

Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 27, 2026

Attendees: Liese Schaff, Carol Waag, Jim Caffrey, Melanie Glynn, Ryan Noel, Dave Pierce, Joshua Greene, John McDonald, Mary Latham, Jason Costa, Doug McNally, Leanda Fontaine, Chris Primi, Tammy Merenda, James Wettereau, Denise Cormier, Andrew Madden – Mass Wildlife Western District Supervisor, Ann Koczela – Windsor Garden Team, Madeline Scully – Windsor Town Administrator.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm

- Federal Updates:

Base budget funding has increased \$10K for a total of \$220K starting FY27.

- Approval of January 27, 2026 meeting minutes

John M. asked for a correction to the January minutes. “...Environmental and GPS Department...”. Liese will make the correction.

**Vote:** Melanie motioned to approve the meeting minutes of 1/27/26 as amended, Carol seconded: vote passed unanimously.

- Fish Stocking

Leanda and Andrew M. spoke to the concerns from BEAT regarding the Mass Wildlife fish stocking program meeting the state's biodiversity initiative. The fish stocking program is one of the largest programs Mass Wildlife is known for. The program emphasizes that the primary goal is to create recreational fishing opportunities rather than restoration or establishing self-sustaining trout populations. It also provides benefits such as addressing food insecurity and supporting environmental justice.

The Wild Trout Management Plan’s ongoing data collection and analysis guide the stocking process. This helps to drive the restoration and management decisions influencing where and how stocking occurs. Only a small fraction of wild brook trout streams are stocked (less than 4% of 1000 streams), and the

impact on native species is considered minimal due to the limited number of fish and the short duration stocked trout remain in these streams.

Mass Wildlife is committed to transparency, public outreach, and aligning its efforts with broader biodiversity initiatives at the state and the governor's level. The core message is that the program balances recreational opportunities with conservation priorities, adapting based on collected data and public input, while continuing to address challenges such as habitat quality, connectivity, water temperature, and climate change.

- Nuno Felting Workshop

Town representatives are encouraged to post flyers or advertise in other ways. Contact Meredyth if you have questions.

- River Network River Rally

Mary encouraged committee members to take advantage of this event. The trip presents a significant opportunity for learning, networking, and bringing back new ideas to benefit the committee's work.

The 2026 event is scheduled to take place in San Antonio, TX, from May 11th to 14th, with accommodations at the Westin Riverwalk. The current training/travel budget stands at \$3,400. Mary looked up costs and feels \$5500 would be an appropriate estimate. Two scholarships have been applied for to help offset costs, and the committee has \$2,110 in unallocated funds that could be moved to the training/travel budget with a vote. Melanie expressed interest but needed to check the dates. Any questions can be directed to Mary.

**Vote:** Melanie motioned to approve moving the \$2110 unallocated dollars from the FY26 budget into the training/travel budget for this event. Doug seconded: vote passed unanimously.

- FY27 Budget Approval, file name

WEST\_WorkplanBudget\_FY27\_v2\_Feb25\_2026

Budget includes the additional \$10K funding and PWSR potential funding of \$8K for a total of \$228K.

**Vote:** Dave motioned to approve the FY27 budget. Carol seconded: vote passed unanimously.

- PWSR Funding

The committee had the opportunity to apply for additional funding, \$5K-\$30K, through PWSR (Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers). The idea of an interactive map was brought up. Carol wrote up the proposal for submission after speaking with cartographers and GIS experts. The project was estimated and submitted for \$8K as our FY27 budget reflects. The map would hit the top priorities of our

Stewardship Plan, having layers showing the designated sections, access points for visitor use, conservation parcels, towns, wetlands, culvert replacements, dam removal, invasive plant and restoration study sites, geological and historical sites, and topography. By bringing all this information together, the map would help everyone understand just how big and important our watershed is. It's also a great way to teach people about watersheds, why they matter, and how they connect to the bigger picture of our environment and economy. We should find out on 2/27 if our project was selected.

- Grant review, Windsor Pavilion Among the Marshes

The committee discussed a pavilion project near Route 9 in Windsor submitted by the Windsor Garden Team and the Town of Windsor. It is intended as an educational and recreational site for visitors to experience local marshes and the watershed. This is the site of the new bus stop and the future site of a charging station. Plans, maps of the area, and the submitted budget were reviewed. Carol indicated that the project is 7.5 miles from the designated river, that there is open water here, surrounded by wetland, and that water flows down to the designated area. Ann and Madeline confirmed that permitting by the ConCom and MassDOT was completed after being questioned.

Total project cost: \$22,150.

- Funds raised to date: \$9,000 in cash and \$1,915 in in-kind services.
- Requested grant funding: \$11,200 for the remaining balance or any part thereof.

A discussion focused on whether to fund the entire amount or support select components more aligned with the committee's mission, such as:

- Native plantings
- Birdhouses
- Signage
- Helical piles

**Vote:** Doug motioned to approve full funding at \$11,200. Carol seconded. Discussion ensued. Several members favored funding specific items for ecological and educational benefits, while others had reservations about the project's scope and alignment with WSWR objectives. Liese called for line items to support in a vote. In the end, an amended motion was made by Doug and seconded by Jim to approve \$7,300 for native plants, helical piles, and signage. Vote: 6 yay, and 4 nay. Motion passed.

- Treasurer's Report:

FY25 treasurers report reconciliation: The only remaining item is the historical sign for the Chesterfield Gorge, although Jim wants to verify figures with

Shannon. Excess funds totaling \$32,948 from last year were reviewed, noting that community grant applications have been sparse and encouraging more proactive outreach to eligible towns. Mary and others would like to see funding opportunities in education and libraries, with suggestions to donate books to local libraries. Members debated whether to leave the 2025 report open or carry the funds forward under the same line items or a lump sum.

**Vote:** Doug motioned to move any remaining funds from the FY25 to the FY26 budget under the same line items. Melanie seconded. Vote passed unanimously.

FY26 review – after some technical issues, the FY26 treasurer’s report was approved.

**Vote:** Doug motioned to approve the FY26 Treasurer’s report, Melanie seconded. vote passed unanimously.

- Invasive’s sub-committee

Carol is requesting funding for the ongoing barberry removal initiative, in its second year. She explained the background of the program for the new members. Last year, outreach focused on five southern towns, distributing brochures and hosting workshops to encourage barberry removal. The initiative will shift to the northern towns this year. Savoy is excluded since it does not have barberry, and different activities are planned there.

She is seeking approval to spend up to \$3,000, already budgeted. 3,000 brochures will be printed and mailed to 2,500 households. Mailing costs are estimated at \$1,950, while labeling and envelopes, approximately \$140, already spent by Meredith. Printing expenses are projected at \$757, though this may change depending on paper selection. In total, the estimated costs amount to \$2,847, but requesting \$3,000 to provide flexibility for unforeseen expenses. Carol confirmed for Jim that this will be from the “supplies” section of the budget.

**Vote:** Joshua motioned to approve the expenditure for printing and mailing for up to \$3000. Mary seconded. vote passed unanimously.

- Local Updates:

Middlefield – Jason is working on finalizing plans for community paddle on Littleville Lake May 17th.

Windsor – nothing but great snowpack

Washington - During a recent MVP meeting, an engineer presented on the Depot Brook flood mitigation project, highlighting the involvement of invasive species removal and bank reengineering efforts. A key question raised during the discussion concerned the existence of a "Westfield River Watershed bank plan." The committee was unclear if this bank plan exists, but it was noted that some

towns adopted riverbank-related bylaws when joining the Wild and Scenic program, while others, particularly later adopters, relied on general Commonwealth riverbank protection language. Joshua will look into this. The MVP grant is also funding saplings for planting along Depot Brook and efforts are underway with the Conservation Commission to get approval for Arbor Day tree planting on April 24th.

Chris Primi has offered his photography services. He will be taking the group shots at the retreat.

Chesterfield – nothing new

Westfield State – John offered assistance to Carol should the \$8000 map grant project come in. We could work with the GPS department. Even if the grant doesn't come through, we could team up to complete something for the entire watershed.

Chester – Dave is looking for details for the setup of the retreat on March 14. Liese will follow up.

Becket – Mary introduced Tammy Merenda as a new rep for Becket. She will be officially appointed next week. She is the Chester librarian with multiple degrees including environmental science. Tammy stated how she likes to bring nature and library science together.

BRPC – Ryan is putting together a MVP grant for a culvert and bridge assessment across the Wild and Scenic towns with the other regional planning commissions. It was noted that Savoy has completed one and Windsor is already in process.

Savoy – Melanie brought a draft RDA to the Concom for invasive plant removal at the town park. A formal one will be submitted prior to the next Concom.

Cummington – Jim reports he's waiting for the snow to melt. He is working with Ryan to start the process on another culvert in town. Also working with Meredyth for an invasive removal project.

Worthington – Liese attended a ConCom meeting with Meredyth to revisit the RDA that had been submitted. Part of the determination was negative and the positive would have required an NOI. The training can proceed and will remain in the negative determination area only and no NOI will be required.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm

Recorded by Melanie, WSWRC secretary