



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

DRAFT

*Wednesday, November 19, 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), Board of Selectmen (BOS)

Attendance:

Bob Maietta, Charlestown, RI
Harvey Buford, Hopkinton, RI (I&E Committee)
Juliet Lamb, Hopkinton, RI
Ahren Cohen, North Kingstown, RI
Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington, CT (Council Vice Chair, Projects Committee Chair, I&E Committee)
Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington, CT (Projects Committee, I&E Committee Co-Chair)
Antonia Bryson, Richmond, RI (Council Chair, Advisory Committee Co-chair)
Denise Poyer, Richmond, RI (Council Secretary)
Tom Halavik, South Kingstown, RI (Hydrilla)
Fred Wagner, Stonington, CT
William Gay, Voluntown, CT
Chris Grube, West Greenwich, RI (Advisory Committee Co-Chair, I&E Committee)
Marc Doherty, Westerly Land Trust
Lauren Bonatakis, NPS
Catie Alves, STB
Tobias Glaza, Avalonia Land Conservancy
Casey Merkle, Council Coordinator
Cory Pelletier, RIDEM

Meeting Convened at: 5:04 pm

Minutes Approval: Motion to approve October 22, 2025 minutes. Motion passed with one abstention.

Committee Updates:

1. Executive Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
 - a. Priorities list review process – we will be asking
2. Projects Committee (Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington)
 - a. Applications are still open until December 29, 2025.
 - b. Please let anyone in your town know about the grants. Information is on the website.
3. Advisory Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
 - a. Need more members on the committee. Meeting times can be flexible.
 - b. Right now, they are following up work on low impact development.
 - c. At a recent meeting with RIDEM about a low impact program, it was determined that most towns in the watershed don't meet the requirements because of the low density.
 - d. Instead, we should focus on a specific green infrastructure item, for instance permeable pavement.
 - e. There is approximately \$20,000 budgeted for a project.
4. Information & Education Committee (Co-Chair Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington & Co-Chair Bob Maietta, Charlestown)
 - a. Garments have been ordered.
 - b. Business cards are available. If you want personalized cards, please let Casey know. Please provide what you want on the card, such as name, phone number or email.
 - c. The committee is utilizing a laptop belonging to the Council. Madeline will be using it for Constant Contact.
 - i. Need more names to include in the contact list.
 - d. Last meeting it was discussed about how we as a council need to have informal discussions around our common issues and needs for each town.

Council 25-26 Initiatives

1. Landowner Stewardship Outreach Project
 - a. Sarah has nearly completed the river front land owner database.
 - b. It includes two sets
 - i. owners within 500 feet of a river (about 160 properties)
 - ii. owners within one quarter mile of a river (about 2,500 properties)
 - c. It can be searched by name of the river and streams and by town.
 - d. Next will be to research the information to include in the brochures.
2. Rain Gardens:
 - a. Catie will develop a one-page information packet that can be sent to the Town Councils and Board of Selectmen, hopefully by December 5.
 - b. Casey sent out a link to an appendix in the 2016 Wood-Pawcatuck Flood Resiliency Plan. It identifies specific sites for green infrastructure in each town. This could be a resource for potential sites.
 - c. Please continue to bring possibilities to Nan and Catie.
 - d. The goal is to have a couple of gardens ready to go in spring and possibly fall 2026.
 - e. There may be more funding available if there are more than 2 rain garden possibilities.

Hydrilla Updates

- a. Meet with Senator Reed's staff to discuss the issue. Also sent a letter to Senator Whitehouse Office.
- b. Contacted South Kingstown officials about wording for the kiosk at Worden Pond.
- c. Tom has been in communication with a newly formed Worden Pond Association.
- d. Hope to have the kiosk finished and the mailer out by January 2026.
- e. RIDEM received a grant that will include spot treatment and some educational materials at Worden Pond.

Working Group Updates:

1. Brook Trout – the committee chairs received some specific guidance from the Executive Committee. They will be discussing it at their next meeting in December.
2. Kenyon Funds - no report

Partner Updates:

1. Avalonia Land Conservancy
 - a. Waiting to hear if they received a grant for property purchase from the state.
 - b. Working with a land owner on Spaulding Pond for a Conservation Easement, hopefully by the end of December.
2. CT DEEP
3. NPS
 - a. Still in discussion with RIDOT concerning the Rt. 138 bridge over the Usquepaugh River. No solution yet.
 - b. Also, in conversation with RIDEM concerning eliminating the use of rip rap for culvert replacement.
 - c. NRCS is working on a watershed plan for Wood-Pawcatuck. The report will be an update to flood mitigation. They will be giving suggestions to all the municipalities. It seems that the report suggests a lot of hardening in the rivers.
 - d. NPS has general guidance for bridge and culvert replacement projects. It is contained in a much larger document. Lauren will send the document to Casey.
 - e. RIDOT has a stream crossing manual.
 - f. Suggest we put all these documents on a resource page so the council can easily access them.
4. RI DEM
 - a. It is hunting season. Please remember to wear your orange.
 - b. Corey has some resources for content for the river front land owner that he will share.
 - c. Corey will be doing the Christmas tree program for fish habitat again. Members of the Council helped with this project this past winter.
5. Save the Bay
 - a. Attended the Water Keepers Conference in Pittsburg.
 - b. Will be attending the Watch Hill Conservancy meeting.
 - c. Brookwood Industries is working with RIDEM regarding updating their RIPDES permit for copper and other metals. Bob spoke with RIDEM and was assured that they would not be able to raise their toxicity levels. They are writing an

amendment to implement the new water quality regulations, based on EPA criteria. He felt that we would not need to make any comments.

6. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association – no report.
7. The Nature Conservancy – no report.
8. Westerly Land Trust
 - a. Launching a citizens science program.
 - b. Master Gardners are looking for projects, which may work well with the Rain Garden program.

Good of the Order:

1. The Council was going to submit a proposal to the Land and Water Summit in March 2026 for a panel on hydrilla. However, we learned that Katie DeGoosh has already submitted a proposal for an invasive aquatic species workshop. The Council did not submit any proposals.

Public Comment:

Next Meeting: 5pm to 7 pm, December 17, 2025

Adjourn: 6:35 pm