



The Rhode Island Rivers Council
 c/o RI Water Resources Board
 One Capitol Hill
 Providence, RI 02908
 www.ririvers.org



Minutes of December 10, 2014 Meeting - 4pm
 RIDEM - Conference Room 280C
 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present:

- Veronica Berounsky, Chair
- Rachel Calabro, Vice Chair
- James Cole
- Walter Galloway
- Paul Gonsalves
- Judy Hadley
- Chuck Horbert
- Guy Lefebvre
- Lisa McGreavy, Secretary
- Elise Torello

B. Guests in Attendance:

- David Urban, Kickemuit River Council
- Cathy Sparks, Assistant to Director for Natural Resources, RIDEM
- Christine Dudley, Deputy Chief of Freshwater Fisheries, RIDEM Fish & Wildlife

1. Call to Order of RI Rivers Council Monthly Meeting: Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:16 pm.

2. Review and approval of November 12, 2014 meeting minutes: Mr. Cole moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Galloway seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Speaker Series: Christine Dudley, Deputy Chief of Freshwater Fisheries, RIDEM Fish & Wildlife: *New Rhode Island Freshwater Regulations for Permitting: a Draft*

Ms. Dudley thanked RIRC members for their assistance in providing input to the RI Freshwater Fishing regulations issued last year which inadvertently caused some confusion regarding the user groups to which the new rules applied. Now efforts are underway by the Department to clarify that the regulations do not require permits for non-organizational, informal, or casual gatherings at state freshwater



access areas. Ms. Dudley will distribute a new revised draft of section 1.16 to RIRC members and other recreational paddling groups for review and comments. The department will then schedule a special workshop prior to a public hearing to ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to fully participate in the regulation amendment process. A healthy discussion followed with perspectives from Ms. Sparks on the challenges and rewards of managing the state's unique natural and recreational resources.

4. Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

-Narragansett Bay Estuary Program – Mr. Galloway reported that the December Management Committee meeting focused on strategic planning for the next two years; a workshop will be held in March. NBEP is looking for feedback on program communication. Science Advisory Committee meetings are underway. A small grants program will be announcing a request for proposals in January or February.

-State Guide Plan Advisory Committee – Ms. Calabro reported that meetings are expected to resume next year.

-Bays, Rivers, & Watersheds Coordination Team – Dr. Berounsky reported that the team met to discuss budgeting and what to present to the new Governor's administration.

- i. BRWCT funds to RIRC: Dr. Berounsky reported that the first of three stormwater grant workshops is scheduled for December 17 from 1 to 3pm at DEM with representatives from the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, and the Friends of the Moshassuck who will present their ideas for stormwater grant projects. Other council members are also invited to hear ideas. The second workshop is scheduled for January 2015 (date TBA) with representatives of the Kickemuit River Watershed Council, the Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council, and the Buckeye Brook Coalition. The third workshop is scheduled for February 2015 (date TBA) with the Salt Ponds Coalition, Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Council, and the Narrow River Watershed Council.

5. Reports of activities in Designated Local Watershed Councils:

-Blackstone River Watershed Council / Friends of the Blackstone as reported by Ms. Hadley: US Senator Jack Reed recently announced that the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor may soon be named a multi-site national park pending a congressional vote scheduled for next week. The RI Tree Council announced a new state champion Tree: a Black Walnut in Lincoln Woods. The BRWC/FOB along with council representatives

John Marsland (President) and Frank Geary are featured in John Waldman's book entitled *Running Silver: Restoring Atlantic Rivers and their Great Fish Migrations*.

-Kickemuit River Council as reported by Mr. Urban: The RIRC-funded interpretive sign for the Kickemuit River Fish Ladder has been installed at the fish ladder site; photos were distributed.

-Friends of the Moshassuck as reported by Ms. Hadley: Greg Gerritt's video entitled *Teddy the Tadpole* is being crowdsourced online and is making progress.

-Narrow River Preservation Association as reported by Dr. Berounsky: The Town of Narragansett is planning a town-wide event to take place next September similar to the *Celebrate Our Rivers* event held every year by the Orleans Pond Coalition in Massachusetts. The US Fish & Wildlife has completed a draft environmental assessment for the rest of Pettaquamscutt Cove using Hurricane Sandy funds involving three projects: water quality assessment at Pettaquamscutt Cove, shoreline stability at the Pettaquamscutt cove, and a dredge and deposit project on the Pettaquamscutt salt marsh to stabilize the salt marsh to help restore Saltmarsh Sparrow habitat. The LaFarge Point Park display has been completed and will be installed at the URI Rowing Center located on Narrow River.

-Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council as reported by Mr. Horbert: The DEM Wetlands Program received an application for a new boat ramp at Randall Pond in Cranston.

-Salt Ponds Coalition as reported by Ms. Torello on behalf of Alicia Eichinger, SPC Executive Director: SPC published online and print versions of the winter newsletter. It includes articles on balancing user groups in the salt ponds, SLAMM maps presented at Beach SAMP, a study of nitrogen and phosphorus in the ponds, an explanation of disease management plans for aquaculture, and features Tale of Two Ponds focusing on Green Hill and Ninigret. We prepared and published a policy statement regarding oyster aquaculture on the ponds. Aquaculture on the ponds is expanding, especially with 3 sites in Ninigret applied for and 3 sites in Quonnie applied for all at the same time. The SPC has been attending Preliminary Determination Meetings for the sites, and are encouraging members to do the same. SPC participated in the discussion "A Resilient South County" held last night in Wakefield. SPC had a representative on the panel and briefly discussed potential impacts of climate change on the ponds, and what the SPC does to monitor the health of the ponds and educate the public.

-Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association as reported by Mr. Galloway: The WPWA is awaiting confirmation from US Congress regarding the passage of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Protection Act which would initiate a



multiyear study to assess whether the Wood, Pawcatuck, Beaver, Chipuxet and Queen rivers meet the standards to be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The new Welcome Center is hoping to hire a part time employee for weekends.

6. Officer Reports: Treasurer-Ms. McGreavy distributed the monthly financial report. Ms. Torello added that the fee to upgrade the RIRC website is \$11.27 and will be applied to the RIRC administration account.
7. Chair's Report:
Dr. Berounsky noted that Ms. Marks/ Audubon of RI will be reporting on her efforts to build support for the Branch River in January. The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council has agreed to act as fiscal agent for the BRWCT Stormwater Grant Program and the first workshop is scheduled for December 17, 1pm at DEM. DEM's Melissa Deciantis will be providing administrative assistance to the RIRC. Meetings have been underway by the Green Infrastructure Coalition. Ms. Jenn Smith of the National Park Service has agreed to speak at the RIRC annual meeting scheduled for January 14, 2015.
8. Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Horbert moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Torello. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 pm.