



The Rhode Island Rivers Council  
c/o RI Water Resources Board  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908  
[www.ririvers.org](http://www.ririvers.org)  
[info@ririvers.org](mailto:info@ririvers.org)



DRAFT FOR REVIEW Minutes of RIRC Meeting  
Wednesday, December 12, 2018 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  
Charles Horbert  
Elise Torello  
Walter Galloway  
Alicia Eichinger  
Paul Gonsalves  
Ernie Panciera  
Eugenia Marks

**B. Guests in Attendance:**

Michael Zarum, Buckeye Brook Coalition  
Bruce Webb, Buckeye Brook Coalition  
Douglas Stevens, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council  
Sara Canuel, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council  
Michael Bradlee, Friends of the Moshassuck  
Eivy Monroy, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program  
Ron Enringer, RI Save the Lakes  
Alison Kates, Narrow River Preservation Association  
Liz Garofalo, Consultant

Call to Order: Dr. Berounsky called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm

Review and Approval of November 14, 2018 meeting minutes: Motion made by Ms. Marks, seconded by Ms. Torello to accept the minutes as amended. Motion passed.

Introductions: All attending board members and guests introduced themselves.

Guest Speaker: Liz Garofalo, the designer who has been tasked with developing a booklet that is being funded with a Legislative Grant, presented a first draft for initial comment by the RIRC and attendees. It is a first draft of a likely 3 or 4 drafts.

- Ms. Garofalo anticipates phone conferences soon with both the Buckeye Brook Coalition and the Blackstone River Watershed Council to go over drafts.
- Some color issues were noted and will be fixed.
- Ms. Garofalo noted the individual maps of watersheds and indicated she wants to revise them to make them clearer.
- Attendees were asked to keep in mind that the target audience is people who don't know anything about the organizations.
- Attendees made comments on
  - o Borders
  - o County Maps
  - o Inset Maps
  - o The RI State border
  - o Relative sizes of watershed maps, especially for small watersheds
  - o Suggestions to make the product more visually impactful
- Photo credits were discussed and will be provided either with each photo or on a separate credit page. Current plan is to utilize what would have been a blank page for this purpose.
- Some discussion centered on the current draft's cover photo, which really is not of a river.
- Walt Galloway needs to be added to the RIRC Members Page
- Ms. Garofalo welcomes additional further e-mailed comments and is waiting to hear from a couple watershed councils who have not yet provided input.

Reports by RIRC Representatives on State Committees:

**Narragansett Bay Estuarine Program:**

- Eivy Monroy announced that a new Director has been hired and is expected to start on January 28, 2019, coming from Oregon. His name is Mike Gerel, and he has a lot of science & policy background, and a lot of varied experience in different parts of the country. The staff is excited to have him and his looking forward to his start. It has been over a year without a Director.
- Ms. Monroy also spoke of the kickoff workshop recently held on the Blackstone River Watershed last month in Massachusetts. They are looking for more Rhode Island participants. The next meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2019 at the Blackstone River Heritage Corridor offices in Worcester. There will be a second planning meeting coming up. Ms. Monroy suggested a representative from the RIRC should attend. Dr. Berounsky suggested representation of the Blackstone River Watershed Council by either Judy Hadley or John Marsland.

**State Guide Plan Recreation Committee:**

- Mr. Gonsalves reported that 9 of 11 workshops have been held, and the next steering committee meeting is scheduled for this coming Friday, December 14. On the agenda is
  - o Rate of responses to on-line survey
  - o EPA Data
  - o How to get word out
- The plan is still on track. The website is: <http://dem.ri.gov/programs/planning/scorp/>

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

- The Board continues to be involved in legislation to place the Water Resources Board under the Public Utilities Commission. The next meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2018 at 9:00 am at the PUC offices on Jefferson Boulevard in Warwick. There are a lot of concerns expressed on how current functions will be preserved (such as for the RIRC). Ms. Marks is still advocating for the RIRC but acknowledged that it could help to have another RIRC member attend meetings.

**Bays, Rivers & Watersheds Coordination Team (BRWCT) Funds:** No report was provided. It is unclear where money previously assigned to these funds will end up.

Officer Reports, Financial Reports:

- Ms. Torello provided an updated financial report. The legislative grant has been deposited, which brings the new balance to \$3931.44.

Written Reports of Activities Received from Designated Local Watershed Councils:

**-Buckeye Brook Coalition** – Report presented by Mike Zarum, no written report submitted  
The BBC held a quarterly board meeting in November. They discussed a TMDL study about toxics.  
<http://www.buckeyebrook.org/>

**-Kickemuit River Council** – Written report submitted by Robin Hagan Aguiar  
No activities or changes.  
<http://www.kickemuitriver.org/>

**-Friends of the Moshassuck** – Report presented by Michael Bradlee, no report written report submitted  
Signs have been added near the vernal pool in the North Burial Ground for the Frog Watch Project.  
A new compost facility opened on Smith Hill, now there are 2 compost sites in the watershed.  
[www.themoshassuck.org](http://www.themoshassuck.org)

**-Narrow River Preservation Association** – Report written, submitted, and presented by Alison Kates:

Presentation on Narrow River Watershed ArcGIS

At the December Board meeting, Board member Barry Devine gave a presentation on the watershed map layers that will be available soon in ArcGIS. He has been working on this with a URI intern. This mapping tool will greatly increase our ability to visualize and learn about structures, populations, and land cover in the watershed.

#### Dredging Project

US Fish and Wildlife is completing the final stage of dredging and thin layer deposition in Narrow River this month. USFWS has again asked NRPA to coordinate volunteers in the spring to plant salt marsh grass seedlings on areas of marsh that were raised to promote new growth.

#### Outreach

This week, NRPA will be sending out the December issue of our newsletter: *Narrow River Notes*. We are starting a 'Go Green' campaign, encouraging people to sign up to receive the newsletter digitally, saving precious resources and creating less waste. Newsletters from the past few years are available on our website.

#### Bobcats

Bobcats have recently been spotted in the Narrow River Watershed. One resident posted a video on facebook of a bobcat walking across the street in the middle of the day! NRPA will use the bobcat as the 'featured creature' for our annual road race. An informational poster about bobcats will be on site at the road race and information about bobcats will be posted to NRPA's website.

#### 2019 Event Dates Set

NRPA has set dates for the following major events in 2019.

May 18, Saturday - 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Narrow River Road Race

June 22, Saturday – 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim

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

September 28, Saturday – Kayak Fishing Challenge on Narrow River

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

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

After having successfully relocated a couple unauthorized occupants camping on our property in Norwood adjacent to the Pawtuxet River, we are left with a significant clean-up, including a lot of junk and human waste. We will be hiring Clean Harbors to perform the cleanup of the site for us. There is also a second camp discovered on the property, and we will be contacting the police to aid with eviction of this unauthorized occupant. Once this is accomplished and the site is cleaned up, the PRAWC will be working to improve the frontage of the property to neaten it and make it look more desirable to the neighborhood in an effort to increase a sense of place in the neighborhood. We have also noted a significant erosion issue on the property which will need to be addressed. Homeowners in the neighborhood have previously expressed opposition to improving the property we own (with walkways, for instance) because of concern for attracting unwanted use in their neighborhood. We will be approaching these neighbors again to try to meet with them to describe the problems we have been

having with the site (which they are aware of, having complained about the occupants of the site), and run the idea of some improvement with improved access as a way to discourage unwanted camping activity and better allow us to monitor and maintain the property. We also hope to discourage some of them from dumping yard waste on our property.

You may have heard in the news about the flooding of Belfield Rd and a couple houses in Johnston recently. The flood waters are from the Pocasset River, a major tributary to the Pawtuxet and one which is known for flooding problems lower in its watershed. Belfield Rd is located near its source, and the flooding is caused by a failing culvert that carries the Pocasset River under a large, contaminated landfill. This landfill was created in the 1950's and 1960's. The culvert is hundreds of feet long and there is no realistic easy way to divert flow around the landfill. In the short term, it appears that flooded properties may be bought and the roadway raised with Federal money. Any long term solution is going to be difficult and expensive, with some potential for worsening flooding downstream if not corrected properly. We will be monitoring progress on this effort closely.

We will be taking steps to survey property that we own at Harris Dam on the North Branch Pawtuxet River. We own property on both sides of the river with good access, and a potential to connect our Riverwalk with a larger portion of the property on the other side of the river and on Rte 115. Long term plans will include more trail creation, as well as a boat launch and fishing access area.

We have received an insurance reimbursement for smoke damage done to our offices by a fire in an adjoining business. This discussion started interest in our insurance coverage in general, with particular emphasis on liability coverage for volunteers. We will be seeking an informational presentation from our agent.

A small group called Save Sand Pond has formed in opposition to a proposed storage facility on the pond, and they have applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit status. They have asked PRAWC to enter a fiscal sponsorship agreement which will temporarily allow them to accept donations and help with expenses while their application is being considered. We will be running this by our accountant. Our attorney has already indicated this can be done.

We have sent out a bid package for construction services related to repairing the Pontiac Canoe Launch. Sealed bids will be accepted until 12/21/18 at 5:00 pm.

We will be trying to secure a booth at the upcoming Salt Water Fishing Show at the RI Convention Center from March 22 to the 24<sup>th</sup>.

We will also be looking to join the Green Infrastructure Coalition.

We will be having our annual holiday party this coming Saturday at Gregg's Restaurant in Warwick.

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

**-Salt Ponds Coalition** –Report written, submitted, and presented by Alicia Eichinger:

1. SPC delivered its first year of data for Green Hill Pond under the EPA Grant to the Town of Charlestown. We recently filmed a denitrification system installation for an upcoming video under the grant.
2. SPC's latest issue of the Tidal Pages went out to our members last month.
3. We submitted a video about the salt ponds to RI PBS for Our Town: Charlestown.
4. SPC welcomed two new board members Rick Black from Narragansett (Pt. Judith Pond) and Ann Whaley-Tobin from Westerly (Winnapaug Pond). We anticipate adding one more board members this month.
5. Dredging and Marsh restoration work has officially begun in Quonochontaug Pond.
6. SPC is helping to get approvals for maintenance dredging that needs to be done this winter in Charlestown Breachway as parts of it have shoaled unexpectedly.
7. 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 submitted a grant application to CRMC for funds to do some initial study work at the site.

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

**-Ten Mile River Watershed Council** –No report presented or submitted:

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

**-Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association** – written report submitted and presented by Elise Torello:

### ***Big Changes at WPWA:***

First, happy and sad news: WPWA is so happy for Denise Poyer, as she will be retiring at the end of December. Sad news: WPWA will miss her! For a quarter of a century, Denise Poyer has been at the heart of all of WPWA's education programs. But Denise is more than a naturalist and an educator, she's conducted numerous scientific studies, and recently developed a bi-state flood management plan. All of her work has had an immeasurable impact on the health of this beautiful watershed. Without a doubt, the brightest feather in her watershed cap is securing a National Park Service Wild & Scenic Rivers designation for the rivers of this watershed. The protection and funding that this program will provide for generations to come has been WPWA's founding goal since our inception in 1983. We are so very proud and thankful for all of her accomplishments on behalf of the awe inspiring natural places of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed, and wish her all the best as she hits the trails in her retirement.

Second big news: We are so very pleased to welcome Cassandra "Kassi" Archambault, WPWA's Wild & Scenic Rivers Coordinator, as of December 3rd! Kassi will retool WPWA's education programs to help promote the Wild & Scenic values recognized by the prestigious National Park Service Wild & Scenic Rivers designation. She will also serve as the liaison between WPWA and the now forming Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council, and she will be representing WPWA at the RI Rivers Council meetings

quarterly. WPWA is so thankful to have such a talented and energetic new steward of the watershed to take the baton from Denise. Welcome to the watershed, Kassi!

***Wild and Scenic Rivers Study:***

The Wild and Scenic bill was heard today (12/12) in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee and was supported by the National Parks Service. There is still a slim chance that the bill will pass through Congress this year.

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

**-Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council** – written report submitted by Sara Canuel and presented by Ms. Canuel and Doug Stevens

**Greenway:**

**Greenway Maintenance & River Rangers**

WRWC Engagement Coordinator, Amanda, began a walking club, known as the Weekly Woony Walk. The club mostly reaches elderly and disabled individuals, and will continue throughout the winter. Takes place 10 am Thursdays at Riverside Park.

The Rangers are completing installation of a green roof on their work containers at Riverside Park. Our Ranger program is winding down a bit now as colder weather approaches but we will keep all Rangers on board through the winter and hire a few new ones in March.

The Woonasquatucket Adventure Park construction has officially begun! Donny, our Red Shed Director, is working directly with the construction crew to assure a safe, maintainable, and usable space.

**Water Quality/River Monitoring:**

**Centredale Superfund:** The WRWC Centredale Technical Advisory Group (TAG) met with EPA, the team hired to do the final cleanup plan, and RIDEM to discuss the current plan to finish the cleanup study. They are seeking our TAG's advice on how to study and conduct the final cleanup. TAG team will be meeting regularly to work with EPA on the cleanup.

**Water Quality Monitoring:** Water quality monitoring concluded in late October. Doug Stephens coordinated this project. Thank you, Doug!

**Electrofishing Monitoring:** Is complete for the season, including reporting to RI DEM. Will continue in June.

**Green Infrastructure:**

We are pleased to have signed an agreement with RIDOT to develop green infrastructure projects over the next 5 years in the Woonasquatucket Watershed! Currently WRWC is working with RIDOT and their on-call consultant to develop a prioritized list of projects.

### Education Programs:

Sara Canuel assumed the Education Director position on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. WRWC has hired an Environmental Educator to run K-8 programming, starting immediately. Her name is Alicia Contelmo, and she has already been able to run a Fish in the Classroom program with assistance from Sara. She will be running the Fish in the Classroom program, as well as Fun with Fish afterschool for the winter.

K-12 programming is taking place. High Schoolers have completed field trips and are now researching environmental issues and choosing their projects. Middle School programming ended on December 6<sup>th</sup>, and was very successful based on student feedback and post testing results. Elementary Schoolers began the program the first week of November in two schools, fish arrived in the classrooms on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

### Red Shed Bike Shop:

Donny Green, Our Red Shed Director, is coming on full time as a Bicycle Programming Director. He has fostered partnerships with Recycle-A-Bike, 1PVD Cycling, Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition, Manton Avenue Project, YWCA, the city's Jump Bike program and of course the Red Shed.

Upcoming programs for the winter include:

- We have Smart Cycling classes for adults scheduled throughout the winter.
  - The first class was on Dec 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Our new grant with RIDOT on Bike Safety is underway. We will be receiving and building a fleet of adult and teen bikes.
- Ongoing construction of the Woony Adventure Park.

### Upcoming Events:

Weekly Woony Walk! This initiative includes elderly and people who may not normally walk the greenway to join each other in a group walk. The walk runs from 133 Delaine St at 10:30am, then walk to 80 Curtis Arms, arriving at 11am, then walking back to Delaine St.

WRWC Holiday Party – Was December 11<sup>th</sup>, 4-7 pm at our office. It was great.

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

**-Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone** – No report presented, no written report submitted.

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

Committee/Legislation Reports: No reports provided.

Other Business:



### **Redesignation of Narrow River Preservation Association:**

- Previous discussions on the NRPA's application were read from the last meeting's minutes.
- The NRPA's financial statement was reviewed.
- Ms. Calabro made a motion to approve the re-designation of the Narrow River Preservation Association as a designated Watershed Council. Motion seconded by Mr. Gonsalves. The motion passed, with abstention of Dr. Berounsky from voting.

### **Chair's Reports:**

- The nomination of Jason Considine as a member representing Chambers of Commerce is evidently stalled. The individual who was shepherding the nominations through no longer works for the Governor, and it is not clear who in the Governor's office is now handling this. It is hoped that with the new legislative session commencing that there will be some movement on this.
- The RIRC will again chair a Watershed Council's Meeting at the upcoming Land & Water Summit.
- Dr. Berounsky noted that three Facebook stories were recently shared regarding the canine sewer detection teams, which is the same group that recently performed the demonstrations in the Narrow River Watershed.

### **Audience Discussion:**

- Michael Bradlee recounted how residents in a northern community had approached the Friends of the Moshassuck to intervene in a development proposal. He requested information on how to contact Towns on the river to let them know of the FOM's status as a Watershed Council. Dr. Berounsky will follow up with an e-mail that previously provided this guidance.
- Ms. Monroy updated attendees on a project being conducted by the NBEP to log and map all restoration practices occurring in the Narragansett Bay Watershed. They hope to track what projects were funded through grants or other funding. They are trying to compile and map any projects that have occurred or are occurring. The resulting map will be updateable. A link on this effort will be provided for distribution by Dr. Berounsky.
- Dr. Berounsky noted that redesignations for the Buckeye Brook Coalition and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Council will be due for 2019.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Mr. Horbert, seconded by Mr. Galloway to adjourn. Motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.