



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



Minutes of January 13, 2016 Annual Meeting - 3pm  
Rhode Island State House Rotunda and Bell Room  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

- A. Members Present:
  - Veronica Berounsky, Chair
  - Rachel Calabro, Vice Chair
  - James Cole
  - Walter Galloway
  - Paul Gonsalves
  - Judith Hadley
  - Lisa McGreavy, Secretary
  - Elise Torello
  
- B. Guests in Attendance:
  - Kassi Archambault, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
  - Laura Bailey, Kickemuit River Watershed Council
  - Ken Burke, RI Water Resources Board
  - Judy Colaluca, Save the Lakes
  - Kathleen Crawley, RI Water Resources Board
  - Alicia Eichinger, Salt Ponds Coalition
  - Mark Gee, Senate District 35
  - Linda George, Senate Policy Office
  - Greg Gerritt, Friends of the Moshassuck
  - Richard Grant, Narrow River Preservation Association
  - Carol Hagan McEntee, House District 33
  - Meg Kerr, Audubon Society of Rhode Island
  - Eugenia Marks, Audubon Society of Rhode Island
  - Ann Morrill, Kickemuit River Watershed Council
  - Henry Meyer, Kingston Water District
  - Ed O'Neill, Senate District 17
  - Bob Nero, Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council
  - Marcia Pena, Buckeye Brook Coalition
  - Susan Sosnowski, Senate District 37
  - Michael Zarum, Buckeye Brook Coalition

Call to Order: Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 3:12 pm.

Overview of the RI Rivers Council - RI Rivers Council Chair, Dr. Veronica Berounsky  
Dr. Berounsky give a brief overview of the Rhode Island Rivers Council (RIRC), noting that it was established by the RI General Assembly under RI General Law 46-28-5 in 1991, making 2016 our 25<sup>th</sup> year. Mr. Ken Payne was the founding Chair of the RIRC. The Council is charged with coordinating state policies to protect rivers and watersheds and strengthening local watershed councils as partners in river and watershed protection. For each of the past 3 fiscal years, the RIRC has been level funded at \$15,000/year from the General Assembly. All of this except for about \$200/year goes to the watershed council grant program. Over the past 3 years RIRC awarded \$44,794 in grants to our designated watershed councils and this was leveraged or matched in triple by the watershed councils for an amount of \$149,526. Her complete remarks may be found on the RI Rivers Council website: <http://www.ririvers.org>.

Speaker: Senator V. Susan Sosnowski. Sen. Sosnowski spoke on legislation recently passed in the General Assembly that is of interest to the RI Rivers Council and its member Watershed Councils such as on cesspool phase out, dam removal, climate change, clean energy, and other topics.

Written Reports of Activities Received from Designated Local Watershed Councils:

-Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone as reported by Ms. Hadley: See the attached 1/13/16 letter from Paul A. Roselli, president, Burrillville Land Trust. [www.blackstoneriver.org/blackstone/](http://www.blackstoneriver.org/blackstone/)

-Friends of the Moshassuck as reported by Mr. Gerritt: Work continues on the reforestation project at Collyer Field, pond monitoring, the Moshassuck Critter video series, and exploring more into the topic of stormwater and amphibians. The Rhode Island Nature Video Festival is scheduled for Saturday, February 6 at the RISD Museum and tickets are available at the Environmental Council of RI website. Eighty video submissions have been received to date. [www.themoshassuck.org](http://www.themoshassuck.org)

-Narrow River Preservation Association as reported by Mr. Grant: The month of December was a busy time for most of us. We were elated with the holidays but interspersed with sadness for those not with us any longer. The celebration of Dr. Jon Boothroyd's life, "Remembering Jon" was held on December 13, 2015 by the Friends of Canonchet Farm and Narrow River Preservation Association. It was an event that started with a walk through Canonchet Farm, guided by Jon's former student, Dr. Brian Oakley, on a path that will be named the Boothroyd Path. That was followed by a reception held at the Towers in Narragansett. Jon had been a member of NRPA for 24 years.

During the first few months of the 2015-16 NRPA year, four new board members have joined the NRPA Board of Directors: Catalina Martinez, Roy Bergstrom, Christopher Hubbard, and Molly Mageau. Financially, the NRPA Membership Drive that began in August, winds down with a membership total of 235 members, approximately the same as recent years, with a total receipt of \$24,000.00. Several RI legislative grants are in process amounting to \$3500.00 and have been designated to The River Watch program. Four board members have volunteered to judge the January 12<sup>th</sup> High School Science Fair Awards selection. "On Pettaquamscutt" Lectures have been scheduled for the winter Sundays 1/31, 2/28 and 3/20. On January 31, Furniture maker Jeffrey Greene, author of *American Furniture of the 18th Century: History, Technique, Structure*; will describe "Furnishing the South County Plantation Homes." NRPA will have a display at the Land and Water Conservation Summit on March 19<sup>th</sup>. The Road Race, Turnaround Swim and the Pettaquamscutt Paddle are scheduled for May 14, June 18 or 25, and July 22, respectively. The education drawer now contains a design for a 4<sup>rd</sup> grade program in conjunction with GemsNET. The RIRC funded storm water grant project is waiting for laboratory results to report on. NRPA-Lesa Meng college scholarship applications are due April 25. NRPA's Coastal Fellow Eric Peterson gave a poster at URI's Coastal Fellow Symposium on his Fish and Wildlife funded project concerning bacterial sources to lower Narrow River. Middlebridge activity, Friends of Canonchet Farm, The RI DOT completed a feasibility study for the Bike Path, now funding needs to be procured. Our Newsletter, *Narrow River Notes*, came out and can be viewed on line at [www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org)

-Salt Ponds Coalition as reported by Ms. Eichinger: We reviewed and submitted comments regarding the latest draft of the RFP in the Post-Sandy Resiliency Project. This RFP focuses on the dredging that will happen in the Charlestown Breachway and the subsequent restoration of adjacent marshes in Ninigret Pond and local beaches. To raise increased awareness about Green Hill Pond, we are almost done with a follow up video to *Green Hill: Below the Surface* focused on geese and nutrient loading in the area. We are waiting on our next meeting regarding a new stormwater awareness initiative for the residents in the Charlestown and Green Hill area. We attended the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association's Annual meeting, and had the chance to network with a few teachers as well as other non-profits during the event. SPC has set a new goal for 2016 (and beyond) to increase membership, and is looking for new strategies to achieve this goal. We are starting to look ahead to this spring and summer season. SPC will be doing a presentation about the ponds in May to the Museum of Primitive Art and Culture in Wakefield. We are also going to start planning our own seminars, safaris, kayak trips, and other potential outreach events shortly. [www.saltpondscoalition.org](http://www.saltpondscoalition.org)

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association as reported by Ms. Torello: Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Wild and Scenic Rivers Study: to qualify the



Pawcatuck, Wood, Beaver, Chipuxet, and Queen Rivers into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system; engaging all 14 towns in the watershed to participate. Flood Resiliency and Management Plan (NFWF): Field work completed and reported to the committee in November: assessed 442 culverts and bridges and 44 high priority dams; geomorphic assessment of 38 miles of stream habitat along several reaches of the Wood and Pawcatuck River. White Rock Dam removal completed: Lower Pawcatuck at White Rock now restored to natural river channel. Dozens of paddling programs for children (school field trips, SMILE (Science and Math in Learning Exploration), summer camp groups). More than a dozen other hiking and paddling programs for the general public. Water Quality Monitoring Program Assessment (funded in part by a grant from the Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team) project completed. Transitioned to electronic newsletter to save paper and \$\$\$. Used grant funds to purchase 16 new kayaks, plus paddles and PFDs. Campus renovations and new signage (Champlin grant). [www.wpwa.org/](http://www.wpwa.org/)

-Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council as reported by Ms. Archambault:  
Green Infrastructure: To increase education and outreach about stormwater management and green infrastructure, WRWC has added resource links to the stormwater page of our website (see [www.wrwc.org/stormwater.php](http://www.wrwc.org/stormwater.php)). At the statewide Green Infrastructure Coalition (GIC) meeting on January 12, 2016, representatives from the Upper Narragansett Regional Stormwater Management District gave an update on progress toward developing a utility. They are currently on Phase II of the 3 phase project. We have ongoing projects with members of the GIC. WRWC did not receive funding for which we applied for a DEM/EPA supplemental environmental project to depave and improve stormwater infiltration around Riverside Park. The WRWC is hosting a workshop on using an online tool called LIDRA (low impact development rapid design) on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 9am-3pm at Save the Bay, Providence. This workshop is open to all interested parties but limited to 25. If any Rivers Council members are interested, they should sign up immediately with Alicia Lehrer ([alehrer@wrwc.org](mailto:alehrer@wrwc.org)). Free lunch is included in the workshop.  
Greenway Extension through Johnston: Following the December 2nd meeting with Johnston Residents in the Lyman Ave neighborhood, WRWC has been working out logistics for the short-term solutions for the area and plans to install in the upcoming months. For the long-term extension, WRWC has collaborated with Town of Johnston representatives and has proposed the additional route option for funding approval with the RIDOT. If approved, WRWC will work with RIDOT and consultants to prepare for design feasibility studies of the new route option. Educational Programs: Programming with the Met High School is transitioning from Part I-Learn One, to Part II-Do One (final stage is Part III Teach One.) Fifteen Met students will study sources of pollution that run into Narragansett Bay from Providence and educate people about the damage of pollution from stormwater. The Met received additional funding from the ECRI Tisdale fund to help with their research and community engagement projects and we will not only educate other school

youth, but also Providence Waterfire attendees in May. WRWC will be working with Providence After School Alliance (PASA) Afterzone (middle school after-school program) and has applied for PASA Summer Scholars programming. Join us at the RI Spring Flower and Garden Show, Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 3pm and Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> at 1pm. There are more spots in the Flower Show if anyone would like to present. Greenway River Rangers have continued in the field longer than usual due to the warmer weather providing a clear bike path. They continue their weekly rounds of keeping the path clean, safe and beautiful. They have also continued their increased efforts towards invasive plant removal alongside the river, in conjunction with the WRWC Invasive Plant Manager. The Rangers will continue to maintain the path, stopping when they are unable to access the path, at which point they will start up again in March. During these winter months, the Greenway Team is also preparing upcoming Spring plantings & projects with the community and for hiring new 2016 River Rangers starting in March and April. Volunteering on Clean Days on the Greenway: In 2015, 747 volunteers gave 3,042 hours of 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 19 individual Clean Days Series events this year. WRWC is now preparing for the Spring Clean Days Kickoff Event to be held on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>! This event will be followed by a full docket of planting and spruce up projects during the spring and summer. Monitoring: The WRWC is currently organizing and analyzing all 2015 monitoring data in order to develop a year-end report for our Rivers Council monitoring grant. We will be analyzing Watershed Watch water quality monitoring data and electrofishing data. <http://www.wrwc.org/>

Oral report of activities in designated watershed councils were also given for:

- Buckeye Brook Coalition by Mr. Zarum
- Kickemuit River Council by Ms. Morrill
- Pawtuxet River Authority and watershed Council by Mr. Nero

A short recess was taken so RIRC members could attend the House and Senate legislative sessions. Representative Eileen S. Naughton along with Representatives Arthur Handy, Carol Hagan McEntee, Dennis Canario, and Edith Ajello crafted a resolution (see <http://ririvers.org/pdf/Resolution-25thAnniversary.pdf> ) and Rep. Naughton introduced it in the House of Representatives honoring the RIRC for its 25 years of work and "devotion to improving Rhode Island's most treasured asset". Several RIRC members were also introduced to the House: Michael Zarum, President of the Buckeye Brook Coalition which is in Rep. Naughton's home district; Treasurer Lisa McGreavy; Meg Kerr, Chair 2000-2007; Vice-Chair Rachel Calabro; Guy Lefebvre, Chair 2008-2013; and Chair Dr. Veronica Berounsky. The resolution was

introduced in the Senate by Senators Susan Sosnowski, Michael McCaffrey, M. Teresa Paiva Weed, Erin Lynch Prata and William Walaska.

Review and approval of December 9, 2015 meeting minutes: Mr. Galloway moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Cole seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

-State Guide Plan Advisory Committee – Ms. Calabro and Mr. Gonsalves:  
Work is progressing on the draft report. A presentation to the RIRC will take place soon.

-Narragansett Bay Estuary Program as reported by Mr. Galloway:  
OVER \$815,000 IN GRANTS APPROVED FOR PROJECTS IN THE  
NARRAGANSETT BAY WATERSHED  
Providence, Rhode Island, January 11, 2016 – The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program and the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPC) are pleased to announce that more than \$815,000 in grants will fund eleven projects aimed at protecting and restoring water quality in the Narragansett Bay watershed. These grants will support municipalities and nonprofit agencies, in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts, with a focus on projects to address nutrients, pathogens, and stormwater. These grants are funded through the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), specifically EPA’s Southeast New England Program for Coastal Watershed Restoration. The Southeast New England Program brings together partnerships to protect and restore the coastal watersheds of southeast New England from Westerly, Rhode Island to Chatham, Massachusetts, including Narragansett Bay and all other Rhode Island coastal waters, Buzzards Bay, and southern Cape Cod. “The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program is very pleased to award grants to municipalities and nonprofit organizations who are taking concrete steps to help protect and restore the water quality in the Narragansett Bay watershed,” said Judith Swift, chair of the Estuary Program’s Management Committee. “We also are pleased to applaud the leadership of Senator Jack Reed who spearheaded this program to focus on the coastal watersheds of southern New England.” “The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program’s grants will fund important projects in the Narragansett Bay watershed—both in Massachusetts and Rhode Island,” said Ron Poltak, NEIWPC’s executive director. “As host of the Program, we look forward to advancing the important work of the diverse partners in protecting this vital coastal resource.” The funded projects this year are summarized below:  
□ The Town of Avon, Massachusetts, is examining stormwater pollution to an important local waterway - Trout Brook. The Town of Avon relies on multiple groundwater sources and the Town’s wells rely exclusively on the recharge of stormwater as the source of fresh water. They will assess potential contributions to the impairments in the Trout Brook watershed, including examining stormwater outfalls that discharge directly into Trout Brook. The

analysis will include land-use surveys within the five largest catchment areas and water quality sampling to assess discharges to Trout Brook. The project will also include preliminary design of stormwater projects for nutrient and pathogen removal. (\$24,000)

□ The Town of Barrington, Rhode Island, is collecting water quality and sediment data and designing green infrastructure projects in and around Brickyard Pond to address water quality impairments. Connected to Narragansett Bay through Mussachuck Creek, Brickyard Pond hosts an annual run of anadromous river herring. The Town will complete a conceptual design study for green infrastructure/stormwater best management practices for five Town-owned priority outfalls. The Town's goal is to significantly reduce phosphorus loadings to support a healthy ecology in Brickyard Pond. (\$19,260)

□ Clean Ocean Access, Newport & Middletown, Rhode Island, will implement a project, *Stormwater pathogens - Find it and Fix it*, to identify sources of pathogens impacting Easton's Beach. This project includes a partnership with the City of Newport, the Town of Middletown, and the Rhode Island Department of Health. The project will include water quality testing and sediment sampling at key locations during dry-weather (low flow of stormwater) and wet-weather (high flow of stormwater) events. The goal is to track down the sources of bacteria that close the beaches to swimming and develop solutions to fix these recurring problems. (\$45,900)

□ The City of Cranston, Rhode Island, will plan and build one or more stormwater infiltration projects in the Stillhouse Cove portion of the Providence River. This cove in Upper Narragansett Bay experiences severe algal blooms during the summer due to excess nutrients. Stillhouse Cove is an integral part of the community and provides Cranston's only public access to Narragansett Bay. Building green infrastructure projects will help reduce stormwater pollution loadings and will greatly benefit the water quality in Stillhouse Cove. The project will also include planning assistance, public outreach, and education through Cranston's partners: Save The Bay and the Edgewood Waterfront Preservation Association. (\$99,100)

□ The Town of East Bridgewater, Massachusetts, is examining creative solutions to provide limited sewer extensions to serve the densely developed town center. East Bridgewater High School's existing wastewater treatment facility has the opportunity to serve additional downtown properties. This project would reduce nitrogen and phosphorus contributions to nearby surface waters, including Meadow Brook, Salisbury Plain River, and Matfield River. The Board of Health will review the capacity of the High School Treatment Facility, assess the flows from other town buildings, project available system capacity for serving town center properties, and develop a Capital Improvements Plan for limited sewer service areas. (\$30,000)

□ The City of East Providence, Rhode Island, will build a stormwater mitigation project at Sabin Point Park on the Providence River to help address elevated bacterial levels. Sabin Point Park is an urban park and beach that is popular for boaters, beachcombers, walkers, and playground use; however, swimming has not been allowed there in decades due to water

quality impairments. The City received funding through the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to complete the design for the stormwater project. The goal is the opening of the first swimmable beach in the Providence metropolitan area in decades. The City will partner with Brown University and the Rhode Island Department of Health staff to monitor nutrient and bacteria levels to assess the effectiveness of the project. In addition, Save The Bay will provide outreach to the surrounding communities regarding controls to stormwater runoff. (\$100,000)

□ The Town of Halifax, Massachusetts, will identify, map, and prioritize the stormwater outfalls and other sources discharging to the East and West Monponsett Ponds (in the Taunton River watershed). The ponds are relatively shallow and provide drinking water, fisheries, flood control, and recreation. Significant levels of pollutants have resulted in algal blooms which have closed beaches and caused fish kills. The Board of Health's project will include field verification and mapping of outfalls, prioritization and conceptual design for sites, and permit level design and cost estimates for the three highest priority sites. (\$57,338)

□ The Town of Jamestown, Rhode Island, will build an innovative stormwater system to protect Sheffield Cove. The Cove is a recreationally important shellfishing ground that was closed in 2009 due to excessive bacterial contamination. The project will be a combination of bioretention and sand filtration to treat pathogens from stormwater and dry-weather background flows. The sand filter's design combines StormCrete (pervious concrete) and sand filtration. The Town will also conduct sampling using microbial source tracking (DNA fingerprinting) to differentiate specific impacts from various source types such as wildlife and domestic animals. (\$118,200)

□ The City of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, will focus on stormwater mapping and green infrastructure design to prioritize projects for the City's 45 stormwater outfalls. The City will characterize the outfall drainage areas (soils groups, impervious cover, topography) and will then select the 10 most important drainage areas. The priority sites will undergo intensive field assessment of catch basins, manholes, and interconnected drain lines. The City will thereafter prepare conceptual designs for future stormwater improvement projects. (\$83,510)

□ The City of Warwick, Rhode Island, will install a series of bioretention basins and vegetated swales within the medians of Suburban Parkway to help improve water quality in the vicinity of Oakland Beach and City Park Beach. The total project will be approximately 2,000 feet long, on City-owned property, and it will help reduce the amount of contaminants entering Greenwich Bay. The City, using Community Development Block Grant funding, previously hired a design group to design the project and provide biddable construction documents for the stormwater treatment facilities. (\$180,000)

□ The Town of Westerly, Rhode Island, will identify, prioritize, and implement water quality improvements in Little Narragansett Bay and the lower portion of the Pawcatuck River. Presently, these waters have high nutrient loads, elevated bacteria levels, lower water clarity, and low dissolved

oxygen concentrations. This grant will support the Town's work with Save The Bay to identify pollutant sources and develop an implementation plan to address the Phase 1 study area, which includes downtown Westerly. This plan will include recommendations for both structural and non-structural water quality improvements and an interactive map showing the results. (\$57,884)

In related news, nearly \$800,000 in grants were also approved to fund six projects in the Buzzards Bay watershed as part of the Southeast New England Program. Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker announced today that this program will help towns and organizations protect water quality through grants approved by the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program. See [mass.gov/eea](http://mass.gov/eea) and [buzzardsbay.org](http://buzzardsbay.org).

Another round of funding from EPA's Southeast New England Program is on track for 2016. On December 9, 2015, EPA issued a press release seeking initial proposals for a grant program of up to \$7 million over the 2016 and 2017 fiscal years to fund projects that will improve coastal water quality and habitat. The request for initial proposals seeks projects that implement innovative restoration and protection approaches, provide strategic collaboration and regional impact, integrate habitat and water quality improvement, and focus on connectivity and ecosystem services and functions. Initial applications are due January 22, 2016. For more information about Southeast New England Program, see: <http://www2.epa.gov/snecwrp>. See [www.nbep.org](http://www.nbep.org)

-Bays, Rivers, & Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) Funds as reported by Dr. Berounsky: Please remember to submit your requests for reimbursement to her at [info@ririvers.org](mailto:info@ririvers.org) .

Office Reports: Treasurer-Ms. McGreavy distributed the monthly financial report.

Committee Reports: Mr. Cole who is Vice President of the Rhode Island Canoe and Kayak Association was recently appointed to the Rhode Island Outdoor Recreation Council.

- Other Business: Ms. McGreavy announced the launching of the new RI Watershed information Exchange listserv. To subscribe, visit: <http://listserv.ri.gov/mailman/listinfo/watersheds> and complete the subscription form.

Chair's Report:

Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Galloway moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Hadley. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.

## Burrillville Land Trust

Protecting our open space and rural character  
PO Box 506, Harrisville, Rhode Island 02830  
(401) 447-1560 • e-mail: [proselli@cox.net](mailto:proselli@cox.net)  
Rivers Council Annual Meeting  
RI State House  
January 13, 2016

### **The Intersection of Finding Strength and Land Conservation**

A few days ago, I walked the woods of the Edward D. Vock Conservation Area - an 86 acre parcel in Pascoag, Rhode Island. The forest, streams, hills and valleys are rich with beauty, serenity and solitude - a bucolic New England landscape right out of a 19th Century William Hart painting. The Burrillville Land Trust owns the property. We worked for nearly 9 years in securing the preservation of these lands. Talked to the two remaining daughters of Ed Vock for nearly 5 years until dementia took over and their memories and stamina were no more. Along came each of their daughters - ready and willing to make their grandfather's land a memorial to the homesteader, the forester, the one who played piano and told stories while they all laughed and sang. The one they called grandpa. The land has been managed with our hands for nearly 8 years now. Forest plans, baseline document reports, biological inventories fill our minds. The pains of picking up trash, calling the cops about trespassers, posting No Trespassing signs again, dirt bike and ATV encounters that rip up land, cut and deface trees are offset by the joys of seeing smiles from woodland hikes, snowshoe walks, mushrooming, tree identification, listening to the birds and figuring out just how much that glacial erratic weighs. I, as land trust president balance the bad with the good - and there is more good than bad in these past years. But now there is a new threat. One that is bigger than the hordes of ATVs whose riders pack chainsaws and axes. One bigger than all the ripped up roots, the runoff from erosion, and the deep cuts in the soil from tires that belong elsewhere in some other place. This threat comes from the promise of riches - of jobs, reduced energy costs, less air pollution, more efficiency. It's a power plant using fracked gas from wells deep below, that despoil water and clean air, create brownfields, pollute agricultural and forested lands, kills plants and animals, reduces the serenity and splendor of a cold New England walk in the woods, and it's a threat that causes earthquakes. Is there anything that any of us can do? Or are we merely slaves to the promises, blindly moving lock-step in line following the whispers of shameful alters and polluted skies. We measure the rock and calculate it to be a million pounds. It used to be lofted carried by ice. Once...a mile high.

Paul A. Roselli, president, Burrillville Land Trust