


NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River and the Watershed / Fall & Winter 2011

New Winter Series Explores Social and Natural History Of the Narrow River Watershed

Mark Your Calendar

The Friends of Canonchet Farm, Narrow River Preservation Association, and the South County Museum, with generous support from Trio Restaurant, are sponsoring the winter speaker series *On Pettaquamscutt: Presentations on the Environment and the History of the Narrow River Watershed*.

The presentations will take place on Sundays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Maury Loontjens Memorial Library, 35 Kingstown Road, Narragansett. Participants are encouraged to continue the conversation at Trio Restaurant, next door to the library.

These events are free and open to the public.

Sunday, January 29

Explore Narrow River without getting wet or cold, as NRPA Board member Dr. Veronica Berounsky presents "Narrow River – Past and Present." Veronica will take you on a tour of the Narrow River and sites in its watershed and discuss important issues that are illustrated along the way.

Sunday, February 26

Wildlife biologist Mike Lapisky, former chief of the Division of Fish and Wildlife of R.I. DEM and a member

of the Friends of Canonchet Farm, will include skulls and pelts in his presentation, "Wildlife at Canonchet Farm."

Sunday, March 25

Jim Crothers, Executive Director of South County Museum, will trace the history of the property now known as Canonchet Farm from the time of the Pettaquamscutt Purchase in 1657 to its purchase by the Town of Narragansett in the middle of the 20th Century.

For more information on the series, contact Rosemary Smith at rcsaims@aol.com.

Bob Schelleng Named *Friend of the River* at 2011 Annual Meeting

Robert Schelleng of Narragansett accepts the 2011 W.E.R. LaFarge Memorial *Friend of the River Award* from NRPA Board member Dr. Veronica Berounsky at the NRPA Annual Meeting on October 4.

Schelleng was recognized for his volunteer participation in the NRPA's River Watch Program, with bi-weekly testing of water quality on Narrow River from May until October for each of the last 20 years. Now for those of you keeping score, here is what Bob has done **so far** for NRPA River Watch:

- ◆ Monitored the water at Lacey Bridge 140 times
- ◆ Conducted 560 dissolved oxygen tests, took 140 temperature readings, did 560 chlorophyll tests and made 200 salinity measurements
- ◆ Collected 50 sets of water samples for further testing at URI.

For more on the River Watch Program, go to page 5.



The President's Cove

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving, the *Providence Journal* ran a column by Sue Hoagland of Narragansett on the Commentary page ("Powerball dreams in a tougher and bleaker America") in which she mused about what she might be able to do if her first-ever (and probably last) Powerball purchase was the winning ticket.

Sue presented an impressive list of what-ifs -- applying the winnings to helping neighbors, supporting schools, even adopting. My favorite (and my bias here is obvious) was right in the middle of the list: "Could I help restore the quality of the Narrow River to its pristine condition and preserve this most beautiful estuary for generations to enjoy?"

Unfortunately, Sue did not have the winning ticket. But she did make good on her commitment to the river by becoming an NRPA member, as 229 others have done so far in our 2011-2012 membership drive. None of the contributions were Powerball-fuelled, but the steady support of many year after year is the best way to preserve the river for generations to enjoy.


In the same week that Sue joined NRPA, Rick Moffit once again contributed \$2,000 to help fund the NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarship (see page 4 for details about this important educational initiative in memory of Rick's wife Lesa).

Rose Epstein, another example of sustained support for NRPA, retired from the Board of Directors on December 8, after many years as our go-to person for promoting NRPA in the news media. She lives on the river and brought many stories about the river to us, many of which originated with her friendship with John Elder Dick who also wrote about the river profusely. The Board will miss her keen insight and humor.

If you have not already renewed your NRPA membership, please do so before the New Year. If you have joined, consider giving a membership to someone on your holiday list, or maybe even dropping a line to the actual Powerball winners and suggesting a contribution.


Thank you as always for your continued support of NRPA, and have a wonderful New Year.

Richard Grant
NRPA President



NRPA is part of the *United Way Workplace Campaign*. Our donor option number is **6239**

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



The NRPA is participating in the 2011 Rhode Island State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA). Our fund number is **6239**.

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

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Tropical Storm Irene Skips Low Tide But Causes Less Flooding than Expected

The tidal surge from Hurricane turned Tropical Storm Irene was less than expected, while tree damage and downed power lines proved to be greater problems. Still, there was flooding along Narrow River as recorded in these photos from NRPA members.



Jason Considine, who took the picture on the left of flooding at Middlebridge, says, “The surge was no more than two feet, reaching only half way across the parking lot in front of Logan’s Landing. I remember the northeaster in March 2007 as being worse, when the water came to the door of the cafe during the morning tide and completely surrounded the building.”

Jason shot the view on the right of the river rise from Lacey Lane just north of Lacey Bridge and notes that water did not stop coming in until 2:30 p.m. even though high tide was around 8:30 in the morning. What happened to low tide? The strong winds out of the southeast pushed water up river throughout the mid-day.



The surge was sufficient to overwhelm a dock along Riverside Drive in South Kingstown, as seen in the photo on the left from Rose Epstein, and cover the boat ramp, detention pond and the end of Pettaquamscutt Avenue on the Narragansett side, as shown in the photo on the right from Tina Lincoln.

Deadline for Scholarship Applications is April 6

MEMO

To: High School Seniors
From: NRPA
Subject: Apply Now

Since 1993 NRPA has awarded scholarships to seniors graduating from high schools in the Narrow River Watershed as part of its Youth Environmental Education Program.

In 2007, the scholarship was renamed the NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarship in honor of a former NRPA Board member who passed away in 2006. Lesa Meng served on the Board for six years and was chair of the Narrow River Road Race Committee during that time. Her husband, Rick Moffitt, and friends provided additional funding for the scholarship, enabling NRPA to increase the scholarship awards to \$1,000 beginning in 2008. Rick continues making donations to support the scholarship fund. In 2011, NRPA awarded \$1,000 scholarships to:

- **Victoria Gallogly**, who graduated from The Prout School and is now at the University of Vermont
- **Margaret King**, a graduate of North Kingstown High School and a student at Lesley College

- **Elena Suglia**, also an NKHS graduate, who is now at Brown University
- **Edward Trowbridge**, a Narragansett High School graduate and a freshman at the University of Vermont.

The scholarship applications are judged on:

- Student's environmentally oriented activities in and out of high school
- Quality of an original essay on the theme "Choose one environmental problem/issue relevant to the Narrow River and discuss what you as an individual could do to mitigate the problem"
- Science teacher's recommendation
- Academic achievement in math and science courses.

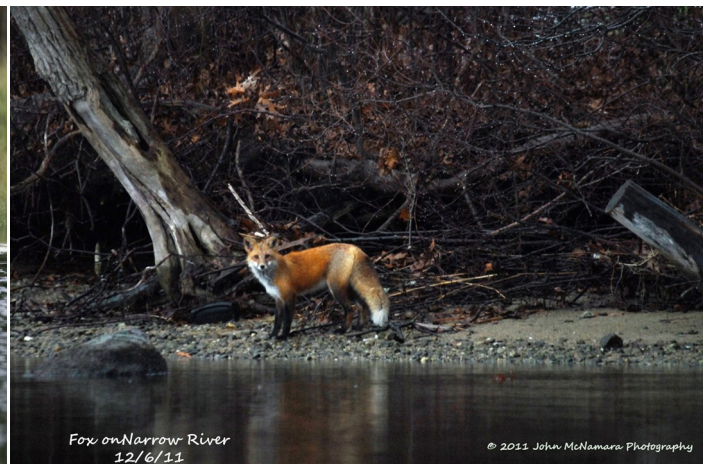
You can download an application from www.narrowriver.org, or pick one up at the Guidance Department at one of the high schools in the watershed: Narragansett, North Kingstown, Prout and South Kingstown. Completed applications are due Friday, April 6, 2012.

The 25th Narrow River Road Race May 19

The 25th Annual Narrow River Road Race will be run (and walked) on Saturday, May 19. The event, which raises funds for NRPA's river monitoring program and educational initiatives, features a 10K run that starts at Narragansett Beach and makes a roundtrip to Pettaquamscutt Park in South Kingstown, and a 5K run and a 5K walk that start at the park and finish at the beach. Online registration will be available in January at www.narrowriver.org, as will downloadable registration and sponsorship forms.

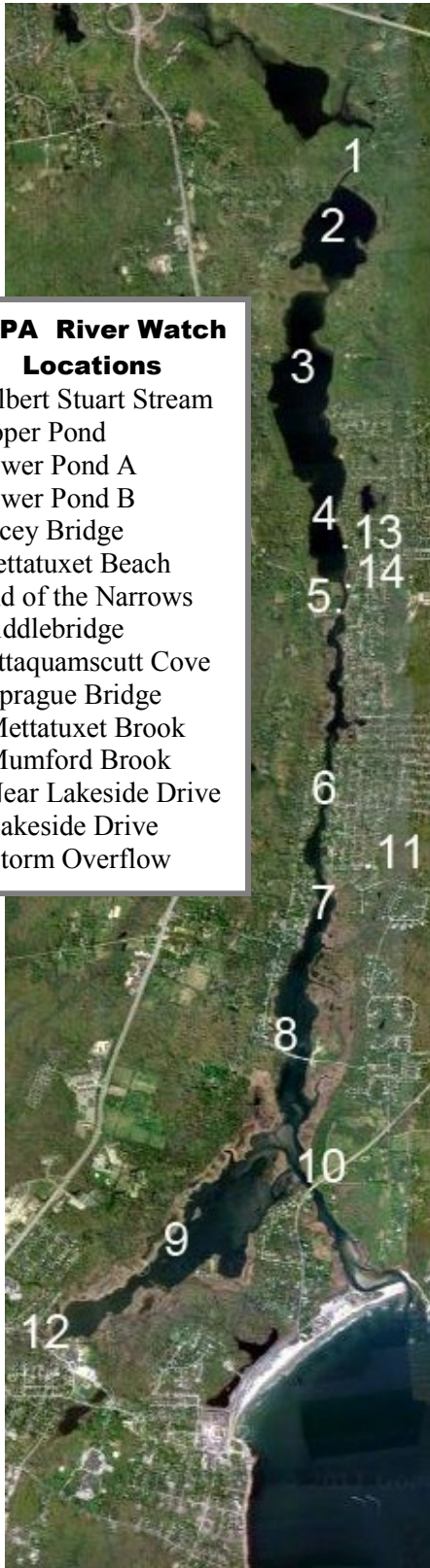
Science Fair Awards

The NRPA Science Fair Program awards prizes for outstanding exhibits dealing with the environment at high school and middle school science fairs in the towns in the watershed. If you know of an upcoming science fair, please contact Lynn Wolslegel at lwolslegel@gmail.com.



The three cormorants that John McNamara photographed in October are among the usual suspects on Narrow River. The trio appears to be taking a break between their sustained dives for food. Two months later John spotted the red tail fox on the right, a much less common visitor to the river bank, just north of Lacey Bridge.

NRPA River Watch Program Completes 20th Year



- NRPA River Watch Locations**
- 1 Gilbert Stuart Stream
 - 2 Upper Pond
 - 3 Lower Pond A
 - 4 Lower Pond B
 - 5 Lacey Bridge
 - 6 Mettatuxet Beach
 - 7 End of the Narrows
 - 8 Middlebridge
 - 9 Pettaquamscutt Cove
 - 10 Sprague Bridge
 - 11 Mettatuxet Brook
 - 12 Mumford Brook
 - 13 Near Lakeside Drive
 - 14 Lakeside Drive Storm Overflow

On the first weekend in October volunteer river monitors delivered water samples from 14 sites in the Narrow River Watershed to the URI Watershed Watch Laboratory in Kingston to wrap up the 20th year of NRPA's River Watch Program. The program consists of volunteers who take samples at locations along the river (shown in the map to the left), from Gilbert Stuart Stream in the north to Mumford Brook in the south, from May to early October. Measurements of dissolved oxygen and temperature are made every two weeks. Additionally, water samples are collected for analysis of salinity, chlorophyll, bacteria and nutrients. The monitoring results are recorded and mailed to the University of Rhode Island. Five times during the season the volunteers also collect water samples that they immediately bring to the URI Watershed Watch Laboratory for analysis of nutrients and bacteria.

Thank You, River Watch Volunteers!

NRPA extends a big thank-you to the volunteer monitors listed below, who contributed their time and effort this year to sample the river waters and make measurements. Special recognition goes out to two individuals who reached major milestones with the River Watch Program. Sue Van Ness completed 10 years of monitoring this season. Bob Schelleng, who has been with the program since its very start in 1992, completed 20 years of monitoring! It is with the generous support of the River Watch volunteers in time and energy that the program has continued to be a success for 20 years.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Dave Adelman | Liz Hill | Howard Reed |
| Veronica Berounsky | Debbie Kaprielian | Dana Sarubbi |
| Bette Carey | Ken Kaprielian | Carol Sarubbi |
| Jennifer Carey | Jeff Kaprielian | Robert Schelleng |
| Elizabeth Castro | Marc Lamson | Rosemary Smith |
| Will Cumer | Dorothy Mann | Sue Van Ness |
| Annette DeSilva | Dudley Mann | Lynn Wolslegel |
| Katherine Estes | Abby Moylan | Craig Wood |
| Annie Hall | Perry Moylan | Omar Zaki |
| Susan Hall | Laura Reed | |

Rivers Council Funds Analysis of River Data

The Rhode Island Rivers Council has awarded NRPA a \$3,500 grant to fund development and publication of a report on long-term trends in water quality in Narrow River based on the 20 years of data collected in the River Watch Program. The project team includes NRPA members Veronica Berounsky, Annette DeSilva and Rahat Sharif. Working with Linda Green of the URI Watershed Watch, Rahat will begin the project in January by creating a database of the river data in Excel spreadsheet format, which is commonly used for data analysis and provides a feed for more sophisticated graphic applications. The trend analysis will focus on bacteria, nutrients and salinity. The team plans to correlate the river data with weather records and other historical data. The resulting database will be shared with other groups. The goal is to create a preliminary report by mid-June and a final report in time for the next NRPA Annual Meeting.

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Go Take a Hike

Two Great Winter Walks in the Watershed

Early winter is a great time to get out and explore the varied landscapes of the Narrow River Watershed. Here are two suggested walks, one at the northern end of the watershed and one at the southern end. Both trails offer interesting, but accessible, terrain, plenty of wildlife, and unusual water views that open up in winter. Bring your binoculars and camera. And when there is that white stuff on the ground, both locations are great for snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing. So, dress warmly, and get out and walk the watershed.



Camp Nokewa
835 Gilbert Stuart Road
North Kingstown

In 2010, the R.I. Department of Environmental Management, in partnership with the Narrow River Land Trust and the Town of North Kingstown, purchased this former summer camp from the Girl Scouts. The 81-acre wooded parcel is situated on the southern shore of Carr Pond.

From Wickford, drive south on Boston Neck Road (Route 1-A) and turn right onto Gilbert Stuart Road and drive past the Gilbert Stuart Museum. The Camp Nokewa entrance is on the right 0.3 miles after the museum.

From Narragansett Pier, drive



north on Boston Neck Road (1-A) to North Kingstown. Take a left onto Snuff Mill Road and follow the signs for the Gilbert Stuart Museum. The entrance to Camp Nokewa is on the right 0.3 miles after the museum.

From Wakefield, drive north on Tower Hill Road (US-1) past the fire tower. Take a right on Gilbert Stuart Road to drive east toward the museum. The Camp Nokewa entrance is on the left 0.8 miles from Tower Hill Road.

Stay to the left on the camp road until you come to a metal gate. Park



your vehicle in the lot to the left, and then continue on the camp road over gently sloping hills along the edge of the pond. And don't forget to look up. You might just spot a young bald eagle that has been seen circling over Carr Pond in search of food.

Note that hunting is permitted on the property, so wear bright orange during season.



Canonchet Farm

Anne Hoxsie Lane
Narragansett

Canonchet Farm, a 160-acre park owned by the Town of Narragansett, is situated in the southeast corner of the watershed. The farm was once the residence of Senator



William Sprague and Kate Chase Sprague, who was the Belle of Washington during and after the Civil War. The park is the home of the South County Museum. Throughout the rest of the park, you can see various stages of regrowth as the trees and shrubs reclaim this Colonial and 19th Century farmland.

Canonchet Farm features an excellent hiking trail maintained by the Narragansett Tree Society, which recently installed a series of boardwalks that cross wet areas. If you have not walked Canonchet Farm before, start at the eastern end of the path on Anne Hoxsie Lane across Boston Neck Road (Route 1-A) from the Narragansett Town Beach.

We suggest leaving your car in the beach parking lot and crossing over to Anne Hoxsie Lane, which leads into the park between two coastal ponds. The trail head is in a grove of beech trees on the right. The trail features old stone walls, several quarries, vernal pools, glacial erratics and, best of all, a spectacular view of Pettaquamscutt Cove and Narrow River.

The Friends of Canonchet Farm offers guided walks in the park from September through May, each focusing on a different aspect of the natural and social history of Canonchet. Go to <http://canonchet.org> for a schedule of walks and topics.

“Send Up Another Pair” The Game Warden Recalls Duck Hunting on Narrow River

Many thanks to Richard Whaley of Edgewater, Maryland for this essay from the memoirs of his father, Chester Tucker Whaley, Sr. (1895 to 1970). The elder Whaley was the state game warden in South County from 1929 to 1960.

Over a period of years a certain young lady, by the name of Ann Kenyon, had been a duck-hunting companion of my sons and myself. Many a good hunt had been enjoyed in her company and as a duck-hunter she needed no apologies. She had her own rig, boat, trailer, decoys, in fact all the equipment needed for the sport and the ability to use it. She could and would get up in the dark of a freezing cold night, load her equipment, get to the shore and alone, put out a fine “set” if need be. Jolly good company and a fine shot, she liked to share her sport with someone and her ethics of good sportsmanship were always grade A. I had taught her a few pointers on wing shooting a few years before when she patronized a skeet field, which I operated. She could hold her own with anyone wing shooting in the brush or in a duck blind and loved the sport.

I had been pretty busy this particular year with my work as a state conservation officer and hadn’t had my annual good duck hunt with her although she and my sons had gotten in a few good ones.

During my travels about the county, I had noticed that black duck were using a piece of private marsh along Narrow River and being unmolested. I mentioned it to her when I met her in town early one morning and right away she said, “What are we waiting for? The season’s almost over and I can get permission to shoot there. Come on, let’s go today.” I could take the day off so I said, “O.K., all we’ll need to take are guns, ammunition and a half dozen or so black duck decoys.”

An hour later we were on our way and readily received permission to shoot there from the lessee when we stopped en route to ask him.

It was a cloudy day with a raw northeast wind of about 8 or 10 miles per hour and with either sleet or snow likely to develop before night. At the marsh our approach drove out 18 or 20 blacks which flew down river toward the ocean. Sooner or later I felt sure they would be back. We tossed the decoys out in the marsh puddle, tidied up a blind already there and settled down for business. Nothing happened for a half-hour or so and then a pair of

blacks was seen winging up from the south. They headed straight for the “set” like they were coming home. “You take the right hand one, I’ll take the left,” she said. We did. Two clean kills and I retrieved them. About twenty minutes later another pair came up the river and the procedure was repeated. It became a routine and got to the point where we were saying, “O.K., send up another pair.” And sure enough along they would come. Eight times this happened until finally Ann winged one that fell in a knot of thick brush. While looking for it, I heard her shout, “Down, Chief, down. Here comes a big bunch.”

(continued on the back page)



The author in a photo from the May 1970 Maritimes, courtesy of the URI Graduate School of Oceanography. Chester Tucker Whaley, as described by his son Richard was “a self-educated student of his surroundings, well read and eloquent in his writings. He recognized the need for conservation of our natural resources and preservation of our delicate ecology long before they became popular terms and issues. Professionals in the field of conservation often sought out his highly regarded opinions. During and after the Depression, when hunting and fishing were crucial for the survival of the family, he proved to be a skillful hunter and fisherman. He loved the bountiful land and waters of South County where he spent his life and his career with the R.I. Division of Fish and Wildlife.”

(continued from Page 7)

Sure enough up the river came a flock of a dozen and though they circled several times over the decoys only one came in, the rest continuing up the river. The lone one attempted to take off after them, but Ann put him back among the decoys.

I could not find the cripple and believe he crawled into one of the many holes under the hassocks. No more birds came for half an hour. Finally I said, "Let's go, we've had it." Ann replied, "Who could ask for more, whoever was sending up those pairs regulated this hunt to perfection." I agreed, for it was probably the smoothest, most satisfying day of duck shooting I ever enjoyed. "Send up another pair" was a by-word for some time after.

Ann, having plenty of ducks from previous trips hung up at home, insisted I take all of them, as my family was very fond of black duck. I foresaw many a good meal ahead and hung them in pairs in my wood shed where they soon froze.

A week later there came a thaw and I plucked them and proceeded to dress them out. Man, you should have seen the mummichogs run out of their gullets. They were

full of the tiny fish. It was then that my heart sank because I knew what was coming. Sure enough, when we attempted to cook a pair they were so strong of fish stink we couldn't stand it in the kitchen. I shall never forget that day's shooting, back there in the good old days of fifteen duck bag limits and it's sad to realize that today we could not for long say, "Send up another pair." Too soon the hunt would be over, just as those "good old days" are over and now only a cherished memory.



This image is from a watercolor by the author.

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