

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
August 27, 2015**

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Attending: P. August, A. Bryson, H. Drew, C. Fox, M. Grant, D. Walsh, A. Desbonnet, J. MacKenzie, J. MacAndrews, M. Grant  
Excused: W. Galloway, A. McCann, K. Coulter  
Visitor: J. Stefanelli

**1. Call to Order 6:40 PM**

Helen called upon the board to congratulate Pete on his gubernatorial appointment. Jen introduced Jill Stefanelli, a guest at the meeting. Jill is a Senior Field Associate for Liberty Bank, is pursuing a BA in Human Resource, and is a life-long kayaking and camping enthusiast.

A motion to approve the July minutes was made by Jen and seconded by Donna, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

**2. Status of Activities**

Jen presented the financial report. Spending is in line with budget, and there are no overages. There are issues with revenue: we have fallen short of what we projected by \$22,000. We did not get \$12,000 from The Coastal Institute, or \$10,000 from the Kimball Foundation. Chris has recovered \$9,000 for this year's budget. The organization needs to develop new sources of revenue. This should be a high priority.

The Executive Director's report on the status of activities in the workplan is attached to these minutes. One item noted was the need to have a Westerly liaison for the flood resiliency project. Joe offered to look into the matter. Chris will send the board a list of representatives from each town on the project.

There will be a more detailed discussion of activities at the Board's September 17 workshop.

**3. Capital Revolving Fund**

Chris reported that an audit showed \$20,132.90 was spent from the Champlin Capital Revolving Fund for a purpose not authorized by the grant. The amount should be reimbursed. The Board needed to override existing policy which restricts the amounts that can be withdrawn from reserves or endowment. Antonia moved to approve an override of the policy in an amount not to exceed \$21,000, and to authorize the treasurer, Exec, Dir, and Financial Advisor to withdraw the funds at a time they deem appropriate, with a notification to the board. Jen and Joe seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chris reported that after November 2016 we will no longer have a revolving fund to provide operating cash. There is a need to find donors for a new revolving fund. As a last resort we could get a loan against the endowments.

The fund development committee is meeting once a month. It is working on getting bloomerang customized for WPWA, a membership campaign for businesses, and analyzing the membership for characteristics that identify potential higher givers. Donna suggested doing a program for the Watch Hill Conservancy. Alan gave a presentation to the Avondale homeowners association.

#### **4. Emeritus Trustees Policy**

Pete explained the rationale for having an emeritus category, and there was a discussion of past practice. Names of new proposed emeriti will be put forth. Mal and Pete will work on drafting a policy including criteria for selections in time for the October meeting.

#### **5. Easement Monitoring Policy**

Antonia explained the need to adopt a policy setting forth how we will monitor the conservation easements held by the organization. It is both good practice and required by the IRS. She presented a proposed policy. Jen moved to approve it as is, and Donna and Pete seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. A copy of the policy is attached to these minutes.

#### **6. Membership Development Committee**

Donna presented a draft setting forth the purpose of the committee. She moved to eliminate the last sentence in the first paragraph of the document, and to adopt the document as amended. The motion was seconded by Alan and unanimously approved.

The committee met on 7/23. Donna and Allyson chaired. We need more outreach to further develop the membership. Donna is spearheading a pilot project at farmers' markets and looking for volunteers to help. We reached our \$22,000 goal from membership in 2015-16.

#### **7. Other Business**

Jen proposed Jill as a board member. Alan seconded. After discussion, there was unanimous approval.

At 8:30, Helen moved to adjourn, Alan seconded, and all agreed.

## August 27<sup>th</sup> 2015 WPWA Board Meeting

### AGENDA ITEM **2b**: Exec. Dir. Programmatic Highlights

**Wild & Scenic** WPWA will be the lead organization for the multi-year (3yr) Wild & Scenic study phase. Denise Poyer will be the lead WPWA representative on the project. A draft cooperative agreement between WPWA and the National Park Service is in final review. We expect execution of the agreement in July which will allow WPWA to access \$10K in funding that is to be spent prior to 9/30/15. The majority of those funds support staff time on the project directed toward forming the steering committee and publicly rolling out the project. Denise will inquire as to whether a portion of these funds can be allocated to WPWA's 2015 Water Quality Monitoring Assessment Project.

**Pawcatuck Flood Resiliency Management Plan** WPWA has hired and deployed two part time URI summer interns to assist our engineers in their field investigations. Feedback from the core working group comprised of town, state and federal officials has been positive. WPWA maintains a project webpage that is regularly updated and all board members are encouraged to utilize it to remain apprised of the project's progress. The project is on schedule and budget.

Due to recent changes in federal audit requirements, it is now unlikely that this project will trigger a need for an A-133 audit. This will allow \$18K in project funds committed to an audit to be reprogrammed. Denise will inquire if any of these funds could be used to support WPWA's 2015 Water Quality Monitoring Assessment Project.

**Coastal Institute Sponsorship** In April WPWA requested \$15K in support from the CI for sponsorship of the above two projects. Interest was expressed by CI director Swift, but funds were not available. WPWA was encouraged to inquire again in July for the CI's next funding cycle. WPWA budgeted to receive \$12K in 2015 from the CI for this sponsorship. Pursuing this funding will be a top priority for me in July and August.

**Champlin Capital Revolving Fund** This \$250,000 loan fund granted to WPWA by the Champlin Foundation in 2006/7 is currently being spent down per Champlin's request. **Please see the attached letter to Champlin detailing how the remaining funds will be expended** by WPWA (if approved by Champlin). I will be meeting with Champlin on 6/17 at the Jay Cronin Access area to discuss its rehabilitation.

### **Pawcatuck River Restoration**

**White Rock Dam:** RI TNC will remove the White Rock dam on the lower Pawcatuck River this summer. My (paid) involvement will begin to increase this month as the project readies for late July construction start. WPWA submitted a comment letter toward the permitting of the project requesting that a volunteer from the paddling community be present for any field directed boulder placement in the restored river channel. (see attached) Due to passage of the WP Protection Act (Wild & Scenic Study), the project was required to consult with the National Park Service via the Army Corps of Engineers permitting process. NPS has determined they have no opposition to the dam's removal.

**Potter Hill Dam:** No reportable progress

**Bradford Dam:** RI TNC is applying for \$700K in NOAA funding to support the construction of a rock ramp (as an alternative to the existing fish ladder) at the Bradford Dam. I submitted a letter of support toward this funding pursuit.

**Upper Pawcatuck:** URI's Alumni publication Quadangles will feature WPWA's 3 dam projects in its Fall 2105 edition.

### **Water Quality Monitoring** To be discussed at the meeting (Agenda Item 4)

**Newsletter** The last paper version of WPWA's newsletter Watershed will be published in July and will focus primarily on WPWA's history. We will announce our transition to a less formal bi-monthly digital newsletter in this last edition. We will provide an insert allowing members to provide their email address so they can continue to receive the newsletter, and offer to print and mail the newsletter to those without email access for a period of 1 year.

**Tree Removal** WPWA has again been granted \$3K in reimburseable grant funds from the RI Trail Advisory Committee to remove trees obstructing the rivers. WPWA will again engage with a local contractor to remove trees in July if water levels are agreeable. My in-kind obligation to the grant will hopefully be covered by the Kimball Foundation. WPWA intends to promote this annual activity in the press, our member communications, and possibly with flyers at access areas.

**Paddle Permits** WPWA (and a host of other org's) continues to comment verbally and in writing against the RIDEM freshwater fishing regulation requiring select users of freshwater access areas to obtain permits for paddles that do not include fishing. This permit requirement includes the WPWA campus which includes public access. In August RIDEM will announce its decision to alter or remove the permit requirement for the 2016-17 fishing season.

March 30<sup>th</sup> – I attended a RIDEM special hearing on the regulation

May 21<sup>st</sup> – At Dir. Coit's behest, Walt, Denise and I facilitate a meeting with RIDEM staff at WPWA to obtain clarification and voice our opposition.

May 26<sup>th</sup> – I testified and submitted a letter of objection at RIDEM's Annual Public Hearing for the 2016-17 Freshwater Fishing Regulations. (see attached)

**Insurance Review** I met with our insurance agent on 6/11 to review current coverage, discuss programmatic compliance questions, and adjust the values of our buildings to reflect recent renovations. Dave Andersen of Lathrop insurance again recommended WPWA obtain D&O insurance. This recommendation was discussed with Pres. Drew and Antonia Bryson on 6/15.

**Easements** The Boulder Farm Conservation Easement Acquisition process is now complete having recently received (and issued to the donor) all the required IRS documentation. The donor's \$15K financial contribution to support the annual WPWA monitoring expenses is expected this year.

It was identified through this acquisition that WPWA needs to adopt a monitoring policy for all its easements and this policy must be attached to our IRS tax filing. Antonia continues to assist the staff in researching all our current Conservation Easements so that we can accurately report them on our annual IRS 990 Tax Return.

### **Financial & Taxes**

- Our 990 Tax filing is on extension, likely through September, due to the need to further compile documentation related to all WPWA's easements.

- To assist with cash flow, WPWA withdrew its annual endowment disbursement earlier than the described October timeline (on 6/2/15 per the Exec Com).

\$9,466 was withdrawn based on our spending rule's calculation.

- WPWA recently received its 2014 annual disbursement from the Community Foundation of Eastern CT's Mitch & Betty Salomon Fund in the amount of \$3,563. Betty Salomon's bequest of \$10K to this fund will be transferred to the Foundation this week.

- June marks membership renewal time and we are half way to our \$22K revenue goal. The Fund Development Committee has a strategy to maximize retention and reach our goal.

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015

Mr. Timothy N. Gorham, Associate Director  
Mr. Keith Lang, Executive Director  
The Champlin Foundations  
2000 Chapel View Boulevard, Suite 350  
Cranston, RI 02920

Dear Tim & Keith,

Thank you for the Champlin Foundation's continued support of WPWA's mission to promote and protect the lands and waters of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed. Pursuant to our recent phone conversation and ongoing written exchanges, below is WPWA's recommendations for the further spend down of the WPWA Champlin Capital Revolving Fund. With Champlin's prior approval, WPWA expended \$91,915 in 2013-14 toward campus renovations. This project reduced the Fund's balance to \$158,085 and helped vastly improved the public's enjoyment of our property.

WPWA Champlin Capital Revolving  
Fund

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Beginning  
Balance \$158,085

PROPOSED EXPENDITURE	COST
Campus Renovation Overages (incurred)	\$8,946.40
Campus Public Signage	\$3,000.00
Equipment Storage Shed	\$3,800.00
Public Kiosk Rehabilitation	\$875.00
Fish Passage Expenses (incurred)	\$20,132.90
Jay Cronin Public Access Rehabilitation	\$121,330.70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$158,085.00</b>

**Campus Renovation Overages \$8,946.40**

In the first stages of the renovation, our contractor, Boisclair Building Concepts, working in collaboration with the Hopkinton Building Inspector determined a fire alarm system would not be required. Once the project was underway, the contractor recommended replacing both roofs at an additional cost of \$10,000. I authorized the roof replacements with the hopes of supporting the expense through cost savings on other approved tasks, such as the fire alarm installation. Ultimately not enough cost savings were realized to complete the project in full and WPWA incurred expenses (\$8,946.40) beyond the Champlin approved amount of \$91,915.

*(detailed in our March 2015 letter to Champlin)*

**Campus Public Signage \$3,000.00**

The WPWA Campus is in need of public interpretive signage to educate the public on the sound use of our campus and the watershed as a whole. These signs have been designed and can be ordered immediately upon Champlin approval. Proofs are in available upon request.

**Equipment Storage Shed \$3,800.00**

WPWA eliminated its indoor storage space as part of the Champlin approved campus renovation. We were able to come up with a creative no-cost solution to store our kayaks, however, we are in need of a shed to store life jackets, paddles, educational resources, and grounds keeping equipment. The cost to build or buy a shed that would suit our needs would cost well over \$7,000. We have a donor that is willing to donate a large shed that is in very good condition. WPWA received a quote (Wilco Development LLC) of \$3,300 to move the shed to our campus and a quote (Boisclair Building Concepts) of \$500 to set the shed in place and outfit it for WPWA's purposes. The value of the shed is \$8,200. We believe this would be the most cost effective solution to our storage issues and appreciate Champlin's funding support.

**Public Kiosk Rehabilitation \$875.00**

At our campus, WPWA maintains a public access site to the Wood River for the public's enjoyment. The informational Kiosk is in need of roof repair and painting. WPWA received a quote totaling \$875.00 from Boisclair Building Concepts to repair and paint the kiosk. We respectfully request that Champlin Foundations fund this public access expense.

**Fish Passage Expenses \$20,132.90**

WPWA recently restored migratory fish access to Worden Pond in S. Kingstown. For the first time in centuries herring and other wildlife now have free access from the Atlantic Ocean to RI's largest natural freshwater body. To realize this historic restoration effort, WPWA removed the Lower Shannock Falls Dam, constructed a fish ladder at Horseshoe Falls Dam, and rebuilt the Kenyon Mill Dam with a rock ramp fish passage structure. These nationally recognized projects have greatly improved the public's ability to freely paddle and fish on the upper Pawcatuck River and could not have been accomplished without the WPWA Champlin Capital Revolving Fund.

Despite receiving over \$4,000,000 in grants to achieve connectivity on the upper Pawcatuck River, WPWA incurred \$20,132.90 in non-reimbursable expenses that were essential toward achieving project success to our contractors. WPWA respectfully requests that the Champlin Foundation retro-actively approve these expenses to be supported by the WPWA Champlin Capital Revolving Fund.

**Jay Cronin Public Access Rehabilitation \$121,330.70**

**Current Condition:** This WPWA owned access site located on the Pawcatuck River at Rte 91 in Richmond, RI was donated to WPWA by the Dubs family in 2007. The site features a degraded (15 car) parking area in need of storm water management, no riverbank stabilization practices or buffers, an informal boat ramp allowing direct vehicular

access to the river, as well as an active USGS stream gauge. During the 2010 Flood the USGS's concrete weir (dam) extending across the river saw a significant loss of riverbed gravel at the downstream face of the "dam". As a result, there now exists a significant hydraulic drop at the "dam" which inhibits fish and boat passage. We hope to resolve this as part of the access area's rehabilitation if funding is adequate to do so.

**Justification:** As the owner WPWA is responsible for all aspects of this site. The site is a poor representation of best management practices for public access. It is a heavily used site and use is increasing as a result of recent public access improvements upstream, specifically the park and boat launch at Lower Shannock Falls. We expect use will continue to increase with the RI Nature Conservancy's plan to add a public access site 2 miles downstream at their recently expanded Francis Carter Preserve.

**Scope of Work:** The parking area would be formally defined, re-graded and resurfaced with permeable material. Stormwater runoff from the adjacent RIDOT road would be addressed, potentially with a rain garden or retention pond. The existing informal "boat ramp" would be replaced with an ADA boat launch and portage path. Streambank stabilization will be addressed on the parcel's river frontage. Interpretive signage that explains the BMP's would be installed as an educational tool. Passage over the USGS weir by boaters and fish will also be addressed. Either the outwash material (deposited appx. 40ft downstream in 2010) will be excavated and replaced in accordance with the USGS's original streambed elevation specifications, or imported material will be used to ensure long term stability.

**Cost:** Based on our experience rehabilitating a similar access site on the Wood River in 2008 we anticipate the cost to hire a consultant to design and permit the project will be \$28,000. We will tailor the design with add/deduct construction items to ensure the construction cost remains within the amount (\$93,330.70) of funds remaining in the WPWA Champlin Capital Revolving Fund. If approved by Champlin, we expect full project completion by October 2016.

I look forward to discussing this spending proposal with you, addressing any concerns, and answering any questions that you may have. Thank you again for Champlin's years of generous support of WPWA's capital improvement projects. We look forward to providing you with a tour of our renovated facilities in the near future.

Most Appreciatively,  
Chris Fox



June 11, 2015

Charles Horbert  
RIDEM Office of Water Resources  
235 Promenade St.  
Providence, RI 02908

RE: White Rock Dam Removal - Lower Pawcatuck River Restoration

Mr. Horbert,  
The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA), a RI based 501-c-3, as the designated Watershed Council for the Pawcatuck River by the RI Rivers Council is in full support of the White Rock Trust's freshwater wetland alteration permit application to remove the White Rock Dam in the Town of Westerly, RI. Restoring to the best possible extent, the natural functions and values of the Pawcatuck River is a high priority for WPWA. The project's goal of improving fish passage and reducing flooding impacts through the removal of the White Rock Dam will be a benefit to the surrounding wildlife and human communities.

In late 2014, the WPWA held an informal workshop to obtain comment on the proposed project from the recreational paddling community. While the majority of attendees were in support of the project's pursuit for a dam removal, there were minor concerns related to the potential for permanent closure of the raceway on river left. This concern was addressed by a pre-permitting plan change that now allows water to flow through the raceway in perpetuity during higher flows. We believe this change will be well received by the advanced paddlers and demonstrates the project's willingness to accommodate interests that are outside the primary goals of the project.

A second concern related to paddling was raised regarding boat passage through the restored river channel. As proposed, the application indicates a potential need to place boulders in the restored channel to facilitate fish passage. In-river boulder placement can present a hazard to recreational boaters. WPWA respectfully requests that the project be encouraged to have a representative of the paddling community onsite during any field directed boulder placement to balance the needs of fish passage with the safety of the recreational paddling community. We further recommend that this representative be an impartial volunteer who will not impose a financial burden on the project. WPWA would be happy to recommend a volunteer to your agency or the project.

May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

Dear Director Coit,

The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association (WPWA), as designated Watershed Council for nearly one third of Rhode Island, as a 501-C-3 in good standing with the RI Secretary of State, and representing over 700 members and donors, and serving thousands of program participants per year, is adamantly opposed to the proposed 2016-17 Freshwater Fishing Regulations 1.16.1 and 1.16.2.

These two proposed boating regulations do not fairly and evenly apply to all user groups and do not align with the Management Area Special Use Permit provision requiring that ANY GROUP of between 10-75 people must obtain a Special Use Permit. Since this requirement was enacted in 2002, it has served to fairly and evenly protect the State's valuable natural resources and avert the majority of user conflicts.

We strongly urge the RI Department of Environmental Management to eliminate these two proposed regulations until such time that the Department possesses the capacity to administer a permit system that can fairly and evenly review and approve permits for ALL user groups of a designated size in a timely and efficient manner. With the evolution of technology and social media, WPWA has identified a trend away from events planned well in advance, to those that occur on a spur of the moment basis.

As written, proposed regulation 1.16.1 and 1.16.2 negatively impacts businesses. WPWA and other private outfitters that provide paddle gear and services often receive customer requests on short notice, based on a forecast of good weather. If a permit cannot be obtained within days or hours in advance, services cannot be( legally) rendered thus resulting in a loss of revenue. WPWA and other entities rely heavily on the revenue generated from fee for service programs as well as the provision of equipment and supplies to support the operating expenses, including insurance, of their for-profit enterprises.

It is our assessment and opinion that these aforementioned proposed regulations and permit requirement, which only serve to regulate a small segment of the overall users of the identified State facilities, is currently beyond the Department's ability to administer and enforce. Therefore, broadening the regulation(s) to fairly include the widest possible range of users would not be feasible in the absence of an automated system to process requests 24 hours per day and 365 days per year.

The Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association applauds the Department's efforts to protect our State's natural resources, anticipates your concurrence with our recommendations, and looks forward to working with you in the future on the development of

a boating regulation that fairly and holistically regulates the State's waterways.