



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



DRAFT- Minutes of Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 4:00 – 6:00 pm
DEM Office of Water Resources – Conference Room 280C
235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present:

Veronica Berounsky, Chair
Alicia Eichinger
Elise Torello
Ernie Panciera
Eugenia Marks (non-voting member)

B. Guests in Attendance:

Douglas Stevens, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Richard Grant, Narrow River Preservation Association
Michael Bradlee, Friends of the Moshassuck
Jennifer Paquet, RI DEM Office of Water Resources

Call to Order: Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm
A quorum was not present. No votes were taken.

Dr. Berounsky noted there is no speaker for this month's meeting, and that the speaker for the May 9th meeting will be Patrick McGee, who works with Phil Edwards at DEM. He will be talking about alewives and their migration. They usually start running about March, but so far the water temperature has been too cool, so May maybe an appropriate time to learn about them.

Review and Approval of February 14, 2018 meeting minutes: no quorum.

Preparation for RI Rivers Council Annual Meeting: Review of new RIRC display, brochure, and maps of Designated Watersheds that will be purchased through FY 2017 Legislative Grant.

Dr. Berounsky noted the Annual Meeting will be held on April 4, 2018 at the Library in the RI Statehouse, which has a great sound system. The Library is not available on our usual meeting date of the 2nd Wednesday, so we will hold our Annual Meeting one week earlier. She noted that there will be another event taking place in the Rotunda, so the RIRC and watershed group displays will be set up outside the Library, and some can be inside the room. There are tables there for the displays and for refreshments. There was discussion on the set up. The set up can occur between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. The displays can be manned from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., and the meeting will start at 3 pm and run until 5, though it was noted that legislators will go into session at 4. Dr. Berounsky noted that the speaker will be Representative Carol Hagan McEntee. Dr. Berounsky will send out an e-mail with the details for the set-up, including parking, loading, and coordinating the refreshments. Dr. Berounsky working with Megan Hamlin Black from the Library and Deb White from the State House for the hallway arrangements.

There was discussion on the topics for the meeting next month. Ms. Marks requested that Senator Sosnowski be asked to talk about the Water Resources Board move and how that affects the RIRC. She noted that she testified last week about the Water Resources Board and the importance of integrating the RIRC with the move of the WRB to the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers.

It was noted that an agenda item for the Annual Meeting will be the election for the Vice Chair. As mentioned in an email of 2/27/18, Ms. Calabro is keeping her seat on the RI Rivers Council but will step down as vice-chair. The Nominating Committee has received nominations, has ascertained interest, and will be putting forth the name of Alicia Eichinger for a vote for the position of RI Rivers Council Vice-Chair.

Committee Reports:

Map Displays: There was discussion on the map displays. Ms. Paquet brought up the files on the screen to show the display maps that Mr. Zwarg made for 8 of the watershed organizations. The group reviewed each map and had some comments about logos. Mr. Panciera will contact Mr. Zwarg to see if there is time to add some missing logos and some of the other comments. There was discussion on hiring a coordinator to facilitate having the displays printed, and choosing a possible vendor. Dr. Berounsky will follow-up on procuring a coordinator.

RI Rivers Council Brochure: There was discussion on how many to order and it was agreed to order 1,000. There was discussion on ways to distribute the brochures, including at the local libraries. Ms. Paquet will look into how the library association can distribute them internally to all the libraries.

RI Rivers Council Display: Ms. Eichinger presented handout versions of the 3 panels and talked about work she's been doing finalizing the display based on the comments received. Print Source is the vendor that has been chosen to make the display. It was noted that the logo for the Ten Mile River Watershed Council is still needed for the display and for the brochure.

Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

- **Narragansett Bay Estuarine Program:** no one present. A written report was sent and read. The NBEP has submitted its 2018 program evaluation to EPA for their review. Passing this evaluation is a requirement to remain eligible for section 320 Clean Water Act funding. The Estuary Program is working on a few different project ideas to potentially submit proposals for funding under the Southeast New England Program, as administered by Restore America's Estuaries. Finally, we are pleased to announce that Whitley Saumweber will be joining the NBEP team in May as the new program director. Whit received his Ph.D. in Oceanography from URI and will come to us most recently from Stanford University after some time on the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

- **State Guide Plan- Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan:** No news.

- **Water Resources Board:** As reported by Ms. Eugenia Marks:
 - Macky McCleary, the new Administrator for the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers has experience with water resources, particularly for CT. A Budget Article has put the WRB under the Division of PU&C.
 - The first meeting of the Special Legislative Commission to Study the Rhode Island Water Resources Board and Water Supply was held on March 6, 2018. Ms. Marks serves on this board. There are 8 to 10 members from various interests and the committee is chaired by Senator Sosnowski, and supported by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture. She noted that three people were invited to testify at this meeting and that she gave a history of the WRB, the role and relationship of the RIRC with the WRB, and her vision of the WRB reconstituted to include the RIRC, and the use of the WRB data in decisions. She noted that it is clear that the WRB will become part of the Div. PU&C and that the staff will physically move to Jefferson Boulevard where the PUC is, most likely this summer. She noted that

there may be an opportunity for the RIRC for support through fees and the administration. She noted that the move was prompted by financial and administrative support, so the RIRC might benefit. She noted that the Special Commission is looking at the legislation and how best to meet the needs. There was discussion on the fee structure where three cents from every 100 gallons of water goes into a fund for watershed protection, but that there is concern over how it is distributed due to the relationship between the small suppliers who buy wholesale from Providence Water. Dr. Berounsky will send Ms. Marks testimony out to the RIRC members.

- **Bays, Rivers, & Watersheds Coordination Team Funds-** Dr. Berounsky noted that these grants are complete.

Officer Reports, Financial Reports:

- Dr. Berounsky reported that Mr. Gonsalves has been assigned to work on the recodification for the rules for the RIRC. It was noted that all State rules need to be re-codified.
- Ms. Torello provided the financial report. She noted that she has not heard back from the fiscal agent (the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council), and that there are no changes to the balance to report at this time.

Written Reports of Activities Received from Designated Local Watershed Councils:

Brief oral reports were heard from the Watershed Councils who were present. Written reports are below:

Ten Mile River Watershed Council –no one present

<http://www.tenmileriver.net/>

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association – As reported by Ms. Torello

- Denise Poyer has been appointed to the Legislative Commission to Study the RI Water Resources Board and Water Supply.
- Working on re-designing and modernizing our website.
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Study
- First draft of the Stewardship Plan will be ready by the end of the month. The second video is completed and will be posted on the WPWildRivers.org website. A media event will be held on Monday, May 7 at 11 am at the Wood River Access off Rt. 165 in the Arcadia Management Area. All of our congressional delegates plan to attend. Other

invitees will be DEM Director Coit, CT DEEP Commissioner, and possibly Governor Raimondo.

- <http://www.wpwa.org/>

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council – As reported by Mr. Stephens

Greenway Maintenance & River Rangers

- We are interviewing Junior and Senior Rangers. Clean Days Events are lined up for April. Registration is live on our web page.
- *Water Quality/River Monitoring:* Fish Counting training will take place in late March and begin in April.
- *Urban Fish Monitoring:* Urban Fish Monitoring/ Electrofishing will begin again in June.
- **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**
- *Fish in the Classroom:* Two Providence schools and two after school programs in North Providence are now participating.
- *Environmental Leaders:* Our Providence Met high school program has completed trimester one and two. Students have been reaching out to potential partners to present their research.
- *EVENTS Upcoming:*
- *ALL EVENTS LISTED at <http://wrwc.org/events.php>*
- Clean Days on the Greenway Kickoff – Kinsley/Promenade in Providence, Friday, April 13th, 2018
- Clean Days on the Greenway – Merino, Donigian and Riverside Parks, Saturday, April 28th, 2018
- Yellow Perch Cocktail Party Thursday, May 17th, 2018, 5:30pm- 8:30pm Skyline at Waterplace
- <http://www.wrwc.org/>

Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone -No one present

www.blackstoneriver.org/blackstone/

Buckeye Brook Coalition –no one present

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

Kickemuit River Council – No one present

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

Friends of the Moshassuck – As reported by Mr. Bradley

FOM held their Annual meeting. FOM will continue doing water quality testing and hope to have 3 test sites. He noted that Mr. Kelly, who performed the testing, is retiring from the Board, and that they are working on securing funds for more than 1 sampling. He noted they are working on a partnership with the Friends of the North Burial Ground. He noted that the FOM work plan includes doing a stream survey.

www.themoshassuck.org

Ms. Paquet left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Narrow River Preservation Association- As reported by Mr. Grant

Canine Detection Project

NRPA has been granted funds from US Fish and Wildlife to undertake a Canine Detection project in collaboration with RIDEM. In this program trained dogs will indicate if bacteria in the water is from human or non-human sources. We will focus the project on the two River Watch sites at which we detect the highest bacteria levels: Mumford Brook and Mettatuxet Brook.

The program has two phases: First, in June and July, Veronica and Heidi travers of RIDEM will take samples from NRPA and DEM stations in the areas of concern and send them to Maine where the dogs will assess the samples. This part of the project is called Ship & Sniff.

Then, later in the summer, trained dogs will come to Narrow River for three days. The dog handlers, Veronica and Heidi will walk with the dogs along the areas of concern and encourage the dogs to sniff and locate bacteria concentrations from human sources.

This project will help us determine the best next steps in reducing the bacteria found at Mettatuxet Brook and Mumford Brook.

2018 Middlebridge Activities Approved

NRPA has received final approval from the Narragansett Town Council for our slate of environmental and education activities held at the Middlebridge Preserve, 94 Middlebridge Road, Narragansett in collaboration with the Narrow River Land Trust and the Town of Narragansett. The events, all open to the public, are as follows:

What Lives in the River? FREE, Saturday, June 16, 9:00 am – 1:30 pm for general public and Jonnycake Center families): An all ages introduction to common fish, shellfish, crabs and other inhabitants in the River. There will be hands-on seining with experts to catch river creatures and guided walks along the intertidal zone and salt marsh to observe the inhabitants. There will be river water tanks and microscopes to examine river creatures and guidebooks to help identify them. Experts will discuss the importance of estuaries as nurseries for fish & shellfish, the fascinating migration of river herring, and the role of river plants in the food web. We recommend that guests wear footwear that can get wet. Families who are clients of the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale, which serves South Kingstown and Narragansett, will be invited to attend with transportation provided. A healthy picnic lunch will be offered to all, free for Jonnycake Center families and \$6 (cost) per person to the general public.

Moon Rising Sunset Paddle - \$20 to rent a single kayak, \$30 for a double kayak, Friday, July 20, beginning at 5:00 PM: The eleventh Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle, sponsored by Narrow River Kayaks, is an annual guided kayak paddle. After brief paddle and safety instruction and a presentation by NRPA board members, the guided sunset paddle takes paddlers into the John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge at Pettaquamscutt Cove and to the beach near the mouth of the inlet for a stretch before returning to Middlebridge with the incoming tide as the sun gently sets on the western horizon. Stay around afterwards for refreshments, conversation and a raffle drawing.

Art on the River - FREE, Saturday, August 4, 9-11 am: Local artists will give instruction to adults in drawing and painting scenes of the Middlebridge area, while children will have their own guided artistic activities. Bring your easels or sketch pads or cameras to capture the beauty of this iconic site. Sketch your version of an expansive landscape view or crouch down and capture a still life view of oysters on the fringe of the salt marsh. In addition, "plein air" (open air) painters and other artists will be demonstrating their techniques. Or if you are more comfortable with electronic media, capture the sights with your camera, iphone or ipad and download photos in real time to the NRPA Facebook page.

Land Trust Days Guided Plant and Insect Walk - FREE, Saturday, September 8, 5-8 pm: Our contribution to a state-wide celebration of special green spaces just outside your door. Join us for an all ages guided walk starting at Middlebridge and walking across the bridge to South Kingstown and through the Garrison House Acres Narrow River Land Trust property. This year's walk will focus on insects. Rick Enser of the Narrow River Land Trust and David Gregg of the RI Natural History Survey. Walk and learn about the insects that inhabit the shoreline and fields and how we track them. To learn how climate change may be reflected in the insect life we will set up moth traps and use other techniques to record insect diversity and discover trends. Please wear sturdy shoes and bring binoculars, hand lens, and insect protection.

Gansett Days - FREE, Saturday September 15, 9am - noon - As we did last year, we will do another of our popular "What Lives in the River?" events from 9am – 11am and another Narragansett marsh walk on US Fish and Wildlife Service property from 10am – 12pm. We recommend that guests wear footwear that can get wet.

MORE UPCOMING NRPA EVENTS:

March 25, Sunday – *On Pettaquamscutt Speaker Series*, 1-3pm @ Narragansett Library - NRPA presentation: URI Watershed Watch Program Director Linda Green "Narrow River and its Watershed: Twenty-five Years in Review"

April 29, Sunday – Spring Fair and Fish on the Run at Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum, North Kingstown, 1-4pm

May 12, Saturday – 31st Annual Narrow River Road Race, Narragansett Town Beach, check in at 8:30am, races start at 10:00am

May 19, Saturday – Compass School EcoFair 9-3 in Kingston

June 23, Saturday – 13th Annual Turnaround Swim, URI Boathouse, North Kingstown, check in starts at 7:45am, swim starts at 9:00am

www.narrowriver.org

Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council- As submitted by Mr. Horbert

We are working to secure assistance for a couple homeless individuals who have been camping on one of our properties. There is a specific process to be followed due to the sensitivity of the matter, and progress is being made with the cooperation of the individuals.

The Town of West Warwick is beginning planning for a big event in Town in June with various events and food trucks in various locations in Town, and wants to include the Crompton Fishing Pier as a “learn to fish” station for the event. We will be cooperating with the Town to make that happen. No date has been set yet.

We have another potential land deal on the horizon. PRAWC had purchased or otherwise obtained a several parcels along the former “Hope Spur” railroad from the railroad. Two of these parcels have been sold. Another two include parcels that are now the location of our two riverwalks (Arkwright, and Harris-Phenix). The last parcel is behind the current “Echo Valley” apartments in West Warwick. Back in the 1990’s, after our purchase, Coutu Lumber (who built the apartments) claimed that they owned the parcel and that the railroad could not have legally sold it to us. This claim was in dispute, and to date, no resolution of the dispute had been reached.

Recently, Chair Nero was contacted by a company who is proposing to purchase the Echo Valley apartments. In going through the land records, they came upon the record of the dispute, which is now clouding the title to the property. They are contacting us to clear this dispute. Chair Nero is having our attorney contact their attorney. Through our attorney, we will be advising the company that in return for, or as part of clearing the title, we wish to either obtain the railroad parcel as a gift, or be given a clear easement, to allow future use of that parcel to continue our river walks. This situation will be monitored and Chair Nero will report any developments at the next meeting.

Chair Nero also had our attorney reach out to the owners of the parcel that is currently preventing the connection of our two segments of Riverwalk. They are amenable to working with us to accomplish this. No specifics were given. This could be either an easement through the property, or the parcel would be subdivided with the Riverwalk lot purchased by PRAWC. The property will have to be appraised before we can go further. Additionally, there is also a small Coventry-owned parcel that we will have to obtain. We will also contact the Town. No

matter how this may eventually play out, the owner will want a fence installed along the entire Riverwalk to prevent access to their property. We will continue to pursue this in order to connect the two Riverwalk segments.

An additional cleanup event has been added to the calendar: April 21 (with a rain date of April 22) will be a Riverwalk rehabilitation event at Riverpoint Park in West Warwick. This is a former pathway that has been neglected over the years. This is in addition to 4 other cleanups and two fishing derbies that we have planned over April and May.

A proposal for a three-story self-storage facility that had been denied by the Planning Board has now been appealed to the Zoning Board. PRAWC will be providing testimony against the proposed project out of concerns for impacts to the pond.

With Spring coming up, efforts will be renewed to work on a memorial for Guy Lefebvre at Veteran's Square. We will be looking into getting a red maple tree and a stone for the memorial.

Three PRAWC members attended the recent Land & Water Summit at URI, including one who was a presenter at one of the sessions.

We will be working to install a few duck boxes into backwater areas along the river as part of a scout project.

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

Salt Ponds Coalition – As reported by Ms. Eichinger

We have begun filming outreach videos under the EPA Grant that we are a partner in; currently we are focusing on the work of URI professor George Loomis and his team as they do septic and de-nitrification system assessments.

We have been in contact with RI PBS who will be featuring Charlestown in one of their next Our Town programs. We will be submitting a video “story” for their consideration about one of the salt ponds.

SPC spoke with John Lake from RI DEM about working with him on a biota study in the salt ponds that would complement the existing work that he does.

We are just about to send out our annual membership mailing!

We have hired a new part-time staff person to help us in the office. We are hoping that this increases our capacity to do more things and reach more people in 2018.

www.saltpondscoalition.org

No other reports were given or submitted for the other watershed council. See their webpages for events.

Other Business: None

Chair's Report: Chair Berounsky did receive an email from Josh Butera of the Governor's Office asking for resumes for the three pending nominations for Council members: Michael Bradley, Jason Considine, Rick McKinney. The nominees sent them in. Now Mr. Butera has everything thing needs to move forward. Alicia Eichinger noted that for her nomination, nothing happened for months, and then she got a call to come in the next week, and at that meeting was approved.

As mentioned previously, Rachel Calabro has left her position at Save the Bay and will start at the RI Department of Health in the climate change program on March 19. If you need to reach Rachel, her email is rachel.calabro@gmail.com . Looking forward to hearing about her new position!

Kate Telford, Administrative Records & Technical Services Specialist with the RI Department of State under Secretary of State Nellie M. Gorbea has appointed Paul as RIRC Rules Coordinator.

We continue to search for options for RIRC funding. Ernie noted that DEM as a person whose job it is to follow the General Assembly and understand legislation. He was going to talk to him about RIRC funding and our founding legislation.

The Land and Water Summit took place Saturday March 14. Attending for RIRC was Alicia Eichinger, Chuck Horbert, and Elise Torello. Chair Berounsky and Ms. Calabro were not able to attend because they were out of state. Ms. Eichinger and Ms. Torello did a great job running the Watershed Organization meeting. They had 31 people attend.

The April meeting will be the RIRC Annual meeting and will be held on April 4 (a week early) so we can use the State House Library Room. We will be working on getting the maps finalized so we can hire someone to make banners, Elise will oversee getting the brochures (1000 copies) printed. Alicia will oversee getting the display sections printed. Eugenia offered to get the coffee (Dunkin Donut Box O' Joe or similar) since she is in Providence. Alicia and Elise will get snacks. Veronica will bring her electric teapot.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.