

**DEERFIELD RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** **Monday, March 21, 2022** **TIME:** **6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

**LOCATION:** via Google Meet

	Art Schwenger	x	Chris Bathurst
x	Charlie Olchowski	x	Ryan O'Donnell
x	David Boles	x	Sheila Kelliher
x	Jim Perry	x	Terry Atkinson
	Chris Curtis	x	Patrick McCoy

**Special Guests:** Tamsin Flanders and Kimberly MacPhee - FRCOG; Andrea Donlon - CRC, Thad Olchowski - potential board member; James Boehmer - potential board member; Jack Widness - VT Representative

**PURPOSE:** Regular Monthly Meeting – Please let Jim know if you cannot attend.  
*Chris Curti will be in class today & next month.*

**LIST OF TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED**

--Call to order

--Review past minutes – **February 21, 2022** (Jim Perry) *Minutes approved.*

--Identify New Agenda Items not included in this proposed agenda.

**Board Member Reports** - Potential Open Leadership Positions (Lead?)

- **President & Vice Presidents:** (Jim Perry – President; Chris Curtis – 1st VP; Charlie Olchowski 2nd VP)
  - **Special Guests - Tamsin Flanders and Kimberly MacPhee - Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)**
    - Purpose: Introduce the project and hear about any concerns and goals the DRWA has for the South River.
    - The FRCOG has funding from NRCS (*National Resource Conservation Service*) to develop a watershed assessment plan for the South River watershed. This project is part of NRCS' National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) program, which offers financial and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners interested in improving water quality and aquatic habitats in priority

watersheds impaired with nonpoint source pollution. *Tamsin: Assessment of water quality in the area helps us to understand non-point source pollution sources, particularly in reference to agricultural producers, with the outcome of finding funding for EQUIP projects. One piece is to get a sense of goals & concerns for the watershed from DRWA and others. Kimberly: This won't be our only opportunity to comment on this. They would like to follow up with us with a brief follow-up survey afterwards. Jim says if farms in the South River Watershed are anything like the others in the region, there is heavy grazing across waterways by cows. The muddy waterways could be fenced off and possibly planted with trees to make protected riparian buffers. Patrick adds that road salt might be significant too. Sheila asks if trail work would be considered; Tamsin says no. Jim answers Kim that there is state land in the area. Sheila's concern is the steepness near Polly's Bridge & erosion where tubers go down to the South River. Jim adds that the access road can be very muddy (Conway Station Rd.) Kim is happy to know about it, and will see whether it's pertinent to this project's funding. David brings up trash & neglect in the area. Kim & Tamsin will email Charlie, since he can't unmute. Someone gave instructions, and he unmuted! Other goals? Charlie weighs in on washed out areas, mentions a final look at South River basins to assess. Kim asks for specifics. Charlie explains making a point to i.d. next problem that could happen vis a vis damage from weather events. Kim says they hope to fill in gaps of agricultural impacts.*

- Board of Directors Search for Additional Directors: (All)
  - Current process: The applicant observes a few meetings to see if they are a good fit, there is a private discussion between the applicant and Jim, and then out to the board for a vote.
  - Chris Curtis had suggested forming a committee to identify/vet potential board members. Revisit the topic when Chris is at the next meeting in [June].
  - Recommendation from Chris B to have a search committee designated for sourcing new board members.
- Mail & Email Call: Do we have any? Nothing exciting. (Jim)
- CRC Liaison: Latest news. (Ryan)
- Special Guest - Andrea Donlon - CRC,
  - Will discuss the Bear Swamp/Fife Brook settlement and 401 Water Quality Certificate. Andrea says Bear Swamp filed for an application for a 401 Water Quality Certificate in 2019. One year

later, DEP denied the permit saying they did not have enough information to ensure water quality standards could be met – agencies had requested an IFIM (instream flow incremental methodology) study but FERC did not require it. Bear Swamp appealed the denial. Trout Unlimited (TU) filed a motion to intervene, while the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC), whitewater interests, and Great River Hydro filed motions to participate in 2020. The parties (TU, MassDEP, and Bear Swamp) agreed to mediation, and have since worked together on a Settlement Agreement and a “proposed” 401 WQC that was then filed with the MA OADR (MassDEP’s Office of Appeals and Dispute Resolution). The agreement has many good requirements: In the winter, the minimum flow will be increased to 225 cfs 11/1-4/15 every year unless they don’t have enough water (they won’t have to take out of pumped storage). Natural Heritage got power company to agree to 5/15-6/15, early July through August to not power up during morning times to protect 2 odonata species are emerging from naiad forms and be drowned. There will be funds to mitigate these things, also invasive species, that were not in original application from power company. The Settlement Agreement requested that DEP commissioner sign the proposed 401 WQC, but Andrea said this was a concern and that there should be a comment period. CRC had filed a letter with American Rivers, concerned that FERC’s strict one year deadline for a 401 would be interpreted as MassDEP waiving their 401 WQC. DEP’s analysis disagrees, and hopefully DEP is correct. CRC’s other concern: Mike Cole’s macroinvertebrate studies led MassDEP to list that section of the Deerfield River as impaired, but the proposed 401 Water Quality Certificate does not mention anything about this, nor does it address the actual impairment. CRC notes that under the Clean Water Act, MassDEP is required to address the impairment, so CRC is requesting the addition of this documentation. Jim asks about the adequate rest facilities, whether they have to comply. Andrea says FERC had some recommended terms and thinks there will be a required recreation management plan. She’s not sure how long they’ll have to finalize that plan...1 year? Thinks DRWA should get involved at that stage.

- **Dornbusch/Cromack River Restoration Project – Status Update, if any.** Andrea has talked by phone to new owners and knows they are happy with the project. She sent them the link to the monitoring

report so they're aware of ongoing required work. She thinks there's another year of invasive species control there, looking at survival of trees & shrubs (great so far), some photo & other monitoring to be done until year 5. Andrea attended Resilient Communities and viewed a film made by WGBY (link here: <https://connectingpoint.nepm.org/north-river-restoration-project/>) no major news, all is well. Jim says we are only getting \$5,000 out of that project and asks that we don't get charged for any spraying or other costs. <Extra note from Andrea: all future invoices processed for this project will be using the remaining funds that CRC moved into one account – having two separate pools for the remaining money was cumbersome>.

- **Graffiti Discovery** - Buckland side of the river, just below the Gardner Falls dam. Andrea observed and took pictures of more graffiti on the other side of the river. Andrea sent Jim the pictures. Sheila wants to know if we can share this on social media, and Jack Widness wants to know if that's apt to give other people ideas about doing other bad acts. David thinks it might be a good idea to coordinate a newspaper article to call attention to it (more for educational purposes...not a medium for social commentary...level of effort to clean up...etc.) Funding available for signage from Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership. Andrea sent Jim contact information for the dam operator.
- **WE DID NOT HAVE TIME TO COVER THIS ISSUE: Issue: How Does DRWA Want to Decide Where it Stands on Various Issues?** - Currently, Jim P has the DRWA taking a supportive, middle to left-of-center position on various resource issues, rather than a more divisive, controversial, or heavily one-sided role. (In the local area, TU focuses on fish habitat and angling. American Whitewater focuses on recreational boating/rafting.) How does DRWA want to proceed when there are opportunities to support or not support various issues that could be controversial or one-sided?

**From Page 1 of our Website:** "Promoting healthy habitats, pure water, protection from spills and runoff, thoughtful development policies and appropriate land use practices for the Deerfield River watershed in Massachusetts and Vermont."

- **Watershed Projects:**

- **Northern Watershed Update** - Update on what types or issues and actions are occurring in the Vermont end of the Deerfield River watershed. Report on progress with planning for the "Somerset Integrated Resource Project

Status 2022 Update,” to be held on March 24, 2022, 5:30-8:00 PM at the Mount Snow Resort Grand Summit Hotel. (Jack Widness) Jack says: *There will be a meeting at Mount Snow on Thursday regarding the Somerset area, headwaters of the Deerfield. The US Forest Service plan put into effect a few years ago will be covered, especially with regard to Mt. Snow, where there is a snowmaking lake on a Deerfield tributary that is no longer used for that purpose and the river needs to be put back to its natural state. Nothing has been done, so they (Mt. Snow) are supposed to be presenting a plan. Please get in touch if you are interested in attending. Local TU chapter in SE VT got another grant to do some wood debris installations in tributaries to help create habitat for insects that fish eat. Wakeboating update is that they’ve filed a petition with ANR. They’re excited about moving forward, and the media will be involved.*

- Franklin County Rivers Source to Sea Cleanup (formerly, The Green River Cleanup) and the Greenfield City Cleanup. – Status Update. (David Boles, Charlie Olchowski ) *Patrick reached out to the Green River Festival regarding booth space and got a possible positive response from Jim Olsen re non-profit booth at GR Festival (Patrick to reach back out to Jim on 4/1). David is awaiting permission for a blue bag litter pickup event in the City of Greenfield. Sheila & David discuss that Stillwater, Lower Road and the swampy areas are a mess. People are sick of the nips, cans & bottles, piling up by the road and are hanging the nip bottles in trees, which is just awful. Jim Boehmer states he has a small non-profit and feels getting kids & schools involved is a good idea. He feels the kids really enjoy it. David feels the police should request a road closure for safety for a couple of hours to do a good clean-up of the area; there could be hazardous materials like needles too, that kids would have to watch out for and it can be a risk. Jim B feels that it means a lot to the kids to be involved. Feels that safety is less of an issue than not having enough trash bags to recover all the trash. He is into documenting on film and getting out the word on social media. David expresses a desire to get together with Jim B on this. Jack Widness says he thinks it’s a great idea, but what about talking with the kids beforehand and having them talk to family and other kids to be ambassadors to this effort as well as getting the trash picked up. David agrees. Jim Perry says disposal cost is a problem; perhaps the kids could have access to the free yellow state MassDOT bags. If there is a source of gloves and bags that we have on hand, then when DRWA is approached by schools, we can have these materials in the tool belt. David will do his best to be a resource to that end to different communities. Feel free to reach out to him.*

- Green River Watershed Alliance - Status Update. (Ryan O'Donnell and David Boles) *Nothing to report.*
- Special Guest - Excessive Use of Highway Road Salts - James Boehmer (Jim gave a brief introduction of the topic. He will present more at a later meeting.) *Jim B has decades of interest in the watershed. He finds it challenging to be part of any group that talks a lot and doesn't take much action. Road salt issue is a 911 issue to him. What is known & happening about the road salt issue is a shift from what is too much salt used on the roads, to way too much salt. A pretreatment practice is one of the culprits. He observed salt crystals into May when we had a drought. Impacts may not show up until 10 years later, super contamination from small plankton, size & behavior of brook trout, increase on invasive species. Are we familiar with who is testing for salt?? He thinks the salt market is increasing the problem due to safety trumping environmental factors. Since we've had this weather in New England forever, what other treatments are possible? Jack W knows about it and is interested in this problem, has asked about it in the area where he lives on a lake in VT. eg. liquid salt is less concentrated. As a board member on Vermont Lakes & Ponds, they would like to know more about it and agree it's a very important problem. Jim P mentions a lot of places have gone to a low salt, feels we need to i.d. the problem and impacts and what other communities & state highway/community highway departments are doing to reduce salt. Ryan brings up chloride monitoring statewide and is waiting to hear about a grant to fund equip needed to do this monitoring in VT & MA. Ryan thinks there will be a lot more info coming from MassDEP. Ryan says continuous monitoring will need to be set up, which they hope they'll get a sense of by initial monitoring. Dirt roads are also often sprayed in summer with magnesium chloride in summer to keep dust down. Jim B has been going out with kids to monitor with chloride testing strips. There is a Salt Watch app on phones to connect with people all over the country/world looking at this problem. Ryan is meeting with people piloting Salt Watch programs. Jim P asks Jim B to resend the video so the board can watch it again prior to the next meeting.*
- Monitoring – Status Update. (Ryan O'Donnell) *As above, Ryan's waiting to hear back on a grant to start March 30th. DRWA has already been monitoring for conductivity and hopes to find how much of it is due to salt. Waiting to hear on volunteers, new & returning.*
- Creating Resilient Communities (Franklin Conservation District) - 10th Anniversary event, was held on Thursday, March 10. Who attended and what did you learn? (Charlie Olchowski)

- Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission's virtual Connecticut River Research and Management Forum, on Tuesday - Terry will attend.  
\*\*LOOK FOR NOTES, TERRY!\*\*
- Wild & Scenic Rivers – Status. Update on community and legislative outreach efforts. Next steps. (Chris Curtis with Charlie Olchowski and Patrick McCoy) *No report.*
- Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership – Status Update. (Sheila Kelliher)
- Trout Unlimited – Updates on what Trout Unlimited has been up to on the Deerfield River. (Sheila Kelliher)
  - *Sheila explained that Trout Unlimited (TU) is not allowed to talk about the agreement.*
- Mass Rivers Alliance - Current issues. Membership renewed. (Sheila Kelliher with Chris Curtis) *No report*
- Trail Maintenance – Status. (Art Schwenger, with Chris Curtis, Chris Bathurst, Jim Perry) The annual Mohican-Mohawk Trails Partnership meeting was held on March 17th. Jim and Art attended the meeting.
  - Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Mark Jester commented that they have Wilcox Hollow road and culvert repair and improvements on their long-term list of things to do. *Upper part of the road was finally repaired, but there is still a culvert problem on DCR land, and DCR knows there's a problem and it is on their long term list of things to do.*
  - Great River Hydro had a contractor look at a trail reroute on the far side of Polly's Crossing that would take hikers up to the RR grade, and the price was high. Jim P suspected that was long ago, so he mentioned to Matthew Cole the less costly route to the left as you cross and exit Polly's Crossing bridge. *Jim keeps mentioning to Matt Cole that the left side would be less costly to remediate but did not receive a firm commitment from Matt to follow up.*
  - It was mentioned that the Polly's Crossing to Hoosac Road side loop trails could use some maintenance. *Trail down to Conway Station Rd., Jim P keeps bringing this up so it will stay on Great River Hydro's radar.*
  - FRCOG has reprinted an updated Mohican-Mohawk Trail Map brochure. Jim P has received boxes of maps to distribute at the Franklin Land Trust Trailhead on Route 2 and other locations. FRCOG also has made new yellow, plastic, trail disks with the updated spelling of Mohican. *There will be a new box at the trailhead on Route 2 to stock with the new maps. Will put up new trail logos/markers. Patrick will pick up some trail maps for*

*distribution at bait shops, etc. Jim P has many and can get more from FRCOG.*

- Access up river at Bardwell Ferry remains a problem. No one seems to have a good contact with the railroad, but apparently the railroad is being sold. One suggestion was to bring in the Feds. to help out. *No one at the Mohican-Mohawk Trails partnership meeting was sure who would coordinate that.*
- The river above Shelburne Falls to the Mohawk Trail State Forest lacks a physical hiking trail. *It is mostly a water trail.* Heath Trails is working toward connecting the two locations with a high mountain trail that would start at the Shelburne Fire Tower Trail, go to High Ledges, then to Catamount State Forest, on to Heath, and further west to Rowe. *Jim says it would be a highland type trail, mountaintop to mountaintop. New person with Audubon is much easier to work with, Melissa Patterson.*
- Deerfield River Recreation Management Plan – Status.
  - Nothing new this month from FRCOG on how they will be using their new funding for a river study. (Jim Perry) *Nothing new per Jim.*
- **Website Maintenance, Google Docs, Email System:** (Patrick McCoy) Status -
  - Patrick reached out to CRC to verify their credit card on file w/ Squarespace that will be charged \$72 on April 5th for DRWA's annual Google Workspace fees. *Patrick will reach out to Mallory again*
- **Financial Report:** Review Mallory's Financial Report. (Patrick and Jim)  
**Last Updated: February 18, 2022**
  - **2021** Budget: \$4900.00
  - Surplus: \$6,431.24
  - Donations/Income: \$8,614.22
  - Expenses: \$2,182.98 (Does not include Monitoring cost)
  - Net Income: \$6,431.24
- **Secretary:** (Terry)
- **Relicensing:** Refer back to: Andrea Donlon's report - Status Bear Swamp/Fife Brook settlement and 401 Water Quality Certificate (Chris Curtis)
- **Membership & Community Outreach:** **(Overall Lead?)** (Sheila Kelliher (Instagram) with Jim Perry (Newsletters) and Ryan O'Donnell (Facebook))
  - DRWA Instagram Account – (Sheila)
  - Facebook Account – (Ryan)
  - Newsletters - 2 email newsletters around the **end of May** (ahead of Memorial weekend, the unofficial start of summer) and around Giving Tuesday (**end of November**). Angie will connect with us again in



late-April/early-May to discuss topics and timeline for drafting/reviewing.  
*Be thinking of articles.*

- Angie's Chaffee's role at CRC is changing and they are in the process of hiring someone new to manage CRC outreach and communications. They expect to have that person with us within the next couple months. Angie has been a tremendous help to us. (Jim)
- **Education:** (Terry Atkinson)
  - Mini-Grants – (Terry)
  - Any projects for Earth Day? (David)
- **[Science]:** (Lead?)

**New and Old Business:** *Chris B would like to have a show of interest to work on graffiti removal, and Jim P will ask for the times people can work on it. Chris B says weekends until it's staying light later. We had help from Shelburne Open Space Ctte last time, but that was on the Shelburne side of the river, Thanks, all, for joining.*

**Next meeting:** **April 18, 2022, 6:00 PM, via Google Meet.**

### **Assignments & Adjournment:**

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**Robert's Rules of Order** (condensed)

**Types of Motions:**

Main motion; Substitute motion; Friendly amendments; Call the Question; Motion to table; Motion to reconsider.

**How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly**

- A member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to")*
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion*
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded*

**The President puts the motion to a vote**

1. The President asks: *Any further discussion?*
2. The President says: *Those in favor, say 'Aye'.* (Pause for response.) *Those opposed, say 'Nay'.* (Pause for response.) *Those abstaining, please say 'Aye'.*

**The President announces the result of the vote.**

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails.*

**HOST Initiating Google Meet**

1. Log into the DRWA Google profile using the username/pswd (e.g., login to DRWA's gmail account).
2. Once logged in Google as DRWA, click the Google Meet link and join the meeting.

3. Once in the meeting, you'll get a pop-up window asking you to grant access to each attendee looking to join.