

# NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River Watershed Since 1970 / September 2017

## 35,000 Salt Marsh Grass Seedlings Planted by Volunteers in Lower Narrow River

Throughout May and June 2017, more than 200 volunteers planted salt marsh grass seedlings in the lower Narrow River, completing a multi-year plan to restore the area.

Under the guidance of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), volunteers of all ages removed salt marsh grass plugs from the trays in which they had been growing all winter long, loosened the roots, and tucked them into evenly spaced holes in areas of the marsh that had been raised in the dredging and elevation stage of the project that was completed in January 2017.

NRPA coordinated volunteer scheduling with Ben Gaspar, Biological Technician with USFWS, who provided training and onsite supervision. The collaboration resulted in the successful planting of all 35,000 salt marsh grass plugs.

Gaspar reflects "It was wonderful to engage all different ages from the community in a very hands on way. The repeat volunteers and smiling

*(Continued on page 6)*



Volunteers plant salt marsh grass seedlings south of Middlebridge  
*Photo by Charlie Biddle*

## NRPA's 47th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

7:00 p.m. Refreshments / 7:30 p.m. Meeting

Coastal Institute Auditorium, URI Narragansett Bay Campus

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

## Annual Meeting: 25 Years of River Watch

NRPA invites you to attend our 47th Annual Meeting. An exciting agenda is planned that will highlight important projects and activities within the Narrow River Watershed. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 3, at the Coastal Institute Auditorium, URI Bay Campus, South Ferry Road, Narragansett.

A reception with refreshments will start at 7:00 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.. The reception features displays and information from other organizations within the Narrow River Watershed.

This year's Annual Meeting will feature a presentation on NRPA's Narrow River volunteer water monitoring program. In 2016, volunteers completed 25 years of water quality monitoring of Narrow River. NRPA Board Members Dr. Veronica Berounsky and Annette DeSilva will present an overview of the data from monitoring sites that span the length of the river from Gilbert Stuart Stream to Pettaquamscutt Cove. The findings from analyses of water quality trends, seasonality patterns, and storm events will be presented. Summaries of bacterial and nutrient level data will be reviewed along with comparisons among the various river monitoring locations. The talk will provide an interesting perspective on how some past activities may have influenced water quality. If you ever wondered about the health of the river and asked questions such as "Has the health of the river changed over years?" we encourage you to attend the meeting.

The Annual Meeting will also include reports on NRPA activities and highlights from the past year. Updates on important issues affecting the Narrow River will be provided, including water and land use management efforts. Highlights from NRPA's education programs will be reviewed. We will discuss dredging and salt marsh planting projects in Lower Narrow River. The W.E.R. La Farge Memorial Friend of the River Award will be presented, and this year's kayak raffle winner will be announced.

The Annual Meeting provides a forum to meet NRPA members and to learn more about the Narrow River and its Watershed. The event is free and open to the public. We hope that you will join us.

## Saturday, September 16 'Gansett Days Activities

### What Lives in the River & Guided Marsh Walk

At Middlebridge Marina, 95 Middlebridge Road, Narragansett  
Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Free and open to the public.**

Details and preregistration at [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org)

# President's Cove

As we come to the end of the 2016-17 membership year on September 1, 2017, we cannot just sit back and relax.

Each element of the past year has been noteworthy as many of you have read in the news. We started the year last September with hiring a new coordinator, Alison Kates. We drifted through the winter, adding a few new Board Members and presenting the On Pettaquamscutt Winter Speaker Series directed by Rosemary and David Smith.

This summer, NRPA hosted the 30th Annual NRPA River Race, What Lives in the River (at which we had 100 participants!), the 12th Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim, and the 10th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle. We'll close out the summer with Art on the River and another What Lives in the River and Marsh Walk in celebration of 'Gansett Days.

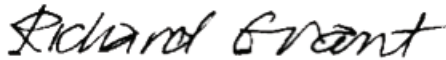
This past year we developed programs with a number of local businesses and community organizations including Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum, Newport County Boys and Girls Club's Camp Grosvenor, the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale and Warm Winds Surf Shop.

We collaborated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and organized hundreds of volunteers to plant 35,000 salt marsh grass seedlings in the lower Narrow River, completing a multi-year restoration effort.

The events of this past year set the groundwork for the coming year. As I take a look at NRPA's three areas of concentration: Education, Water and Land, I see that we need some help. If you are interested in volunteering to improve the ecology of the Narrow River, in areas such as water testing, assisting at What Lives in the River, Road Race management, Science Fair Award judging or Turnaround Swim planning, please drop us a note at [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org) or on our facebook page [facebook.com/NarrowRiverPreservationAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/NarrowRiverPreservationAssociation).

NRPA welcomes you to become involved in preserving, protecting and improving water and land conditions in the Narrow River Watershed.

Best,



Richard Grant, NRPA President



Richard Grant at this year's Pettaquamscutt Paddle.  
*photo by David Smith*

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) works to preserve, protect, and restore the natural environment and the quality of life of all communities within the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River Estuary and Watershed.

[www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org)

## NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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[nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org)



NRPA is part of the United Way Workplace Campaign.

Our donor option number is 6239

If you plan to give to United Way, please consider designating a portion of your gift to NRPA.



NRPA is participating in the 2017 Rhode Island State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA).  
Our fund number is 6239.

## Rhode Island Rivers Council



# 2017 NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarships Awarded

For the 25th year, the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) has awarded scholarships to seniors graduating from high schools in the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River Watershed.

The scholarship honors the late Lesa Meng, an NRPA Board member, whose husband, Rick Moffitt, established the scholarship fund, enabling NRPA to provide \$1000.00 scholarships to seniors graduating from high schools located in the Narrow River watershed.

Here are the four recipients of the 2017 Lesa Meng/Narrow River Preservation Association scholarships.

**Rosalind Lucier**, of South Kingstown



High School, will be attending Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA in the fall, where she plans to study biochemistry. She has been

a top performer in her SKHS classes and was ranked number one in her class. Rosalind was awarded Excellence in AP Biology and Excellence in AP Physics, as well as the Baush and Lomb Honorary Science Award. She is a recipient of the Girl Scout Gold Award. For her project, she created a children's picture book featuring Mark, a talking quahog who goes on adventures to educate the reader about the factors of climate change in Rhode Island.

**Kate DeBoer**

is also a graduate of South Kingstown High School. Kate is planning on attending the University of Rhode



Island, Kingston, RI. She has been accepted into the 6-year pharmacy program (PharmD). Kate was also a past NRPA Science Fair winner for her work studying water quality. She has organized beach clean-ups at the Narragansett Town Beach. Kate has also earned the prestigious Girl Scout Gold Award. Her project focused on encouraging children to eat healthier in order to improve their mental and physical health.

**Wyndom Chace** graduated from

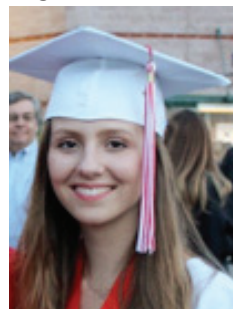


North Kingstown with the highest ranking in her class and has chosen Williams College in Williamstown, MA.

She plans to pursue environmental science and chemistry. She was a member of the summer marine research team in the Biology Department at Salve Regina University. She has had an opportunity to present posters at two conferences detailing her work on sea level rise in North Kingstown and a second poster on changes in land use and vegetation in NK. She was a nominee for Save the Bay's 2016 Walsh Award for Outstanding Environmental Advocacy. Wyndom is also quite an accomplished pianist.

**Danielle Donadio**, a graduate of

Narragansett High School, plans to attend the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH, where she is considering majoring in wildlife biology and conservation.



Danielle is an honor student, a varsity athlete and a talented

musician. She is a member of the RI Philharmonic Youth Wind Ensemble. In addition, Danielle is also a Level I Rehabilitator and volunteer at the Wildlife Rehabilitators Association of RI. She helps with feeding and rehabilitation of animals ranging from turtles to opossum and seagulls.

Applicants were judged on the quality of an original essay about mitigating the impacts of human activity in the Narrow River Watershed, participation in environmentally-oriented activities in and out of school, a science teacher's recommendation, and academic achievement in science and math courses.

## Where Are They Now?

In 1997, Kelly Knee won a \$500 NRPA College Scholarship.

After graduating from South Kingstown High School, Kelly put her NRPA College Scholarship toward her education at Tufts University, where she earned a B.S. in Environmental Engineering and an M.S. in Water Resources Management.

Currently, Kelly is the Technical Director of RPS ASA, an environmental consulting company in South Kingstown. RPS ASA's work is varied, but focuses mostly on coastal and ocean environments. Specifically, Kelly works on management of ocean observing and forecast data as well as coastal hazard impact assessments (e.g. impacts of sea level rise, storm surge, waves, etc). "I love my work", she says.

Kelly lives in Cranston where she has easy access to upper Narragansett Bay and kayaking on the Pawtuxet River. She often walks down to the mouth of the river from Narragansett Town Beach and at least once a year, she kayaks on Narrow River.

# 10th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle

The 10th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle was a great success, raising funds for NRPA and enabling people to enjoy and learn about the Narrow River.

On Friday, July 21st, all kayak and paddleboard rental fees collected between 9am and noon were donated directly to NRPA.

Later the same day, 40 paddlers joined a sunset paddle. All enjoyed the evening and were greeted by Ben Gaspar from US Fish & Wildlife at Sedge Island where Ben gave a very informative talk and tour of the ongoing marsh restoration project. Paddlers saw an amazing sunset over Narrow River and each received a commemorative stainless steel water bottle.

Many thanks to Jason Considine and the staff of Narrow River Kayaks for sponsoring this wonderful event for ten consecutive years!



Photo credits clockwise from top left: Alison Kates, Alison Kates, David Smith, Alison Kates, Nate Vinhateiro and David Smith

# Farewell to NRPA's First President Ted Smayda

*By Dr. Veronica Berounsky*

Theodore J. Smayda, Ph.D., 85, one of the founders and the first president of the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA), passed away on April 5, 2017 at his home in Jamestown, RI.

In 1954, Ted was a URI Masters student, and along with fellow grad student Perry Jeffries, submitted a report for a class on their research project on the plankton of Narrow River. What resulted was the first systematic study of the phytoplankton and zooplankton in Upper Pond. They received an "A" on their report! A copy of the report can be viewed on the NRPA website.

On the hand drawn maps of the report, Upper Pond is called "Lewarck Pond", a term not seen in other reports. As the story goes, Ted once remarked to Perry that they "were just like the explorers Lewis and Clark!" So they rechristened the pond "Lewarck".

After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Oslo, Ted returned to Rhode Island in 1959 as a biological oceanography professor at the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island and lived in Saunderstown. Ted's interest was in phytoplankton, the tiny



H. Perry Jeffries, left, and Ted Smayda at their URI MS Graduation in 1955.

## Smayda, continued

plants of the sea that are visible only under a microscope. Although recognized internationally for his work in the open ocean, Ted continued to be fascinated by the unique organisms found in Narrow River.

Ted was always environmentally conscious, and with his interest in Narrow River ecology, he was concerned when the local Boy Scouts, who earlier had been given over 200 acres on Upper and Lower Pond called Kelgrant, were considering selling it to a developer. There was also talk about another project for a hotel and restaurant along Rt. 1 at the border of the Narrow River watershed. In 1970, Ted, W.E.R. LaFarge, Gary Galkin, Robert O'Neil, and others banded together to protect Narrow River.

They knew parts of the watershed were pristine and other parts only had residential development. Historically, it was important for its shipbuilding and farming, and for being the birthplace of the famous portrait painter Gilbert Stuart. In particular, Ted knew how ecologically unusual and unique it was with its anoxic basins that were naturally without oxygen in the bottom waters and so supported a whole ecosystem based on sulfur, not oxygen.

*(continued on page 7)*



H. Perry Jeffries, left, and Ted Smayda in 2010 at a URI staff event. Smayda passed away in April and Jeffries passed away July 31st at the age of 88.

## SC Bike Path Progress with Green Economy Bond Grant and Town of Narragansett

In the last update, we discussed the award of the \$750,000 Green Economy Bond Grant to the Town of Narragansett to design and construct a portion of the final segment of the South County Bike Path (aka Phase 4A).

With the start of the new fiscal year (July 1, 2017) the town has moved forward on this project. At the Monday, July 17 Town Council Regular Meeting, the Council formally accepted the Green Economy Bond grant of \$750,000 and authorized Town Manager Jim Manni to sign an agreement with the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM).

A second agenda item was awarded to the lowest bidder, DiPrete Engineering, a contract for Professional Engineering, Land Surveying, Permitting and Design Services for Phase 4A of the Bike Path.

This segment of the South County Bike Path, which is funded, is dubbed Phase 4A and includes three components:

- Provide a safe crossing at Mumford Road where the South County Bike Path currently ends at Mumford Road in Narragansett.
- Construct the first 1,375 feet of the proposed off-road route through Canonchet Farm to the Narragansett Town Beach. This portion begins at Mumford Road and travels on town property behind the Narragansett Elementary School schoolyard and the adjacent athletic field to a point where the remainder of the Phase 4 route turns northeast to travel on the grade of the SeaView Railroad and through Canonchet Farm.
- Construct a 375-foot bike path along the east side of the athletic field to the Narragansett Community Center parking lot.



With the loop around the school property, bicyclists and walkers will have a safe entrance to the bike path, enjoy the convenience of public parking spaces, and avoid the dangerous vehicular traffic in front of the Narragansett Elementary School. In the meantime, funding for the balance of Phase 4 remains in the 2017-2025 R.I. Transportation Improvement Program.

For maps of the bike path and other resources, visit [southcountybikepath.org](http://southcountybikepath.org)

## Volunteers, *continued from front page*

faces at the end of plantings made it very worthwhile to facilitate the nature connection to the marsh."

Volunteers included Narrow River Watershed residents, kayakers, fly fishers and others who care deeply for this valuable resource.

Groups such as Lila Delman Real Estate, Fuss and O'Neill, Inc, Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association's Kayak and Fly Fishing Committees, and the URI Men's Rowing Team demonstrated their commitment to the river by helping to plant. Student groups from URI, Compass School, Meadowbrook Waldorf School, EnrichRI homeschool group, and more than 35 students and teachers from South Kingstown High School all brought their energy and enthusiasm to the planting.

Many volunteers expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to be a part of the restoration and health of the salt marshes.

The collaboration of NRPA and USFWS for this stage of the project was a continuation of the cooperative joint effort of many entities throughout the restoration project, which included participation from Save the Bay, the Town of Narragansett, and the RI Coastal Resources Management Council.

Over the next few years, USFWS will be monitoring the restored marshes and reporting on the long-term success of the project.

Photographs and more information about the project are available at [narrowriver.org/saltmarshplanting](http://narrowriver.org/saltmarshplanting).

### Do we have your email address?

Stay up to date on events and activities in the Narrow River Watershed .

Send your email to [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org) to be subscribed to NRPA email updates



Volunteers brought energy and enthusiasm to the planting sessions.



While some volunteers use a drill to auger holes, others remove seedlings from their trays, break up the roots, and tuck them into the holes.



Left: For planting on Sedge Island, USFWS picks up volunteers at the kayak ramp at Sprague Bridge via boat. Right: A completed section.



Students and teachers from South Kingstown High School plant along the river.

Photo credits from top, left to right, Alison Kates, Ben Gaspar, Ben Gaspar, Alison Kates, Charlie Biddle, Charlie Biddle

# What Lives in the River Is Fun for All!

More than 100 people of all ages explored river life, caught critters, walked along the salt marsh, and learned about the inhabitants of Narrow River at What Lives in the River on June 17th.



Jaiden and Anthony demonstrate how to use a seine net.

Guided by volunteers, kids and adults fished the Narrow River with nets and traps and found a myriad of river life such as glass shrimp, flounder, minnows, worms, pipefish, sea cucumbers, and several varieties of crabs including green crabs, blue crabs, hermit crabs, asian shore crabs, and a horseshoe crab.

NRPA partnered with the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale to ensure that all who were interested were able to enjoy this day of fun exploration.

Please join us for our next What Lives in the River event on Saturday, September 16th from 9am to 11am at Middlebridge Education Area at 95 Middlebridge Road, Narragansett.

More information at [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org).



9 year old Jay shows off his catch.



NOAA Scientist and NRPA Board Member Catalina Martinez shows the underside of a horseshoe crab.



South Kingstown High School science teacher Brenda Dillmann explores creatures with participants.



Volunteer Emily Kaczynski invites a young explorer to touch a green crab.



Miles, age 7, of Wakefield uses a seine net to catch river life.

*Smayda, continued from page 5*

So this small but active group took on the developers, and long story short, Ted and the newly formed Narrow River Preservation Association won. The outcome of the legal proceedings was that only seven homes could be built, and on large lots with no clear cutting to the water. Now known as "Seven Farms," this large, pristine part of the Narrow River watershed was preserved for future generations.

Ted reflected "The early days of NRPA were ones of intense activity at the cutting edge of resolving issues involving Boy Scouts, Army Corps of Engineers, real estate, and habitat threats to Narrow River and its watershed. Those early victories secured the continuance and legitimacy of NRPA as a fair-minded environmental group."

At NRPA's 40th Annual Meeting in 2010, Ted gave a history of the organization. Because he had continued to do research on Narrow River, he was asked to re-join the Board of NRPA and served for several years. He was always an advocate for good science and comprehensive planning that involved all three towns in the watershed.

We are forever grateful to Ted for his decades of countless efforts to protect and preserve the Narrow River Watershed.

## STORMWATER

Did you know that the first inch of stormwater runoff contains the vast majority of pollutants? Efforts to keep these contaminants from ending up in the Narrow River are under way in Narragansett and South Kingstown.

NRPA is keeping abreast of local stormwater mitigation efforts and will keep our members informed on progress.

Photo credits: clockwise from top: Alison Kates, Veronica Berounsky, Charlie Biddle, Charlie Biddle, Veronica Berounsky, Alison Kates, Catalina Martinez, Brenda Dillmann, Emily Kaczynski, Miles

## Become a Member of NRPA

We welcome YOU to become a 2018 NRPA Member.

Your membership enables NRPA to continue our many educational and preservational initiatives and is fully tax deductible.

By starting or renewing your membership now, you will also help us demonstrate continued public support for the mission and activities of NRPA.

We invite you to choose a membership level that is comfortable for you.

- Benefactor - \$500 or more
- Patron - \$100-\$499
- Family - \$50
- Individual - \$30
- Student - \$15

All members receive *Narrow River Notes* three times a year.

Each membership includes three raffle tickets for an Old Town Heron XT kayak in lemongrass color, generously donated by Narrow River Kayaks. The kayak is 9'6" and weighs 38 pounds.

Additional raffle tickets are available for \$5 each or 3 for \$10.



The winner will be drawn at NRPA's Annual Meeting on October 3rd.

Join today by sending in your membership envelope or joining online at [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org).

## 30th Annual Narrow River Road Race

On May 20th, with cool temperatures and overcast skies, 200 runners and walkers enjoyed one of the most beautiful courses in New England as they participated in the 30th running of the Narrow River Road Race. The road race is a principal fundraiser for Narrow River Preservation Association's educational initiatives and watershed preservation programs.



Richard Rochette, 5K Walk Winner

North Kingstown's Josh Baranoff won the 10K run in 40 minutes and 48 seconds. Amy Stewart of Stowe, VT, finished second, placing first among the women, at 42:17. Third place was taken by Nathan Vin-hateiro, a Wakefield resident and NRPA Board Member.

The 5K Run was won by Tripp Burman of Narragansett in a time of 19:11. Boston's Dana Mackey placed second (first in the Women's Division) in 20:27. Placing third in the 5K was Coventry resident Ashley Dennis, whose time was 20:34.

Richard Rochette of Wakefield finished first in the 5K Walk, as he has for several consecutive years.

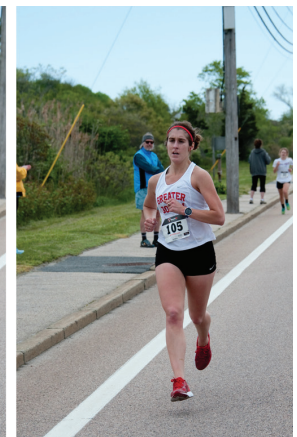
The USA Track & Field (USATF) certified 10K course starts at Narragansett Town Beach, turns at Treaty Rock Park in South Kingstown, and returns to the beach. The 5K course starts at Treaty Rock Park and finishes at the beach, where prizes are awarded to first place male and female finishers in each of six age categories for the 10K Run, 5K Run, and 5K Walk.

Many thanks to our local sponsors and many volunteers!



Full results are available at [narrowriver.org/](http://narrowriver.org/)

10K Run winner Josh Baranoff of North Kingstown is cheered on by his family.



From left, Amy Stewart, 10K Run second place finisher and first in women's division, receives award from Richard Grant, NRPA President, Tripp Burman of Narragansett finishes first in the 5K Run with a time of 19:11, and Dana Mackey finishes overall second place in 5K Run, first in women's division.

Photo credits: top: Charlie Biddle, middle: Sean Daugherty, bottom left to right: Alison Kates, Alison Kates, Sean Daugherty, Sean Daugherty



## 12th Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim

On Saturday, June 24th, 114 swimmers took part in the 12th Annual Narrow River Turn-around Swim, braving torrential rain.

Starting and finishing at La Farge Park in North Kingstown, the route takes swimmers one half mile distance in the Narrow River, where they turn around and return to complete the mile swim.

This year the swim was held on the birthdate of the late W.E.R. La Farge, a longtime benefactor of the Narrow River. W.E.R. donated the land for La Farge Park to the Town of North Kingstown and an adjacent plot of

land to the University of Rhode Island Rowing Team for their boathouse and access to Narrow River. W.E.R.'s daughter, Louisa La Farge, and granddaughter, Lindsay La Farge Rosston, swam in the race and his step-daughter, Heather Lee, was the honorary swim starter.

The swim is generously supported by local sponsors and by URI Rowing and O.A.R.S.. See the back page of this issue of Narrow River Notes for a complete list of our sponsors.

Full results and many more photos are available online at [narrowriver.org/TurnaroundSwim](http://narrowriver.org/TurnaroundSwim).

Photo credits: clockwise from top right: Charlie Biddle, Frank McQuiggan, Frank McQuiggan, Frank McQuiggan



Louisa La Farge, left, and her daughter Lindsay La Farge Rosston relax after swimming the 2017 Narrow River Turnaround Swim. Louisa and Lindsay are daughter and granddaughter, respectively, of the late W.E.R. La Farge, long time supporter of the Narrow River and NRPA.



Watched closely by volunteer kayak spotters and certified open water lifeguards, swimmers start the 12th Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim.



Matt Gilson of Albion, RI nears the finish of the 2017 Narrow River Turnaround Swim in torrential rain. Looking on to ensure swimmer safety is URI Swimming Coach Mick Westcott.



2017 Narrow River Turnaround Swim first place finishers. From left to right, Stuart Cromarty, First Place Men's Wetsuit Division, Diane Leith Doucett, First Place Women's Non-Wetsuit Division, and Matt Gilson, First Place Men's Non-Wetsuit Division. Not pictured is Emily Mitchell, Winner of the Women's Wetsuit Division.

# Many thanks to NRPA's 2017 Sponsors

The Narrow River Road Race, Narrow River Turnaround Swim, the Pettaquamscutt Paddle and all of our educational and environmental programs are made possible through the generous support of these businesses and individuals.



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