



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



Minutes of September 9, 2015 Meeting - 4pm
 RIDEM - Conference Room 280C
 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present:

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

B. Guests in Attendance:

- Kassi Archambault, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
- Tom Borden, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
- Alicia Eichinger, Salt Ponds Coalition
- Richard Grant, Narrow River Preservation Association
- Barry Martasian, Friends of the Hunt River Watershed
- Eivy Monroy, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
- Ernie Panciera, RIDEM
- Elaine Papa, Buckeye Brook Coalition
- Arthur Plitt, Blackstone River Watershed Council/FOM
- Steve Roth, Kickemuit River Council
- David Urban, Kickemuit River Council

Call to Order: Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm.

Review and approval of August 12, 2015 meeting minutes: Mr. Horbert moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Cole seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports of activities in Designated Local Watershed Councils: Dr. Berounsky noted that it would be very helpful if council representatives would submit monthly activity reports to via email to Ms. McGreavy either before or at the meeting to be included in meeting minutes.



-Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone as reported by Ms. Hadley: Two special events are planned at the Environmental Center in Manville, as part of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor's "Go! 2015" program: a Geocaching 101 Workshop will be held Saturday September 19th from 12 to 3 PM (call 401-724-5292) and a Full Moon Canoe Paddle on Sunday September 27th at 7:30 PM (call 688-4416). This will be an easy, guided, paddle on flat water to view the rising moon. Experience the beauty of the Blackstone River in a new and unique way. Look for wildlife while gently gliding down the river. Also, a Branch River Day and Farmers Market was held on August 22 with representatives from Save the Lakes, Blackstone River Coalition and Audubon RI. <http://blackstoneriver.org/blackstone/>

-Buckeye Brook Coalition: Mr. Horbert reported that the RI Airport Corporation recently completed restoration of Buckeye Brook channel with great success. The channel will be free flowing by next week and trees will be planted as part of the restoration plan. Ms. Papa reported that cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) was recently discovered in Warwick Pond. The Pond is closed until November 1. A public meeting was held on September 1 with representatives from DEM, DOH, and URI Watershed Watch to discuss water quality conditions and potential causes for the algae bloom. <http://www.buckeyebrook.org>

-Friends of the Moshassuck as reported by Mr. Plitt: Video work continues. Many have seen the videos. This week the menhaden are the feature, but back to tadpoles soon. Website links to the YouTube video. We shall be finishing the forest mapping project at Collyer Field this fall with a new round of tree identification. Getting the city to actually take title to the land is on the agenda, but it will be slow going through the city process. With the new sewer infrastructure, we are working out with NBC how to plant trees without harming their access to infrastructure for maintenance. FOTM in partnership with the Green Infrastructure Coalition is going to put together a program on amphibians and stormwater focusing on designing stormwater infrastructure to serve as breeding habitat for amphibians in appropriate places. FOTM's video project is serving as the instigator in efforts to create a RI Nature Video Festival which will hopefully happen this winter. The event will actually be put on by the Environment Council of Rhode Island, but all watershed groups are highly encouraged to participate. Details soon to be shared. www.themoshassuck.org

-Kickemuit River Council: No report. <http://www.kickemuitriver.org>

-Narrow River Preservation Association as reported by Mr. Grant: This year has been an especially successful year for the NRPA. A recent membership drive mailing to 3300 residents has had a great response. Water quality testing for the National Fish and Wildlife is still underway for the \$4 million project to build up the marshes north of Sprague Bridge. The NRPA annual



meeting is scheduled for next month. Two new members have been appointed to the board, Catalina Martinez and Roy Bergstrom. Next weekend is the Gansett Days event; What Lives in the River on September 20 and the Garrison House Acres Walk on September 26. The RIRC/BRWCT stormwater grant is progressing with the last of 3 sampling events looking at optical brighteners in Pettaquamscutt Cove. Results are due in about two weeks. <http://www.narrowriver.org/>

-Pawtuxet River Water Authority as reported by Mr. Horbert: The PRWA will be meeting next week. The BRWCT/RIRC stormwater grant awarded to the PRWA for Sediment Analysis at Tongue Pond is not going forward due to issues raised by landowners regarding potential liability. Dr. Berounsky noted that further discussion is needed on how to proceed with the grant cancellation. Work is being planned on the PRWA website to get it back up and running.

-Salt Ponds Coalition as reported by Ms. Eichinger: SPC held its annual meeting last month with CRMC's Caitlin Chaffee as speaker. Her presentation wrapped up our summer seminar series pertaining to the DOI Grant and the dredging/post-Sandy restoration projects/marsh restoration projects in the ponds. We have been keeping track of the development in Potter Pond. We are taking a look at the revised plans in order to decide what, if any, action to take. We had our last safari for the summer last month. It had a great turnout. We have two planned for the fall so far, one with a Boy Scout troop and one with the Williams School. SPCA President Mr. Art Ganz was the annual speaker at the Nope's Island Association meeting and spoke about aquaculture in Rhode Island. Ms. Eichinger attended the presentation of a Girl Scout earning her silver medal that she and Mr. Ganz mentored. The next newsletter has been completed and is in processes of being printed and mailed. <http://www.saltpondscoalition.org/>

-Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association as reported by Ms. Torello: Our membership committee has been setting up at local farmers markets to spread the word about our organization and try to recruit new members, with some success. Our membership reminder mailing has been very successful in increasing our donor retention. Ms. Denise Poyer, WPWA Program Director, is working on the study to hopefully include the Pawcatuck, Wood, Beaver, Chipuxet, and Queen Rivers in the Wild and Scenic Rivers program. She has sent out invitations to the towns in the watershed and others to be on the study committee which will meet for the first time November 5. The engineers and WPWA interns are finishing up their field work for the Flood Resiliency and Management Plan and will also meet in November. We have successfully completed most of our kayaking programs for the year. We have two left: an Almost Super Full Moon Paddle September 26, from 6 pm to 8 pm at Watchaug Pond in Charlestown; and a Pawcatuck River Fall Paddle on October 11, from 9 am to 1 pm at the Jay Cronan River Access on Rt. 91 in Richmond. The White Rock Dam removal is a little behind schedule but it will be completed. The Water Quality Monitoring Project is under way and



making good progress. We used Champlin Grant money to purchase new kayaks, including several to more safely and comfortably accommodate larger paddlers. Ms. Poyer is researching ways to take physically challenged children on paddles. <http://www.wpwa.org/>

-Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council as reported by Ms. Archambault:
Woony River Ride, Saturday, September 19: Register and spread the word! woonyride.org. Electrofishing monitoring and our paddle program are finishing up for the year. Last Paddle Sunday October 4: Sunday, October 4, 1:30 PM, downtown Providence. Downtown, Post Industrial River Restoration, Paddle with the WRWC Staff and Board. Paddle, learn about upcoming projects and enjoy some snacks and drinks with staff and board after. Contact Erik at the Watershed Council at etalley@wrwc.org or (401) 481-1376 to register & for more details. Advance sign- up is required.
History Bike Ride THIS Saturday, September 12: 9:30 AM, \$10. We meet on the Park Street Bridge of the Providence Place Mall. Sarah Zurier, Historian at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, will lead the tour. On the route, explore settlement, industry, and recreation on the Woonasquatucket. The midpoint of the ride is a visit to the Clemence-Irons House (1691) in Johnston, one of the oldest houses in Rhode Island. This is an easy, 10 mile ride with plenty of stops. Educational Programs: Include macroinvertebrate field trips with Wheeler School, classroom visits and preparation for "Fish in the Classroom" at the Paul Cuffee School and North Providence's Centredale Elementary School, and MET School Science Program. Bike Camp: A successful summer now over. Eighty-eight campers joined us over 8 weeks. Fifty-eight received scholarships. We taught 10 campers how to ride for the first time and gave out 66 bikes, 77 helmets and 27 locks. All campers learned about the river and environment and went for daily rides. They also learned basic bike mechanics and several campers reached level 2 bike mechanics. River Rangers: This summer along the Greenway, we worked with 10 Junior River Rangers selected from a pool of 18 candidates from across various neighborhoods bordering the Woonasquatucket River Greenway and around Providence. This group worked hard and learned the ins and outs of beautifying and maintaining this great asset to the city. They went through a series of trainings and projects to expand their skills including: landscape maintenance, invasive plant management, canoeing & in-water cleanups, community outreach and engagement, and individual professional development. Two Junior Rangers joined our staff for the rest of 2015. The Ranger team is now preparing the Greenway for the Woony Ride visitors. Work done + having fun = success!
Volunteering on Clean Days on the Greenway: To date, nearly 640 volunteers have given their time to make the Greenway a cleaner, more vibrant and beautiful part of our urban ecology along the Woonasquatucket River. Volunteers have given their time through individual community service work, our Clean Days on the Greenway kickoff event in April and 10 Clean Days Series events so far this year. Several Clean Days events have included in-water cleanups where volunteers have hauled out a considerable amount of debris from the River, mainly upstream of the Providence Place Mall. Due to



finding so much debris in water, we are considering hosting a competition Trash Haul in the future! We currently have four upcoming Clean Days events in the works for this fall. Greenway Extension through Johnston: We are stepping up our efforts to extend the Greenway through Johnston. We are planning a public meeting to build resident support - tentatively scheduled for Nov. 4, 2015. WRWC has moved: Our new office is right on the greenway and next to the river. Come visit us at our new location: 45 Eagle Street (in the Eagle Square Shopping Plaza), Suite 202, Providence, RI 02909. Bike Sale This Weekend! The Red Shed Bike Shop is selling our great refurbished bikes this Saturday, September 12, from 10 AM to 5 PM at RISD Beach (the grass patch in front of the RISD student center) on Benefit Street in Providence. Buy a super bike at a super price for yourself or a loved one! Proceeds support Bike Camp. <http://www.wrwc.org/>

Reports from non RIRC-designated watersheds:

-Friends of the Hunt River as reported by Mr. Martasian is looking for members interested in advocating for the Hunt River watershed. One concern is for the recent decrease in fish and eel counts making passage over the Old Forge Road dam compared to earlier counts.

Speaker Series:

Rachel Calabro, Save the Bay: *Fish Runs in Rhode Island*

Ms. Calabro presented a slide show and talk on fish runs, dams, and river restoration in Rhode Island noting that there are currently 671 dams regulated by DEM in the state. All areas on the topic were covered including cases in which dam removal resulted in economic and environmental benefits for fish and wildlife habitat. To view the presentation, visit the RI Rivers website at <http://ririvers.org/meetings.htm>

Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

-Narragansett Bay Estuary Program – Mr. Borden reported that staff is working on the state of watersheds report and will be meeting with the NBEP Management Committee next week with a focus on the Blackstone River. A request for proposals with a deadline of September 23 has been released relative to EPA's Southeast New England Program for up to \$900,000 in coordination with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) for water quality grants within the Greater Narragansett Bay Watershed. For more information, see <http://www.nbep.org>

-State Guide Plan Advisory Committee – Ms. Calabro reported that the committee will be meeting in October.



-Bays, Rivers, & Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) – Dr. Berounsky reported that a bid request was issued for contracting with a web designer to add stormwater related content on RIRC-designated websites. The selected contractor will need to coordinate with council representatives in the process and has until June 2016 to complete the work.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Cole reported that DEM Fish and Wildlife incorporated all the suggestions he offered as part of DEM's request for input to proposed amendments to the Fishing Abstract for the 2016-1017 season.

Ms. Torello reported that she added a photo gallery to the RI Rivers website and asks councils to send photos to her for posting.

Dr. Berounsky reported that the Ten Mile River Watershed Association has submitted a request for RIRC designation which is currently under review by the designation subcommittee headed up by Ms. Calabro. The request will be before the full council at a monthly meeting either in October or November of this year.

Officer Reports:

L. McGreavy distributed a RIRC account summary showing a balance of \$4,174.46. The RIRC now has a print and online subscription to *Landscape Architecture Magazine*. An email with login information was previously distributed.

Chair's Report:

-Dr. Berounsky reported plans for upcoming meetings: At the October 14 meeting, Mr. Alex Kuffner, Energy and Environment reporter from the Providence Journal will be joining the council for a discussion on reporting environmental news. At the November 18 meeting, Mr. Dave Chopy, Chief of DEM's Office of Compliance and Inspection, will be offering information on contacting the department in the event of an environmental emergency or other instance that requires DEM notification. Level funding of \$15,150 for the RIRC Legislative grant program for fiscal year 2016 has been approved by the Department of Administration and a request for proposals will be sent to designated watershed councils by the end of the week with a due date on October 15. Final grant reports from the FY15 legislative grant program have been posted on the RIRC website.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Ms. Hadley moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Torello. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 pm.