

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

*May 27, 2020, 6 pm to 8 pm*

In Attendance: Charlestown, Neil Wardley; Exeter: Nan Quinlan; Hopkinton: Elaine Caldarone; North Kingstown: Ahren L Cohen, Jim LeBlanc; 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, Harvey Perry; Sterling, Roger Gibson; Save the Bay: Dave Prescott; Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association: Brett Still; National Park Service: Jamie Fosburgh; CT DEEP, Eric Thomas; RI DEM, Cathy Sparks; Council Coordinator: Kassi Archambault.

Kassi gave a quick review of the chat function.

Call to Order (ZOOM Teleconference): 6:04 PM

Attendance was reviewed and Quorum confirmed.

Secretary's Report: Approval of Minutes of April 22, 2020 meeting, as amended: Motion by Fred; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Dennis. All in favor, none opposed.

Financial Report:

1. Year to Date: Beginning on 01/10/20 and ending 05/14/20 Kassi has worked a total of 366 hours, totaling \$12,810.
2. April 17, 2020 – May 14, 2020 Statement
  - a. RI Foundation Grant of \$30,000 submitted and received by WPWA for Coordinator Salary.
    - i. Beginning Balance of \$7,373, Ending Balance of \$4,380; Expenses: \$2,992.
      1. Project Coordinator Hours 04/17/20-05/14/20: \$3,063. (85.5 hours approved by Chair Jon Ericson)
      2. On target budget-wise if NPS funds arrive.
3. Approval of the Financial Report: Motion by Fred; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ahren. Discussion: Fred asks if we have a backup plan to continue funding Coordinator's salary. Yes, we do, WPWA can cover. All approved.

Old Business (80 Min)

1. Committee Reports (5-10 min)
  - a. Information and Education
    - i. Bill and Dennis gave a report. Progress has slowed with pandemic.
    - ii. Dennis reviewed plan on alerting local press on W&S activities
    - iii. Dennis moves we establish a Wild & Scenic Facebook page, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Roger.
    - iv. Good discussion on the benefits of FB. Instagram hits a younger crowd. We need a champion. Need to keep content fresh. Bill agrees to manage a Wild & Scenic Facebook site. Motion passes: 10 in favor, 6 opposed.
  - b. Bylaws – Meeting twice a month.
  - c. Advisory – Documents are being thoughtfully revised with Council feedback.
2. Committee Presentations

- a. Executive – Presenting initial discussion with Alan Desbonnet, Board President.
  - i. Jon gave an overview of W&S / WPWA partnership
  - ii. Concept of partnering is central to the national W&S program
  - iii. Many shared values and some shared programs; e.g., WQ monitoring, River trail maintenance, river condition reporting, youth adventure program
  - iv. Back office support from WPWA (boats, layover funding, D&O insurance, visitor center meeting venue, fiscal agent)
  - v. Will send a survey to members to gauge thoughts on partnership
  - vi. Comments:
    1. Dennis asks what will be on the survey. Preparation to have an open discussion.
    2. Brett Still: WPWA Board sees this as an exciting opportunity for leveraging partnerships, lot of synergy, opportunity to work collaboratively (WQ, education programs), looking forward to a conversation. Hope to be seen as a strategic partner.
- b. Projects – Eric Thomas provided report of Survey Results and Possibilities.
  - i. Uses survey results to develop action activities
  - ii. 20+ responses
  - iii. Committee will analyze results and recommend action strategies.
  - iv. Look at first few pages of report for a short version of the report.
  - v. Need to consider funding for the projects we hope to take on.
  - vi. Might provide opportunity to leverage with partners.
  - vii. Harvey and Nan created funding source lists.
  - viii. W&S needs to partner with a non-profit entity to transfer funds.
  - ix. Madeline feels that Wild and Scenic is like the teenager who has to live with parents. Wants to see us stand on our own legs and establish our identity.
  - x. Fred asks if it is a good idea to list our existing partnership – RIDEM, STB, DEEP, Save the Sound.

### New Business (30 Min)

1. Introduction to Dropbox – web based storage of documents
  - a. Kassi reviewed DropBox shared folder
  - b. Kassi will manage DropBox content
  - c. For final, internal documents
  - d. CT government representatives cannot use
  - e. Be careful about security
  - f. 17 members of 22 present use Google Drive, 16 use DropBox
2. Discussion and Vote to establish River Maintenance Committee
  - a. Should we establish an ad hoc committee to review topics raised in April meeting?
  - b. Bill has inspected the Chipuxet and Pawcatuck, they are fine and do not require clearing
  - c. Bill suggests a paddlers workshop to see what is needed
  - d. Dennis is learning a lot of new info on rivers. Dennis supports a workshop.
  - e. Should we do a drone reconnaissance?
  - f. Fred – Need a central repository of river information
  - g. Dennis moves a workshop coordinated by Bill and Dennis; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ahren. All approved.
3. Good of the Order – Open discussion on other topics of interest
  - a. Stewardship Council Kickoff Meeting took place May 2019, One Year Anniversary Toast!
    - i. Kassi and Jon gave a toast and all hoisted their glasses

What we look forward to next year

- ii. Get brand out
  - iii. Do an event
  - iv. Get info out there
  - v. Enjoy the progress we are making
  - vi. Teach the public who we are, get exposure
  - vii. Do a stewardship project to enhance the watershed
  - viii. An earth day event
  - ix. Eradicate poison ivy along rivers
  - x. Get outside more often
  - xi. First big event
  - xii. Canoe kayak trail suggested
  - xiii. Get out in a kayak more
  - xiv. Have an accelerated learning curve to learn the Council culture
  - xv. Explore the watershed
  - xvi. Sign some financial documents
  - xvii. Getting two new local officials on the water
  - xviii. See some branding on RI DEM properties
  - xix. Getting the kids on the water
  - xx. A big event and get PBS
  - xxi. Market ourselves and consider a river network
- b. Kassi good of order – Zoom call with other new Partnership Wild and Scenic River groups; CT Land Conservation Council has a Regional Conservation Mapper

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 by Ahren; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Dennis. All approved.

Chat comment(s) not discussed:

From Harvey Perry to Everyone: (6:45 PM)

I remain troubled that the Council voted to grant WPWA \$7000 of NPS funds support its water monitoring program without seeking the funds from other sources first. The Council could have committed the funds, with NPS funds being a backup if other grants could not be found.

(Note: This was discussed in April's Council Meeting. Answer: Co-Presenter, WPWA Executive Director Chris Fox stated that in ten plus years experience in applying and searching for water quality grant funding, sustainable funding is not available. Sustainable funding for a long term commitment to a water quality site permits worthwhile data; Council members agreed with this statement.)

The creation of an ad hoc river trails project committee by the Council creates confusion in my mind about the role of the Projects Committee. Should this idea have been referred to the Projects Committee? Or is the Council going select projects and appoint such project committees in the future?