

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

April 22, 2020, 6 pm to 8 pm

In Attendance: Charlestown, Neil Wardley; Exeter: Nan Quinlan; Hopkinton: Elaine Caldarone; North Kingstown: Ahren L Cohen; North Stonington: Madeline Jeffery, Dick Seager; Richmond: Antonia Bryson, Pete August; South Kingstown: Dennis Migneault, Bill McCusker; Stonington: Fred Wagner; West Greenwich: Chris Grube, Pat Lardner; Westerly: Jon Ericson; Save the Bay: Dave Prescott; Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association: Brett Still, and guest speaker: Chris Fox; National Park Service: Jamie Fosburgh; Council Coordinator: Kassi Archambault.

Called to Order at 6:03 PM

Attendance was reviewed and Quorum confirmed.

Secretary's Report: Ahren moved to Approve of Minutes of March 25, 2020 meeting, Fred 2nd, all approved.

Introduction of new Town Representative:

Pete August introduced new Richmond Town Representative Antonia Bryson. Antonia gave a brief summary of her background (environmental law) and interests.

Presentation:

1. Budget Item: River Trail Maintenance

- a. Chris Fox, Executive Director of WPWA presented how he and a contractor maintained navigable kayak passage in the watershed. Overview of recent past, and request for what areas the Council would like to see completed.
 - i. WPWA clearing trees since late 1990's. Challenge to fund. Dangerous work. Insurance Co. would not allow volunteers. Does not clear trees on tributaries. Trees fall from wind and lose stability. Create coarse woody debris, important for the ecosystem. A WPWA Staff member accompanies the contractor to help and make cutting decisions to protect habitat.
 - ii. WPWA has an interactive map to crowd source blow-downs <https://wpwa.org/river-conditions-report/>
 - iii. Need to replace 2 chainsaws
 - iv. How can Council help? Help with funding. One new chainsaw and help with contractor bill.
- b. Council questions and discussion held after presentation.
 - i. A couple of Council members suggested to expand tree cutting to include Chipuxet
 - ii. On average 5-6 days, at 10 hours each to clear trees core service area: Upper Wood and Parts of the Pawcatuck
 - iii. Contractor brings personal saws. Need two people and four saws for the job.
 - iv. Dennis M asks if members of the Council can assist with planning. The answer was a committee is welcomed.
 - v. Madeline asks if there is a special ask in fundraising. Restricted fund raising is not common practice.
 - vi. Use an 18" chain saw, Husqvarna is preferred (Ahren)
 - vii. Beaver dams present a problem. Need DEM approval.
 - viii. Can expand to CT rivers with some startup attention, possibly the Shunock
 - ix. Uses vegetable oil in saw or run dry

- x. Some river clearing has been controversial in some rivers nationally (Jaime). Has value as wildlife habitat. Might want to be selective in choosing rivers to clear. So far no public controversy in the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed; only core service areas are addressed.

Financial Report:

1. Specific budget item discussion on River Trail Maintenance.
 - a. Can we fund at \$5K and include Chipuxet? Answer was that funding for the clearing of the Chipuxet would have to be identified for inclusion in this line item. \$3K is the minimum spent to maintain the core areas.
 - b. Motion by Dennis to approve \$1,500 to clear core areas (Wood River and Pawcatuck River sections) for safe paddle passage; 2nd: Chris G, all in favor.
 - c. May study the clearing needs in other Rivers; Brett suggests reaching out to a broader community via a web survey and conservation commissions
2. Approval of the Monthly Financial Report.
 - a. Year to Date: Beginning on 01/10/20 and ending 04/16/20 Kassi has worked a total of 280 hours, totaling \$9,818. March 20, 2020 – April 16, 2020 Statement: Beginning Balance of \$10,435, Ending Balance of \$7,373; Expenses: \$3,063. Project Coordinator Hours 03/20/20-04/16/20: \$3,063. (87.5 hours approved by Chair Jon Ericson)
 - b. Dave moved approval of the Monthly Financial Report; 2nd: Fred, all approved
 - c. Dave motioned to approve transfer of \$4,500 from Outreach to Planning; 2nd: Ahren, all approved.

Old Business

3. Committee Reports
 - a. Projects – Survey Summary likely coming in May.
 - b. Information and Education – Working on river signs with RIDOT. Preparing to work with CT Towns and DOT. Will pursue project(s) such as presentations, brochures and /or river paddle guides.
 - c. Bylaws – Revised Mission Statement; meeting monthly; soliciting requests from the Council on revisions that members would like to see.
4. Committee Presentations and Discussion
 - a. Advisory – Presenting and seeking approval of Review Process and the Role of Town Representative.
 - i. Chris Grube reviews expectations of Town Representatives, especially in the Review Process
 - ii. Dennis asks about document control
 - iii. Antonia notes we need to focus on issues that impact rivers
 - iv. Madeline says she feels this is too restrictive and limits reps. She wants to mull this over.
 - v. Vote to table the formal vote of adoption to next meeting. Ahren made motion, Madeline 2nd, approved
 - b. Executive – Presenting initial discussion with Alan Desbonnet, Board President.
 - i. Tabled to next meeting

New Business

1. Good of the Order – Open discussion on other topics of interest.

Action Items

1. Email any bylaw revision requests to Bylaws Committee Chair, Jon Ericson.

Next Meeting: Fourth Wednesday of each month at 6pm. Date is May 27, 2020.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:08 by Fred; 2nd: Ahren, all in favor.