

York River Stewardship Committee

April 28, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Voting members present: Karen Arsenault, Sally Harold, Joan LeBlanc (Chair), Mary Marshall, Jim Smith, Judy Spiller

Non-voting members present: Emma Lord (NPS), Deane Rykerson, Anna DiChiara, Paul Dest, Jenn Hunter (Coordinator)

Guests: Gerry Beekman (York Conservation Commission), Clayton Smith, Bill Goodwin

1. **Welcome:** Joan opened the meeting at 5:35, asked for a round of introductions, and welcomed guest Gerry Beekman, member of the York Conservation Commission that was awarded two grants for the Goodrich Park invasive plant management project in coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. **Presentation and Discussion with Gerry Beekman:** Invasive Plant Monitoring and Management in the York River Watershed. *Presentation will be posted online on our website.*
Questions and discussion followed the presentation:
 - What can we do as a committee: Educate local community about the problems, let people know what they can do in their yards. Everything ends up in the river. Example: you can plant dogwoods and willows, take out honeysuckle but replace it with something better.
 - Concern about introducing herbicides (glyphosate)
 - Best approach for multiflora rose: dig it out.
 - Has there been success with the town managing knotweed along roadsides? Not so much
 - State fact sheets – are they helpful? Yes, state putting out excellent information in the flipbook. Suggestion for a related presentation at the library – using flipbook as a guide, and talking about the seasonal nature of some invasive plants as they become more noticeable.
 - People want simplified information even though the solutions aren't always simple. "Picture This" app was noted as useful.
 - Volunteer days at Goodrich Park... how will they work? Volunteers will use manual and mechanical techniques, no chemicals.
 - We would like to support an info series with Gerry and YCC/P&R at library.
 - Suggestion for photos in the presentation: tell which month these invasives appear and what month the image was taken for reference.
3. **Minutes:** Joan asked for a motion to approve the February minutes. Judy made a motion to approve, Mary seconded. All approved.
4. **Outreach planning and updates:**
 - Boat tours: Once again Jim will be hosting boat tours, with audience limited to partners and groups helping with our work. There is a group working on a script for the river tours. Planning schedule available on google drive. As always, schedule subject to change. This is for internal use only; please don't share the sheet with others to avoid confusion.
QUESTION: Do we need a liability waiver? We are not a legal entity but merely a citizens committee. Paul indicated that the WNERR and York P&R have not required waivers for their events and that it would not be driven by a need from WNERR as YRSC's fiscal agent. Joan recommends that the Executive Committee discuss this issue at its future meetings.

- River Celebration month: Jenn reported that a small group met to do some brainstorming. Preliminary ideas: September 10-October 10, celebrating the York River Watershed and following the lunar cycle as our “month.” It would be a low exposure, low effort approach in this first year, mainly promoting activities and events of other groups, working with partners in the watershed to build appreciation and connection to the watershed and various resources. We would: recruit partners and events, offer assistance in planning, offer stipends where applicable so events can be free, advertise and promote the events. Feedback: mention the WATERSHED in the title.

5. Updates and discussions

- **NPS PWSR Program:** Emma mentioned that on May 13 from 12-1 NPS will hold a zoom meeting for PWSRs. She also noted that Section 7 Federal review will occur for the Maine DOT Scotland Bridge work.
- **Executive Committee:** Joan noted that Mary agreed to become Secretary for the Committee’s next fiscal year. We will be voting for officers at our May or June meeting. Mary and Joan will be making a presentation to the York Select Board next Monday. We will be extending an invitation to the Town Manager and Selectboard to join us for a boat ride.
- **Coordinator:** Jenn gave some project updates: Save Kittery Waters sent their final report. That was the final project from our first Watershed Grants round. From the second round of grants for 2025-26: about half are complete already. She noted Blue Ocean Society is installing fishing line collection bins on the York River. Third round of grant proposals are due on Thursday, with one application so far. The review team will be making recommendations at the May meeting.
- **River Access Ad Hoc Committee:** Mary noted there have been two meetings, in April and March. The 103 kayak access was destroyed, likely by a boat hitting it. Discussions around temporary docks and dock saturation – how many more docs can be built along the river.
- **Other Members:** Deane announced Maine Preservation Jane’s Walk: Old York and the River, Saturday May 2 at 8:30. Jenn noted that the walk details are in the last newsletter she issued.

Submitted by,
Karen Arsenault

APPROVED: 5/26/26