



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



Minutes of Wednesday, March 9, 2016 Meeting – 4 pm
 DEM Office of Water Resources - 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
 Charles Horbert
 Ernie Panciera
 Elise Torello

- B. Guests in Attendance:
 Kassi Archambault, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
 Roy Bergstrom, Narrow River Preservation Association
 Nancy Hess, RI Division of Planning
 Ann Morrill, Kickemuit Watershed Association
 Mike Zarum, Buckeye Brook Coalition
 Gavin Zeitz, RISD

Call to Order: Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:07 pm.

Review and approval of February 10, 2016 meeting minutes: Mr. Horbert moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Cole seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Guest Speaker: Ms. Nancy Hess, Supervising Land Use Planner at the RI Division of Planning’s Statewide Planning Program, gave a presentation and distributed a hand out to the group (see <http://www.ririvers.org/meetings.htm>) about the latest updates to the Water Quality Management Plan Element of the RI State Guide Plan (SGP). She noted that the last time a formal update was given to the Rivers Council

was back in 2014 and much work has been done since then, adding that the new Water Quality Management element is set to consolidate SGP elements 162, 711, 715 and 731, while coming into alignment with other SGP elements. It will not be duplicative, but will cross-reference Land Use 2025, Water 2030, and Transportation 2025.

She described the plan's Advisory Committee as representatives from State and Federal agencies (EPA, NRCS), environmental organizations, wastewater treatment facilities, EPA, WC councils (Including the Rivers Council), several municipalities, and URI. The plan details Clean Water Support for RI's Economy, especially in tourism & recreation, Manufacturing and Industry, and Commercial Fisheries. The scope of plan covers the realm of water resources that are not directly involved in drinking water, which is a varied subject area. The plan asks the question, "Where we have been...over the past 40 yrs? It goes on to describe The Clean Water Act, explores biological indicators, and addresses non-point source pollution, etc.

Since 2013, the Advisory Committee has had 11 meetings. The plan also includes a Technical paper and road salt and sand usage in RI & it also includes an Issue Brief on the economic impacts of clean water in RI. Nancy then went on to list and describe the plan's 6 sections as follows:

Part 1- Intro and Vision

Part 2 - Water Resources and Trends

Part 3 – Water Quality Management Framework

Part 4 – Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment

Part 5 - Planning

PART 6 – Pollution Source and Aquatic Habitat Management, Implementation Matrix, sub-list of pollution sources

NEXT Steps- Nancy told the group that the next meeting is scheduled to take place at end of March. There will be additional stakeholder outreach, a revised Draft, and then final approval by the Technical Committee and the State Planning Council. The total remaining process should take roughly 6 months.

Questions – Mr. Horbert asked what the plan highlights related to the value of buffers and if there were any recommendations for restoration of non-existent buffers. Mr. Panciera responded by stating that in Aquatic Habitat section, the plan does stress the need for Riparian Buffers. Dr. Berounsky wanted to know what classification system for watersheds was being used,

as it was not the HUC classification. Mr. Panciera briefly described the classification being used has resulted in some watershed planning areas being merged, based on capacity and resources.

Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

- Narragansett Bay Estuary Program as reported by Mr. Galloway:

We formed a small Watershed Counts planning board to help put together the 2016 report. It includes Jennifer West (Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve), Rachel Calabro (Save The Bay), Stefanie Covino (Mass Audubon), Caitlyn Whittle (EPA), and well as Nicole Rohr and myself. In our recent meeting we further developed ideas and stories for the 2016 report on headwaters of the Narragansett Bay Watershed. We are currently seeking a science writer to assist with interviews of stories for the report.

EPA has selected the projects to go to the next step of the \$7 million Southeast New England Program. The list is confidential but as I understand it they have selected those to submit a full proposal and will decide by the end of May.

- Watershed Counts (in lieu of SGP Update) as reported by Rachel Calabro:

This year's Watershed Counts report and activity will focus on headwaters and the plan is to get the watershed councils involved. The focus will reach far beyond the state borders, up into areas like Worcester and Bridgewater. There will be some focus on the importance of 1st order streams and other smaller riparian waterways.

-Bays, Rivers, & Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) Funds as reported by Dr. Berounsky: Dr. Berounsky noted that there were 2 requests from watersheds and she requested that all correspondence be sent to her at info@ririvers.org.

Written Reports of Activities Received from Designated Local Watershed Councils (most were also given orally):

-Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone as reported by Ms. Hadley: Good progress is being made with the 2016 River Rat program and legislative grant. Several meetings have taken place with various teachers from Cumberland schools, BRWC board members and key people from the Cumberland/Lincoln Boys and Girls Club. Two dates have been scheduled where BRWC people will go to the club during an after school program and demonstrate the Enviroscope storm water model to the children. Tentative dates have also been

scheduled for classroom Canoe safety instruction to be followed by actual canoe safety instruction where the BRWC will bring one or two of its canoes to the pool at the Boys and Girls Club and participants will have the opportunity to practice the skills they learned in the classroom instruction.

Teachers at a Cumberland grade school were trained on how to use the Enviroscape and then used it in their classroom to demonstrate it to two of their classes.

Volunteer hours for calendar year 2015- Our volunteers and board members have contributed 4,127 hours. At a dollar rate of \$23.07, that comes to \$95,209.89 of leveraged value.

www.blackstoneriver.org/blackstone/

-Buckeye Brook Coalition as reported by Mr. Zarum: Mr. Zarum started by encouraging people to participate in the State Guide Plan process. He then went on to ask how the plan was going to be implemented and who is responsible. Mr. Zarum also stated that the Annual Meeting for the Buckeye Brook Coalition was held on March 1st.

<http://www.buckeyebrook.org/>

-Kickemuit River Council as reported by Ann Morrill

1. On March 8, 2016, at the request of the Warren Town Council, Linda Brunini, KRC Special Projects Coordinator, showed the film Linda directed on the alewives. It was very interesting. The response was wonderful. Linda asked for volunteers to watch for the return of the alewives, & a Professor from Providence College volunteered.

2. The KRC will again participate in the 2016 Earth Day Cleanup sponsored by Warren Conservation Commission. KRC will give out certificates for participation. They are really nice certificates.

3. KRC will follow through on the new grant to check the homes that have not tied into sewers that go right by them.

4. We will write letters to the editor to encourage voters to improve the Warren Sewer Treatment Plant.

5. KRC requested an EAST BAY report from Ernie Panciera, DEM rep.

6. KRC had wonderful news. The Town is allocating the funds to line the sewer pipe that is leaking in the Northern Kickemuit.

<http://www.kickemuitriver.org/>

-Friends of the Moshassuck as reported by Greg Gerritt: we are planning for amphibians and stormwater conference and organizing tree planting and cleanups for spring.

Anyone who wants to go to amphibians' conference should contact Greg

(gerritt@mindspring.com). Friends of the Moshassuck (FOM) had their Annual meeting Saturday Feb 20.
www.themoshassuck.org

-Narrow River Preservation Association as reported by Mr. Bergstrom:

Board of Directors Meeting

NRPA Board of Directors held its regular monthly meeting on March 1, 2016. The meeting began with a presentation of *A Slick Solution: Best Way to Clean up an Oil Spill* by South Kingstown High School Junior Abby Cobb, our 2016 Science Fair Award winner. Before the meeting Abby was presented with a \$50 prize, a certificate and an NRPA membership. For more information on the program, visit <http://www.narrowriver.org/Education>. The Board heard reports on NRPA's financial condition, the 2016 membership drive (we now have 339 members) and support from local municipalities.

David Smith announced that he will leave the Program Coordinator position on October 31. The Board has formed a committee to find a new coordinator.

2016 Events

We are looking to divide our Annual Meeting into two events: a Narrow River Community Day in the spring and the business portion of the Annual Meeting in October.

The On Pettaquamscutt Winter Speaker Series, which we co-sponsor with South County Museum and Friends of Canonchet Farm, wrapped up its fifth season with the third presentation on March 20, when Archaeologist Jay Waller described "What R110 tells us about the Native American usage of the natural resources at Canonchet Farm." The series drew an average attendance of 63. See <http://www.narrowriver.org/OnPettaquamscutt>

NRPA members staffed a display at the Land and Water Conservation Summit on March 19.

Preparations are under way for three warm weather events, which are both fundraisers and opportunities to promote appreciation of the river through well-run recreational events:

- Narrow River Road Race: May 14
- Narrow River Turnaround Swim: June 25
- Pettaquamscutt Paddle: July 22

NRPA is an advocate for responsible use of the Town of Narragansett owned property at Middlebridge. This month we submitted an education activity plan to the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust for our activities at Middlebridge, which includes three events co-sponsored with Narrow River Land Trust, field trips for local middle and elementary school students, and participation in the town's

Gansett Days celebration in September.

NRPA River Watch

NRPA River Watch begins its 25th year this spring, and we are recruiting additional volunteer monitors for each of the 14 sites on the river and its freshwater inputs. As part of the FY2016 Rivers Council Grant, we are working up more data aligning the two-year USF&WS project and the Stormwater Grant project with NRPA Watershed Watch database.

Education

The Education Committee is working with Guiding Education in Math and Science Network (GEMS-Net, <https://gemsneturi.wordpress.com/>) and Narragansett Elementary School developing a field trip for fourth grade students to test water quality in Crooked Brook, one of the freshwater inputs to Pettaquamscutt Cove.

This year NRPA will award four \$1,000 college scholarships to seniors graduating from the high schools in the watershed. The deadline for the application is April 26. For more on the NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarships, see <http://www.narrowriver.org/Education>

Activities on the River

Board member Craig Wood is participating in a committee that is studying proposed dredging of the mouth of Narrow River in order to increase flushing in Pettaquamscutt Cove and provide material for marsh resiliency projects and beach nourishment.

www.narrowriver.org

-Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council as reported by Mr. Horbert: We have run into significant problems with funding and timing for our Randall Pond Fishing and Canoe/Kayak Dock. We attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain a line of credit from a local bank which would have allowed us to at least start the project. At this time, with insufficient funds to proceed with the project with the reimbursement process in place, we will have to suspend our efforts on this project until we are able to secure additional funds through another grant effort.

We have contracted with ESS Group to perform a fish passage restoration feasibility study for Cranberry and Blackamore Ponds off of the main branch Pawtuxet, and anticipate that work to commence this spring. <http://www.pawtuxet.org/>

-Salt Ponds Coalition – No report
www.saltpondscoalition.org

-Ten Mile River Watershed Council as submitted by Mr. Ben Cote: The Ten Mile River Watershed Council is in the process of planning an Earth Day Cleanup for April 16th. It will be conducted along Central Pond in East Providence. On March 20th, the TMRWC and the Providence County Hiking Club will be taking part in a 10 mile hike along existing trails in the lower Watershed to explore recreational opportunities. We have had meetings with the North Attleboro Fish Hatchery about fish passage into Attleboro and with the Pawtucket Parks Director about issues with geese along the Slater Park Duck Pond. The Council is looking to identify breeding areas in the Slater Park area. We also discussed boat access to the Country Club Dam and a proposed extension of the parking area at the start of the Ten Mile River Greenway at Doreen Tomlinson Park in Pawtucket. We are also planning our annual fish counting at the fish ladders on the lower river and vernal pool monitoring. This year we will be checking on a potential vernal pool at Hunts Mills in East Providence. The TMRWC had a booth set up at the RI Saltwater Fishing Show with information on fish ladders and our activities and we attempted to attract potential fish counters. Our next Board Meeting will be March 23, and we will be discussing our upcoming events. <http://www.tenmileriver.net/>

-Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association as reported by Ms. Torello: Bradford Dam With remaining funds from Nature Conservancy's Sandy Grant, which paid for the removal of White Rock Dam on the Pawcatuck River, the RI Nature Conservancy is proposing to replace the Bradford Dam with a massive rock ramp structure to marginally address flood resiliency and greatly improve fish passage. The decrepit dam does have an aging fish ladder. WPWA is partnered with RI TNC on the project, but we are EXTREMELY disappointed that the prime driver of the decision to not perform a dam removal is based on:

- 1) Impacts to wetland resources upstream
- 2) The potential for scour to a RIDOT road bridge immediately upstream

Removing the dam provides the highest level of fish passage efficiency, is the proper option to achieve river restoration, and would provide a much higher benefit to the affected communities of the watershed in the way of flood resiliency. All Watershed Council's should consider advocating for changes to wetlands regulations to ensure future projects like this are not forced to settle for second best when it comes to river restoration.

Water Quality Assessment

WPWA is struggling to figure out how to pay for all of the 46 sites we would like to monitor in our ~300 square mile watershed. Thanks in part to a grant from the RI Rivers Council, we did a thorough, critical, and objective assessment of our water quality monitoring program and trimmed our list of sampling sites to 31 "Tier One" "must-have" sites, 15 "Tier Two" "really-would-like-to-keep" sites, and 23 sites we can live without. WPWA's Board of Trustees has committed to sampling all of the Tier One and Tier Two sites, but the bill from URI Watershed Watch alone is

\$29,900 for these 46 sites (\$650/site). Add in the cost of WPWA staff time to coordinate the program, process the data, and maintain the database, and the bill soars even higher. Even with outside groups (e.g., RI Rivers Council, Trout Unlimited, North Stonington Citizens Land Alliance) funding a significant number of these sites, the price tag is still very high for our organization and the debate is ongoing here as to how we will pay for all of this. We really need much more money from the state to help pay for this important work.

Flood Resiliency Management Plan

Preliminary technical reports will be available at the end of this month, and the next Steering Committee meeting is mid-April.

Wild and Scenic River Project

Had a meeting 3/2. They are forming an Outreach and Education Committee and still trying to get reps from a few more towns: Coventry, East Greenwich, and Exeter.

<http://www.wrwc.org/>

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council as reported by Kassi Archambault:

- **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. If anyone is interested in volunteering for Fish Counting to monitor anadromous herring as they return to the Woony, contact Alicia Lehrer alehrer@wrwc.org.

- **Green Infrastructure:** The WRWC is an active member of the RI Green Infrastructure Coalition (GIC), Providence Working Group. As such, we have several projects coming up this spring with GIC partners:

- Green Infrastructure Demonstration at Citizens Plaza:** Led by Groundwork Providence, we will install rain gardens and trees along the downtown river walk and along the Moshassuck River around the Citizens Plaza parking lot.

- Pleasant Valley Stream Stormwater Treatment:** Working with Providence Parks, we will install 5 tree filters to capture stormwater from the streets around Pleasant Valley Stream on Pleasant Valley Parkway in Providence. We will also conduct a homeowner stormwater retrofit program, surveying 100 homeowners and installing 5 retrofits.

- Green Infrastructure Showcase Around Riverside Park:** We will install at least 5 examples of green infrastructure including a green roof at the Red Shed Bike Shop at Riverside Park. In addition, we will showcase other types of green infrastructure at One Neighborhood Builders owned homes and William D'Abate Elementary. When completed, we will develop a map of the projects, give tours and have self-guided tours available.

- Greenway Extension through Johnston: We are moving forward with recommendations from our last Johnston Public Meeting: Flexible Bollards for the 5 Greenway entrances to deter traffic and improve on police access to the bike path. Designing "No Bike Path Parking" signs for the Lyman Avenue area.

- Educational Programs: We are actively seeking to hire an Education Intern to work with Kassi, our Education Director, and other WRWC staff to teach and improve upon our educational curricula and outreach materials and expand the scope of these programs in the community. Kassi is preparing for spring educational programs, including:
 - Fish in the Classroom with North Providence's Greystone Elementary School and Paul Cuffee Elementary School;
 - River Adventurers with Providence After School Alliance (PASA) at DelSesto Middle School; and
 - Environmental Leaders with The Met High school and PASA at Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex.
 Kassi will present with the RI Environmental Education Association panel at the "Environmental Education and Environmental Organizations - They're a Good Fit! " session of the RI Land and Water Summit on 3/19/16.

- Recreation: Thanks to the RIRC funding, we will be offering and expanding our recreation programs for 2016. We are finalizing our recreation schedule, coordinating with guides and diversifying our recreation from paddles, to also biking and walking along the Woonasquatucket River.

- River Rangers: The WRWC interviewed candidates for our 2016 Senior Ranger positions during the first week of March. We aim to hire before the landscaping companies in order to recruit the best talent. On March 21st, our Greenway maintenance team will begin training new Rangers and working on the Greenway. Recruitment for Junior Rangers will begin March 28th, hiring and training beginning on April 11th. The Greenway Leadership Team is putting together an implementation plan for restoration plantings.

- Our 2016 Clean Days on the Greenway (CDGW) Series Kickoff will take place on Saturday, April 23, 2016 from 9 AM to 2 PM (rain date April 24, 2016). Although the event will be headquartered at Merino Park, the event will span Merino and Riverside Parks in Providence and include other greenway locations and river cleanups in the area. The event will also incorporate the NBC shredder event, mattress disposal, and e-waste disposal. We are also inviting environmental education partners to have a table at the event so that participants can learn more about environmental restoration. This event will be followed by a full docket of planting and spruce up projects during the spring, summer and fall. The Greenway Leadership Team (GWLT) has identified priority projects for spring, summer and fall, and they are developing project



designs and timelines to begin implementation within the CDGW Series.

- Open House! Please join us to warm up our new office! This Thursday, March 10th, 4-6 pm Eagle Square, 45 Eagle Street, Providence, RI 02909.
<http://www.wrwc.org/>

Officer Reports

Chair's Report: The financial reports showed a balance of \$4,149.58.

Dr. Berounsky proceeded to discuss the former secretarial duties of Lisa McGreavy. Several Council members have agreed to take on selected duties, including a rotating schedule of meeting minutes to be taken. Mr. Gonsalves has agreed to compile the minutes which will include the reports from the member watershed councils. She then mentioned that Tom Uva from the Narragansett Bay Commission will be the speaker for the April meeting.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. Galloway moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Cole. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.