

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

*June 24, 2020, 6 pm to 8 pm*

In Attendance: Exeter: Nan Quinlan, Kevin McGovern; Hopkinton: Elaine Caldarone; North Kingstown: Ahren Cohen; North Stonington: Madeline Jeffery, Dick Seager; Richmond: Antonia Bryson, Pete August; South Kingstown: Dennis Migneault, Bill McCusker; Stonington: Fred Wagner, Brian Bottaro; West Greenwich: Chris Grube, Pat Lardner; Westerly: Jon Ericson; 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.

Call to Order (ZOOM Teleconference): 6:04

Nan introduced Kevin McGovern, a new Alternate Representative for Exeter

Secretary's Report: Approval of Revised 5/30/20 and 6/10/20 Minutes of May 27, 2020 meeting  
Fred moves approval, Motion by Fred; 2nd: Madeline. All in favor, none opposed.

Financial Report: Approval of the Monthly Financial Report

- 1) Year to Date: Beginning on 01/10/20 and ending 06/11/20 Kassi has worked a total of 453 hours, totaling \$15,837. April 17, 2020 – June 11, 2020 Statement: Beginning Balance of \$4,380, Ending Balance of \$1,352; Expenses: \$3,027. Project Coordinator Hours 05/15/20-06/11/20: \$3,027. (86.5 hours approved by Chair Jon Ericson)
- 2) Motion to accept financial report presented with agenda: Ahren; 2nd: Nan. All approved.

Old Business (85 Min)

- 1) Committee Reports (5-10 min)
  - a) Advisory – Nearly done drafting Role of Town Representative, considering both general and specific to Advisory Committee. Will present details in July or August
  - b) Bylaws – Meeting twice a month. Have drafted a communication policy, will have redrafted by-laws next month.
  - c) Projects – Working on Recommendations as outcome of Survey Results and Possibilities. Will adopt the form of a Strategic Plan.
- 2) Committee Presentations
  - a) Executive – Discussion on Partnership, Survey Results
    - i) Jon gave overview of survey results
      - (1) Thanks everyone for their thoughtful comments.
      - (2) Prompted by Council questions on level of partnership with WPWA.
      - (3) We have been invited to meet WPWA Board but COVID-19 got in the way of face to face meetings. Should we arrange a Zoom meeting with Board?
      - (4) Need to develop a plan to communicate W&S and what makes it unique, especially

- compared to WPWA. Maybe a project for the I&E committee.
- ii) Dennis notes I&E committee is reaching out to press. Suggest that we invite Alan to meet with the full Council.
  - iii) Fred suggest we meet with Alan next council meeting.
  - iv) Madeline asks what are our expectations of each other.
  - v) Bill does not like surveys and suggests we should steer away from them. Prefers an open discussion.
  - vi) Antonia reminds us that we should partner with other organizations, as need requires
  - vii) Pete points out we have specific areas of mutual interest – water quality monitoring, river clearing, financial agent, education programs
  - viii) Eric points out our unique role is protecting the ORVs, and that we have a published Stewardship Plan.
  - ix) Dennis points out we have a federal mandate, ORVs and an Advisory Committee, allowing the Stewardship Council to provide advisory opinions to the towns – makes us unique.
  - x) Fred suggests we write-up our potential partners and point of contacts and learn what they are doing. Must search out common areas of activity and interest.
  - xi) Brett says WPWA would like to be thought of as a partner and collaborator, a resource for W&S. Must keep dialogue open.
  - xii) Dick suggests that our relationships with Town governments are our most important and unique partnership.
  - xiii) Madeline concurs with Dick on relationship with towns.
  - xiv) Nan – many of our relationships will be driven by grant opportunities. Wants to showcase projects and programs that we are doing that are uniquely ours
  - xv) Ahren – reminds us the dire financial situation of states and we should not expect significant financial or staff support.
  - xvi) Cathy reminds us we are unique in our close ties with towns and state agencies.
  - xvii) Dick suggests we also ask what we can do for partners.
  - xviii) Pete will bundle minutes as organized – who are our partners? What do we have in common with WPWA, how are we unique?
  - xix) Fred suggests regular coordinated meeting with agencies and W&S.
  - xx) Dave mentions he has sponsored a mini-annual session on water quality. Suggests annual meeting and the W&S Council would sponsor.
  - xxi) Nan suggest we talk to our organization partners to learn how we do this.
  - xxii) Madeline thinks this is superfluous at this moment. Adding another annual meeting would be a lot.
  - xxiii) Cathy agrees such a meeting can be done, but needs to be really well thought out. If people feel it is a waste of time, this will reflect poorly on us. We are not ready. Need a well-articulated goal and something to share.
  - xxiv) Fred thinks we might have something in January.
  - xxv) Jon/Kassi pose question #2 – how do we communicate with WPWA and the public. No comments.
  - xxvi) Jon/Kassi on meetings. No comments.
  - xxvii) Kassi asks if we want to have a small group that sorts this out.
  - xxviii) Madeline is feeling pressured at having to make a decision on this.
  - xxix) Jamie says it is time to move on.
- b) Information and Education – Social Media (Facebook) introduction. Seeking Council approval of \$4,005 for Graphic Branding. A budget located in Supplemental Information of Agenda to serve as a loose guideline.

- i) Dennis described the Facebook page. Getting some good content already
- ii) Branding: need to get the dragon fly logo (Wood-Pawcatuck Wild & Scenic logo) out in the public. Dennis asks for authorization to do some purchasing on branding.
  - (1) Bill moves that we authorize \$4,005 for branding expenses, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Dave.
  - (2) Fred requests more details on each item in list of branding products. Dennis responds.
  - (3) Eric - how do we evaluate the success of this?
  - (4) Nan – likes the idea of getting this launched and having the ability to leave branded and informational “stuff” around.
  - (5) Dick – can get embroidered hats or silk-screened hats, big cost difference.
  - (6) Ahren – we should approve the spending.
  - (7) Dick – wants to know how Council feels about various SWAG ideas.
  - (8) Fred – suggests the River guide as a cheap give-away.
  - (9) Motion approved.
- iii) Dennis discussed the road/river sign project – focus now on signage at DEM launch sites. Proposes authorizing I&E committee to start putting out signage.
  - (1) Bill McCusker shows oak sign that his friend donated for the SK bike path.
  - (2) Jon – what is the lifespan of a sign like this? Bill – not sure of weathering of wooden sign, although it has several coats of exterior polyurethane and is made of a wood durable to the outdoors Vandalism is the issue. Jon suggests we include sign maintenance in future budgets.
  - (3) Still communicating with DOT on road river signs. Budget authorization would cover the cost of NPS Wild & Scenic logo for river signage.
  - (4) Have not reached out to CT DOT yet.
  - (5) SK is a low hanging fruit – so simple. Only two sign sites.
  - (6) Fred asks how the signs weather.
  - (7) Pat – W. Greenwich has path with wooden signs which look great.
  - (8) Bill motions we authorize \$3,000 for I&E to spend on signs; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ahren. All approved.
- 3) Dropbox was implemented for Council document storage. Any questions? (5 min)
- 4) No questions arose. If you have questions, contact Kassi

#### New Business (25 Min)

- 1) Water Quality Committee of the WPWA Board. Any Council members interested in inquiring?
  - a) We have been invited to participate on a WPWA water quality monitoring committee. Do any W&S members have interest in joining the committee? Looking for novices.
    - i) Bill volunteers.
    - ii) Eric asks how it will report out.
- 2) Good of the Order – Open discussion on other topics of interest
  - a) Kassi announced she is expecting a Halloween baby
  - b) Jon mentions we will develop a plan to cover for Kassi when she is out on maternity leave.
  - c) Bill’s reports on paddling workshop
    - i) 80 miles paddled
    - ii) Described geography
    - iii) Noted issues on Lower Wood, Pawcatuck Rivers
    - iv) River condition was pretty good
    - v) Met with Charlie Brown at DEM to get policy on dealing with beaver dams
    - vi) Bill was very impressed with the quality of the paddles and beauty of the rivers
    - vii) Suggest we do a Council members paddle up the Upper Wood.
    - viii) Divided up paddlers on various river sections
    - ix) Worst part is Worden Pond to Biscuit City

- x) Next step is meet with Chris to brief him on where trees are down
  - xi) As water levels drop, new hazards will appear. Might need to re-survey
  - xii) Bill hopes WPWA can continue funding. Both groups to fund a significant effort. Include covering chain saws and contractor fees.
  - xiii) Fred said paddling maps do not include all seven rivers in the W&S designation. Not sure how navigable Shunock and Green Fall-Ashaway rivers are. If not navigable, must say so. Jon stated he will address it.
  - xiv) Bill will assess navigability of the Shunock and Green Fall-Ashaway Rivers.
- 3) Madeline briefs us on the US Fish and Wildlife Service Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge. Has purchased a 78 acre parcel near the Green Fall River – the MacIntosh property. Very beautiful. Big parcel.

Next Meeting: Fourth Wednesday of each month at 6pm. Date is July 22, 2020.

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

## **Summary of Partnership Discussion and Survey Results**

Below is compiled from the May 27 and June 22 Stewardship Council Meetings

### Items of Mutual Interest and Collaboration Between WPWA and W&S

1. WPWA is our fiscal agent
2. WPWA provides infrastructure for W&S operations
  - a. Fleet of watercraft
  - b. Office and meeting space
  - c. Administrative services
3. Water Quality monitoring
4. River clearing
5. Educational/outreach programs (youth paddles)
6. Partnerships with organizations and municipalities for project related goals

### Items Unique to W&S

1. Relationship with each community in watershed
2. Published Stewardship Plan, which is a watershed management plan adopted by watershed municipalities and acknowledged by federal government
3. Monitor issues in communities that might impact rivers
4. Relationship with state and federal partners (NPS, DEM, DEEP)
5. Advocate to educate and protect ORVs of rivers

