

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed
Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council
Minutes**

February 26, 2020, 6 pm to 8 pm

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

In Attendance: Charlestown: Neil Wardley; Exeter: Nan Quinlan; Hopkinton: Elaine Caldarone, Mike Warner; North Kingstown: Ahren L Cohen, Jim LeBlanc; North Stonington: Madeline Jeffery, Dick Seager; South Kingstown: Dennis Migneault, Bill McCusker; Stonington: Fred Wagner; West Greenwich: Chris Grube, Pat Lardner; Westerly: Harvey Perry, Jon Ericson; RI DEM: Michelle Sheehan and guest speaker Corey Pelletier; CT DEEP: Eric Thomas; Save the Bay: Dave Prescott; Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association: Brett Still; Council Coordinator: Kassi Archambault.

Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM

Presentation: Freshwater Habitat Conservation by Corey Pelletier, Biologist of Freshwater & Diadromous Fisheries for the RI Department of Environmental Management

An excellent and wide-ranging presentation on watershed issues - - causes and mitigation options including: warming of waters, sedimentation, forestation, water depths, fish populations, seasonal variations on water depths and temperatures, channel widths, dams and status and other related issues. Mitigation initiatives were presented to decrease historical dams, lower water temperatures and increase aquatic organism passage for genetic variation and more chance of survival during warm water periods. A nationwide “conifer revetment program” to change river flows in specified areas is uniquely dubbed “Trees for Trout” by DEM and the RI Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Our council requested that notices be sent out and publicized so that this work can proceed and show the benefits of these programs.

Secretary’s Report: Approval of Minutes of January 22, 2020 meeting: Motion to Accept: Eric; 2nd: Dave. All in favor, none opposed.

Financial Report

1) Monthly Report:

a) Year to Date

- i. First fully 2020 pay period began on 01/10, therefore this will be the “first of the year” for budget report purposes.
- ii. Beginning on 01/10/20 and ending 02/06/20 Kassi has worked a total of 87 hours, totaling \$3,045.

b) January 10, 2020-February 06, 2020 Statement

- i. RI Foundation Grant of \$30,000 submitted and received by WPWA for Coordinator Salary.
 - a. Beginning Balance of \$17,190, Ending Balance of \$14,145; Expenses: \$3,045.
 - i. Project Coordinator Hours 01/10/19 – 02/06/20: \$3,045. (87 hours approved by Chair Jon Ericson)

Motion to Accept Monthly Financial Report: Fred; 2nd: Jon. All in favor, none opposed.

2) National Park Service (NPS) Funding Budget Proposal and Approval

“Time is of the Essence” regarding this subject. The Stewardship Council is responsible for submitting its budget to the National Park Service within the month in order to obtain its \$150,000 funding for the year. Members discussed clearly identifying the process for developing the budget. The budget needs to be periodically reviewed as a matter of good management practices to address any changing needs by the Council, and that some funds may need to be reallocated during the year.

I move that we approve the budget as proposed by the Executive Committee with the stipulation that no monies be disbursed for each line item without a discussion and a vote at subsequent Council meetings. Exceptions to the line item votes are made for items 1b, 1c, 4a, 4c, and 6.

Motion by Dennis; 2nd: Eric. All in favor, none opposed.

It is now important to timely complete the Council’s survey work and prioritize its projects in order to add details for budgeting and monitoring Council activities. Some of this detailing is well underway and will aid the Council in its next meeting to complete and approve the budget by major category and line item activities. A part of this work will include identifying partners and costs/benefits associated with their work on our behalf. Programs that will be discussed in March will include water quality monitoring and river trail maintenance by WPWA.

3) Motion to Approve Cooperative Agreement be made between Fiscal Agent, WPWA, and NPS on our behalf: Ahren; 2nd: Dennis. All in favor, none opposed.

Old Business

- 1) Brief Discussion on Committees
 - a) Council Committees, including the Executive Committee, are in equal status.
 - b) The Information and Education Committee
 - i) Met with RIDOT.
 - ii) Has a permissible sign of green background, white lettering.
 - iii) Seeking permission for NPS Wild and Scenic River logo sign.
 - iv) Stewardship Council and RIDOT will sign a letter approving next steps once negotiations are over.
 - c) Projects Committee

- i) Survey will be open longer. Check email for directions from Kassi if you have yet to submit a survey.

New Business (15 Min)

1) Good of the Order

- a) Various workshops, summit conferences and training programs were identified for attendance
- b) Actively engaged Town Representatives are a huge asset for the Stewardship Council. Members have been aiming to educate town staff and officials in a productive and relationship building manner to implement the Stewardship Plan. A simple show of hands to show members understood that personal opinions may be made as residents, rather than Stewardship Council members.

Around the Table in Five: Comments were made and all on-deck hands were in reasonably good moods.

Many commented on meetings members are having with their town officials or staff:

1. North Stonington on Boombridge Kayak Trail, celebration for opening of bridge
2. Exeter, meeting with Town Planner and Conservation Commission Chair. Objective is “we are here to help.”
3. Westerly, solar and Potter Hill Dam
4. West Greenwich, zoning on solar, visual buffer, adding to proposals “after project connected any issues or violations will cause the town to pursue unplugging solar array from the grid. “ This addition proved useful for the Town.
5. Stonington, Eric, CT DEEP Representative, and Fred, Stonington Representative, met with officials regarding the kayak trail and both technical and monetary help CT DEEP may provide.
6. URI, groups of students may provide research for Stewardship Council
7. DEM, open space grant applications welcomed from towns. June release.
8. South Kingstown, tree restoration

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM, Motion: Ahren; 2nd: Chris. All in favor, none opposed.