



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

DRAFT

*Wednesday, December 17, 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:

Justin Andrade, Charlestown, RI
Bob Maietta, Charlestown, RI
Nan Quinlan, Exeter, RI (Projects Committee)
Harvey Buford, Hopkinton, RI (Council Treasure, I&E Committee)
Juliet Lamb, Hopkinton, 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, (Hydrilla)
Fred Wagner, Stonington, CT
William Gay, Voluntown, CT
Chris Grube, West Greenwich, RI (Advisory Committee Co-Chair, I&E Committee)
Bob Madison, Westerly, RI (I&E Committee)
Lauren Bonatakis, NPS
Catie Alves, STB
Harvey Perry, TNC
Chris Fox, WPWA
Casey Merkle, Council Coordinator
Brian O'Connor, Charlestown, RI Resident

Meeting Convened at: 5:10 pm

Minutes Approval: Motion to approve November 19, 2025 minutes.

Committee Updates:

1. Executive Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
 - a. Coordinator Contract discussion in Executive Session. A vote will be sent out to the full council by Friday December 19.
2. Projects Committee (Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington)
 - a. Applications are still open until December 29, 2025. You can find the applications on our website under the tab “What we support”
3. Advisory Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
 - a. Still need more members on the committee.
4. Information & Education Committee (Co-Chair Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington & Co-Chair Bob Maietta, Charlestown)
 - a. Some of the garments are here and distributed. Hats are still to come in.
 - b. There is equipment available for tabling events. Looking to have each town rep to do at least one event this coming year.
 - c. Raising the question of whether to have a committee to work on projects or just allow individuals to work on their own projects.
5. Website update – Juliet has agreed to work with the website designer to update the WPWildandScenic.org.

Landowner Stewardship Outreach Project

1. Sarah is working on a draft of the brochure. She will have more in January.

Rain Gardens:

1. Six towns have expressed interest.
 - a. West Greenwich
 - b. Richmond
 - c. North Stonington
 - d. Hopkinton
 - e. Charlestown
 - f. Stonington
2. Other towns are encouraged to contact Katie and Nan if they are interested.

Hydrilla Updates

1. South Kingstown got an extension on their grant for the kiosk and poster.
2. The state has developed a mini flyer on hydrilla. We should be able to obtain more from RIDEM if we want to hand them out at tabling events.
3. Katie DeGoosh sent an email about the grant they received for Hydrilla Management.

Working Group Updates:

1. Brook Trout
 - a. A brief synopsis of the origin of the group was given to the council.
 - b. The Council received a thoughtful letter from Terry Gray, RIDEM Director. They suggested it would be helpful to have two things.

- i. Develop and review data about the detriment of stocking over wild populations.
 - ii. Develop an understanding of what the public would support.
- c. The working group received a memo from the Executive Committee asking them to focus on the letter from RIDEM.
 - i. The Working Group had sent a letter to the executive committee to be sent to the full council. It was not sent.
 - ii. The Working Group was disappointed with the directive from the executive committee.
 - iii. The Working Group has had some difficulties getting the committee to agree on the direction they should take.
 - iv. Bob and Corey will meet with the executive committee next month and have another meeting with the Working Group.
 - v. Brian O'Connor spoke about the difficulty of complying with the requests from RIDEM.
 - 1. It is not possible to get accurate data and surveys that have been done by the state have not been released to the public.
 - 2. Comparing anything to the Wood River is comparing apples to oranges.
 - 3. Also, this would require hiring professionals and would take several years.
 - 4. As an example, CTDEEP did surveys for wild fish over the last 30 years. A third of brook trout streams no longer have brook trout.
 - 5. CTDEEP changed regulations for the Green Falls to catch and release. The Shunnock will be a stocked fisheries because it was determined that the wild populations were already decimated. However, only trout over 9 inches will be allowed to be kept. This should protect native brook trout because they rarely get to that size.

Chapter 6 Priorities

1. Survey has been sent to the council to select what each rep believes should be the priorities from the Stewardship Plan to focus our funding and time on.
2. The survey will be sent out again and the results will be provided to the full council and discussed at the next meeting.
3. It should be decided at the next meeting what the time period for these priorities should be.

Partner Updates:

1. Avalonia Land Conservancy – no report
2. CT DEEP – no report
3. NPS
 - a. RIDOT engineers have presented plans on scouring remediation on the Queen River Bridge that are more compatible with Wild and Scenic protection. The bridge is on the list to be replaced within 10 years.

- b. Have been in communication with RIDEM about NPS Junior Ranger Program grants. Applications are due Jan. 9.
 - c. Received another project for a floating dock in the Pawcatuck River in Westerly. It is already an impacted area so the dock should not have too much of an impact. However, the river is fairly narrow at the site and may impact boating in the river.
- 4. RI DEM – no report
 - 5. Save the Bay – no report
 - 6. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association – no report.
 - 7. The Nature Conservancy
 - a. Working on issues of flood resiliency, aquatic organism passage, and improving water quality in the headwater streams of the watershed. We are assisting WPWA with fundraising and project management.
 - 8. Westerly Land Trust – no report

Good of the Order:

- 1. Nan has been asked to work on an advisory committee with URI NRS concerning PFAS near the Yawgoo Ski area.

Public Comment:

Next Meeting: 5 to 7 pm, January 28, 2026

Adjourn: 7:00 pm