



**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed  
Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council  
Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)**

*Wednesday, November 20, 2024  
Westerly Land Trust,  
449 Westerly Bradford Rd, Westerly, RI 02891*

Abbreviations: Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council (WPWSRSC or Council), Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), National Park Service (NPS), Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM), Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA), Save The Bay (STB), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Westerly Land Trust (WLT), Information and Education (I&E), Ocean State Climate Adaptation and Resilience (OSCAR ) Fund Grant, Mainstreet Resiliency Projects (MRP)

Attendance:

**Justin Andrade, Charlestown, RI**  
**Bob Maietta, Charlestown, RI (I&E Committee Co-Chair)**  
**Sharon MacLean, Exeter, RI (I&E Committee)**  
**Nan Quinlan, Exeter, RI (Projects Committee)**  
**Harvey Buford, Hopkinton, RI**  
**Ahren Cohen, North Kingstown, RI (Council Treasurer)**  
**Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington, CT (Projects Committee, I&E Committee Co-Chair)**  
**Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington, CT (Council Vice Chair, Projects Committee Chair, I&E)**  
**Antonia Bryson, Richmond, RI (Council Chair, Advisory Committee Co-chair)**  
**Denise Poyer, Richmond, RI (Council Secretary)**  
**Tom Halavik, South Kingstown, RI (Projects Committee)**  
**Harvey Perry, The Nature Conservancy (TNC, Advisory Committee)**  
**Fred Sculco, Westerly Resident (Advisory Committee)**  
**Christopher Grube, West Greenwich, RI (Council Chair, Advisory Committee Co-Chair)**  
**Tom Ryan, West Greenwich, RI**  
**Lauren Bonatakis, National Parks Service (NPS)**  
**Dr. Catie Alves, Save The Bay (STB, Advisory Committee)**  
**Chris Fox, Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association**  
**Jenn Fusco, Westerly Land Trust**  
**Casey Merkle, Council Coordinator**  
**Scott Millar, advisor for the Community Support Proposal**

Meeting Convened at: 5:01 pm

Secretary's Report: Minutes of October 16, 2024 meeting approved.

## Committee Updates:

1. Executive Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
  - a. Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Gathering Report (Denise Poyer, Richmond & Casey Merkle, Coordinator)
    - i. There are PWSR reps who work with federal legislators
    - ii. There is a “Tool kit” on the NPS site for PWSR resources  
<https://rms.memberclicks.net/PWSRToolkit>
    - iii. Some PWSR groups used Americorp and Teracorp interns to increase their staff. The program pays for half their salary and the organizations contribute the rest. We should consider hiring one for next September.
    - iv. Elaine Calderone was awarded Volunteer of the Year by NPS. She was nominated by Lauren Bonatakis.
  - b. Schedule for Town Representative Reports
    - i. Reps will be assigned dates (by alphabetical order) to report on their towns at future Council Meetings. We will begin with Exeter and North Kingstown tonight.
    - ii. A schedule will be sent to the Council next week.
  - c. Potential workshop for Council Structure
    - i. It was discussed that the current committee structure should be rethought. We are looking for interested people to take part in a workshop.
    - ii. This will help inform us as to how to structure the upcoming Work Plan.
    - iii. Two items to consider are
      1. Yearly reporting on Water Quality
      2. More input on the Community Support program
2. Projects Committee (Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington)
  - a. Changing name to “Community Grants Committee”. This committee would focus only on the grants program.
  - b. The question comes in as to what to do with other projects and how to manage it.
3. Advisory Committee (Antonia, Richmond)
  - a. Watershed Working Group update from Dr. Catie Alves, Save the Bay: This program was already allocated in our current workplan budget for this year and has \$14,000 allocated and the committee approved additional funding of \$2,650 to cover the total costs.
    - i. Catie will be leading the Group, which will include different experts who are doing work and research across the watershed.
    - ii. Beginning spring 2025, there will be three half-day meetings, running to spring 2026.
    - iii. The funding supports Catie, interns, and facilitator time, transportation, and facilities.
    - iv. The group will determine how they will continue after that.
  - b. Community Support Program update
    - i. Proposed that we hire Scott Millar at \$75 per hour to develop the program.
      1. This will include reviewing current GIS mapping capacity and how to help towns supplement and update what they have.
      2. Develop advisory committee to determine how to expand program
    - ii. Looking for \$25,000 from this year’s budget to begin this process. The Advisory Committee will vote on how to appropriate the funding at their next meeting.
    - iii. Harvey and Fred have identified other potential sources of funding for the next phases.
    - iv. Long term goals would be to have GIS mapping available to all towns; determine where it would be stored, and how it would be maintained.

- v. The council wants to make sure that an initial assessment is done to determine what capabilities each town has, what their needs are for this information, and what is the best way to support them.
  - vi. It is also important that each town representative be included in any initial contact of towns.
4. Information & Education Committee (Co-Chair Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington & Co-Chair Bob Maietta, Charlestown)
- a. General update (See October 8 Meeting Minutes attached)
  - b. It was noted that the focus of this committee is more people oriented and as such reaches individuals to get the local support.
  - c. Looking for ideas for future podcasts.
  - d. Looking for articles to publish in the Dragonfly Express.
  - e. Decided not to have the Seven Rivers Festival next year.
  - f. Considering:
    - i. Developing a Powerpoint presentation
    - ii. Photo presentation
    - iii. Wild and Scenic Rivers Film Festival
    - iv. Scenic Tours of the Watershed

Workplan and Budget Development 2025-26, which begins July 1, 2025

- 1. Review timeline
  - a. Budget needs to be approved by the full council at the February Meeting.
  - b. At December meeting we need:
    - i. Budget requests from each committee
    - ii. Council wide initiatives need to be decided
- 2. Council Initiatives (see Submitted Council Initiatives attached)
  - a. Three have been proposed (see attached).
  - b. Council will decide on which to adapt for the coming Plan
- 3. Budget proposals from Committees

Working Group Updates:

- 1. Kenyon Mills Working Group (Denise Poyer, Richmond)
  - a. No report
- 2. Wild Brook Trout Working Group (Bob Maietta, Charlestown)
  - a. Held their first meeting
- 3. Potter Hill Dam
  - a. Hydraulic analysis determined that only the removal of middle alternative would meet the FEMA requirement there be no change downstream in flooding in a hundred-year storm.
  - b. Plan E was selected. It will include nature-like fish passage and reduce the head by 3 ½ feet.
  - c. Engineers will need to develop plans that meet all requirements.
  - d. Town of Westerly has hired a public outreach group to run their communications going forward.

Partner Updates:

- 1. CT DEEP no report
- 2. NPS
  - a. Advised to continue business as usual until the political climate is better known. Partnership Wild and Scenic has good bipartisan support, so they are hopeful.
  - b. Annual challenge cost-share program is open until January. This is a 1:1 match for projects that need to be completed in a year.

- c. Another part of Lauren's job is to review projects that could impact the Wild and Scenic Rivers. If reps know of any projects in their town that need to be reviewed please let Lauren know.
3. RI DEM no report
4. Save the Bay
  - a. Catie was featured on Channel 12 news encouraging EPA to list Bradford as a superfund site. <https://www.wpri.com/target-12/these-are-gross-substances-epa-urged-to-clean-westerly-site/>
5. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association
  - a. RI Rivers Council redesignated WPWA as the Watershed Council for the next five years.
6. The Nature Conservancy no report
7. Westerly Land Trust
  - a. Champlin Farm Preserve has been acquired. There will be a restoration project that will be done on an old gravel pit.
  - b. Education has had all K through 4 grades through their program.

Town Representative Updates:

1. Exeter, RI (Nan Quinlan, Sharon MacLean) Tabled until the next meeting.
2. North Kingstown, RI (Ahren Cohen) Tabled until next meeting.
3. South Kingstown had a meeting with RIDEM. There is no funding from the State to do any type of invasive species control in Worden Pond. This potentially costs up to one million per year for four years of treatment.

Good of the Order: none

Public Comment: none

Next Meeting: 5pm-7pm, December 18, 2024

Adjourn: 6:58 pm