

**DEERFIELD RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
MEETING MINUTES**

DATE: **Monday, April 17, 2023** **TIME:** **6:00** pm - 8:00 pm

LOCATION: **Google Meet this month.**

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

Special Guests:

- **Jack Widness** - VT Representative
- **Ivan Ussach** - Millers River Watershed Council - ivan@millersriver.net

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

LIST OF TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

--Call to order

--Review past minutes – **March 20, 2023** (Jim Perry) *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)
 - DRWA Search for Additional Directors (ongoing): *Jim thinks it is wise to add a few more board members, areas of expertise, and potential future officers on the board. Jim's daughter may have a lead from GCC.*
 - Mail & Email Call: Do we have any? (Jim)
 - CRC Liaison: Latest news. (Ryan) *No news.*
 - Was our mini-grant \$250 check received/cashed by Mohawk Trail Regional School? *Check was received per Alia.*

- **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)
 - **VOTE:** Contribute \$100 toward full sponsorship of the Trout Unlimited angling movie in Vermont. \$1 back from each ticket sold. Proceeds past expenses to our Wild & Scenic River task. *The board voted to contribute the \$100.*
 - **Ivan Ussach - Millers River Watershed Council** - A short presentation on what is happening with them and priority issue(s) they are working on.
 - Ivan is MRWC's part-time Watershed Coordinator since 2005 *He has been part time staff person 5-15 hours per week plus volunteer time, has been active with grants in the past also. Their big project for the last 5 years has been an attempt to get the Town of Gardner to choose an alternative to expanding their current sludge landfill. MRWC thinks it is a terrible idea, and they've been fighting about it for a long time. The city has filed a notice of intent and environmental impact form to EEAA. They have cobbled together a group of local concerned organizations (about 10) to advocate for a non-landfill alternative. For a variety of reasons, they commented that an EIR should be filed. Some promising alternatives are nearby in Fitchburg and they continue to be optimistic about this.*
 - *A new project they have just begun in the town of Athol is about aquatic nuisances in a local lake. The group of stakeholders met last month (local lake associations, land trusts, watershed council, Harvard forest). They've been involved in a dam removal project funded by the state in Wendell on Whetstone Brook. Studies have been completed by consultants. A small group is advocating to keep the dam. Recently the CRC contacted them to write a letter of support for grant funding in Winchester, NH. They are a small group that continue to be the eyes and ears of the watershed, whether it's reports of erosion, illegal dumping, or contractor violations. They are also continuing to work on promoting a series of "blue trails" (water/boating) in the watershed. For several years they've had active water quality monitoring staffed by volunteers; results have consistently shown bacteria levels get higher after heavy rainfall, which generates public alerts. They may not be able to continue this. They are interested, but not actively involved in, stormwater management. They are a small organization. Charlie asks if the Millers T.U. organization has been part of their project. They have a good relationship per Ivan but are not working*

together currently; Ivan will follow up on this suggestion to work together. Chris and Charlie compliment Ivan on their active concerns and projects. **Contact: Ivan@millersriver.net . Also see MillersRiver.org website.

- *Jim says to check out DeerfieldRiver.org to see what we do. David asks if there is access to swimming. Ivan says there is not much access to swimming, but they typically get calls about where it is safe to swim. There are no officially publicly designated swimming areas on the map. Ivan says the Millers River has dramatically improved over the years of industrial pollution. David asks if they organize cleanups on the Millers. Ivan says there are not regular cleanups, but they do periodically. David offers to provide support, can call or text his cell 413-522-2102.*
- *Jim remembers paddling down the Millers and noticed how much industrial trash has been removed, how much cleaner the river looks.*
- *Ivan asks if there is any issue that rises above the others for DRWA. Jim says probably pursuing Wild & Scenic Rivers status, but we are working on all kinds of projects. Chris states that they are in the process of what parts of the river might be designated, the study process, and waiting for what is likely a 10 year process. Charlie mentions a conflict over where waste from Erving Paper Mill would be placed on the north side of the Millers. He gives Ivan his number ##### for more info.*
- Franklin County Rivers Source to Sea Cleanup (formerly, The Green River Cleanup) and the Greenfield City Cleanup. – Status Update. (David Boles, Charlie Olchowski)
 - *How did BLUE BAG APRIL in Greenfield go? Any photos? David is waiting for an article to go in the paper and Greening Greenfield. Blue bags are available at Greenfield DPW and John Zon Center. There is also a relevant movie being presented on Earth Day. The cleanup will occur on Sat., Sept. 23rd. David has been doing reconnaissance on all the litter along the roads and hopes to extend the cleanup further into Franklin County.*
- Green River Music Festival - June 23-25 Chris has not heard back from Jim Olsen. Patrick might leave a note in his mailbox.
- Monitoring – Status Update. Progress on 2021 and 2022 Annual Reports? (Ryan O'Donnell)

- Ryan presented Water Quality of Beaver Brook & the North Branch of the Deerfield River Public Program - Wednesday March 29 at 6:30pm
- On April 13, 2023, David Boles and I met with a group **hosted by Kelsey Wentling - CRC**, and a group interested in Maple Brook (FRCOG, City of Greenfield).
- We talked about issues and needs.
 - FRCOG would like to focus on the infrastructure of the Maple Brook conduit pipe and areas that might drain into it.
 - DRWA would like to quantify the pollution/contaminant problem first. What is the quality of water going into Maple Brook and what contaminants are draining out of the tailpipe and into the Green River? **I recommended testing for a wide variety of parameters to help us identify what specifically is the issue**, what specific contaminants are coming out of the Maple Brook pipe? Then, once it is known what the problem contaminants are, go back and sample through the various manhole covers along the pipe to see if the source of contamination for each contaminant parameter can be identified. **Then, solve the specific contamination problem.** Structural issues with the pipe may be important to the City of Greenfield, but are not DRWA's concern unless there are leaking sewer pipes draining into the system. We want to know issues, such as if there are plumes from contaminated groundwater intersecting the pipe, contaminant runoff going into the pipe, or direct pipe connections polluters are using. *Ryan has done some monitoring where Maple Brook enters Green River and Jim feels strongly that the city needs to know where the plumes of pollution are coming from. David feels this may be the biggest polluter of the Green River. Ryan says it is true and that stormwater is a big part of the problem. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission did a 604 B (see below), and he will be talking to CRC Kelsey about it.*
 - A **604B grant** is a potential source of funding for monitoring. DEP will want a monitoring Quality Assurance Plan too. *David & Jim are interested in this grant as a way to find out what is entering the river in order to improve it. Chris jumps in to say he used to work for PVPC and did a lot of work on tributaries that contributed pollution to the watershed.*

Kimberley McFee is the person at FRCOG who is the environmental impact connection. Charlie thinks she is the right person to contact, but Jim felt she was not responsive to our needs for identifying the pollution and following it back to the sources of the pollution; he feels we need a municipal partner. David thinks FRCOG will be in touch with CRC Kelsey about a next meeting. Jim feels we need to first know what is coming out the "tailpipe" first, then figure out where it's coming from.

- Wild & Scenic Rivers – Status. Next steps. (Curtis with Charlie Olchowski and Patrick McCoy)
 - This week, Senator Markey provided a copy of the hearing request that he just sent to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (ENR). (I can't share it yet, as it has not been made public.) They just received confirmation from David Brooks from ENR that he is going to try and include the bill in the first public lands markup (which was tentatively scheduled for later this month). *Chris connected with Page Rodriguez in Markey's office. All 4 senators from our watershed are on board in support of Wild & Scenic.*
 - Markey's office also now better understands our request that they send a letter to the National Park Service seeking funding for a Reconnaissance Study for Wild and Scenic, and they have agreed to look at this closely. *Chris clarified that the money is already in the budget for this.*
- Trail Maintenance – Status. (Chris Curtis, Chris Bathurst, Jim Perry)
 - Any word back from CSX on the draft proposal? *Chris hasn't heard anything back from them. He hoped we would vote on a proposal for CSX (sent in the meeting email). A right of entry permit to do more detailed report of the trail alignment and creation of a safer crossing. Secondly, we want to request an easement for relocation of the trail. Is there an alternative to having CSX hold that easement, such as the town of Shelburne? Charlie thinks proposal should be for permit trail easement. Chris thinks it should be done with right of entry easement at the same time. Jim thinks we should request permanent easement, rather than a 10-year easement.*
 - **VOTE** on proposed Engineering Assessment application to CSX and applying for grant funding? The Town of Shelburne has offered to sponsor an application for *Woodlands Partnership grant money, per Jim. Chris expects this will be a long process. Franklin Land*

Trust has several easements, but they are not in the easement business; Jim thinks they should be encouraged to be a partner to this. Town of Shelburne would be a much more complicated partner in any easement unless the funding could pass through from the town without all the processes and permissions a local town government requires. Jim suggests a field trip to get a better feeling for the site for the boardwalk, debris shed, and apply for a right of entry. Chris will send out an email to the board to try to arrange a field trip. Chris moves to approve the submission of proposal to CSX with further discussion on whether DRWA should hold the easement next meeting. This was approved by the board.

- Lady Slipper High Ledges **guided hike** has been moved one day to Sunday, May 21, 9 - 12, due to a conflict on Saturday with another hike. Jim will provide the news release to Patrick for the Website and to Ryan and Sheila for Facebook and Instagram.
- Deerfield River - Recreation Management Planning - Status: (Bruce Lessels) *Bruce not present until a bit later.*
- Relicensing - Status. (Bruce Lessels)
 - Gardner Falls - (Jim & Bruce)
 - Draft - Revised Recreation Management Plan for Central Rivers Power was sent to us for review and updated on March 30:
 - The company held one site visit and one online meeting. Jim P held two separate site visits for interested parties.
 - Lots of back and forth edits to our proposed group comments. Cooperators included: DRWA, CRC, Shelburne, and hopefully Buckland. **Lots of help from Andrea Donlon - Buckland and Kelsey Wentling - CRC MA River Steward.** Larger agencies will comment separately.
 - Completed DRWA Board Review on Sunday, April 16, and continued to receive additional comments/edits from CRC and Buckland residents.
 - **VOTED Electronically:** 8 of 9 Board Members voted by email and all voted "Yes" to approve the group comments. Comments on the Draft Plan Revision are being sent to Central Rivers Power and our partners: Monday, April 17.
 - David and Chris C expressed concern with the previously approved, but not constructed parking area in Wilcox Hollow. *A loop trail has a lot more value than a dead end trail! CRC, Buckland, Shelburne, and other interested parties are*

concerned about the limited access and unresolved promised mitigation. Bruce says another way they dodge requirements is that they drag their feet so long, that they take absurd amounts of time to complete them; Jim says the owner was not truthful about these things being completed. Chris Curtis' concern is with building a large parking lot adjacent to the river, but Jim says the number of vehicles is 10-15; (25-30 is a mistake). There is disagreement about how close this parking lot would be to the river. Chris feels we need to give careful consideration before giving permission; Jim clarifies that approval was already given by FERC, but the owners haven't fulfilled their obligation.

- **Woodlands Partnership of Northwest MA** – Status Update. (Sheila Kelliher) *No updates, she hasn't been to any meetings of late.*
- **Trout Unlimited** – Updates on what Trout Unlimited has been up to on the Deerfield River. (Sheila Kelliher) *Has a meeting Thursday evening at GCC. Someone from VT will talk about making the Battenkill a wild fishery.*
- **Mass Rivers Alliance** - Current issues. (Chris Bathurst) *Chris B attended a 2nd meeting since he joined. Nothing new from last time.*
- **Website Maintenance, Google Docs, Email System:** (Patrick McCoy) Status -
 - Bruce took a crack at beginning to update our **river recreation page**. *Patrick has been tinkering with the boating page. Zoar Outdoor has appropriate links. Bruce has been very helpful with timing of flows and other details. Chris C says he'd be very helpful with certain aspects of Wild & Scenic.*
- **Financial Report:** Review Mallory's Financial Report. (Patrick)
 - **Last Updated: March 2023**
 - **2022** Budget - End-of-Year Report:
 - Donations/Income: \$7,932.18
 - Expenses: \$3,070.08 (**includes** Monitoring cost)
 - Net Income: \$4,862.10

Patrick is trying to get CRC to update how much money they should be holding in their account for us, etc. Patrick says CRC has the template, but we want to make sure our numbers match up, carryover balance, etc. Also Jim states CRC does not have our 2023 budget in yet, even though we have given them numbers. Jim says he's had little to no communication from CRC about obtaining DRWA President's approval, prior to paying for things from the DRWA account.
- **Secretary:** (Terry) *Nothing to report*
- **Membership & Community Outreach:**
 - DRWA Instagram Account – (Sheila & Ryan)
 - Facebook Account – (Ryan)

- Newsletters & Appeals - (Jim)
- **Education:** (Terry Atkinson)
 - Education Outreach:
 - Mini-Grants – Did Mohawk Regional School receive and cash the \$250 check? *Check has been received; will contact Alia about whether it was cashed.*

Terry briefly discussed a National Park Service Interpreting Climate Change course she wanted to take, which is deferred for the time being. A future class will be offered that is more local to our region. With the impact of larger, slower moving storms, the amount of water they dump on communities, sea level rise, and the cost to infrastructure, there needs to be clearer communication on the importance of active stewardship in the face of a warming planet.

- **[Science]:** (Lead?)

New and Old Business:

Next meeting: May 15, 2023, 6:00 PM

Assignments & Adjournment:

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.