



The Rhode Island Rivers Council  
c/o RI Water Resources Board  
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DRAFT FOR REVIEW- Minutes of RIRC Meeting  
Wednesday, June 13, 2018, 4 pm  
DEM Office of Water Resources – Conference Room 280C  
235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present:

Veronica Berounsky, Chair  
Rachel Calabro  
Alicia Eichinger, Vice Chair  
Walter Galloway  
Chuck Horbert  
Eugenia Marks  
Ernie Panciera  
Elise Torello

B. Guests in Attendance:

Robin Aguiar, Kickemuit River Council  
Michael Bradlee, Friends of Moshassuck  
Judy Colaluca, Save The Lakes  
Richard Grant, Narrow River Preservation Association  
Sally Johnson  
Jenny Paquet, RIDEM Water Resources  
Douglas Stevens, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

Call to Order: Chair Veronica Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and asked for introductions.

Review and Approval of May 9, 2018 Meeting minutes: Motion made to approve the minutes, seconded. Motion passed unanimously

Guest Speaker: Speaker: Judy Colaluca, President of “Save the Lakes,” (STL) and CMD Reservoir. STL will have a roundtable discussion at the end of the month, to include Veronica, Judy and Bob. Has been a good partnership working with Veronica and RIRC

About STL:

Formed in 2008 to address the presence of the invasive milfoil (species?). They were not sure what to do, so decided to organize to remove and sparked the idea to “protect all Rhode Island lakes.” Was reported in local papers at that time.

STL's goal is to:

Share info with other water body stewards, including watersheds for invasive species management and to establish and promote best practices (this can be challenging in imparting to community, as there is some reluctance to change ways to more ecologically sound practices. Inertia in changing historical practices... "but I've always done it that way," etc.). Also, people may not have the resources that would help with remediation and renovations:

e.g. Charlestown Resident removed phragmites from land and solicited STL because she was uncertain "what to plant" in its place. Judy not sure what to recommend.

Some challenges: residential use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides near the lake, as well as composting close to the lake edge.

Judy mentioned the key to addressing these issues is education (even if there is some resistance to change). Judy mentioned some of the activities in which they organize to engage the community:

- Fishing Tournament
- Poster Contest
- Give-away – including fishing poles to youth

Maintains a best practices information package and established a "Great Boater's Program" modeled and inspired by similar (funded) programs run in Maine, Vermont, and New York, where boats and trailers are inspected for invasive species, fauna and flora, but in particular looking for weed seeds, which may be tracked into the lake by visitors and fishers using the water resources.

Great Boater's educated how boats and trailers can track weed seeds from one location to another, thereby spreading weeds and other invasives, unwittingly.

Boat inspections occur regularly (attested by Chuck H.). Done by volunteers (no funding and not part of a funded program or state mandate), therefore cannot force inspection, or levy fines/citations. Other states have such a system to protect lakes, (written into state charter, Environmental agency's charter (??)). Large effort from volunteers of STL, sometimes starting at 5 am!

Most fishers submit to the voluntary inspection without resistance or complaint, but volunteers cannot inspect if the party refuses.

Some data from 2014:

- 117 boats inspected in 30 lakes
- 40% from within 10 miles
- 18% within 20-50 miles
- 10% greater than 50 miles
- About 20% of boats contained weed seeds, representing 25 distinct species of invasives - Most weeds found *on the trailers!*

Bladderwart and Phragmites are two common invasives, significant portion spread by boats and trailers, as opposed to natural means (i.e. birds, a commonly known source/vector for spreading weeds)

Ernie: "What do they do...wash the weeds off?"

Judy: Yes, boaters are instructed to wash off the materials. Attempts to contain materials are performed, sometime containment. Samples are submitted to DEM (?) [not URI (??)] for plant ID.

Elise: What sources for the weeds (Ans. From previous page – boats and trailers)

STL has compiled a package for any watershed that wishes to set up a similar program, and Judy willing to help anyone interested, and wishing to be educated and learn what to do for:

- Best Practices

- Info in Invasives

A program manual is included in the package and is printed for interested parties

- contains a list of weeds discovered, and on what pond.

e.g. Helped to establish fishing tournament on Johnson's Pond (Coventry?)

Judy had made the observation that there is a procession of fishers from one tournament to another across the state and region. Her concern is what may follow in their path...bladderwart (and other invasives) transported between tournaments as fishers travel from one to the next.

Ernie: "What is Massachusetts funding?"

Judy: Staffing

Chuck: E.g. in NY there is State employment for inspections, often staffed by summer interns

Elise: mentioned and example in Maine

Ernie: If someone finds something but there is no wash station? What do they do?

Judy: containment, as best as possible

Anecdote from Judy: Milfoil acts similar to vines but submerged. Here nephew (?) was upset by the weeds entangling his legs as he swam.

Risk to other swimmers, in particular, children

Elise: What herbicide?

Judy: 2,4-D class of herbicides (pellet form, liquified and applied). There was question about safety, impact to environment raised by Elise. (Self) mentioned I could check into it.

Ernie: These are commonly used, DEM aware. Service providers use best practices to minimize risk.

Judy mentioned that some people are concerned or against its use. Solitude applies the herbicide.

Judy mentioned that the treatment is expensive.

There is a Meeting sponsored by STL at the Johnston Senior Center, June 27, 6:30 – 8

Asking watersheds to join for the meeting, with an opportunity to talk (5-6- minutes) about your watershed. Judy mentioned, for example, how you confront weeds, other invasives. DEM will also be present. There will be breakout groups, with the hopes of providing resources, such as lawyers, (other expertise?) and information, for attendants, with an opportunity to ask questions of concern. Judy mentioned that in the past, they have more questions coming out of the meeting. Therefore, Judy/STL is hoping this year more questions are answered in the meeting.

Judy: “We need to come together to solve some of these challenges”

Thank yous and questions;

Judy is asking people to come to group meeting and share their experiences.

Walt mentioned he met Judy from his/EPA boat...

Judy: raised the issue of storm water flowing into the lake

Chuck: only the last decade or two have we (society/state) been thoughtful about storm water; there are a lot of old communities with old roads, close to lakes. Mentioned that there are now and have recently been DEM grants for fixing storm water, but we don't as yet have a handle on how to address everything that could impact the water quality, particularly with private land owners close to water.

Judy: “They don't” (use best practices). People plant grass near the water's edge and then fertilize

Judy offered another anecdote for the difficulty with controlling the weed situation: the milfoil is hand harvested and then given to a farmer, who incorporated it into his composting pile. Heard from farmer at one time that while turning he observed that there was milfoil growing through the compost pile!

Michael: It was not hot enough (affirmed by others)

Ernie: mentioned the need to strengthen Lake Management Plan; the need to have staff to write those plans, in the first place. Making the point that funding upfront is a necessary tool to even start to develop and organize a management plan, and that plans are critical for gaining funding.

Judy: STL has gone to legislature to testify for the need of having stewardships for the water bodies. Agrees to the need for staff.

Ernie: elaborated on the need to write, gather information for a plan.

Initial funding for STL came from DEM

Elise: will provide RIRC new brochure for handouts STL meeting

Rachael: suggested Judy visit the Save the Bay website for information, and tips. There is an extensive list of appropriate local plant species for replanting, remediating after invasives removal.

Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

**Narragansett Bay Estuarine Program:** As reported by Mr. Galloway:

Reviews of the NBE Program are happening next Monday and Tuesday. Reviews are intensive, with visit from EPA HQ, RI, and others coming for the site visit and Committee Meeting, and touring to visit sites of interest, including Heritage Sta., STB Aquarium, and Warwick open beach, city beach. They are still looking for a new Program Director.

**State Guide Plan Recreation Committee:** As reported by Chuck Horbert:

The 1st Advisory Committee meeting is set for June 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Water Resources Board:** As reported by Ms. Eugenia Marks:

Eugenia – WRB operates out of DUC; removed support for moving WRB to a new parent managing body.

Monthly meeting this Friday, where they will discuss admin. matters for water suppliers and develop comprehensive plan - for meet over plans.

WRB keeps tab on water availability in the state. They accumulate data for many waterbodies across state regarding surface water levels, and precipitation data for certain areas, comparing changes by month (and year?). Information is on their website. June report shows some changes to below normal. Chipuxet, for example. National Weather Bureau supports the data displayed on State map of lake levels (submitted by Eugenia), with lower rainfall recorded for the month of May. They monitor the range of the state from Block Island to Chepachet.

Info on soil moisture: We are within normal range for the past 12 months

**Bays, Rivers & Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) Funds** as reported by Dr. Berounsky: They are sampling in 5 areas. Reiterated the delay for submitting reports on water quality – extended to July 15<sup>th</sup> to allow all participants to obtain data from Watershed Watch and compile it.

Elise: What needs to go in the report?

Veronica: It was listed in the RFP: a map of the sampling areas, site pictures, and the report from Watershed Watch.

(RFP?) provides funding for 4 sites of each Watershed Council:  
they disclose how to use the data  
Veronica will send out info about it  
Watershed watch bills

Ernie: Asked about Grant extension

Veronica: not needed, reports can be sent when Watershed gets final report from Watershed Watch (Elizabeth Herron) July 15<sup>th</sup>

Officer Reports, Financial Report, Committee Reports:

Elise provided the Financial Report. Expenses for banners. Monies available to redo some watershed banners, which suffer from low resolution and translucency

Written Reports of Activities Received from Designated Watershed Councils:

**-Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association** – as presented by Elise Torello  
– *trailer advisory Grant; Children’s Paddles; wild scenic river*  
*Downed trees were remediated (Chuck attested to the work)*  
<http://www.wpwa.org/>

**-Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council** – written report submitted by Kassi Archambault, presented by Doug Stevens

*Greenway Maintenance & River Rangers*

River Rangers just completed a Clean Day with TD Bank. They contributed funding to participate, put up bird houses along Promenade and Kinsley, and replanted the planter boxes on the corner of the pocket park.

Shortly Rangers will work with Fidelity who is also giving funds to participate. They will be completing a mural and attaching metal herring cutouts to the railings at the Riverside fish ladder.

*Clean Days on the Greenway Series*

The WRWC has hosted or participated in 10 events so far. We have engaged 486 individuals, approximately 150 from Olneyville.

Volunteers gave 2162 hours so far this year at a value of \$52,190.

*Water Quality/River Monitoring:*

*Herring Return Count:* Thanks to John Hake, herring counters have been counting for the whole season. We eagerly await the return numbers for 2018.

*Water Quality Monitoring:* Water quality monitoring is underway. Doug Stephens is still coordinating this project. Thank you, Doug!

*Electrofishing Monitoring:* On June 5th, volunteer Jacob Gorke and WRWC Education Director, Kassi, and students from the Jaqueline Walsh High School Students conducted electrofishing on the upper Moshassuck River. About 35-40 fish were found of 8 different species. The lower river monitoring was rained out twice and may be rescheduled with the help of the Friends of the Moshassuck.

*Green Infrastructure:*

We are pleased to have signed our agreement with RIDOT to develop green infrastructure projects over the next 5 years in the Woonasquatucket Watershed! There are many green infrastructure projects underway, including Citizen's Bank at Olneyville Square, Greystone Mill Social Club, King Street and Sheridan Street and Pleasant Valley Stream multiple homeowner retrofits.

*Education Programs:*

All programs have finished for the school year. Fish in the Classroom ended with two all day field trips at Riverside Park. 3rd – 5th graders engaged in 6 to 8 different activities, including releasing fish, YMCA's Y on the Move (bouncy house), Narragansett Bay Commission's testing water quality and checking out macroinvertebrates among others.

*Red Shed:*

Summer Bike Camp registration is open! There are a couple of spots available nearly every week of summer! Sessions start June 25th and run to mid-August. Camp runs Monday-Friday from 9am-3pm and is held in Riverside Park at the Red Shed Bike Shop, 50 Aleppo St, Providence, RI 02909. Cost is \$250 per week; scholarships are available for youth in need.

Campers can bring their own bikes or use one of ours during camp. Camp fee includes breakfast and lunch daily, a new helmet and bike lock.

Every week includes:

- Scenic group rides on the Woony Bike Path
- Bike Mechanics lessons
- Smart Cycling instruction
- Environmental education and stewardship
- River paddles with skilled instructors

We've assembled a great team for bike camp. Sara Canuel our environmental Educator will be lead counselor, one of last year counselors will be returning for another summer and a new counselor who has just completed a mentorship program with Recycle-A-Bike.

*Recreation Program:*

Full paddle schedule is posted on events pages on WRWC.org and on our Facebook page. Kassi Archambault, our Education Director, has joined Erik Talley to lead and coordinate paddle trips this summer! Join us! THIS Sun., June 17th, 11:30am Downtown And

Weds., June 27th, 5:30pm Stillwater Pond

EVENTS -ALL EVENTS LISTED at <http://wrwc.org/events.php>

Upcoming:

a. See paddle trips above

b. Woony River Ride – Saturday, September 15th

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

**-Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone** – written report submitted by and presented by Judy Hadley

The BRWC/FOB is considering applying for a RI Foundation grant to help with marketing and ways to increase our membership. We are continuing to work on improving our website.

We are having a June 13 Five Guys 5 – 8 p.m. fundraising event.

We are also having a Savers Clothing drive again. We are asking folks to save their shoes, clothing, curtains, rugs, sheets etc. and place in a 33-gallon bag. Clothing can be dropped off Saturday June 16th and Saturday June 23rd from 9 to 2:30 PM at our building at 100 New River Road, :Lincoln, RI 02865.

We ran a bird watching canoe trip last Saturday. 23 people enjoyed a very pleasant trip down the river and were treated to the melodious calls of birds such as: Song Sparrows, Yellow Warblers, and Warbling Vireos, all common wetland residents.

It was very successful.

[www.blackstoneriver.org/blackstone/](http://www.blackstoneriver.org/blackstone/)

**-Buckeye Brook Coalition** – No report

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

**-Kickemuit River Council** – As reported by Robin Aguiar:

Volunteer Organizational Meeting at end of this month. Hosting summer meeting, August 8<sup>th</sup> for RIRC in Warren. (Veronica reminded attendants of no July meeting).

Will visit fish ladder, can take video. Food and beverages provided by Kickemuit!

Location: Bristol County Water Building. Walk to broken bridge

Recommended folks attending August meeting leave between 4:15 – 4:40 to get through construction and traffic (go 114, if you have to). RSVP for attendance. Will send email

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

**-Friends of the Moshassuck** – As reported by Mr. Bradlee:

Report of Frog Pond Watch: Completed digging and “remediation” (removal of liner) completed just in time for mid-Spring rains. Tadpole were observed a week later. A dry spell snuffed out the first brood. Nascent rains allowed a second brood. Legs have been observed and the dredging appears to extend the flood zone for a longer period, benefitting toads and frogs.

[www.themoshassuck.org](http://www.themoshassuck.org)

**-Narrow River Preservation Association** – As reported by Mr. Grant:

### **Narrow River Road Race**

NRPA recently held our 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Narrow River Road Race. With 234 participants and nearly 25 volunteers, fun was had by all raising awareness for the Narrow River watershed.

### **Canine Detection**

NRPA and DEM are part way through a Canine Detection study that will identify any sources of human contamination in areas of the Narrow River that have high bacteria counts.

In May, NRPA and DEM sent samples to a Canine Detection lab in Maine. Those samples will determine areas of focus when the dogs visit the Narrow River Watershed in late June. In addition to the two days of detection, there will be an opportunity for local media outlets to see a demonstration of the dogs in action.

## **UPCOMING NRPA EVENTS:**

June 16, Saturday – What Lives in the River, 9:00am–1:30pm @ Middlebridge Marina, Narragansett

June 23, Saturday – 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Turnaround Swim, check in starts at 7:45am @ URI Boathouse, 166 Walmsley Lane, North Kingstown

July 14, Saturday – 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Awareness Day at Narragansett Town Beach 10am-1pm

July 20, Friday – 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle, check in at 5pm @ Narrow River Kayaks

August 4, Saturday - Art on the River, 9:00–11:00am @ Middlebridge Marina, Narragansett

September 8, Saturday – NRLT Land Trust Days Guided Plant and Insect Walk, 5:00-8:00pm @ Middlebridge Marina, Narragansett

September 15, Saturday – What Lives in the River (9-11am) and Guided Marsh Walk (10am-noon), ‘Gansett Days @ Middlebridge Marina, Narragansett

[www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org)

**-Pawtuxet River Authority and Watershed Council** – written report submitted, presented by Chuck Horbert –

We will be looking into pursuing grants from the RI Foundation to pursue organizational improvements, including upgrading our financial software and mapping our properties. Other ideas are being discussed as well. We may also look into Community Development Block Grants for funding for some other property improvements.

It appears that the recent problem we had with homeless occupants of one of our properties has been resolved. The individuals have found other housing, with assistance, and were in the process of removing their belongings from the property. Unfortunately there looks to be a lot of other debris that will be left behind, and which is not easily accessible for removal. We are not sure how this will be handled yet.

We had a number of good events in May, including a well-attended cleanup at the Johnston Memorial Park on Hartford Ave as well as a well-attended fishing derby at Tiogue Lake. We also had a smaller cleanup at our Pawtuxet Falls property where we encountered a DOT crew in the process of replacing iron fencing at one end of the bridge. They had helped us out by cutting brush that was up against the bridge and blocking access. We finished up brush removal, and pointed out to the DOT resident engineer that a lot of graffiti had been recently added to the bridge abutment and wall. They will look into sending a crew to clean it up.

This past Saturday we entered our truck and trailer with our logos into the Gaspee Days Parade in Pawtuxet Village, which went over very well. Lot of positive feedback.

This coming weekend we hope to get our stone into the stone carver's to be engraved for the memorial we are working on for Guy Lefebvre, past RIRC Chair.

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

**-Salt Ponds Coalition** –written report submitted and presented by Alicia Eichinger  
SPC released our first video under the EPA Grant. It is an overview video for the work being done under the grant. It can be viewed on both our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Water quality monitoring has started, and is going well so far.

Our Spring Newsletter is done and is available on-line.

Our summer safari and kayak schedule is set for 2018. This year we will be hosting 10 free public safaris and 3 paddle trips. All of our safaris will be held at Ninigret Wildlife Refuge, and this year we will be exploring Pt. Judith, Quonochontaug, and Winnapaug Ponds on our paddle trips. The schedule is on the calendar page of our website [www.saltpondscoalition.org](http://www.saltpondscoalition.org). We will also be at Narragansett Environmental Awareness Day and hosting private education programs for camps and local

neighborhood groups.

This year RI Natural History Survey held its BioBlitz on Point Judith Pond, and I was able to participate. It was a great opportunity for me to see a part of PJ Pond that I had not seen before (from land at least).

SPC helped at the Chariho 6<sup>th</sup> grade fieldtrip held at East Beach. Art did a barrier beach walk and Claire and Alicia led a seining program in Ninigret Pond.

We are progressing on the Quonie Breachway Marsh Restoration Project. The application is now out for public comment, and the Charlestown Coastal Ponds Commission recommended that the Charlestown Town Council vote that the town contribute toward the local match. The project is anticipated to go out to bid in July, and the work would be done this winter.

[www.saltpondscoalition.org](http://www.saltpondscoalition.org)

**-Ten Mile River Watershed Council** – It was reported that the Book related to the watershed is now available.

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

Chair's Report: by Dr. Veronica Berounsky, Chair

Chair Berounsky noted (and showed) that in the Sunday, June 10, 2018 Providence Journal there was a front page article about Pat McGee – who was our May RIRC speaker – and his department's work on the American Eel.

Final reports for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (and final) year of the Bay, Rivers, Watershed Coordinating Team funds are due July 16. These are the reports on the water quality sampling that was carried out as part of the URI Watershed Watch Program and the funds actually came through DEM directly to URI (so watershed councils didn't not have to submit any bills), This is an extension of the due date because URI Watershed Watch Program has not yet gotten their reports out to the Watershed Councils.

Narragansett's Environmental Day at the Beach is coming up on Saturday July 15, from 10 am to 1 pm. We need volunteers to staff the RIRC display, Jenny Paquet volunteered to bring the display, brochure, and DEM's 3-D watershed model that can be used to demonstrate overland waterflow. Other volunteers are Elise Torello, Walt Galloway, and myself. Alicia Eichinger will be there for the Salt Ponds Coalition and can help out if needed.

Bruce Hook is still doing a little work on some of the watershed maps-banners to see if he can find a way to make the rivers more visible, etc. More on this later.

Chair Berounsky is working on the application for the \$2000 legislative grant that State Reps. Carol Hagan McEntee and Robert Craven are hoping to make available. That application is due by the end of the month. More about this next month.

Chair Berounsky has been in touch with Josh Butera of the Governor's Office and he said

the appointments of Michael Bradlee, Jason Considine, and Sally Johnson are moving along towards confirmation for the three vacant RIRC seats.

Hoping to set up a meeting soon with Kathy Crawley of the WRB about how the transition of the WRB to the DPUC affects the RIRC. Walt Galloway has offered to also attend this meeting.

Right after this RIRC meeting, the Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone organization is having a fund raiser at Five Guys Restaurant in Lincoln. Come and eat and support one of our member watershed councils.

In May, the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council held their "Yellow Perch" fundraiser at the Skyline Restaurant Waterplace Park that included boat rides on the River. Their watershed map/banner was prominently displayed. That also prompted them to make pull-up banners of other watershed subjects. A photo from the event was in the Providence Journal.

Finally, one more request for RIRC members and reps of watershed councils to attend the Save The Lakes Round table on June 27.

Adjournment:

Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.