



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

***Wednesday, March 26, 2025  
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)

Attendance:

Bob Maietta, Charlestown, RI (I&E Committee)  
Justin Andrade, Charlestown, RI  
Sharon MacLean, Exeter, RI (I&E Committee)  
Nan Quinlan, Exeter, RI (Projects Committee)  
Harvey Buford, Hopkinton, RI (Projects Committee, I&E Committee)  
Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington, CT (Projects Committee, Information & Education Committee)  
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)  
Ali Gretchner, South Kingstown, RI (I&E Committee)  
Fred Wagner, Stonington, CT (Advisory Committee)  
William Gay, Voluntown, CT  
Chris Grube, West Greenwich, RI (I&E Committee, Advisory Committee Co-chair)  
Tom Ryan, West Greenwich, RI  
Bob Madison, Westerly, RI (I&E Committee)  
Lauren Bonatakis, National Parks Service (NPS)  
Marc Doherty, Westerly Land Trust  
Casey Merkle, Council Coordinator

Meeting Convened at: 5:04 pm

Secretary's Report: Minutes of February 26, 2025 meeting approved.

Town Representative Updates:

South Kingstown

1. At 2025 census 33,000, third largest town by geographic area and second largest by population.
2. Incorporated 1674.
3. URI played a significant role in economic and social life.

4. Town planning department also includes a full time GIS manager.
5. Headwaters of Pawcatuck, including last three miles of the Chixpuxet, and the vast majority of the Queen-Usquepaugh Rivers are all within South Kingstown.

#### What's an Aquifer? (20-minute presentation by Denise Poyer)

#### Committee Updates:

1. Executive Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
  - a. Elections in May
    - i. All four offices, chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer are up for election.
    - ii. Denise, Elaine and Antonia are willing to serve another year. The treasurer position is open at this time.
    - iii. However, anyone can nominate themselves or someone else. Nominations should be made to Casey by the April 23 meeting.
  - b. River Access updates
    - i. Two sites were selected to design erosion remediations, Stepstone Falls River Road in West Greenwich and Switch Road in Hopkinton.
    - ii. The town of West Greenwich has the final design and the DPW is preparing to start the project.
    - iii. The Switch Road design that was produced was determined to be inadequate for the purposes of a Wild and Scenic River by NPS. The Council may move forward with another design in keeping with the maintaining the ORVs of the Rivers.
    - iv. Another potential site for access improvement may be the Potter Hill Mill, especially after the dam remediation.
2. Projects Committee (Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington)
  - a. General update: Grants award agreements have been signed and checks have been sent out.
3. Advisory Committee (Antonia, Richmond)
  - a. General update
    - i. Will start looking into hydrilla issue in Worden Pond, thanks to information from Tom
4. Information & Education Committee (Co-Chair Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington & Co-Chair Bob Maietta, Charlestown)
  - a. General update
    - i. Hands on Aquatic Invasive Workshop done last night
    - ii. The Herring are Coming film program last month.
    - iii. Working on coordinating other topics.
    - iv. Asking to council to suggest places to hold programs

#### Working Group Updates:

1. Kenyon Mills Working Group (Denise Poyer, Richmond)
  - a. RFP has been sent out and we have received some questions.
  - b. Additional provision in consent decree includes future penalties if Brookwood Industries does not meet the requirements by first year. At this point they have not met the requirements so we may receive more funding.

2. Wild Brook Trout Working Group (Bob Maietta, Charlestown). Will have another meeting on next week.

Partner Updates:

1. CT DEEP no report
2. NPS
  - a. Congress extended continuing resolution for remainder of fiscal year, meaning we will continue to be funded at last year's amount. May be a small cut to available funds because of increased costs.
  - b. Jamie and three other senior staff in the rivers program will be retiring by June. Due to hiring freeze this means NPS will be under staffed.
3. RI DEM no report
4. Save the Bay no report
5. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association nor report
6. The Nature Conservancy no report
7. Westerly Land Trust
  - a. There is an action item in the Flood Mitigation plan for FEMA pointing to rain gardens, so it could be a good motivation for other towns.

Good of the Order:

1. Earth Day Cleanups: Casey received a small grant (\$500) from RIDEM to conduct cleanups at sites along the rivers.
  - a. Cleanup date Saturday April 26.
  - b. Casey is coordinating with the towns of Richmond, Hopkinton, Charlestown, Stonington and Westerly who are already conducting cleanups.
  - c. Looking for lots of Council Participation. Need to document what and where the cleanups are conducted. Please take photos!
  - d. Casey will send out details, including specific sites, as they develop.
2. Town of Richmond Transfer Station was reviewed by SNEP network. Scope of RFP was developed and will be sent to their consultants.
3. Stonington Circus Lot update: Cleanup has started on the site. Discussions by tree warden has looked at what vegetation needs to be removed and new plantings. The town is committed to moving forward with the project despite uncertainty of federal funding.
4. River Management Society has a series of Wild and Scenic Management Webinars. They cost \$15 to register, which will be covered by the Council.
  - a. Looking for at least one volunteer attend the next one on River Bank Stabilization, May 28.
  - b. Visitor Management on June 18.
5. Every town in RI is taking part in the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration of the US. Suggested that the Council could develop a cultural piece regarding the Wild and Scenic Rivers to coordinate with some of the towns' celebrations.

Public Comment: none

Adjourn: 6:36 pm

Next Meeting: 5pm-7pm, April 23, 2025