

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed
Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council
Meeting Agenda**



April 27, 2022, 5 pm to 7 pm

ZOOM Web Conference

Login:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/98274392486?pwd=ck5yZ>

[XkxZXFUay9jaytUbVlxTWpVQT09](#)

Password: Steward

Meeting ID: 982 7439 2486

Dial-in:

+1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 982 7439 2486

Password: 025264

Call to Order *please keep comments brief and on topic so many people can participate in the discussion*

Secretary's Report: Approval of Minutes of February 23, 2022 meeting

Financial Report:

1. Approval of the Monthly Financial Report.
2. Entertain a motion to approve budget transfer.
 - a. Grants program is nearly exhausted.
 - b. This budget transfer includes \$4,184 into grants from "unallocated and unspent" of FY 20-21, \$8K into grants from Blueway River Maps and \$4K from into events from interns.

Projects Committee – Grant Proposal Recommendations:

1. Entertain a motion for Stewardship Council to approve \$4,000 grant to the Westerly Land Trust for Acquisition of Cottrell Family Preserve.
2. Entertain a motion for Stewardship Council to approve \$1,900 grant the Westerly Land Trust Water Quality Monitoring at Mastuxet Brook.
3. Entertain a motion for Stewardship Council to approve \$4,000 grant to the Town of Richmond Beaver River Park Grassland Habitat Management Plan and Habitat Management.

Committee and Project Updates (6 pm):

1. RSVP and FYI
 - a. Natives – preparation and planting days for Exeter Library will take place within Monday, May 2nd through 4th.
 - b. Outstandingly Remarkable Values Events –
 - i. Ceremonial Stonework with Mark Starr, Wed 5/11, 6:30-8pm presentation. Hike Sat 5/14 (5/15 rain date), 9-11am.
 - ii. Traditional Ecological Knowledge kayak tour with Tomaquag Museum, Wed 5/11 3:30-6pm with a rain date of Fri 5/13.
 - c. WPWA Annual Meeting – Thursday, May 26th, 6-7:30pm at Malted Barley in Westerly, RI. Planned Presentations by the Stewardship Council – Chair's Message, Water Trails, Environmental Resource Map.
2. Other

Nominations: Elections of Officers takes place yearly in May. Accepted nominations and self-nominations welcomed via email to Kassi@wpwa.org until May 11th. Slate will then be revealed and voting will be open to all members from May 18th - 24th, with voting outcome at May 25th Stewardship Council Workshop.

Town/Community Updates (6:30 pm)

Next Meeting or Workshop: The fourth Wednesday of every month, May 25, 2022.

Adjourn

Supplemental Information for 4/27/2021 Meeting:

1. Financial Report
2. Three Grant Proposals

Financial Report

- 1) Budget year to date beginning on 07/08/2021 and ending 03/17/2022 Kassi has worked a total of 702.25 hours, totaling \$29,988.75
- 2) 3/04 – 3/17 Statement:

| Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| NPS Wild & Scenic Grant Drawdown Request | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date 3/29/2022 Inv 2022-1015 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | Total Budget | | Previously Billed | | This Billing | | Total Billed | | Remaining | |
| | | | Revised Budget | Revised Hours | Hours | Total | Hours From | Hours To | Hours | Total | Hours | Total |
| | | | | | | | 3/4/2022 | 3/17/2022 | | | | |
| 1 Staffing, Outsourcing & Interns | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | a | Outreach Publications & Communicatic | 25,309.00 | | | 7,236.59 | | | | 7,236.59 | | 18,072.41 |
| | b | Website Maintenance | 4,450.00 | | | 948.19 | | | | 948.19 | | 3,501.81 |
| | c | Coordinator (2,294 hours @ \$35/hr) | 80,290.00 | 2,294.00 | 1,466.50 | 59,360.00 | 56.50 | 1,977.50 | 1,523.00 | 61,337.50 | 771.00 | 18,952.50 |
| | d | GIS & Mapping Service | 8,592.00 | | | 4,438.00 | | | | 4,438.00 | | 4,154.00 |
| | e | Expert Consultant | 22,058.00 | | | - | | | | - | | 22,058.00 |
| | f | Interns | 4,000.00 | | | - | | | | - | | 4,000.00 |
| 2 Programs | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | a | Enhancement Projects | 77,154.00 | | | 17,856.71 | | 180.00 | | 18,036.71 | | 59,117.29 |
| | b | Events (ex public paddles) | 18,980.00 | | | 795.94 | | 2,550.00 | | 3,345.94 | | 15,634.06 |
| | c | River Trail Maintenance | 5,000.00 | | | 2,700.00 | | | | 2,700.00 | | 2,300.00 |
| | d | Update Blueways River Maps | 8,000.00 | | | - | | | | - | | 8,000.00 |
| | e | Water Quality Monitoring | 7,000.00 | | | 7,000.00 | | | | 7,000.00 | | - |
| | f | Youth Adventure Program | 12,000.00 | | | 6,423.00 | | | | 6,423.00 | | 5,577.00 |
| 4 Miscellaneous Costs | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | a | Directors and Officers Insurance | 2,600.00 | | | 2,500.00 | | | | 2,500.00 | | 100.00 |
| | b | Mileage | 2,724.00 | | | 132.94 | | 108.93 | | 241.87 | | 2,482.13 |
| | c | Supplies | 3,207.00 | | | 2,210.21 | | | | 2,210.21 | | 996.79 |
| | d | Workshop Attendance | 5,000.00 | | | 640.00 | | | | 640.00 | | 4,360.00 |
| 5 Total Direct Costs | | | 286,364.00 | 2,294.00 | 1,466.50 | 112,241.58 | 56.50 | 4,816.43 | 1,523.00 | 117,058.01 | 771.00 | 169,305.99 |
| 6 Indirect and Accounting | | | 28,636.00 | | | 20,454.00 | | 3,409.00 | | 23,863.00 | | 4,773.00 |
| TOTAL | | | 315,000.00 | 2,294.00 | 1,466.50 | 132,695.58 | 56.50 | 8,225.43 | 1,523.00 | 140,921.01 | 771.00 | 174,078.99 |

Grant Proposals: Narrative excerpts are below and full proposals, as submitted and reviewed by the Projects Committee are currently linked on this webpage: <https://wpwildrivers.org/draft-council-documents/#>

GRANT PROPOSAL

Westerly Land Trust \$1,900 Request Water Quality Monitoring at Mastuxet Brook

The Westerly Land Trust (WLT) respectfully seeks a partnership with the Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council through a grant of \$1,900 to support the beginning of WLT's long-term, volunteer-based water quality monitoring program at Mastuxet Brook in Westerly, Rhode Island.

Starting in May 2022, Westerly Land Trust, in collaboration with the University of Rhode Island's Watershed Watch, will begin testing water quality and recording streamflow measurements at Mastuxet Brook. Mastuxet Brook lies within the Lower Pawcatuck watershed and drains approximately 1,000 acres of highly urbanized land. Both Watershed Watch and Save the Bay have identified Mastuxet Cove, where Mastuxet Brook meets the Pawcatuck River, as a hotspot for pollution. Currently, no water quality data is collected along Mastuxet Brook. By filling this data gap, the Westerly Land Trust will help identify and address point-sources of pollution along Mastuxet Brook, which will help enhance water quality downstream in the Lower Pawcatuck River.

Monitoring water quality and streamflow in Mastuxet Brook also represents initial steps towards protecting and enhancing brook trout and American eel habitat. The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture identified the Mastuxet Brook watershed as brook trout habitat and, in 2006, RI DEM biologists confirmed a breeding population of brook trout in the stream, leading the state to designate the brook as a Conservation Opportunity Area. Gathering long-term water quality data is a good first step towards securing future funding for habitat restoration projects to protect both this small watershed and that of the Lower Pawcatuck River. ...

GRANT PROPOSAL

Westerly Land Trust \$4,000 Request for Acquisition of Cottrell Family Preserve

The Westerly Land Trust (WLT) respectfully seeks a partnership with the Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council through a grant of \$4,000 to support a portion of the closing costs of a recently acquired 21.47 acre property, the Cottrell Family Preserve, on the Pawcatuck River in the Potter Hill area of Westerly, Rhode Island.

In 2017 a local land-owning family approached the Westerly Land Trust about the possibility of WLT purchasing 43 acres consisting of four neighboring parcels that lie on the Pawcatuck River and abut 210 acres of Town-owned forest to the west and south. As the conversation continued, a two-phased approach to the acquisition was proposed, and in February 2022, WLT purchased two of the four parcels totaling 21.47 acres (13-29 and 14-30 Christian Hill Road, Westerly, Plat 8, Lots 6 & 8) with potential for the remaining portion to be acquired in the future.

WLT values the opportunity to conserve any land in Westerly, but these parcels' prime location directly between the Pawcatuck River and the Town Forest made them especially worthy of prioritized protection. Not only does this acquisition extend the continuous wildlife corridor of wetlands, forest, and meadows already preserved by the Town of Westerly, but it eliminates the possibility of development, especially with the high value of riverfront property. In line with WLT's mission and Rhode Island's state guide plan, preserving parcels like these will fortify a natural flood plain and protect the Pawcatuck River's water quality, both important amidst climate change's imminent threats. In

addition, the existing neighboring trails systems could be expanded into this property, offering enhanced public land and water access for health, education, and environmental immersion. ...

GRANT PROPOSAL
Town of Richmond \$4,000 Request for
Beaver River Park Grassland Habitat Management Plan
And Habitat Management

The Town of Richmond, Rhode Island owns 18+-acre Beaver River Park, located off Beaver River Road and bordering the Beaver River, ~800 feet south of the Route 138 crossing of the Beaver River (Figure 1). Beaver River Park is a critically important public open space property to the town and its residents, as an active playground, passive recreational (i.e., walking and wildlife viewing and photography) site, and unique grassland habitat. The Richmond Conservation Commission (RCC) provides oversight of the on-site grassland habitat, and previously developed a walking trail with stations and accompanying descriptive guide for residents and other park visitors to learn more about the grassland and other park components. The Richmond Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for the routine maintenance of the park, and has provided assistance in managing the plant community within the grassland and along the park foot trails. The Town Administrator is responsible for overseeing the DPW and Richmond boards and commissions including the RCC. Collectively, these town officials and the RCC seek to conserve the important on-site habitat at Beaver River Park, as well as the Beaver River that borders the park property. The parkland contributes to the Beaver River watershed, and conservation of the on-site habitats contribute to natural habitats supporting wildlife and quality of the Beaver River, one of eight tributaries to the Wood-Pawcatuck River, a designated Wild and Scenic River.

Grassland habitat dominated by native warm season grasses and herbaceous forbs (e.g., little bluestem, common milkweed, goldenrods, butterflyweed) provide important habitat to songbirds and other wildlife (e.g., meadow vole, red fox), and are often habitat for rare plants that are only found in early successional plant communities. While lightning strikes once served as a primary source of ground fire to sustain grassland habitat by limiting growth and cover by woody plants (shrubs and trees), current developed landscapes and community protection and hazard safety have eliminated natural fire processes. Rather, strategic active and routine management is required to sustain grassland habitat to address the establishment of woody plants through ecological succession, and in particular to minimize colonization and spread by non-native plant species (e.g., autumn olive, shrub honeysuckle).

The Beaver River Park grassland habitat has been colonized by autumn olive, winged sumac, bayberry, white pine, spruce and other shrubs and trees. While both the RCC and DPW have completed removal of woody plant activities in the past two decades, autumn olive has greatly increased in cover particularly in the South Cell grassland although autumn olive and sumac are invading the North Cell grassland as well (Refer to Figure 1). Town commitment to management of the grassland is hampered by two primary factors: (1) lack of staff capacity to complete the woody plant control; and (2) a management plan which outlines and details management actions needed and a prioritization and scheduling of these management actions. To add, the town needs a better understanding of the level of effort of routine management so be able to schedule DPW staff and equipment, as well as budget to hire contractors to assist with management to sustain a healthy and functioning grassland habitat. ...