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

***Wednesday, April 22, 2026***
***Westerly Land Trust,***
***449 Westerly Bradford Rd, Westerly, RI 02891 and via Zoom***

Abbreviations: Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council (Council), Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CTDEEP), National Park Service (NPS), Information and Education Committee (I&E), Projects Committee (PC), Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA), Save The Bay (STB), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Westerly Land Trust (WLT)

Attendance:

**Bob Maietta, Charlestown, RI (I&E Committee Co-Chair)**
**Sharon MacLean, Exeter, RI (I&E, Hydrilla Working Group)**
**Nan Quinlin, Exeter, RI (PC, Rain Gardens)**
**Juliet Lamb, Hopkinton, RI (Website Update)**
**Janice McAleer, North Kingstown, RI**
**Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington, CT (Council Treasurer, PC Chair, I&E)**
**Madeline Jeffery, North Stonington, CT (I&E Committee Co-Chair)**
**Antonia Bryson, Richmond, RI (Council Chair, Advisory Committee Co-chair)**
**Denise Poyer, Richmond, RI (Council Secretary, Landowner Initiative, Website Update, Kenyon Funds)**
**Tom Halavik, South Kingstown, (PC, Hydrilla Working Group)**
**Chris Grube, West Greenwich, RI (Council Vice Chair, Advisory Committee Co-Chair, I&E)**
**Bob Madison, Westerly, RI (I&E)**
**Blake Busch, Westerly, RI**
**Jen Fusco, Westerly Land Trust**
**Lauren Bonatakis, NPS**
**Harvey Perry, TNC**
**Fred Sculco, Westerly Resident (Water Quality Report)**
**Casey Merkle, Council Coordinator**

Meeting Convened at: 5:03 pm

Minutes Approval: Motion to approve March 25, 2026 minutes. Minutes approved.

Committee Updates:

1. Executive Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)

a. Denise and Elaine completed a new member packet. It will be sent to all members of the Council.
b. Work Plan includes funds to hire a social media consultant. Casey will be sending out the job description to be posted shortly.
c. The new slate of officer nominations is:
    i. Chair: Antonia Bryosn
    ii. Vice chair: Chris Grube
    iii. Secretary: Denise Poyer
    iv. Treasurer: Elaine Caldarone
    v. This slate of nominations will be sent out to the Council on an electronic ballot within the next two weeks.

2. Projects Committee (Elaine Caldarone, North Stonington)
    a. No new activity.
3. Advisory Committee (Antonia Bryson, Richmond)
    a. Most recent support letters were attached to the agenda.
    b. Moving to an ad hoc meeting schedule for the committee.
4. Information and Education Committee (Madeline Jefferies, North Stonington)
    a. Will continue to have their meetings on the second Tuesday of each month.
    b. Red Wing Blackbird event in conjunction with WLT was held last week. It was a nice and successful event.
    c. Garments are all available. See Casey for your order.
    d. Sharon will be having a table at the Exeter Spring Market on May 2. She will include information on W&S Council and hydrilla.
    e. Madeline will have a table at the Groton Earth Day event on April 25 at the Groton Public Library.
    f. Elaine has dates for an educational program with the Tomaquag Museum for dates in May, June, August and September. Information will be sent to the Council shortly.
    g. There is a newsletter brief being prepared that will be sent out to the general public. They are looking for articles of interest.

<u>Partner Updates:</u>

1. Avalonia Land Conservancy – No report.
2. CT DEEP –
    a. see attached update from Chris Belluci.
    b. Casey is working with Chris to have him do a presentation at the May meeting.
3. NPS
    a. Thanks to the quick work on the work plan and budget Lauren was able to get it through all the necessary processes for approval in a timely manner. We should be able to receive our funding for next year on time.
    b. W&S Rivers Partnership Program will hold periodic speaker series again this year. The first one will be on May 13 from 12 pm to 1 pm on Zoom. It will reintroduce the Program to the river groups and explain some of the staff changes at NPS.
    c. The series is so that all the W&S groups can learn from each other. Let Lauren know if we have any topics to bring up.

    d. Lauren has been reviewing a lot of projects over the last few months. They are mostly bridge replacement projects. These include
        i. A scourer remediation project on the bridge over the Usquepaugh River.
        ii. There will be a bridge replacement on the Ashaway River.
        iii. Replacement of the culvert on Miles River.
        iv. Bridge replacement at Potter Hill Mill. WLT has been approached by RIDOT for a temporary easement on their property.
    e. It would be best for Lauren to get in on a project early on in the design phase so she can better coordinate with the engineers. If you know of a project coming up in your town that will require federal review let Laurn know about it.
4. RI DEM – no report
5. Save the Bay – Katie Alves has resigned from STB. They will be working to get a new person in her place.
6. Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association – No report
7. The Nature Conservancy – No report
8. Westerly Land Trust
    a. They have a lot events linked to Earth Day, including cleanups along the roads near Land Trust properties.
    b. There will be a Thursday hike event at Champlin Park.
    c. There will be a Garden Market Day at Wilcox Park on May 17. This may be another opportunity for the Council to have an information table.

<u>Status Reports</u>

1. Landowner Stewardship Outreach Project (Denise Poyer, Richmond)
    a. First draft of pamphlets has been sent to the committee with many thoughtful comments already received. Denise, Casey and Sarah will review the comments and present a final draft for the May Council meeting.
    b. To explain the separate pamphlets:
        i. 0 will be the general information pamphlet that will be available for tabling and other events.
        ii. 1 is to introduce river front land owners to their Wild and Scenic River. It will be customized for each individual river. For example, folks living along the Beaver River will get one with details about the Beaver River. These will be mailed to our landowner list.
        iii. 2 is to introduce landowners to potential issues for their rivers. These will be mailed to landowner a couple weeks after the first one. They will also be available for events.
        iv. 3 is to introduce personal action people can take to help their rivers. These will be mailed shortly after the second one and will be available for events.
2. Rain Gardens (Nan Quinlan, Exeter)
    a. West Greenwich new Senior Center is interested in having a rain garden once the building is finished.
    b. Crandall Field in Hopkinton has a site near their parking lot that still needs Town Council approval.

    c. Richmond may have a site on new town property on the corner of Rt 138 and Rt 112. Denise will be going to the Town Council May 7 for their approval.
3. Aquatic Invasives (Hydrilla)
    a. Post cards have been sent to RIDEM to be sent to all fishing tournaments.
    b. It has been difficult to get regular communications established with RIDEM to work with the Council on this issue.
    c. New Worden Pond group is meeting tomorrow night.
4. Kenyon Settlement – accepting proposals until May 15.
5. Wild Brook Trout Working Group
    a. They voted to disassociate with the Council. They formed a new group called the Wild Brook Trout Conservation Group. Bob and Tom will participate as members of the new group but not as representatives of the Council.
    b. A letter will be distributed to the Council
6. Water Quality Monitoring
    a. Fred Sculco is working with URI Watershed Watch to identify sites for the report and standardize criteria.

Good of the Order:

1. Tom brought up the fact that North Kingstown and Narragansett have town zoning regulations that require all new building construction have a rain garden to deal with runoff.
2. Potter Hill Mill dam removal project – town of Westerly told the engineers that the $18 Million funding is in question and asked that any work stop. It has also been determined that there may be hazardous materials at the site and these would have to be dealt with before any dam project goes through.
3. Sharon suggested that anytime someone from the Council is involved in an event that the Council supports can be written up as a brief report. This could be put on the website to point to what the Council is working on. Photos are really important to attract interest.
4. Madeline says that the I&E committee would like to have Council members mailing address and phone numbers in case they need to contact them. She also requested a list of Council members and what committee(s) they are on. Bob suggested that we have a member only page on the website that could contain Council members contact information.
5. Tom suggested we have a list of where W&S signs are in each town so representatives can check to see if they are still there and in good shape.
6. Bob Madison said that they have hand outs left over from the Redwing Blackbird event that are available. RICKA has an event tomorrow night at the West Greenwich Library at 7 pm. The topic is on Dam Removal in RI.
7. Bob Maietta discussed the fact the Potter Hill Dam project is not moving forward. Right now, there are thousands of fish lost to predators because the fish passage at the dam is inadequate.
8. Chris Grube reported on the successful Big River cleanup this past month. Also, West Greenwich Planning Board denied the Bella View Estates development.

Public Comment: None

Adjourn: 6:33 pm

Next Meeting: 5 to 7 pm, May 27, 2026