

**DEERFIELD RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** Monday, February 20, 2023 **TIME:** 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Google Meet this month.

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

**Special Guests:**

- **Jack Widness** - VT Representative; *Present*
- **Bruce Lessels** (former DRWA VP and former owner of Zoar Outdoor) *Present*

**PURPOSE:** Regular Monthly Meeting – **Please let Jim know if you cannot attend.**

**LIST OF TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED**

--Call to order

--Review past minutes – **January 16, 2023** (Jim Perry) *January minutes approved.*

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

**Board Member Reports -**

- **President & Vice Presidents:** (Jim Perry – President; Chris Curtis – 1st VP; Charlie Olchowski 2nd VP)
  - Affiliation Agreement - Review and Vote on updated 2023 - 2024 CRC/DRWA Affiliation Agreement **VOTE: APPROVED** *Jim reviewed a few changes, mostly minor. See document. The board passed the agreement with a few minor changes made prior to the meeting.*
  - Bylaw Update? - Do we want to Update our 2007 Bylaws? They do not acknowledge our relationship as Affiliate of the Connecticut River

Conservancy and as a result, what it now means to be a member and associated member responsibilities? Any Board Members want to take this on? *Bylaws have a lot of differences now that we are an affiliate of CRC. This is why there needs to be some editing/changes/updates to bylaws. Jim feels it needs a wholesale rewrite by the board. Chris Bathurst wants to know if we want to communicate to DRWA members on issues we recommend supporting, can we do that directly? Jim says we can compose the email and send via CRC to our members, but we should talk later about whether we want to get into the business of encouraging our members to actively support certain issues, like some of the other organizations do.*

- Thank You Cards - The very last of the 2022 donor “Thank You” cards will go out in tomorrow’s mail. \$7,932.13 in donations received. All of which we get to keep. *Jim printed 60 cards he donated to DRWA. Ran out and used older cards to fill in. Jim thanked the 10 food vendors for their food donations to the cleanup.*
- DRWA Board of Directors Search for Additional Directors: *Bruce Lessels is interested in joining the Board. Bruce is interested in being the DRWA representative to the River Recreation Planning task. Jim asked Bruce to call him for a discussion and next month we will vote on him joining the Board.*
- Mail & Email Call: Do we have any? (Jim)
- CRC Liaison: Latest news. (Ryan)
  - Did our MassRivers dues get paid? *Ryan thinks yes.*
  - Did our mini-grant \$250 check go out to Mohawk Trail Regional School? *Ryan thinks yes, but Alia told Terry that it had not been received by Mohawk Trail School District.*
- **Watershed Projects:**
  - Northern Watershed Update - Update on what types or issues and actions are occurring in the Vermont end of the Deerfield River watershed. (Jack Widness)
    - (Out of order. This discussion came at the end of the meeting:) Jack Widness praised the last newsletter and says he thinks it’s important in keeping local businesses visible for their contributions to DRWA events, like cleanup. Jack asks Chris C to come speak to his organization on our Wild & Scenic River plans, when possible. Mount Snow’s snow lake dam will be removed possibly within the next 6 months. Their Trout Unlimited group has requested funding for improving fishing ecology in river/streams. VT is asking the Agency of Natural Resources for changes in wakeboat restrictions

on Harriman Reservoir & Lake Rohanda, due to ecological damage. DEC has proposed their rule change, slightly different from his organization's recommendation. TU wants promote home lake rule by requiring the wakeboats to empty their ballast tanks to avoid spreading invasives. Jack would like the next meeting to have DRWA presence. DEC only wanted to restrict wakeboats to 500'; TU wanted 1,000 feet from shore. Jim P will send around a letter for us to support Jim W.

- Franklin County Rivers Source to Sea Cleanup (formerly, The Green River Cleanup) and the Greenfield City Cleanup. – Status Update. (David Boles, Charlie Olchowski ) *David says trash & leaves mixed up together by apt complexes; a letter would be a good idea to send. Jim was willing to work with David on what he proposes. David has also noticed a lot of trash since snow has melted; plans to do a Greenfield City blue bag event again.*
- Green River Watershed Alliance - Status Update. (Ryan O'Donnell and David Boles) *David's concept is of seeing Green River as one river instead of a river in 2 States. He'd also like to see parts of the Green River brochure published in the Recorder paper. He has a couple of calls in to the Recorder trying to generate interest. Ryan says GR Alliance is funded by grants and Windham County, and volunteers, but grants are sunsetting.*
- Monitoring – Status Update. Progress on 2021 and 2022 Annual Reports? (Ryan O'Donnell) *He was "overly ambitious" about saying he'd have his report done. He hopes to have them done next month. Ryan said he should soon know about new monitoring sites in VT and MA DEP sites. DRWA has been funding some of the testing costs.*
- Wild & Scenic Rivers – Status. (Chris Curtis with Charlie Olchowski and Patrick McCoy) Next steps. Legislative progress vs Start assessment alone with other sources of funding. *Nothing new. In a holding pattern. Waiting for Congressional delegation to refile Wild & Scenic bill, file with National Park Service to help fund it without Congressional delegation, and funding by grant for Deerfield River Enhancement Fund. This last application is in, and they are probably in the decision-making process now says Ryan.*
- Woodlands Partnership of Northwest MA – Status Update. (Sheila Kelliher)
  - *Board meeting was held on 1/31/23. Two guest speakers from DCR spoke about forest stewardship and the service forestry program. Recruitment is underway for a new chair and vice chair.*

*Upcoming events include a public stakeholder meeting for the virtual forest center and an earth day tree planting.*

- Trout Unlimited – Updates on what Trout Unlimited has been up to on the Deerfield River. (Sheila Kelliher)
  - *Last week we held our annual tri-chapter meeting with 2 other Trout Unlimited chapters in Vermont within the watershed. Jack Widness in attendance. Each chapter shared its conservation accomplishments for the year. In March we will hold an in-person meeting at Berkshire East with guide Chris Jackson, who will share his insights on how to make your own [fishing] leaders.*
- Mass Rivers Alliance - Current issues. (Chris Bathurst) *Chris B says there's a River Lobby Day Wed., 3/25/23. Most important issue is the Drought Bill. It takes place in Boston at State House 9:30 a.m. to meet with reps throughout the day. Then the bill will go to a joint house committee; Chris B wonders whether CRC is involved? Bruce L asks what the bill is about...Chris says it primarily focuses on policy for water usage outdoors, centralized management and authority in managing our water use, as opposed to each Town or Water District on their own.*
- Trail Maintenance – Status. (Chris Curtis, Chris Bathurst, Jim Perry)
  - Jim cleared one fallen tree from the Mohican-Mohawk Trail on Franklin Land Trust Property.
  - Jim is working with FRCOG and others on the wording and placement of several new kiosk-type signs along the trail. DRWA logo would be one of several on the signs.
  - There will be a Mohican-Mohawk Trail annual partnership meeting on February 24 at 10:00 AM via Microsoft Teams. Jim and Chris C will attend. Talk of removing “Mohawk” from the trail name.
  - On January 26, 2023, Jim and Chris C met with Bob Rohauer - **CSX Railroad**, State Relations & Community Affairs, Community Affairs and Safety, Regional Manager - Northeast on the CSX property upstream of the Bardwell's Ferry bridge .*Jim wrote up a complete account of the issues and details discussed. Chris C says Bob R was very willing to discuss the details of and open to relocating the trail with signage where the trail crosses the river by the train trestle. Chris is writing up a proposal, working on the details of the proposed protective canopy under the trestle. Jim thinks we should all review the proposal before it is submitted. He suggests it could be used to apply for a state recreational trails grant. These funds would also be used for maintenance needed for this trail.*
  - We all scouted out a potential trail route that would utilize the current parking area on CSX property adjacent to the Bardwell's Ferry Road and would then immediately dive off into the forest adjacent to the left side service road and then angle down slope to a bench above the river, follow the bench a ways to a steep side hill

that would need to be traversed with an elevated structure for about 150 feet before entering under the existing trestle. Under and within a certain distance of the trestle, a protective shed roof would need to be constructed to protect hikers from falling RR debris, such as ballast rock. Once under and past the trestle, the trail would continue along the James Richardson property and then rejoin the existing Mohican - Mohawk Trail. *(Franklin Land Trust holds a recorded easement with Jim Richardson for the trail, but we should check back with him again about a trail realignment through his property.)* Chris B needs a good topographical map of the area; Ryan says he can help with that.

- CSX owns this section of rail line with Norfolk-Southern RR as a 50-50 partner and later this June or July, they will add a third party (Berkshire & Eastern RR), who will be the Operator.
- Process order:
  - 1) Apply for a Preliminary Engineering Right of Entry Agreement Application:
    - The first step is to apply for a **Preliminary Engineering Right of Entry Agreement** from the railroad which will allow us to conduct a Trail Engineering Assessment of the proposed trail alignment and its construction and costs.
      - Create a Proposal: As part of the Application for the Preliminary Engineering Right of Entry Agreement, we were asked to develop a good Business Case addressing:
        - Existing illegal use of the trail and parking on railroad property..
        - How the existing trail section located on CSX property is part of a historically used and larger trails network.
        - How a proposed NEW trail realignment on CSX land will not harm the RR owners.
        - How the Trail Engineering Assessment will address:
          - The proposed alignment and will corral people away from the rails.
          - A signage plan.
          - A parking plan (conceptual) so that cars do not block railroad maintenance access.
          - Etc.
  - 2) Apply for Grant funding to conduct the Trail Engineering Assessment
  - 3) Conduct the Trail Engineering Assessment

- 4) Apply for an Easement from the RR owners.
    - Submit to the Operator an application for an Easement that includes information from our Trail Engineering Assessment. The Operator will review the application and pass the application and a recommendation along to CSX and their partner for review, and hopefully approval.
  - 5) Apply for Grant Funding to Construct the New Trail, including a falling debris shed under and approaching the trestle, parking, signage, and maintenance, if the easement is approved.
    - Deerfield River Recreation Management Plan – Status. (Jim Perry)
      - No word on comments to the draft report. *Jim hasn't heard anything, nor has Bruce.*
- **Website Maintenance, Google Docs, Email System:** (Patrick McCoy) Status - *No major updates, just general request to the Board that on any projects we're doing to please keep documentation in the Google Docs format we're using. He can help with that. Jim would like Mohican - Mohawk Trail and Wild & Scenic project information uploaded to Google Docs.*
- **Financial Report:** Review Mallory's Financial Report. (Patrick) *Patrick says the new Chief Financial Officer is really trying to right the ship.*
  - Jim and Patrick met with CRC financial staff on January 27 at 9:30 AM and leadership on February 16. At 3:00 PM.
    - Final 2022 financial report has been delayed to the end of February.
    - We took in **\$7,932.13** in donations in **2022**.
    - Because CRC has not met their commitment to provide us with financial reports during 2022, CRC will not be charging us the 16.4% indirect cost rate Administration Fee for 2022. *(This amounts to about \$1300 in savings to the DRWA. This is a gesture of good will on CRC's part.*
    - CRC will commit in the Affiliation Agreement to providing monthly donation reports and quarterly financial reports (at a minimum, financial reports monthly when possible). *Jim has noticed a general positive easing of overall management by CRC with Ron on board as Acting, although they will be looking for a permanent head of the organization.*
    - CRC is willing to go easier on contracting now and is willing to defer more to DRWA's judgment. CRC will continue to sign the contracts and hire the staff and use their contracting procedures. DRWA bylaws also seem to allow contracting with Board Members: *"Directors shall not be precluded from serving the Association in any other capacity and receiving compensation for any such services."*

- **VOTE:** Proposed Budget for 2023 **APPROVED** We usually decide this in January. Also would like to add an Outreach Activities category for Green River Festival, for example.
  - Trail Maintenance - No money spent last year on this. Chris C says our original plan was to do some maintenance at Bardwells Ferry by hand, but we've lost access to the trail for now. Maybe grant or other funding to contribute in future.
  - Educational Programs - Patrick & Jim says proposal to fund 2 grants for up to \$300 each; **\$600 total**.
  - Franklin County Rivers Cleanup - David agrees \$900 was budgeted, but 0 spent. CRC may have absorbed some of the costs too. Jim asks whether we should reduce the budget, but David says he'd rather leave as is and still try to spend no money. Jim wanted to know how the 10 food product donors get put on the donor list. Jim sent Thank You Cards to all 10.
  - Monitoring - Ryan imagines supply costs will go up this year. Does not know how much he'll need; can try to keep it capped at **\$2000**; will ask board for more if needed.
  - Wild & Scenic Rivers - Chris looking for matching funds, doesn't know what amount he needs.
  - **Other?** - Green River Festival - there is interest in having a booth again this year. Will need a new tent. **\$500** budget item.
  - General Operations - Printing, Mailing, Memberships, Website & Email & Google Docs, etc. - **\$1000** proposed
  - Board approved budget as proposed.
- **Last Updated: July 18, 2022**
  - **2021** Budget: \$4900.00
  - Surplus: \$4479.24
  - Donations/Income: \$8,614.22
  - Expenses: \$4,134.98 (**includes** Monitoring cost)
  - 07/18/2021 Jim approved 2021 water monitoring expenses of \$1,952.00
  - Net Income: \$4,479.24
- **Secretary:** (Terry)
- **Relicensing:**
  - Gardner Falls - We are waiting on a meeting to discuss recreation issues. As of February 20th, the meeting has not yet been scheduled. (Jim) Doodle poll went out, but nothing back yet.
- **Membership & Community Outreach:**
  - DRWA Instagram Account – (Sheila & Ryan)
  - Facebook Account – (Ryan) New media person at CRC has been giving us recognition on their FB page.

- Newsletters - (Jim)
- **Education:** (Terry Atkinson)
  - Education Outreach:
  - Mini-Grants – **Has CRC** sent the check to Mohawk Trail Regional School for Trash Cans with Lids, mini-grant application for \$250? *Ryan will check, but Alia has not received it.*
- **[Science]:** (Lead?)

**New and Old Business:**

**Next meeting: March 20, 2023, 6:00 PM**

**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.