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# NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River and the Watershed

Spring 2011

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## Bald Eagles at Home on Narrow River Pair Arrives in February to Nest, Fish



*We always knew the watershed was a desirable place to live! And now proof comes from a pair of iconic bald eagles that arrived in early February and set up shop along the Narrow River. The U.S. national bird is usually found on lakes and coastlines further north, but this pair has apparently found the fishing to their liking, says NRPA Board member John McNamara, who first photographed the eagles on February 3 and has recently observed the pair with an immature eagle feeding along the river's edge. More of John's photographs are inside.*

## NRPA River Watch Volunteers Needed

NRPA is looking for volunteers to join our River Watch program. No previous experience in water-quality monitoring is required. All new volunteers receive both classroom and field training from the URI Watershed Watch personnel. Manuals and all necessary monitoring equipment are also provided.

This year's monitoring season runs from May until October. The program consists of biweekly measurements of temperature, algae concentration, salinity, water clarity, and dissolved oxygen. Each volunteer is assigned a river location for monitoring. Some locations can be sampled from the shore, while other locations require a boat or canoe. Volunteers are needed for both.

Classroom training is recommended for all new volunteers. The training is designed to help people learn more about

water quality in general, and about the Watershed Watch program. Field training will be offered in April and May.

Here is the Training Schedule:

### **New Volunteer Classroom Training:**

Weaver Auditorium, Coastal Institute in Kingston. Choose either:

Sunday, April 17 at 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 26 at 6:00 p.m.

### **Field Training for New Volunteers:**

At locations to be announced on the following dates:

Saturday, April 30, 9:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

Lakes and ponds (both sessions)

Saturday, May 7, 9:00 a.m.

Lakes and ponds, coastal sites (Bristol)

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 a.m.

Lakes and ponds, coastal sites

Saturday, May 14, 1:00 p.m.  
Rivers and streams

There is no charge for the training, but we ask that you pre-register to ensure that there are adequate materials for all participants. For more information or to register, contact Program Coordinator Elizabeth Herron at:

**401-874-4552**

**emh@uri.edu**

**[www.uri.edu/ce/wq/ww/](http://www.uri.edu/ce/wq/ww/)**

### **Attention Returning Volunteers:**

Equipment pickup for this year's program begins the week of May 2, at Room 002, Coastal Institute, 1 Greenhouse Road, Kingston, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily, or between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3. Please call ahead to schedule a pickup (401-874-4552).

*Annette DeSilva*

# The President's Cove

This is a busy time for the Board members of NRPA. Our 13-member Board of Directors, with the assistance of a program coordinator, a grant writer and a long list of volunteers, is involved with planning and organizing for the spring and summer events.

In April, we started our season with new Board member Lynn Wolslegel taking the helm at the North Kingstown Spirit Fair, which will be followed by attendance at the Kingston Fair where NRPA displays the Kayak Raffle in front of the Kingston Library. Then, we top it off with selling raffle tickets at the Wickford Art Festival.

The Road Race is scheduled for May 21 this year and Blue Wheeler has been working hard on that occasion. Veronica Berounsky is in the planning stage for the NRPA Turnaround Swim on June 18, Jason Considine is gearing up for the Pettaquamscutt Paddle on July 9, and Sally Sutherland is getting NRPA ready for the Beach Day at the Narragansett North Pavilion on July 16.

While most of these activities are concerned with fundraising, they also promote having fun in the watershed.

As you can imagine, in the current economy our normal channels of income have diminished. But I cannot let this opportunity go by without extending a great thank you to the response to our membership drive, which concludes April 15. We exceeded all previous years and I am happy to report that we have 402 paid members. The next step is to call our sponsor list and that is always an exciting time as everyone asks how we are doing. It is great to respond that all programs are running strongly and that last year was highlighted by growth, and substantial and meaningful programs, and was topped off with awards. As always, being in charge of fund raising, I ask you to be involved, continue your membership and consider being a sponsor of one of our events. You could even consider being a Board member or work on a committee. Your assistance would be appreciated in our water, land or education programs.

I find it quite rewarding that I pay back the earth for the time I have used its facilities by contributing to NRPA.

Thank you for your continued support.

Richard Grant  
President, NRPA



## Narrow River Almost-Haiku

Narrow River, fresh and salt.  
Three ponds, moon cycle, lush valley.  
Flows to pounding surf.

*Marianne Kittredge Chronley*  
Narragansett

## 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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### Narrow River Notes

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### Editor

David Smith

*With a tip of the hat and many thanks to former Editor Dr. Bob Kenney for his great service to NRPA*

### Board of Directors

Richard Grant, President  
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Sally Sutherland  
Blue Wheeler  
Lynn Wolslegel

### Staff

David Smith, Program Coordinator

Submissions & Correspondence to  
[nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org)

## 6239

NRPA is part of the *United Way Workplace Campaign*. This is our donor option number.

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

## Two Join NRPA Board of Directors

There are new faces at the NRPA. Charles Biddle and Lynn Wolslegel have joined the NRPA Board of Directors, and David Smith is the new Program Coordinator.

**Charles Biddle**, a 1979 Brown graduate, returned to Rhode Island after a 30-year career in the textile industry in New York. Charlie has been involved with Save the Bay and the Oyster Gardening

for Restoration and Enhancement (OGRE) program based at Roger Williams University. He is exploring ways the Narrow River can play a role in the restoration of disease-resistant shellfish populations in Narragansett Bay.

**Lynn Wolslegel** was the Science Department Head at North Kingstown High School when she retired in June 2010 after 32 years in education. She is now an

instructor in the URI School of Education. Lynn, who lives near the Gilbert Stuart Museum, is looking to work on the watershed education initiatives at NRPA.

**David Smith**, a freelance writer who has worked in marketing for high-tech companies, started as the Program Coordinator in January and manages communications and fundraising activity for NRPA.



*At the January 2011 NRPA Board Meeting: (standing, from left to right) new Board member Charles Biddle, Jason Considine, M-J Kanaczet, Jon Boothroyd, Sally Sutherland, Ken McShane, Program Coordinator David Smith, John McNamara; (seated, left to right) Veronica Berounsky, Richard Grant, Annette DeSilva, and new Board member Lynn Wolslegel. Not present were Rose Epstein and Blue Wheeler. (Photo by John McNamara)*

### Did You Know?

Every year the average American family disposes of 21 pounds of household hazardous waste. As much as 50 percent of all household hazardous waste is liquid. A single quart of motor oil or gasoline intentionally dumped or accidentally spilled onto the ground can pollute 250,000 gallons of groundwater and make it unsafe for drinking. Similarly, one gallon of gasoline spilled has the potential to contaminate one million gallons of drinking water.

From the *Narrow River Handbook, A Guide to Living in the Watershed* (2008). For a copy of the Handbook, visit [www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org) and click the Handbook link on the Home page.

### Narrow River Land Trust to Host Spring Event at Camp Nokewa, May 22

The Narrow River Land Trust is holding an afternoon of walks, talks and refreshments on **Sunday, May 22 at 2:00** at the former Camp Nokewa Girl Scout Camp, which was recently purchased by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. More than 80 scenic acres bordering Carr Pond are now accessible to the public.

Janet Coit, Director of DEM, will be the guest speaker. Larry Mouradjian, Associate Director of DEM, and Cathy Sparks, Chief of the Division of Forest Environment and the Division of Fish and Wildlife, will be on hand to answer

questions regarding the management plan for the area. This is an opportunity to get to know how the State and the Narrow River Land Trust are working to preserve the Narrow River Watershed. Come walk this beautiful property, meet the neighbors and strengthen relationships with all. The afternoon will also include guided hikes of the property and a brief annual meeting of the Land Trust. This is an outdoor event. Entrance to the camp is a quarter mile west of the Gilbert Stuart Museum on Gilbert Stuart Road.

*Mike Hutchinson  
Narrow River Land Trust*

# Science Fair Award Winners Present Their Findings

The first order of business at the March NRPA Board meeting was to hear from Erin Hsu and Matt Sheehy on their investigation with teammate Ben Graves of the green claims of certain household products. The study earned the trio the 2011 NRPA Science Fair Award at Curtis Corner Middle School.

Next up was Ryan Moffatt, the award

winner at South Kingstown High School, who presented *A Journey down Narrow River through Water Analysis*.

Since 1989, the NRPA has judged high school and middle school science fairs in towns in the watershed for Science Fair Awards to encourage the curiosity of young scientists and help them gain respect for the watershed.

After their presentations (and some questions), the students received an award certificate, a \$50 U.S. Saving Bond and a membership in NRPA.

In addition to the awards, there were several Honorable Mentions:

At South Kingstown High, an Honorable Mention went to Ethan McClure for his *Building a Robot to Separate Oil From Water*.

At Curtis Corner Middle School, there were four Honorable Mention projects:

Sophia Brown, *Got Nitrate?*

Jason Comeau, *How Height Affects Hydroelectric Power Production*

Sean Fry-Wolf and Joshua Beck, *Wild Water: How Best to Purify Water in the Wild*

Emma Mather, *The Effects of Raised/Elevated CO<sub>2</sub> on Plant Growth and Germination*.

NRPA Board members also visit elementary school science fairs to give certificates to students with appropriate environmental projects.

*Veronica Berounsky*



Science Fair Award Winners Matt Sheehy (left) and Erin Hsu of Curtis Corner Middle School and Ryan Moffatt of South Kingstown High School display their projects at the March 1 NRPA Board meeting. (Photo by John McNamara)



Bald eagle in flight over Narrow River on February 3 (Photos by John McNamara)



# Sixth Annual Turnaround Swim



(Photo by John McNamara)

Over the winter, this majestic bald eagle perched in a tree overlooking the URI Crew Team Docks. If the eagle is still around on Saturday, June 18, it will have a bird's eye view as open-water swimmers return to the waters of Narrow River for the Sixth Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim!

At 9:00 that morning, the swim will start from the beach at the URI Crew Teams' Campanella Rowing Center off Walmsley Lane in North Kingstown, round a buoy half a mile down the River and return to the Crew Team beach.

The swim creates awareness of the river as a scenic area and as a good place to swim, promotes open-water swimming as

a lifetime activity, and raises money for the NRPA's education, preservation and protection programs, including the River Watch monitoring program, now starting its 20th year. Thanks to NRPA and others, water quality in Narrow River has improved. In the words of Narragansett Elementary School Physical Education teacher Paul McCaffery, who co-chairs the event with URI Swimming and Diving Coach Mick Westcott, "The title Turnaround is indicative of the path we chose for the course of the swim and also for the course of the river. The Narrow River has been turned around from one that wasn't healthy to one that is."

We are pleased to be returning to the URI Rowing Center, a beautiful spot on Narrow River's Lower Pond, and also the location of LaFarge Point Park. WER LaFarge was one of the founders of NRPA in 1970 and remained active until his untimely death from cancer in 1994. He bequeathed a piece of his farm as land for the Rowing Center. Many comments have been received about how well organized and safety-conscious the swim has been and the same committee will again run it. In addition to Paul and Mick, other people on the Swim Committee are: Perry Moylan, Pat Gannon, Felix Sarubbi, Jason McNamee, Lori Pugh, Karen DeQuattro, Shelagh Donohoe (Head Coach, URI Women's Rowing), Mike MacDonald (Head Coach, URI Men's Rowing), NRPA President Richard Grant, and Veronica Berounsky (NRPA Board member). They will be assisted by

the many friends, relatives and colleagues who have offered to return to help make the swim run smoothly and efficiently.

## Sign Up Now

So, if you like to swim, if you are on a swim team, if you are looking forward to swimming outdoors after a winter in the pool, sign up and support a good cause and celebrate the sixth year of the swim!

To register for this one-mile swim, download a form from the NRPA website ([www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org)) and mail the form and registration fee to NRPA, PO Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874.

Please register by June 8. There will be free t-shirts for the first 100 swimmers. When you register, you can also become a member of NRPA at a discounted rate.

## URI Crew

A special thanks goes to the Rowing Center and the URI Crew Teams, who have provided valuable support for each Turnaround Swim. For information about the Men's team, visit:

[www.rhodeislandrowing.com/](http://www.rhodeislandrowing.com/)

And to learn more about the women's rowing, got to:

[www.gorhody.com/sports.html](http://www.gorhody.com/sports.html)

## Rowing Camp

Have you ever wondered how those crew teams make those long boats go so smooth and so fast? Now your kids can find out. The URI Women's Rowing Team will hold instructional rowing camps this summer for boys and girls, ages 12 to 18. Dates are June 27 to 30, July 11 to 14 and July 18 to 21. The sessions run from 9 to 1 at the Campanella Rowing Center. The camp will cover learning the basics of the stroke, training on the water in an eight-manned rowing shell, racing and a workshop on college recruiting. Apply by June 17. For further information, contact Liz Tuppen at 401-874-7894 or [tuppenL@gmail.com](mailto:tuppenL@gmail.com), or visit [gorhody.com/sports/w-rowing](http://gorhody.com/sports/w-rowing).

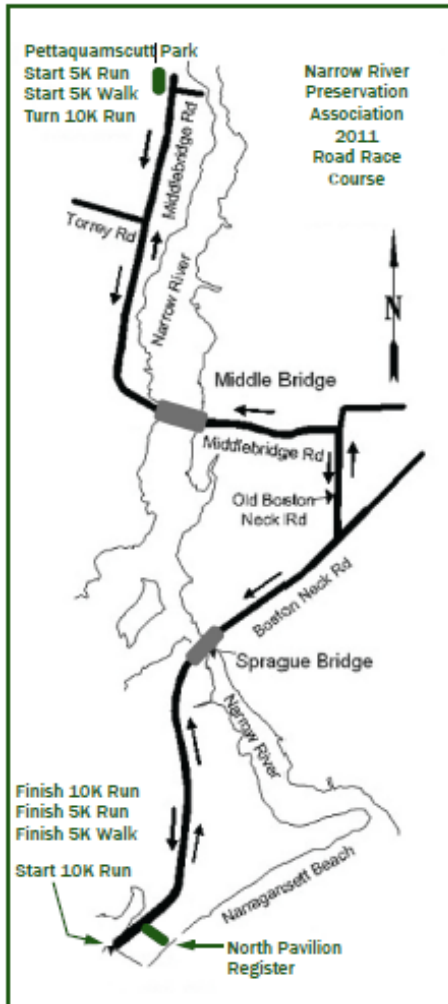
*Veronica Berounsky*



Start of the 2009 Turnaround Swim from the Campanella Rowing Center on the Lower Pond in Narrow River (Photo by John McNamara)

# 24th Annual Narrow River Road Race

## Follows Familiar Course



This year's Narrow River Road Race, sponsored by Citizens Bank, gets under way at 10:00 on Saturday morning, May 21, with 10K runners starting from the Narragansett Beach North Pavilion, and 5K runners and 5K walkers setting out from Pettaquamscutt Park on Middlebridge Road in South Kingstown. Sound familiar? It should, as this is the 24th running of the event, and we are reluctant to tinker with this fun event and reliable fundraiser for the NRPA. Last year 250 runners and walkers took part along with dozens of volunteers helping out.

Registration opens at 8:30 a.m. in the Narragansett Beach North Parking Lot.

Shuttle buses from the Registration area to the starting line for the 5K events at Pettaquamscutt Park begin at 9:00 a.m.

To register, visit [www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org), click the Narrow River Run link in the Calendar to display the Road Race page, and then either register online or download an application form. Either way, sign up now for a reduced registration fee. The entry fee is \$20 if postmarked by May 7, 2011, and \$25 after May 7 and on the day of race.



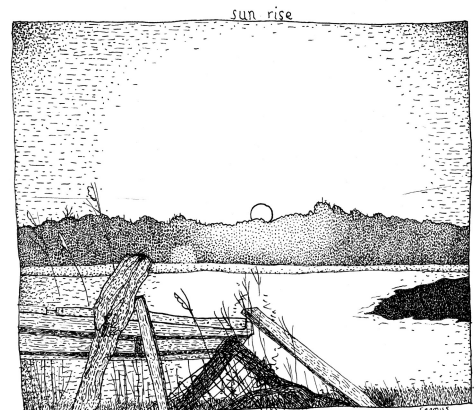
**It's not too late to become a 2011 Road Race Sponsor and show your commitment to protection of the watershed. For a sponsorship package, call 401-783-6277, or email [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org).**

This USATF certified 10K course (#RI06004RN) starts and finishes at the Narragansett Town Beach.

### Response and Call

*Narrow River Notes* usually includes a call for writers, to which artist and Middlebridge resident Seamus Hames sent in these two sketches inspired by Narrow River: *Hushed* (right) and *sun rise* (far right). More of Seamus' work can be seen at [www.topdrawer.squarespace.com](http://www.topdrawer.squarespace.com)

So now here is our call for writers, and visual artists. Send your submissions or questions to David Smith at [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org).



# The Best View of River Wildlife

## Fourth Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle July 9



*Pettaquamscutt Cove and the Narrows look great in this aerial view, but they are even more beautiful from a kayak.*  
(Photo by John McNamara)

Please join us on Saturday, July 9 at 9:00 a.m. for the Fourth Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle co-sponsored by Narrow River Kayaks and the Rhode Island Blueways Alliance to benefit the Narrow River Preservation Association. You will enjoy a scenic two- to three-hour guided tour of the lower Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River while learning many of the watershed's unique natural and historical features. Refreshments and a kayak raffle are to follow and all levels are welcome.

The cost is \$10 per participant with

your own equipment and discounted rates are available for participants wishing to rent. All proceeds go directly to the Narrow River Preservation Association. For more information or to register, please contact Jason at:

**401-789-0334**

or

**narrowriverkayaks@verizon.net**

We hope you'll join us this July as we paddle for the preservation of our precious Pettaquamscutt!

*Jason Considine*

### **NRPA Board Favors Bike Path Through Canonchet Farm**

*The following is a letter to the Narragansett Town Council expressing the NRPA's position on extension of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path through Canonchet Farm:*

The Narrow River Preservation Association supports the development through Canonchet Farm of a route for the final segment of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path. We take no position on a specific route because a demarcation of wetlands within the Farm is not yet complete. We believe that the route should not co-opt existing walking paths, should minimize crossing of wetlands, should minimize cuts through the historic stone walls and avoid unique or specimen trees.

NRPA believes that a route that traverses any part of Narragansett Avenue east of Strathmore Street is very dangerous for bicyclists, particularly during the summer months when parked cars line both sides of the road. We also believe that Wanda Street is too narrow and congested for a proper bike route.

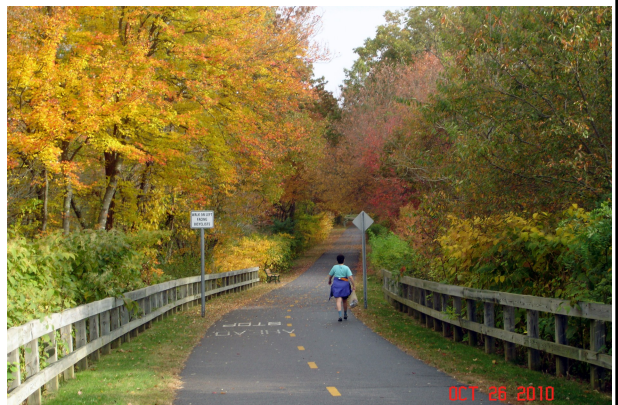
While NRPA endorses no specific route, a number of Board members favor a path to the west, utilizing the old Sea View Railroad grade northward, before turning east toward the uplands of the Farm north of the South County Museum leasehold. We believe that the path should terminate at the Anne Hoxsie Lane parking lot.

NRPA believes that a bike path route through Canonchet Farm will allow bicyclists to enjoy the beauty of the Farm and offer a link to South County Museum. We also note that an estimated 50% of the users of the presently existing path are not bikers. They are solitary runners and walkers, and large numbers of families with children, either riding bikes, walking or being transported in strollers. All should have a chance to enjoy the many aspects of Canonchet Farm.

We have included an image of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path near Riverside Cemetery in South Kingstown as an example of the finished look of a segment through Canonchet Farm.

Respectfully submitted:

Jon C. Boothroyd, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Science  
Narrow River Preservation Association



(Photo by Jon Boothroyd)



*View from the east in 1916 of the covered bridge crossing the Narrows at the site of the current Sprague Bridge. Note the Sea View Railroad bridge in the background.*

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