



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



Minutes of January 14, 2015 Annual Meeting - 4pm
 Blackstone River Valley Tourism Council Visitors Center
 175 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present:

- Veronica Berounsky, Chair
- Bob Billington
- 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:

- Lisa Aurecchia, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
- Tom Borden, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
- Wendy Jencks, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Alicia Lehrer, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
- Diane Mailloux, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Steve Roth, Kickemuit River Council
- Russell Taub, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- David Urban, Kickemuit River Council

1. Call to Order of RI Rivers Council Annual Meeting: Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:15 pm.

2. Review and approval of December 10, 2014 meeting minutes: Ms. Hadley moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Cole seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Speaker Series: Bob Billington, President, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council:
The New Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park Designation



The RI Rivers Council is an associated function of the Rhode Island Water Resources Board
 Public Contact Information: Veronica Berounsky, Chair; Rachel Calabro, Vice Chair; Lisa McGreavy, Sec.

APPROVED 2/11/15

Mr. Billington led attendees on a fascinating indoor historical walking tour of the Blackstone Valley using floor maps and interpretive banners hanging on the walls in the Visitor's Center of the Blackstone River Valley Tourism Council which receives 75,000 to 85,000 visits per year.

4. Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

-Narragansett Bay Estuary Program – Mr. Borden reported that the Southern New England Coastal Watershed Restoration Program increased its grant funding availability from \$2 million for 2014 to \$5 million dollars for 2015 which will hopefully become a long term funding source for important work in Narragansett Bay. The Science Advisory Committee is helping to develop a status and trends report.

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

-Bays, Rivers, & Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) – Dr. Berounsky reported that the BRWCT will be sponsoring a table for the team and the RI Rivers Council at the RI Land and Water Summit on March 14, 2015.

- i. BRWCT funds to RIRC: Dr. Berounsky reported that the Blackstone Valley Tourism Center has offered to act as the funding agent for the BRWCT Stormwater grants. The first of three stormwater grant workshops was held on December 17 with representatives from the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, and the Friends of the Moshassuck. The second workshop is scheduled for January 21, 2015 at DEM from 1 to 3pm 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: A 30' x 30' classroom/meeting room addition to the existing center is in the planning stage. The council may be using another building in the Manville area for much needed storage space for canoes and other equipment. A plan for the Branch River watershed is moving forward. Ms. Eugenia Marks will be reporting to the RIRC in February.

-Kickemuit River Council as reported by Mr. Urban: The council has been preparing purchasing orders in fulfillment of plans outlined in the RIRC FY15 legislative grant project.

-Narrow River Preservation Association as reported by Dr. Berounsky: The US Fish & Wildlife has delayed the start of the lower Narrow River dredging project from May to the Fall.

-Salt Ponds Coalition as reported by Dr. Berounsky on behalf of Alicia Eichinger, SPC Executive Director: SPC is working on aquaculture projects and specifically looking at how they affect water quality. A membership drive is underway.

-Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association as reported by Mr. Galloway: 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 has now been authorized. A Board Meeting is scheduled for January 15th which will be a workshop about water quality monitoring with Linda Green from the URI Watershed Watch Program. Another Introduction to Geocaching workshop is being planned in February along with a series of Fly-Tying workshops.

-Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council as reported by Ms. Lehrer: A new bike path sign design has been completed and will be installed on the bike path. An urban design team is being formed to create ideas for the Downtown area from Providence Place Mall to Eagle Square. A stormwater education program is being introduced in schools in Providence and North Providence. Efforts are underway to extend the bike path into Johnston in order to connect the state's bike paths. The Red Shed Bike Camp will take place again this year for the third year at Riverside Park whereby 80 kids will receive a working bike, helmet, and lessons on bike maintenance. Mr. Galloway thanked Ms. Lehrer and Ms. Aurecchia for nominated Ms. Jane Sherman in consideration of the River Network's River Hero Award. Ms. Sherman received the prestigious award at the 2014 National River Heros Banquet in Pittsburg. Ms. Sherman founded the WRWC and was also past Chair of the RI Rivers Council.

6. Committee Reports:

Mr. Cole and Mr. Galloway provided an update from the November meeting regarding plans by the DEM Division of Fish & Wildlife to amend portions of the *2014 Rhode Island Freshwater Fishing Abstract*.

7.

Officer Reports: Treasurer-Ms. McGreavy distributed the monthly financial report. The RIRC has subscribed to *Landscape Architecture* magazine which will be available in print and digital form. Dr. Berounsky asked Mr. Lefebvre to review the magazine and report back to the RIRC with any news and articles that may be of interest to the council.

8. Other Business:
Further discussion ensued on the importance of connecting the state's existing bike paths.
9. Chair's Report:
Dr. Berounsky reported that The Narragansett Bay Commission will be issuing clean up grants in the amount of \$500-\$1,000. For more information, contact Tom Uva at tuva@narrabay.com. The RI Land & Water Summit is scheduled for March 15, 2015. Dr. Colt has offered to help with RIRC member reappointments as they arise.
10. Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Horbert moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Galloway. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:41 pm.
11. Post Adjournment: A light supper fare was followed by the viewing of a compelling twenty-minute film retracing the area's mill history and its impact on development of the Blackstone River Valley.