

**DEERFIELD RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** Monday, September 18, 2023 **TIME:** 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Google Meet this month.

DRWA Board Meeting –  
**“Google Meet”**

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

**Special Guests:**

- **Jack Widness** - VT Representative
- **Dr. Brian Yellen** - Past President DRWA; Current President of the Fort River Watershed Association
- **Rebecca Budd** is restoration manager at CRC under Ron Rhodes. Will be participating in Fort River cleanup. There was a dam removal in Beaver Brook; she will come back to tell us about another time.

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

**LIST OF TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED**

--Call to order

--Review past minutes – **July 17, 2023** **Vote to Consider Approval** (Jim Perry)

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

**Special Guest:** Dr. Brian Yellen - Fort River Watershed Association (FRWA). *Brian was with us for several years until 2017 while working on his doctorate. He started FRWA a couple of years ago. FRWA is a small watershed, 5 towns, parts of Belchertown, Pelham, Amherst, Hadley, Shutesbury, .... Is undammed and has lamprey migrating*

upstream. Has been working with aging infrastructure and bringing down bacteria levels in conjunction with Ryan's help sampling. Several swimming holes have been closed, and they are still trying to track down the source of the bacteria. (Puffer's Pond is in Mill River Watershed, and is experiencing similar bacteria problems.) They do a cleanup every year with about 100 volunteers. They have installed interpretive stops along a trail in Groff Park, with funding help from MA Environmental Trust. Chris C relates similar problems with public trail access/property ownership. Fearing Brook bacteria comes from a broken sewer pipe, which is very difficult to access. CRC also runs sample palooza, and Fort River has some of the highest bacteria, contributing factors may be farming, livestock, etc. Chris C mentions 604B funding to investigate point source pollution. Polly mentioned to Brian "Never tell a New England farmer how to farm," but he thinks it is time to have that conversation once they have more data. Hickory Ridge Golf Club has closed and is now a public park. Chris B asks if Brian knows the history of the name Fort River; perhaps Fort Hill. David asks if there is a homeless problem, but Brian says nothing very permanent. Chris C wants to collaborate where possible. Brian has found partnership with CRC amazing and wonders if we feel the same.

### **Board Member Reports -**

- **President & Vice Presidents:** (Jim Perry – President; Chris Curtis – 1st VP; Charlie Olchowski 2nd VP)
  - Franklin County Fair - DRWA had an unstaffed table in the Fish & Wildlife Barn. The report back is that it had a lot of visitors. (Jim)
  - Mass Rivers Alliance - Anna Renkert from Mass Rivers Alliance came out for a visit with the local TU chapter and me. (Jim)
    - We toured the now abandoned **Barnhardt Manufacturing** facility on the North River and talked about removal of its dam.
    - Also **Rice Brook** in the Village of Charlemont and work TU has done to add woody debris to the stream to benefit native brook trout.
    - We also stopped at **Shunpike** and **talked about the Assistance Mass Rivers Alliance could provide in Boston:**
      - Related to the lack of parking and river access facilities for river users, since some of the river access is owned by MassDOT, would it be better if those lands were managed by DCR?
      - The DRWA Wild & Scenic River process.
      - Dam relicensing and enforcement of mitigation between licensing periods.
  - Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) Town of Shelburne: (Jim)

- Jim represented DRWA at the Town of Shelburne at an invitation-only workshop on Wednesday, September 13, 2023 from 9 AM to 3 PM.
      - Identify natural hazards that present the greatest threat to the community.
      - Evaluate strengths and vulnerabilities of residents, infrastructure, and natural resources.
      - Develop and **prioritize actions** that reduce the impact of hazards and increase resilience. (Jim)
  - Outreach Grant - (Jim)
    - CRC has applied for a \$30k grant from the **Community Foundation of Western Mass** to increase awareness of local rivers and engagement with the watershed organizations in Western Mass.
      - We could apply for a similar grant next year, if we come up with a project that would also support diversity.
  - Mail & Email Call: Do we have any? (Jim)
    - Emails to register for the Wildflower hike and **3** groups let us know of their planned river cleanup efforts in Charlemont.
  - CRC Liaison: Latest news. (Ryan)
- **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)
    - Fly Fishing Film Tour Event at Latchis Theater in Brattleboro:
      - Was held: September 14th. 6:30 PM
      - How did it go? Did it break even or make a profit?
  - Franklin County Rivers Source to Sea Cleanup (formerly, The Green River Cleanup) and the Greenfield City Cleanup. – Status Update. (David Boles, Charlie Olchowski ) *All set to go on Saturday, Sept. 23rd, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The enormous amount of rain has resulted in abandoned homeless camps on the river. When the water comes into the city, it leaves much more polluted. Maple Brook is one of 3 smaller streams that is contributing to this pollution. Please try to get anyone you can to participate. Patrick mentions timely payment to vendors needs improvement. David thinks there have been some donations, eg. \$500 from Coca Cola.*
    - Posted to our website and Facebook. Sent out a notification in our Fall ENewsletter.

- Depending on the weather, Jim will set up a table and solicit sign-ups for our newsletters and take photos for our publicity.
  - Zoar Outdoor, Deerfield River Watershed TU, and Mohawk Trail State Forest are running mid-river cleanups.
- Green River Watershed Alliance - Status Update. (Ryan O'Donnell and David Boles) *They have lost their funding, are inactive right now. Should we leave it off the agenda? Along with other items to help trim the agenda down?*
- Monitoring – Status Update. (Ryan O'Donnell)
  - Ryan sent out the final monitoring results for the season. *Last monitoring was in August. Data won't be ready for reporting until after November or December. It will be an interesting year! Flooding will have an impact, flow may dilute bacteria levels. Source tracking project cannot be funded with our current source. It is hard to track down sources, it is difficult, and you need a lot of funding for it. Ryan has been talking to Kelsey about this, collaborating with FRCOG and others to tackle the Green River. DEP funding 604B (or 319) would likely cover this issue. There is talk of tSas that are contributing more, such as Green River Park, the sewage treatment plant, etc.*
  - Jim has been incorporating the monitoring results at our tables and booths and explaining what the results mean to the public.
- Wild & Scenic Rivers – Status. Next steps. (Chris Curtis with Charlie Olchowski and Patrick McCoy)
  - *(Chris C) There are 3 new staff people in Senator Markey's office. He has been meeting with them in regard to the status of their bill. He feels they are on board and working with us. On the House side it is in gridlock. John Swords, our contact at McGovern's office, says our bill is on the short list, but there is little movement on bills right now. John is willing to reach out to Sen. McGovern to reach out to National Park Service to fund a study without an act of Congress. Chris has written a letter in this regard. Another avenue of pursuit is to State Initiated Wild & Scenic without an act of Congress. He will pursue this next.*
  - Trail Maintenance – Status. (Chris Curtis, Chris Bathurst, Jim Perry)
  - Hike:
    - A **Late Summer Wildflower Hike** was held at the **High Ledges**, on September 10th. It was led by Peggy Warwick of the Shelburne Open Space Committee with Jim as the

sweep. Once again we have partnered with the Shelburne Falls Arms Library and Shelburne Falls Senior Center.

- Posted the hike to our Website, Facebook, Instagram, and appeared in our ENewsletter and our Franklin County Fair Booth. Still, only 5 of us attended this hike. I am perplexed.
- Deerfield River - Recreation Management Planning - Status: (Bruce Lessels)
- Relicensing - Status. (Bruce Lessels)
  - Gardner Falls Hydroelectric Project - (Jim & Bruce)
    - Report from Kelsey at CRC:
      - Related to the Wilcox Hollow washout: **Patriot Hydro has engaged a contractor to come out to fix the lower roadway and possibly upper section as well.** (*Alan Harris reported today that: "They have fixed the drive in a very rudimentary way so you can actually get down there now."*)
      - However, though they have been in touch with DCR and Eversource, **the 3 entities cannot reach consensus** on who needs to do which repairs. As a result, this construction is not intended to prevent future washouts, but instead is intended to open access again this season as a (likely) temporary fix. The work should start next week and be done within a few days. I expressed that while we appreciate the road being reopened this season, a longer-term solution will need to be worked out to make sure this doesn't happen year after year. I think we will need to keep pressing this point with all three organizations.
      - **Related to the recreation plan: Skip had intended to have a second meeting with us to discuss our edits to the rec plan; however, given that the plan is now overdue to FERC, he will submit the revised plan directly to FERC (including our April comments). The revised plan includes some, but not all, of our requests.** He said the plan will include a few of the repairs we discussed, such as the handrail, and that he is pushing for translated signs, QR code etc. **Unfortunately, their corporate owner was not interested in agreeing to some of the other points of discussion, such as maintain the**

loop trail. Skip is aiming to file the revised plan possibly next week.

- Jim says: To ensure the mitigation needs are met, we will now need to work directly with FERC, rather than Patriot Hydro.
- **Woodlands Partnership of Northwest MA** – Status Update. (Sheila Kelliher)
  - This year's grant winners were announced. *Nothing to report except there will be a board meeting in November.*
- **Deerfield River Watershed Trout Unlimited** – Updates on what Trout Unlimited has been up to on the Deerfield River. (Sheila Kelliher) *They will do a cleanup at the confluence of the Cold River. TU received a \$26,000 grant for water qu se for measurement. They'll be doing other parts of the river near where she lives. Ryan mentions collaboration. Sheila mentions the grant required immediately purchasing the equipment. October meeting speaker will be an environmental police officer.*
- *Attendance of about 120 at the movie was good in Brattleboro. Patrick said it was a great event, and Chris gave a good talk on Wild & Scenic. He said there were 9 different short films, all very interesting.*
- **Mass Rivers Alliance** - Current issues. (Chris Bathurst) *He has not been able to meet with them, but has met with smaller associated volunteer organizations. Sheila cites DOT ownership might make it possible to get them to provide a portapotty. Chris suggested to bring ownership issue up to legislators, Paul Mark? Perhaps they can bring pressure on DOT, where they're unresponsive otherwise.*
  - See President's note, above, on the tour that was held.
  - Membership Dues are due and a request was sent for payment by Jim to Ryan.
- **Website Maintenance, Google Docs, Email System:** (Patrick McCoy) Status -
- **Financial Report:** Review Financial Report. (Patrick) *Meeting with CRC revealed higher balance than we thought. They worked out a quarterly reporting agreement, level of detail, and time of issue.*
- **Approval of Expenses:** Remember to run all expense invoices **through the DRWA President for approval**. If the **planned expense** is not already in the Approved Budget or voted on, talk to the President before making a purchase. *CRC is unable to say what budget expenses for DRWA should come out of. Either Patrick or Jim must approve invoices to payment, as a way to track expenses. Ryan points out that it takes CRC a long time to issue checks; David feels payments should be more timely. Ryan says CRC has a process you must follow and approval from Jim & Patrick.*
  - **Meeting with CRC:**
    - Patrick & Jim met on August 23rd with Ron R and Chris R at CRC to discuss the Budget. CRC determined that they are holding for us **\$46,785.48** as of **June 30, 2023**. That sounded good to us. *Patrick*

*wonders whether we should have the funds in a high yield account; put on agenda for next month.*

- As a reminder, our proposed DRWA 2023 budget with planned Program Area funding allocations...
  - Trail Maintenance - \$0
  - Educational Programs - \$600
  - River Cleanup - \$900 (but, try to gain some of that back through corporate donations)
  - Monitoring - \$2000
  - Wild & Scenic Rivers - \$0
  - Outreach Activities - (such as Green River Festival) - \$500
  - General Operations - (such as Contributions, CRC Admin. fee, Printing, Mailing, Stamps, Memberships, Website & Email & Google Docs, etc.) - \$1,500
- **Last Updated:** July 13, 2023
  - Contributions: Jan 1, thru Jun 30, 2023 **\$1,121.62**
- **Secretary:** (Terry)
- **Membership & Community Outreach:**
  - DRWA Instagram Account – (Sheila & Ryan)
  - Facebook Account – (Ryan)
    - Jim has been posting our events and pre and post photos to Facebook and has linked to Instagram based on advice from Sheila and Ryan. Patrick has been updating the news/events on our website. *Sheila says Jim is posting on Facebook, and they go to Instagram. Ryan posts about monitoring, Jim about hikes.*
  - Newsletters & Appeals - (Jim)
    - An ENewsletter that highlights four September events was send out to our email member list Sept 1.
    - The Fall Appeal Letter is being sent to the printer. The appeal will include our new brochure and donation return envelope.
- **Education:** (Terry Atkinson)
  - Education Outreach:
  - Mini-Grants – *Time for Terry to get some letters out in this regard.*
- **[Science]:** (Terry Atkinson?) *Next month*

**New and Old Business:** *Chris wonders what we should be thinking about for projects with our current funds. Perhaps a visioning session in person, as a separate meeting, since our agenda is so busy. Chris offers his house. Ryan thinks it would make us think outside the box. Thursday evening was proposed (not 3rd Thursday). Sheila says we need to consider new leadership; Jim may be ready to step down. There was discussion about how much better organized we are as an organization.*

**Next meeting: October 16, 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.