



The Rhode Island Rivers Council
c/o RI Water Resources Board
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
www.ririvers.org
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Minutes of RIRC Meeting
Wednesday, May 8, 2019 Meeting – 4 pm
DEM Office of Water Resources – Conference Room 280C
235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present:

Alicia Eichinger, Vice Chair
Rachel Calabro
Walter Galloway
Paul Gonsalves
Chuck Horbert
Eugenia Marks
Jenny Paquet (representing DEM)

B. Guests in Attendance:

Mike Gerel, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
Bianca Ross, URI
Douglas Stephens, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Sara Wiggington, URI
Michael Zarum, Buckeye Brook Coalition

Call to Order: Ms. Eichinger called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm

It was noted that there was a quorum.

Review and Approval of April 10th, 2019 and March 13th 2019 meeting minutes: vote taken, approved.

Introductions: All attending board members and guests introduced themselves.

Guest Speaker 1: Bianca Ross, URI, Ph.D. candidate, Assessing Nitrogen-removal Performance of Advanced Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems in Charlestown

Nitrogen – >algal blooms—>O₂ depletion, eutrophication. 46 STUDY SITES 27 seasonally-occupied, 23 year round. N-removing effectiveness. Feedback to septic system service-providers based on trends. 4 types of technologies reviewed in study. 19/ mg/L standard – no difference between year-round and seasonal homes; however, significant difference in N removal among technologies: Norecos are less effective at N-removal than other 3 technologies.

Monitoring makes a difference. Charlestown vs. Barnstable County, MA monitoring – Barnstable more frequent monitoring (required by County) and timely corrective action is effective.

Photometer Study: (\$550 cost of equipment for this study) relies on colorimetrics measuring ammonium and nitrate concentrations. Rapid test. (20 minutes; works for indoor and outdoor,) Efficient and cost effective.

Excludes organic nitrogen Total N = ammonium + nitrate + organic Nitrogen. Compare photometer vs. standard methods. Both were statistically reliable predictors.

Question: In RI are advanced systems required town-wide or a certain distance from coastal feature?

Study will continue through March 2020. Microbial community analysis and greenhouse gas flux analyses during this time. Bpeixoto10@uri.edu

Guest Speaker 2: Sara Wigginton: Study of Septic System soil Treatment. Barnstable Co., MA

1. Conventional (primary and secondary treatment – tank and soil). Drain field is laid in Horizon C of soil -- removes almost no nitrogen. Need anoxic conditions and carbon source for denitrification to occur.

2. Layered soil treatment – 45 cm sand + sawdust vs. 90 cm sand over drain field laid in gravel.

Are systems removing N and are they emitting NO_x (greenhouse gas)?

Layered – 45 cm sand + 45 cm sand and sawdust; vs. control of 90 cm sand. Gas probes at 4 different depths to monitor CO₂ CH₄ NO_x Sand and sawdust removes N below 19mg N/L standard; control (sand only) does not perform to standard.

Subsurface gas Sand+sawdust probes record gas high at all depths

BUT Flux of air above system shows less emitted from layered system.

These systems (sand and sawdust) are non-proprietary and are 1/3 to 1/2 less expensive than advanced systems.

How long is sawdust effective? Robertson (Canada) after 15 and 20 years sawdust is still effectively combining carbon and oxygen.

Further study of soil microbes, inorganic N, loss of carbon will be analyzed to complete study.

Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

Narragansett Bay Estuary Program: As reported by Mike Gerel and Walt Galloway:

Walt attended the 4/29 NBEP Workshop in Worcester, here is his report (his notes are underlined):

THE BLACKSTONE RIVER – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center at Worcester

3 Paul Clancy Way, Worcester, MA
Monday, April 29, 2018
8:30am – 1:00pm

PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP: Provide an open platform to share information on the history of the Blackstone River, learn about the status of environmental indicators in the watershed and the groups working to improve its health, and discuss current challenges, successes, and how we can best use science and partnerships to improve the resilience of the watershed moving forward.

OUTCOMES:

1. Greater understanding among participants about the current condition and future of the watershed
2. New relationships formed and potential new partnerships explored.
3. Specific next steps defined for advancing water quality, habitat, and appreciation of the Blackstone watershed.

AGENDA

Registration and Networking 8:00-8:30am

Welcoming Remarks 8:30-8:45am

Mike Gerel, Program Director, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Mike introduces the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, the status and trends report, the purpose of the workshop, and desired outcomes for the day.

Perspective on the Blackstone 8:45-9:15am

Morris A. Bergman, Councilor, City of Worcester

Noted that Blackstone was at one time the “most polluted river in the country for toxics” and noted the broad efforts of many in the room and those who came before in cleaning up the river so it may be delisted.

Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Noted that watershed groups are critical! [RIRC needs to join better with MA watershed groups.]

Janet Coit, Director, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Called out Sue Kiernan for all her efforts. Noted she (Janet) had worked for John Chafee some 30 years ago and his role in establishing the Blackstone National Heritage Corridor. Also, RI may delist the Blackstone from the 303d list thanks to WQ improvements!

Mel Cote, Chief, Surface Water Branch, U.S. EPA Region 1

Thanked many present for their work in setting up the workshop and noted the importance of workshops and partnerships in achieving desired goals for rivers and their watersheds.

Speakers provide an overview of their work and perspective on the Blackstone and its watershed.

Looking back – the historical importance of the Blackstone 9:30-10:00am

Kevin Klyberg, Park Ranger, Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park

Kevin grounds us in the local area by offering a brief history of the region and takes questions

This was an excellent presentation and we should invite Kevin to the RIRC to do it for us.

Panel 1 – Present: Successes, challenges, and opportunities in the Blackstone watershed

10:00-11:15am

Moderator: Nick Wildman, Ecological Restoration Specialist, MA Department of Ecological Restoration

Panelists:

Susan Mara, Director of Planning, City of Pawtucket

Karla Sangrey, Director, Upper Blackstone Clean Water
Stefanie Covino, Conservation Planner, City of Worcester
Peter Coffin, Blackstone River Water Coalition

Panelists offer their views on recent successes, ongoing challenges, and current opportunities by answering questions from the moderator and audience. Very informative views from the wide array of perspectives, urban to rural. Should be notes forthcoming from NBEP

Q&A very valuable – we should have Alison Hamel from RIDOT come to the RIRC. She presented to the NBEP a while back and has a lot to offer about what RIDOT is now doing in RI and why

Walt recommends that RIRC be in touch with Mass Rivers Alliance for individual watersheds pertinent to Narragansett Bay. Rob Clark and Alison Hamel from RIDOT and Kevin Klyberg from NPS recommended for speakers at RIRC. The value of NGOs talking to local officials in this political climate was underscored. NBEP as convenor works to RIRC advantage for cooperation. Hiring by end of June from 6 finalists GIS/ Watershed Specialist. 5 Full proposals for SNAP planning projects to be funded. Synopsis of 500-page NBEP Report to be published nationally.

State Guide Plan Advisory Committee (Outdoor Recreation): As reported by Mr. Gonsalves: 4/26 meeting for action steps and goals. Consultant is writing. 5/9 presentation to State Planning Council. First Draft of SCORP expected in next few months.

Department of Environmental Management Watershed Section. Watershed Meeting (Ernie Panciera in absentia)

Confirmed that RIRC will combine with next month's meeting with DEM Watersheds to update current work plan, identify concerns, etc. One hour required for meeting. How to structure? Forego individual Watershed Council's reports for this meeting was concurred. Time to be confirmed by Ernie Panciera

Water Resources Board: Ms. Eugenia Marks reported that she awaiting Budget Article 5 and Senate Commission action.

Officer Reports:

Financial Report. Ms. Eichinger reported that \$1,487,17 is the current balance.

Reports of Activities from Designated Local Watershed Councils:

Reports were given at the meeting by the following:

Narrow River Preservation Association –Written report submitted by Alison Kates.

Narrow River Watershed Watch Data to be Presented at Seminar in Maryland
NRPA Vice President Veronica Berounsky will miss the May 2019 RIRC meeting because she will be giving a seminar at the Horn Point Lab, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science in Cambridge, MD on May 8, the day of the RIRC meeting. The title of the seminar is: How long is our anthropogenic legacy? Improving water quality in Pettaquamscutt Estuary (RI). Part I: Monitoring water quality and managing inputs for a quarter century (1992-2016) Part II: Tracking down human sewage

with canine detection.

NRPA President Richard B. Grant Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

NRPA President Grant, who usually attends the RIRC meetings, will be miss this month because he will be in DC received the Environmental Law Institute's 30th Anniversary National Wetland Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Narrow River Cleanup

On Sunday, April 28, Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) coordinated cleanups at six sites throughout the Narrow River Watershed. Over 35 volunteers picked up cans, bottles, broken glass, plastic bags, cigarette butts, shoes, two tires, broken floats, a rug, and more from the marshes in and around Narrow River.

Two of the sites netted 260 pounds of trash. In addition to that, trash from the other sites was discarded in dumpsters offered by local businesses and taken home by volunteers.

Salt Marsh Restoration in Lower Narrow River

Throughout May and into June 2019, NRPA is recruiting and managing volunteers to help restore salt marsh in lower Narrow River. Available dates and all information can be found at:

<http://narrowriver.org/salt-marsh-restoration/>

In partnership with US Fish and Wildlife Service, NRPA and volunteers will plant 30,000 salt marsh grass seedlings. Planting is messy, easy and fun!

Families, groups and individuals are welcome. So far, several groups are signed up, including professional groups, school groups and homeschool groups.

2019 NRPA Events

All are welcome to attend NRPA's 2019 events.

May 18, Saturday - 32nd Annual Narrow River Road Race, 10K run, 5K run and 5K walk

June 15, Saturday – What Lives in the River, 9am – 1:30pm, Middlebridge Preserve

June 22, Saturday – 14th Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim

July 19, Friday - 12th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle (rain date Saturday, July 20)

August 3, Saturday – Art on the River, 9-11am, Middlebridge Preserve

September 14, Saturday – 'Gansett Days What Lives in the River, 9-11am, Middlebridge Preserve

September 27 & 28, Friday evening and Saturday all day – Kayak Fishing Challenge on Narrow River

October 3, Thursday - NRPA's 49th Annual Meeting, 7:00pm, URI GSO Bay Campus Auditorium

www.narrowriver.org

Salt Ponds Coalition –Written report submitted, and report presented by Alicia Eichinger.

SPC has joined forces with members from the Harbor Island Improvement Association and the Town of Narragansett to plan for improvements along the Foddering Farm Causeway. We are still applying to different sources to get an initial study done, but in the meantime, we are collecting pledges to help fund the first phase privately.

SPC begins its water quality sampling next week.

SPC has published its summer calendar of events; it is currently on our website (joinsaltponds.com or saltpondscoalition.org).

The Quonochontaug Project is in the planting phase. SPC visited the marsh with Wenley Ferguson from Save the Bay. We planted some plants with her and spread some seed on the marsh. Next week, will start the volunteer planting days. As of right now, we have all the volunteer help we need

which is exciting.

We are about to publish a new video for the Charlestown/EPA Grant which focuses on the installation of de-nitrification systems, and why it is important to the water health in the salt pond area.

www.saltpondscoalition.org

Ten Mile River Watershed Council –No written report submitted.

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

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council – Report given by Doug Stephens

Greenway Maintenance & River Rangers

We are now hiring for our summer Junior Ranger positions. We are sending all summer hires through One Providence for Youth.

Ranger Enterprise Program

With the help of a grant from Councilwoman Sabina Matos, we purchased landscaping equipment from ONE Neighborhood Builders of their unused equipment. We will use this equipment in any and all non-RIDOT jobs for the Rangers. Our purchase includes blowers, mowers, spreaders, a water tank and a trailer.

Clean Days on the Greenway

We had two very successful Clean Days in April with approximately 400 amazing volunteers! We will be holding monthly corporate and school group clean day opportunities each month.

Water Quality/River Monitoring:

Centredale Superfund: Cleanup has begun!

Water Quality and Electrofishing Monitoring: Our anadromous herring fish count is in full swing and will continue until the end of May. We still have spots available if interested!

Thanks to Doug Stephens, we are continuing to monitor water quality at 4 locations on the river. All volunteers confirmed through watershed watch.

Green Infrastructure:

WRWC is collaborating with the PVD office of sustainability to offer a rain barrel workshop as part of Sustain PVD Fair. Workshop will take place Saturday, May 18th, 10-11:30 at the Avenue Concept.

Our Pleasant Valley tree filters project will go in during June. Construction of our Citizens Bank G.I. will begin this month!

Education Programs:

Environmental Leaders:

Our 31 High school students from the MET are reaching completion of their Teach One class and projects will be completed by the end of the month. Projects include making a more handicap accessible garden at Pleasant View Elementary, painting storm drains murals at Riverside Park, creating educational brochures on environmental topics, tree planting, running a clean day, facilitating educational lessons on recycling / pollution / GMO's and more.

River Adventures:

Spring session began April 23. We are planning to kayak, bike, plant trees, build an insect hotel and

explore the local parks.

Fish in the Classroom:

Fish in the Classroom lessons have been running great at both D'Abate and Paul Cuffee Lower Elementary. 12 classes and approximately 294 kids are participating in the program this year. We have also started our afterschool spring program at Whelan Elementary in North Providence through Kids Klub Inc.

Our Fish Release Celebration for D'Abate Elementary will be taking place on June 6th, with a rain date of June 12th. Our Fish Release Celebration for Paul Cuffee will be taking place on June 10th, with a rain date of June 13th.

Trash Skimmer Outreach:

WRWC is the educational partner for the Marina Trash Skimmer project. We will be planning one educational trip to the skimmer per month and one community outreach trip to the skimmer per month.

Red Shed Bike Shop:

Youth bike educational program have officially started and will continue until Summer Bike Camp. We are currently working with the Manton Avenue Project, YWCA, Henry Winters School, Agnes Little School, River Adventurers Afterschool Program and the Meeting Street School. Classes include bike safety, learn to ride, and exploration of the bike path.

Girl's bike camp was very successful this past vacation. 8 girls were able to learn to ride a bike, and take a bike, helmet, and lock home with them.

Summer Bike Camp registration is live on our website.

Upcoming Events:

Paul McElroy Walk with Audobon Bird Expert Lauren Parmelee, Saturday, June 1st 9-11 am at Riverside Park - Providence, RI 02909

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

Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone – Written report submitted by Judy Hadley

Join us as we celebrate the grand opening of our new environmental center. The new room is handicapped accessible, with a large classroom style meeting space, small office and most importantly, an indoor bathroom! It is designed to be used for meetings, seminars and classroom instruction. The date is Saturday May 18th from 1-3 PM. 100 New River Road Lincoln, RI 02865. Featured guest speaker will be Janet Coit Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. Featured entertainment will be the Eastern Medicine Singers, an Algonquin Drum Group. Please RSVP by Thursday May 16th to: Judy Hadley Treelady@cox.net or Keith Hainley dkhainley@gmail.com.

We have launched a newly designed website at our same web address: www.blackstoneriver.org. Be sure to check it out.

As part of that, we now have a New "Official" E-mail address. Effective immediately and please make the changes accordingly, our E-mail address is: BRWCFOB@gmail.com. (not sure if the all caps is required or not) Directors Suzanne and Eric will be monitoring it. Please delete: brwatershed@cox.net

If any of you are the administrators for your official websites where the BRWC/FOB is listed as a Partner would you please update our contact info as such:

Blackstone River Watershed Council/ Friends of the Blackstone

P.O. Box 8068

Cumberland, RI 02864

BRWCFOB@gmail.com

President John Marsland

401-644-3215

www.blackstoneriver.org

Buckeye Brook Coalition – Verbal report submitted by Michael Zarum

Annual Meeting well attended. Fish cooperative program to count fish many river herring seen into Warwick Pond and Spring Green Pond. WQ starting to see that advocacy has been effective in positive; Glycol plant at airport downstream improvement; tributary restored as compensation for runway extension and has good water quality. Herring NMF decision on endangered species is up-coming. Truk-Away site is a concern and GZA has been hired to investigate.

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

Friends of the Moshassuck- No written report submitted.

www.themoshassuck.org

Kickemuit River Council – Written report submitted by Robin Aguiar Hagan.

No news to report.

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

Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council – Verbal report submitted by Chuck Horbert:

Clean-ups coordinated with towns and depend on flooding/ water levels. Tiogue Lake Fishing Contest 5/11; Wish list of further cleanups, land acquisition, Eagle Scout project – pedestrian bridge; EMS access; fish passages at Pontiac Dam and other locations; Pawtuxet Historical coordination; filling board positions

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

Ten Mile River Watershed Council - No written report submitted.

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

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association – Written report submitted and presented by Kassi Archambault:

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council will have their first kick-off meeting on 5/22. Representatives are chosen from 11 of the 12 towns, the Narragansett Indian Tribe, RI DEM, National Park Service, Save the Bay and Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association. Both the missing town and CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection have individuals interested in serving and need to finish the appointment process.

Recreation

Kayak Trip Leading Course has 1 spot available at \$225.
Friday, May 17, 2019 – Sunday, May 19th at WPWA in Hope Valley
For details, visit wpwa.org
To register, contact Kassi, kassi@wpwa.org

June 4th at 6pm, Expert Mushroom identifiers and cooks will be offering a class at WPWA. To register, visit [wpwa.org /events](http://wpwa.org/events)

Newsletter

The Newsletter is being published electronically in early May. Keep an eye out!

Organizational Development

The WPWA Board of Director's is actively seeking new members. If you have a passion for the watershed and are interested in serving with a focus on Governance and Fundraising, please contact Alan Desbonnet (Pres.) at aland@uri.edu

WPWA's updated website will hopefully go live in late May.

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

No committee reports

Vice-Chair's Report:

July 13 Environmental Awareness Day at Narragansett Beach. Volunteers needed for RIRC booth.

RI Rivers Council Commissioner appointees will soon have Senate confirmation hearings.

Representative of RIRC desired for Blackstone River Watershed Council opening.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 5:55pm.