was drawn to first three columns, which described how money was spent, and last two columns, on the amount spent and remaining. Our current funding is left over from the Study Committee phase and will likely be used by September. It was also discussed we were able to move funds from one line item to another to cover unanticipated costs provided there is an acceptable vote from membership to do so.

For future funding, NPS has expressed that 2 years from designation to funding allocated is an impressive turnaround. We need action on this. We are entered in FY2020 Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers funding for this fiscal year (Sept 1-Oct 30.) WPWA secured from RI Foundation to pay the Coordinators salary until April 2020.

b. Discussion:

Focused on when national appropriations may become available. The Dear Colleague Letter circulated by Rep Joe Courtney was successful so far. The draft Department of Interior FY 2020 Budget includes additional funds for the new WSR groups, including Wood-Pawcatuck. Currently, members of the public may call representatives to ask them to support this budget.

2. Re-allocate funds to different line items.
 - a. \$7,000 for 200 hours was moved from Project Coordinator Outreach time to Project Coordinator Planning time. Motion to Accept: Dave; 2nd: Cassius. All in favor, none opposed.
3. Approve Council's starting budget.
 - a. Motion to Accept: Ahren; 2nd: Pete A. All in favor, none opposed.

Old Business- none

New Business: (1 Hr)

1. Reinstate Interim Chairperson and role of Coordinator as interim secretary and treasurer until Charter is approved, new officer(s) are elected, and all roles and responsibilities are established.
 - a. Motion to Accept: Dennis; 2nd: Michael. All in favor, none opposed.
2. Goals of first year: 1) Finalize Charter, 2) Elect Officers, 3) Finalize Prioritization of Projects, 4) Accomplish First Project, Initiate Several Others
3. Goals will be reassessed in three months or so.
4. Introduce the format of Focus Group discussions for next meeting(s). Focus is to draft WPWSR Stewardship Council Charter (5-10 min);
 - a. Group discussed options for creating the Charter. Group voted on two options, 1) have small group discussions on the Charter or 2) have one large group discussion on the Charter. Group decided on option 2.
 - b. Group expressed will to have short process on Charter. After one full meeting, Coordinator and perhaps a committee will compile notes and come up with a draft charter to present to the full group. A committee may continue to work on the Charter, rather than a full group during meetings.
5. Introduction to Project: Drafting our Charter. This is developed from Chapter 7 Stewardship Plan. (10 min);
 - a. All members will review materials provided, and come prepared to June meeting with notes and ideas. Coordinator will provide sample by-laws for non-profits and charters/by-laws from other WSR groups.
6. Town Updates/Community Flash: Is there anything the towns are doing or interested in, that may be of interest to the Stewardship Council?

- a. Joe MacAndrew, WPWA, announced WPWA Annual Meeting and described river access projects he has accomplished with Westerly Conservation Commission.
 - b. Chris Grube, W.G., announced WG may heed a town road, Falls River Rd, to RIDEM due to erosion and water quality problems. Cassius Spears Jr, Narragansett Indian Tribe, explained his day job is with RI's Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), which has biologists, engineers, potential grants and more. NRCS prides itself in getting projects accomplished. Cassius may present to the whole group on this topic.
 - c. Pat Lardner, W.G., announced RI Canoe and Kayak Association will be having a meeting on the water starting at WPWA.
7. Communications: Other new business for the council to consider; follow-up questions; agenda topics; for additional sharing, email Kassi, kassi@wpwa.org .

Action Items

1. Become familiar with and consider potential outcomes using WPWildRivers.org, Stewardship Plan especially Chapters 6 and 7, Flood Resiliency Plans (one-page per town).
 - a. Three Stewardship Plans were handed out.
2. Review "Focus Group I: Charter" for next meeting focus groups.
3. Consider being, or asking for a volunteer to be, a Facilitator, Recorder or Timekeeper next session.

Around the Table in Five- each member announces their last thoughts.

Next Meeting: Fourth Wednesday of each month at 6pm at WPWA. Date is June 26, 2019

Adjourn at 8:02