

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

**Minutes  
Meeting held on April 27, 2022**

In Attendance: Exeter: Nan Quinlan; Richmond: Antonia Bryson, Pete August; South Kingstown: Dennis Migneault; Stonington: Fred Wagner; West Greenwich: Chris Grube, Pat Lardner; Westerly: Jon Ericson, Lauren Barber; Save the Bay: Dave Prescott; WPWA: Andrew McNulty; National Park Service: Lauren Bonatakis; Kassi Donnelly, Coordinator.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

Secretary's Report:

A. Bryson presented the draft minutes of the February 23, 2022 meeting. D. Migneault moved to approve the minutes as presented, and J. Ericson seconded. There being no discussion, the motion passed and the minutes were approved.

Financial Report:

1. Approval of the Monthly Financial Report: P. August presented the monthly financial report, with appended biweekly accounting summaries. F. Wagner moved to accept the report as presented, and P. Lardner seconded. There being no discussion, the motion passed and the financial report was approved.
2. Budget Transfer: P. August explained that he was recommending a transfer of funds between categories in the existing budget. He noted that if the Council approved the grant proposals on tonight's agenda, only \$2000 would remain in the grants account. The National Park Service permits the Council to transfer between categories amounts up to 20% of its budget in any given year without NPS approval. The proposed transfers amount to only 7% of the budget. He proposed transferring \$4184 in unencumbered funds from first budget cycle and \$8000 from the Blueways river map account, which the Council has no plans to use, into the account for grants, and transferring \$4000 from the account for interns not being hired this budget year into the account for events to fund the event planner. The proposed transfers would increase the grants account to \$14,000 and allow for at least three more proposals to be funded. F. Wagner moved to approve the transfers, and P. Lardner seconded. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

Projects Committee Grant Proposal Recommendations:

K. Donnelly presented three grant applications that had been recommended for approval by the Projects Committee. A summary of the applications and the full applications were included in the materials provided to Council members prior to the meeting.

1. \$4000 grant to Westerly Land Trust—Acquisition of Cottrell Family Preserve. N. Quinlan moved to approve the grant, and D. Migneault seconded. P. August noted that closing costs for small land trusts were difficult to obtain and the grant would be an ideal use of Council funds. The motion passed unanimously.

2. \$1900 grant to Westerly Land Trust—Water Quality Monitoring at Mastuxet Brook—P. August moved to approve the grant and J. Ericson seconded. D. Prescott clarified the relationship between the proposed monitoring site and the site maintained by Save the Bay, and explained how the additional monitoring would help identify the contributions of various sources of runoff to water quality. Given the importance of the Brook for native Trout, Pete suggests we consider adding this site to the WPWA-sponsored portfolio of monitoring locations when we discuss water quality testing for next year's budget. The motion passed with D. Prescott abstaining.
3. \$4000 grant to Town of Richmond—Beaver River Park Grassland Habitat Management Plan—P. August moved to approve the grant and D. Prescott seconded. N. Quinlan expressed concern about maintenance of improved habitat at the Park. A. Bryson explained how the plan would facilitate both budgeting for maintenance and increased involvement by the town's DPW. The motion passed.

There are two more grant applications in the pipeline. K. Donnelly reminded members that the Projects Committee meets on the second Thursday of the month, and will be discussing these new applications. One is a proposal from South Kingstown Land Trust regarding public access at Yawgoo Pond. The second proposal is from the wildlife rehabilitators of RI regarding a rain garden to shade animals. A decision is expected in early May, with either a subsequent digital vote or a vote at the June meeting.

#### Committee and Project Updates:

- K. Donnelly reminded members that D. Prescott and N. Quinlan will be directing the planting of a native garden at the Exeter Library next week. Volunteers to assist are needed.
- There is a Council event on May 11, a slideshow presentation by Mark Starr on ceremonial stonework, followed by an outdoor walk on May 14. A second Council event on May 11 is a Traditional Ecological Knowledge Kayak tour with Loren Spears of the Tomaquaug Museum. Members were encouraged to sign up for one or all events.
- The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association will hold its annual meeting on May 26. C. Grube will attend and speak on the activities of the Council. Council members are encouraged to attend.
- L. Bonatakis reported on the status of the 7 Rivers Festival. To date there are 11 responses from hosts, with May 7 as the deadline for submitting an event. Many more have shown interest. After that date the goal will be to advertise widely for participation. Yard Signs have been placed in the community by the I&E Committee. K. Donnelly appeared on the local radio station (WBLQ) to promote the festival, and will appear on the station again on June 9.
- L. Bonatakis also reported that the map spearheaded by the Advisory Committee and formerly known as the Conservation Inventory has changed its name to the "watershed environmental resource map." The new name is felt to be more consistent with its purpose and with a similar map maintained by DEM. The map is ready to go on website. It will be publicized in the near future.

#### Nominations:

K. Donnelly announced that it is time to elect officers for the upcoming year. She is soliciting nominations for the four offices: chair, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary. Members may nominate themselves or other members for each office. Nominations should be sent to her by May 11. K. Donnelly will then publicize the nominees, and there will be a vote, with results announced at the May 25 workshop. She will send a communication to all Council members outlining this process and soliciting nominations.

### Town/Community Updates:

A. Bryson reported that the intern working with towns on municipal self-assessments has completed the assessment for Richmond and has presented the results to the Planning Board. Richmond overall has good regulatory compliance with LID principles but needs improvement in several areas. The Planning Board will digest the information before discussing next steps.

K. Donnelly reported on her progress in improving public access at the put-in site at Stepstone Falls. She also reported that members C. Heil and D. Augustyn had presented a slideshow on the Council to the Hopkinton Locustville Pond Preservation Association meeting. She noted that the presentation slides are available should members wish to present to other organizations.

P. August encouraged members to stop at the newly repaired dam on the Wood River in Hope Valley. He noted that DOT had done a fantastic job. He suggested that the Council send a thank you letter to promote good relations for future projects. He will draft one for Council approval.

L. Bonatakis gave an update from NPS. The US Congress has approved an increase in budget allocation for Wild & Scenic Rivers. She expects to hear this week what the amount will be. She also informed the members that she will be sending out a short survey in order to inform NPS thinking on improving connections between the sixteen Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers groups in New England.

Next Meeting or Workshop: The next meeting will be a workshop on May 25, 2022.

### Adjournment

There being no other business, F. Wagner moved to adjourn the meeting and P. August seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 pm.