



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

***Wednesday, April 23, 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
Justin Andrade, Charlestown, RI
Sharon MacLean, Exeter, RI
Nan Quinlan, Exeter, RI
Harvey Buford, Hopkinton, RI
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)
Fred Wagner, Stonington, CT
Chris Grube, West Greenwich, RI
Tom Ryan, West Greenwich, RI
Bob Madison, Westerly, RI
Chris Fox, WPWA
Lauren Bonatakis, National Parks Service (NPS)
Harvey Perry, TNC
Casey Merkle, Council Coordinator

Meeting Convened at: 5:04 pm

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

Town Representative Updates:

1. North Stonington, CT
 - a. In 1806 the town of Stonington split into two separate towns, Stonington and North Stonington (NS)
 - b. More than 60% of NS lies within the WP watershed. Three rivers are part of the town: Green Fall, Pawcatuck and Shunock. All 8 miles of the Shunock River lies within NS.

- c. In the 1800's the village of NS was called 'mill town' because of the large number of mills located there. There are still 31 dams remaining in the two rivers and tributaries.
- d. There are 5,151 residents in a 54 square mile area resulting in 95 people per square mile.
- e. In CT the state agency that manages natural resources, environmental quality, and energy, is the department of energy and environmental protection, or DEEP. The state sets minimum standards for all environmental regulations but unlike RI, permits, and enforcement of state and local regulations are handled locally by an Inlands and Wetlands Commission composed of town volunteers and an inland/wetlands inspector.
- f. The other significant difference between CT and RI is that CT has a state council (Siting Council) which permits, among other duties, the location of commercial-sized solar farms. The towns can request input but do not have final approval.

Committee Updates:

- 1. Executive Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
 - a. Officer nominations updates – Existing Chair (Antonia), Vice Chair (Elaine), and Secretary (Denise) have agreed to run again. No other nominations came forward. Current Treasurer (Ahren) has decided to step down. Harvey Buford has agreed to run for treasurer. No other nominations have been made for treasurer.
 - b. Bylaws review and updates –
 - i. Existing bylaws were developed in 2020. Since we have not had extensive experience as a council, it was decided to review and revise the bylaws.
 - ii. The Executive Committee has provided a suggested rewrite of the bylaws.
 - iii. The council will be given hard copy and electronic copies of both the existing and proposed revisions.
 - iv. Comments or suggestions can be sent to Casey by the May meeting. Any questions can be answered at the May meeting.
 - v. Voting to adopt the bylaws will be made at the June meeting.
- 2. Projects Committee (Elaine, North Stonington)
 - a. No updates. Will check on the grant recipients in a few months to see if they need any support.
- 3. Advisory Committee (Antonia, Richmond)
 - a. Hydrilla in Worden Pond
 - i. Developed a letter to be sent to Senators Reed and Whitehouse to bring attention to the issue of hydrilla in Worden Pond.
 - ii. Bob Maietta sent an email to the Council urging action on this issue.
 - iii. It was suggested that letters also be sent to the CT Senators and Representatives.
 - iv. RIDEM has let us know that they are approaching Senator Reed for funding to help address the problem.
 - v. At the last hydrilla meeting RIDEM described the grant request for boat cleaning station and informational greeters.
 - b. Motion made by Fred to send the hydrilla letters, as amended at this meeting, to the RI and CT Congressional Senators and Representatives. Seconded by Bob Maietta. Motion passed unanimously.
 - c. RIDOH issued a warning about PFAs found in fish taken from the Pawcatuck River.
 - i. Assumption is that the former Bradford Dyeing Association (BDA) is the source.

- ii. STB has already issued a letter prompting RIDEM and EPA to declare BDA as a Superfund Site.
 - iii. It was suggested that the Council follow this closely. Antonia will ask Catie Alves to give the Council an update.
- 4. Information & Education Committee (Co-Chair Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington & Co-Chair Bob Maietta, Charlestown)
 - a. Decided to go with at least two vendors. Will have samples to try on for the May meeting. The plan is to have this billed out by the end of the fiscal year.
 - b. To see samples of the garments go to the Sanmar website and look up EB600; CSJ70; F233; and K863.
 - c. If Council member would like to attend outdoor events I&E has a lot of equipment to set up informational tables
 - d. It was decided to do two Dragonfly newsletters a year instead of four.

Working Group Updates:

- 1. Kenyon Mills Working Group (Denise Poyer, Richmond)
 - a. RFP deadline is May 15. We've had inquiries from several different organizations.
 - b. Nan will also be part of the Working Group, along with Denise, Chris Fox and Cory.
- 2. Wild Brook Trout Working Group (Bob Maietta, Charlestown).
 - a. Discussions have focused on upper Wood River, but we may expand discussion to the whole watershed. Recommendations could also apply statewide.

Partner Updates:

- 1. CT DEEP no report
- 2. NPS
 - a. Still not had official word concerning Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers budget. To err on the side of caution we should prepare to not receive funds on July 1. The Council needs to start considering how it would function with late or no funding. Unspent funds from this current fiscal year should still be available to the Council.
 - b. The program is short staffed due to early retirements and possible staff reduction.
 - c. Antonia will contact Fred Acker to get a recommendation of who we should be contacting in support of NPS.
- 3. RI DEM no report
- 4. Save the Bay
 - a. STB has a variety of coastal cleanups open to volunteers. We'll also be starting storm drain marking projects in Westerly and Hopkinton this and next year. Sign up to volunteer [here](#).
 - b. STB is selling ducks for \$5 as part of the [Pawcatuck River Duck Race](#), on April 26. To purchase a duck and support STB, contact Dr. Catie Alves: calves@savebay.org or 401-315-2709.
 - c. I've been collaborating with Save The Sound's Long Island Soundkeeper to track the Town of Westerly's progress towards upgrading their wastewater treatment facility to be in compliance with their 2021 [RIPDES permit](#) (RI Pollutant Discharge Elimination System). RIDEM intends to review their construction plans within the next month and then will have some recommendations on how to proceed. Basically, they're doing what they need to at this time and I'm following up regularly with RIDEM on the timeline.

5. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association
 - a. Blowdowns have been cleared on the upper Wood from Rt. 165 to Barberville Dam.
6. The Nature Conservancy no report
7. Westerly Land Trust no report

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. Successful cleanup in North Stonington, with a lot of trash collected from the truck stop area.
 - b. Cleanup date for other sites is Saturday April 26, but may need to be moved to Sunday.
 - c. Casey is coordinating with the towns of Richmond, Hopkinton, Charlestown and Westerly who are already conducting cleanups.
 - d. Looking for lots of Council Participation. Need to document what and where the cleanups are conducted. Please take photos!
 - e. Supplies are available tonight.
2. Suggestion made to speak with Avalonia Land Trust about becoming a member. Fred will contact them.

Public Comment: none

Adjourn: 6:39 pm

Next Meeting: May 28, 2025; 5pm-7pm