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

DRAFT Minutes of June 10, 2015 Meeting - 4pm
RIDEM - Conference Room 280C
235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present:
Veronica Berounsky, Chair
Rachel Calabro, Vice Chair
Paul Gonsalves
Judy Hadley
Chuck Horbert
Lisa McGreavy, Secretary

B. Guests in Attendance:
Kassi Archambault, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Tom Borden, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
Natalie Carter, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
Alice Clemente, Blackstone River Watershed Council/FOB
Richard Grant, Narrow River Preservation Association
Sue Kiernan, RI DEM
Alicia Lehrer, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Eugenia Marks, Audubon Society of RI
Arthur Plitt, Blackstone River Watershed Council/FOB
James Toomey, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

Call to Order: Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm.

Review and approval of May 13, 2015 meeting minutes: Mr. Horbert moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Hadley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Speaker Series - This month's speaker: *Overview of the BRWCT Stormwater Grant Reimbursement Process for Grantees* by Natalie Carter, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and Sue Kiernan, RIDEM.

In order to administer the RI Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordinating Team (BRWCT) stormwater grants to the RIRC, DEM and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council (BVTC) will be entering into a joint master contract whereby the BVCT will act as fiscal agent. Sub-grant agreements will then be drafted between the BVCT and individual watershed councils for awarded

projects. Any purchasing activity the councils have planned as part of the stormwater projects must follow state purchasing guidelines which will be included with the grant agreements. The RIRC grant subcommittee will review and approve all council requests for reimbursement and then forward the request to BVCT for payment to the councils. The BVCT will then request reimbursement to DEM/DOA. All correspondence regarding grants and agreements must be sent to the RIRC official email address at info@ririvers.org. Work on the projects can start once grant agreements have been signed and executed. Grant agreements will be sent out soon. Councils should send any time extension requests to the RIRC at info@rirvers.org. At this time it appears that funding for Year 2 will not be available so plan Year 1 projects accordingly.

Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

-Narragansett Bay Estuary Program – Mr. Borden reported that the NBEP is seeking to fill a part time administrative position; more information is available on the NEIWPCC website at http://www.neiwpcc.org/ The NBEP will be announcing two new funding opportunities in the near future: a project-based grant round announced in July 2015 with awards in December 2015; and a research-based grant round to be announced next summer. A bill has been introduced in the legislature to maintain the RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative with a modification to include a focus on climate change.

-State Guide Plan Advisory Committee – Ms. Calabro reported that a meeting of the committee has been scheduled for June 23, 2015 and a draft report will be coming out soon. A placeholder will be included in future agendas for RIRC updates.

-L. McGreavy added that DEM Office of Water Resources is planning a meeting of watershed groups and partners on June 16 at 4pm at DEM in collaboration with the RIRC. The purpose of the meeting, which is expected to take place annually, is to provide an update on DEM's new and ongoing strategic initiatives and targeted activities, hear about current issues groups are dealing with in their watersheds, and get feedback on how DEM can help councils address the issues.

-Bays, Rivers, & Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) – Dr. Berounsky reported that while the bill to repeal the BRWCT passed last year, the funding portion of the program remains in-tact as funding sources are remaining in place; however it is unlikely that the second year of the BRWCT stormwater grant to the RIRC will be still be available.

Reports of activities in Designated Local Watershed Councils:

-Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone as reported by Ms. Hadley: The annual meeting was held on May 20 with Charlene

Cutler, the Director of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, speaking about the national park designation process. The BRWC/FOB is contributing funds towards the restoration of the barn at the Kelly House. The Greenway Challenge is scheduled for September 26. A Clothing Drive is taking place from 6/14 to 6/20 at the Providence Savers store. Remember to tell Savers that your donation is in the name of the BRWC/FOB. The River Rat Program is progressing very well and the final report will be submitted by the June 30 deadline. Ms. Clemente added that the flooding problem at Hope Global in Cumberland has been resolved as a result of the town receiving a grant to lift the building to protect it from future flooding.

-Buckeye Brook Coalition as reported by Mr. Horbert: DEM will be developing a new TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) water quality restoration study for Buckeye Brook. Knowles Brook is already included in the completed statewide TMDL study.

-Friends of the Moshassuck as reported by Ms. Hadley: Greg Garrett has been leading evening nature walks to the North Burial Ground. Work on the tadpole video project is progressing.

-Kickemuit River Council - no report.

-Narrow River Preservation Association as reported by Mr. Grant: Mr. Grant thanked the RIRC for funding assistance for the "Exploring Narrow River through the Lens of Art and Science" Day yesterday June 9 at the Middlebridge Education and Activities Center. Over 100 6th grade students and teachers from Narragansett experienced hands-on seining, use of microscopes and guidebooks to identify river creatures, guided walks, water quality testing, sketching, fish imprints, and seaweed pressing. Photos are available on the website at www.narrowriver.org. On Saturday June 13 NRPA and the Narrow River Land Trust will put on "What Lives in the River?" Day for families. On Saturday June 27, the Tenth Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim takes place. Mr. Grant reported on his experience visiting the Coojoot Graphite Mine located on property owned by the Narrow River Land Trust.

-Pawtuxet River Water Authority as reported by Mr. Horbert: Site clearing has started at the Natick Dam hydropower project. Plans were modified to lower some elevations and DEM issued a revised freshwater wetlands permit. Mr. Horbert was recently nominated for a position on the board of the Pawtuxet River Water Authority. *Post meeting note: Mr. Horbert was subsequently appointed to the PRA Board.*

-Salt Ponds Coalition - no report.

-Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association - no report

-Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council as reported by Ms. Archambault who was recently hired as WRWC's new Education Director: WRWC has several events planned and underway including the River Rangers landscape crew for 18-24 year olds, a series of Clean Days, Red Shed Bike Summer Camp. Plans are in place to extend the Woonasquatucket Greenway for an additional three miles. For information see http://www.woonasquatucket.org/

-Branch River as reported by Ms. Marks: Work is underway to assist the Glocester Town Planner with the education component of the town's MS4 permit. An intern from Bryant College has been assisting with projects in the watershed. Plans for a possible summer farmers market are being discussed. Water quality sampling has been taking place in Wilson's Reservoir, an impoundment in the Clear River which is a tributary to the Branch River. A local resident has been providing interesting information he is collecting from his in-home meteorology station.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Horbert attended the May 26 DEM public hearing on the proposed adoption of the 2016-2017 Fishing Regulations along with Mr. Cole.

Officer Reports:

L. McGreavy distributed a RIRC account summary showing a balance of $4,409.

Chair's Report:

-Dr. Berounsky reported that Mr. Burke of the RI Water Resources Board informed her that state funding to the RIRC for FY16 is expected to be level-funded, i.e. same as last year. The RIRC summer meeting which will be held on either July or August will take place on the Blackstone River on the riverboat called the Blackstone Valley Explorer; more information to follow.

Other Business:

-Ms. Calabro announced that the Blackstone Coalition will be celebrating the Campaign for a Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone on July 26 from 12 to 3pm at the Blackstone Gorge;
-Final reports for the FY2015 RIRC Legislative Grantees are due June 30, 2015;
-Narragansett Environmental Awareness Day will be held on Saturday, July 18 from 10am to 1pm on Narragansett Town Beach. Mr. Horbert, Ms. Hadley, and Ms. Torello will be hosting the RIRC table at the event;

-Ms. Marks announced that the Green infrastructure Workgroup will be launching a website in July that will include an education element on stormwater and will be an excellent primer on the subject matter.
-Ms. Calabro reminded the group that Save the Bay's annual meeting will take place in conjunction with Taste of the Bay event on June 11 at Save the Bay in Providence.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Horbert moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. McGreavy. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 pm.