



**Wood-Pawcatuck
Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

Westerly Land Trust,

449 Westerly Bradford Rd, Westerly, RI 02891 and via Zoom

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:

Justin Andrade, Charlestown, RI
Bob Maietta, Charlestown, RI
Sharon MacLean, Exeter, RI (I&E Committee)
Antonia Bryson, Richmond, RI (Council Chair, Advisory Committee Co-chair)
Denise Poyer, Richmond, RI (Council Secretary)
Tom Halavik, South Kingstown
Fred Wagner, Stonington, CT (Advisory Committee)
William Gay, Voluntown, CT
Chris Grube, West Greenwich, RI (Advisory Committee Co-Chair, I&E Committee)
Bob Madison, Westerly, RI
Jen Fusco, Westerly Land Trust
Lauren Bonatakis, NPS
Harvey Perry, TNC
Tobias Glaza, Avalonia Land Conservancy
Casey Merkle, Council Coordinator
Olivia Wilson, NPS Fellow
Chris Bellucci, CTDEEP
Cory Pelletier RIDEM
Fred Sculco from Westerly, RI
Marilyn Makey, from North Stonington, CT

Meeting Convened at: 5:00 pm

Minutes Approval: Motion to approve July 23, 2025 minutes. Motion passed.

Rain Gardens presentation (20 minutes)

Tabled until next month's meeting.

Committee Updates:

1. Executive Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
 - a. Bylaws Update
 - i. Fred suggested that Article 5 A should not have a limit on terms for Officers. It was stated that items in the Bylaws can be changed at any time with a ten-day notice of the potential vote and it would have to pass by a two-thirds vote by the members present at the meeting.
 - b. Motion made to accept the Bylaws as written. All ayes except Bob Madison and Fred Wagner, who voted no. The motion passed with more than two-thirds present and voting.
2. Projects Committee (Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington, presented by Corey Pelletier)
 - a. General update – RFPs for Community Grants will go out by October 1, 2025. Application deadline is December 31, 2025.
 - b. There is \$54,000 allotted to the program. The committee decided to increase the maximum for grantees to \$10,000.
 - c. It was suggested that the Council come up with six items from the Action Plans in the Stewardship Plan that should get priority consideration for awarding the grants. After discussion it was determined that it is too late to apply these priorities to this year's application process. However, it would be a good exercise to do for the council and put into next year's application process.
 - d. The announcement will have wide spread distribution. Council members are encouraged to send the announcement to anyone they think would be interested.
3. Advisory Committee
 - a. RIDEM sent a notice about changes to surface water regulations.
 - i. Antonia, Harvey Perry and Catie Alves crafted a letter in support of the additional protection for Wild and Scenic segments.
 - ii. Other council members would like to add comments but the deadline is Sunday.
 - iii. Lauren suggested we ask for an extension to send in our comments.
 - iv. A question was raised over the impact of language in the current regulations that would allow more degradation depending on social needs. It was suggested we discuss this with RIDEM at another time.
 - b. Antonia contacted RIDEM for more information on the MS4 Low Impact Development Permit Program. RIDEM will meet with the Committee in October.
 - c. The Committee discussed utilizing unused funds from the LID project for educational programs.
4. Information & Education Committee (Co-Chair Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington & Co-Chair Bob Maietta, Charlestown)
 - a. Sharon attended the Exeter Fall Festival.
 - b. I&E will be sending out an order sheet to all Council members to select one item of clothing. Hats will also be ordered for all Council members. It is hoped that an order can be put in by Thanksgiving.
 - c. Dragonfly Express will be twice a year instead of four times a year.

- d. The Committee is working on developing a Constant Contact list to start a monthly mailing.
- e. There will be a new order for business cards to be given out to all Council members.

Council 25-26 Initiatives

1. Riverside Landowner Outreach Program – Denise has three URI candidates to interview for the Riverside Landowner Stewardship Coordinator position. She hopes to hire someone by the end of the week.

Hydrilla Updates

1. SNEP mini grant update –
 - a. RIDEM did receive a large grant from the SWIG SNEP that includes treatment for hydrilla in summer of 2026. The Council is taking a step back from creating a boat lane this year and see how our project can fit in with RIDEM.
2. South Kingston received a Wild and Scenic Community Grant from the to build a kiosk at Worden Pond and to send out flyers to town residents. They plan to work on signage and flyers next month.
3. Bob Maietta suggests that we continue to remind RIDEM this is a concern of the Council.
4. Sharon has attended a program to help educate people about the concerns of aquatic invasives. She volunteered at the boat ramp and reported that knowledge of hydrilla among users was poor.
5. Lauren mentioned that there is a big research project with Army Corp of Engineers on the CT River. There will be a webinar in October to discuss some of their results. Lauren will send out information concerning the webinar.
6. The Council will need to elevate this to a priority issue.
7. Suggestion was made to hold more educational sessions.

Working Group Updates:

1. Kenyon Mills Working Group (Denise Poyer, Richmond)
 - a. Shannock Mills, LLC has been awarded \$36,000 and a grant agreement has been signed. We expect a progress report in 6 months.
2. Wild Brook Trout Working Group (Bob Maietta, Charlestown)
 - a. The group has voted to send a letter to RIDEM that will inform them about the purpose of the group.
 - b. A discussion regarding how much autonomy the working group should have. The Executive Committee will meet with Corey and Bob at another date.

Partner Updates:

1. Avalonia Land Conservancy – no report
2. CT DEEP
 - a. They have an Integrated Water Quality Report and will send a copy to the Council.
 - b. Applications for Recreational Trail Grants are available.
3. NPS

- a. News of funding for the grant for the Dragonfly Mercury Program was last minute so planning was rushed. First sampling was done today at Arcadia Deer Check Station. Two more samplings scheduled for Saturday in Westerly and North Stonington.
 - b. Lauren has had a lot of interactions with RIDOT on its bridge projects.
 - i. The Arcadia Road bridge has a small scour hole that RIDOT wants to cover with riprap. Lauren wrote a letter of approval because it is such a small area.
 - ii. The Kingston Road bridge over the Usquepaugh River has severe scouring, due to constriction by the bridge. RIDOT wants to place a lot of rip rap over the scour holes and cover them with a concrete mat. This is not consistent with Wild and Scenic best practices. Advisors have said that the best option is to widen the bridge, which RIDOT has indicated that is not a possibility at this point.
 1. Lauren suggests that the Council send a letter supporting the Wild and Scenic position that the bridge needs to be replaced.
 - iii. A third project is the Hillsdale Road culvert. The plans call for a lot of rip rap up and downstream. Lauren will be meeting with RIDOT to see if there are alternatives.
 - c. If there is a government shutdown Lauren will not be officially available. We should still be able to access and draw down our funds.
4. RI DEM - no report
 5. Save the Bay - no report
 6. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association - no report
 7. The Nature Conservancy – Madeline Jefferies received an award and a lot of recognition for her service to the Town of North Stonington from the town and CTDEEP at an event last Saturday. The Council will recognize Madeline at the next meeting.
 8. Westerly Land Trust is happy to support the Dragonfly Mercury program.

Good of the Order:

1. Denise, Casey and Elaine met with Representative Magaziner and his staff. It was a good meeting with the Congressman stating that he will be happy to support the Wild and Scenic Partnership Program.
2. Danielle Chesebrought, Stonington Selectwoman, who has been involved with the Circus Lot and the Pawcatuck Riverside Park, will not be running for office in November.
3. Sarah Baker, Stonington Council representative, will be moving out of state. Fred suggested that the Stonington Board of Selectmen should wait until the new board is elected in November to appoint a new Council representative.
4. Meadowbrook Pond was recently treated for aquatic vegetation.

Public Comment: none

Next Meeting: 5 to 7 pm, October 22, 2025

Adjourn: 7:00 pm