

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council Minutes

March 25, 2020, 6 pm to 8 pm

In Attendance: Exeter: Nan Quinlan; Hopkinton: Elaine Caldarone; North Kingstown: Ahren L Cohen, Jim LeBlanc; North Stonington: Madeline Jeffery, Dick Seager; Richmond: Pete August and guest: Antonia Bryson; South Kingstown: Dennis Migneault, Bill McCusker; Sterling: Roger Gibson; Stonington: Fred Wagner; West Greenwich: Chris Grube, Pat Lardner; Westerly: Jon Ericson, Harvey Perry; CT DEEP: Eric Thomas; Save the Bay: Dave Prescott; Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association: Brett Still and guest speakers: Elise Torello, Chris Fox; National Park Service: Jamie Fosburgh; Council Coordinator: Kassi Archambault.

Called to Order (ZOOM Teleconference) 6:01 PM

Secretary's Report: Approval of Minutes of February 26, 2020 meeting, as amended on March 24, 2020: Motion by Dick Seager; 2nd: Fred Wagner. All in favor, none opposed.

Presentation:

1. Presentation by Elise Torello on long-term WPWA water quality monitoring and data assessment. Elise has worked with WPWA water quality data for over seven years.
 - a. A 2016 study was explained, which ranked the importance of water quality testing sites. The goal is to fund all of Tier One sites. Currently ten are funded. Tier 1 there are 30 sites, Tier 2: 15, Tier 3: 23.
 - b. On WPWA.org there is page on Water Quality Monitoring Data. This page has a Google map with data from WPWA, Save the Bay, CUSH, Salt Ponds Coalition, US Stream Guages and others. When groups such as Trout Unlimited and Avalonia Land Trust collect samples in the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed, data is sent from URI Watershed Watch to Elise at WPWA to enter the data.
 - c. Many sites have been monitored since 1988. With such long term data, trends and outliers can be detected and acted upon. For example, a spike in nutrient levels can lead to finding and acting on the cause, then seeing the nutrient levels level back out. Parameters often include bacteria, temperature, nitrogen, pH, phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-a, secchi depth.
 - d. Elise would like to monitor the following sites.
 - i. 5 of Higher Priority: Wyoming Pond, Queen R. @ Mail Rd., Usquepaugh R. @ Rt. 2, Pawcatuck R. @ Bradford, Pawcatuck R. @ Boombridge Rd.
 - ii. 3 of Lower Priority: Worden Pond, Tomaquag @ Chase Hill Rd., Meadowbrook Pond
2. Discussion followed
3. Kassi presented budget for water quality monitoring in Wild and Scenic budget.
 - a. Jaimie asked if \$7K was chosen because we will fund one monitoring site for each of the 7 rivers in the system. It was not, however we can explore this for future years. Highly likely each of the designated rivers has a testing site, at least at its outlet. In the presentation, each river was represented.
 - b. Has ASRI of CT been approached for monitoring funds? Not sure
 - c. Chris Fox mentions need to be able to fund sites for the long term
 - d. There is little value in stop and go monitoring at a site. Need the long term continuity to evaluate trends

Financial Report

- 1) Specific budget item discussion on Water Quality Monitoring.
 - a) Fred Wagner moves to fund \$7,000 for seven or more sites for Water Quality Monitoring through WPWA; 2nd: Pete August. All in favor, none opposed.
- 2) Monthly Financial Report.
 - a) Year to Date
 - i) Beginning on 01/10/20 and ending 03/19/20 Kassi has worked a total of 193 hours, totaling \$6,755.
 - b) February 07, 2020 – March 19, 2020 Statement
 - i) RI Foundation Grant of \$30,000 submitted and received by WPWA for Coordinator Salary.
 - (1) Beginning Balance of \$14,145, Ending Balance of \$10,435; Expenses: \$3,710.
 - (2) Project Coordinator Hours 02/07/20-3/19/20: \$3,710. (106 hours approved by Chair Jon Ericson)
 - c) Stewardship Council budget and supplementary paperwork has been submitted to NPS.
 - d) Motion by Ahren Cohen to accept Financial Report; 2nd: Dennis Migneault. All in favor, none opposed.

Old Business (40 Min)

1. Council Membership and Procedures
 - a. Jon reviews membership protocols and responsibilities of Town Representatives
 - b. Need to revise Bylaws to include code of conduct and not expressing personal opinions
 - c. Some Council Members did not receive the email thread on this
 - d. After long discussion, there was general agreement the Wild and Scenic (W&S) Council handled this appropriately
2. Committee Reports
 - a. Projects Committee – Survey Summary and recommended next steps likely coming in April.
 - b. Information and Education Committee – Dennis reports trying to get a final resolution from State of RI on whether they will or will not post NPS logo. More coming next month.
 - c. Advisory Committee –
 - i. Fred Wagner reported the Committee will provide a Review Process and Town Representative Role description next month. This month, feedback desired on a “policy statement” of a solar ordinance review. He presented the solar ordinance and W&S position letter submitted to the Town of Charlestown. Positive feedback received.
 - d. Executive Committee – Jon Ericson briefly mentioned meeting with Alan Desbonnet, WPWA Board President. Will bring to Council meeting next month.

New Business (15 Min)

1. Explanation of Southeast CT/Western RI Waters Work Group
 - a. Eric Thomas briefed us Nitrogen Action Strategy
 - b. Had an outreach event for project, but not happening in a public venue now
 - c. Stewardship Council should participate in the event
 - d. Dave mentions group has been working a while.
 - e. Group focused on water quality issues and permitting hearings (Kenyon Industries and Westerly Waste Water facility)
2. Good of the Order – Open discussion on other topics of interest. (10 min)
 - a. Jon: Westerly grant for boat washing station is approved
 - b. ZOOM is working fine for W&S meetings
 - c. Will make ZOOM available for Committees
 - d. Pete introduced Antonia Bryson, prospective new Richmond Town Representative
 - e. Fred discussed exciting activities in Stonington, North Stonington, and Westerly.
 - f. Jamie reported that W&S budget is moving through DC. No problems
3. Fred Wagner motioned to adjourn at 8:07 PM; 2nd: Ahren Cohen. All in favor, none opposed.