
NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River Watershed Since 1970 / December 2018

11th Pettaquamscutt Paddle

On July 20th, paddlers in kayaks, canoes and stand up paddleboards enjoyed Narrow River while supporting NRPA's conservation and education efforts.

Narrow River Kayaks donated all proceeds from the day's rentals and registration fees for the sunset paddle to NRPA.

Special thanks to Narrow River Kayaks and NRK Owner Jason Considine for again hosting the Pettaquamscutt Paddle, a major fundraiser for NRPA.



Photo credit: Jason Considine (top) and Veronica Berounsky.

Canine Detection Featured at NRPA Annual Meeting

At NRPA's 48th Annual Meeting in October, Karen Reynolds, President and K9 Handler of Environmental Canine Services, LLC in Otis, Maine and Heidi Travers, RI Department of Environmental Management presented on Canine Detection of Human Contamination.

In June, the special dogs trained to identify sources of human waste (sewage) visited areas of the Narrow River near locations at which testing has indicated high levels of bacteria. The dogs identified specific areas where there may be leaking septic or sewage systems.

This method of canine detection is extremely accurate as well as less expensive and more responsive than other methods of bacteria identification such as DNA testing.

NRPA is working with the Towns of Narragansett and South Kingstown to pinpoint problems that can then be corrected. To protect the privacy of property owners, NRPA and the towns are not releasing exact locations of contamination to the public.

NRPA will continue to monitor bacteria levels throughout the river, which will indicate whether contamination problems decrease or remain

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1972: Narrow River is No.1 Resource to be Protected

Article from The Narragansett Times, November 16, 1972 (reprinted with permission)

Narrow River: No. 1 Resource

A federally-sponsored study of Rhode Island's natural resources has concluded after a year of investigation that Narrow River is the most valuable of 250 major wild areas in the state.

And acting on that information, released at a meeting Tuesday night, the private Narrow River Preservation Association has agreed to provide seed money for a major, professional study of the meandering, brackish waterway to determine how best to balance of its use against its protection and preservation.

Dr. Robert T. O'Neill of South Kingstown, president of the 150-member preservation unit, said his group would provide up to \$500 for the study, and will ask South and North Kingstown, Narragansett, the state, and the people who live near and use the river to donate the remainder of the needed funds.

He said the group is checking with professional planning firms now to determine the cost of such a study.

At a meeting Tuesday attended by about 50 persons in Narragansett Junior High School, the river was put

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NRPA Receives \$500 Grant from Women's Club of South County

The General Federation of Women's Clubs, Women's Club of South County has awarded NRPA with a \$500 Grow Hope Grant to support bringing Narragansett and South Kingstown clients of the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale to our June 2019 "What Lives in the River" and August 2019 "Art on the River" events.

Many thanks to the Women's Club for supporting our efforts to ensure that all of our neighbors are included in our education and fun environmental activities.

A check will be presented to NRPA at a Holiday Luncheon on December 5.

President's Cove

Dear friends,

This is the first newsletter of the 2018-2019 year and I just wanted to advise you that the NRPA Board of Directors is at full strength. Each board member has been assigned to manage at least one project.

While we are profiting by the experience of each board member, we also profit from the experience of our membership and friends of the Narrow River. So if you have a new idea, let me know.

On a new note, I have formed an Associate Board of Directorship committee, which includes critical advisors to NRPA. This will broaden and deepen our ability to make good decisions about our goal of improving the water quality and way of life in the Narrow River Watershed.

We will keep members of NRPA up to date with future newsletters and schedules for events as planning is finalized. One can check our website, narrowriver.org, for past issues of our newsletter and special notes.

Thank you for your interest in NRPA,

Richard Grant

Best,

Richard Grant, NRPA President



Richard Grant, NRPA President, left, and Veronica Berounsky, NRPA Vice President, at Middlebridge Marina in Narragansett.

Photo by Alison Kates

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.

NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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Narrow River Notes
Published three times per year
by NRPA
Editor: Alison Kates

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Are you a member of NRPA?

If not, please join now!

Membership has never been easier! You can join by mail or online at narrowriver.org/membership.

Please support our work to protect and preserve the Narrow River as well as our many educational and artistic programs. Your membership matters!



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 2018 Rhode Island State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA).

Our fund number is 6239.

Rhode Island Rivers Council



Phase II Dredging

The final phase of dredging on the Narrow River upstream of Sprague Bridge is scheduled to begin on Monday, December 3, 2018.

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is not exactly sure how long the project will last, but it is a relatively small amount of work and is not expected to take long.

This work will create a small area of low marsh on the side of the river to connect existing marsh, and will deepen the middle of the channel in front of Sedge Island which should improve navigation.

This spring, NRPA and USFWS will be seeking volunteers to plant salt-marsh grass seedlings on the newly raised areas of marsh. A combination of super-saline soils, soil oxidation, and compaction caused the failure in many plantings to date. Given the passage of time and settling of the material, this subsequent planting is expected to have better success.

NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarship Applications Due April 29

This spring, NRPA will award up to four \$1,000 college scholarships to students graduating from high schools in the watershed: Narragansett High School, North Kingstown High School, The Prout School and South Kingstown High School.

Since 1995, NRPA has granted over \$56,000 to local high school seniors.

Applications are judged on the student's environmentally oriented activities in and out of high school, an original essay on mitigating an environmental problem or issue relevant to Narrow River, a science teacher's recommendation and academic achievement in math and science courses.

Completed applications are available at the Guidance Department of each school and must be submitted to the student's guidance counselor (not to NRPA) by Monday, April 29, 2019.

Sheldon Pratt Awarded 2018 W.E.R. La Farge Friend of the River Award

A highlight of the 2018 NRPA Annual Meeting was the awarding of the 2018 W.E.R. La Farge Memorial Friend of the River Award to Dr. Sheldon D. Pratt for his decades spent studying the Narrow River and its watershed, for using his expertise in benthic ecology to enlighten and inform hundreds of students and adults for NRPA, and for his years of service to the Narrow River Land Trust.

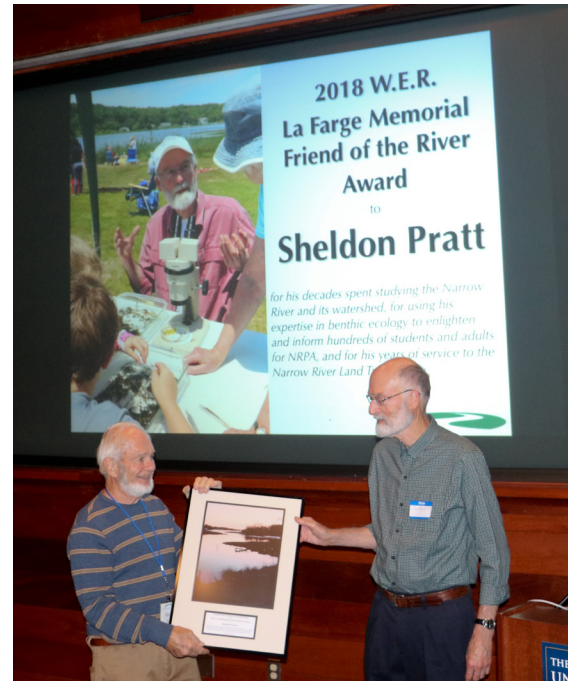
Dr. Veronica Berounsky, NRPA Vice President had the following words to share:

Sheldon D. Pratt is the quint-essential naturalist, happiest when he is out exploring nature – particularly the New England coastline and its bays, estuaries, and rivers. He is very curious about how our natural world works. He doesn't strive for the limelight and is not fond of giving public talks, but if you are lucky enough to go out with him on a student field trip, to go sampling with him, or just to stop by his office you will learn more than you ever thought you would about the animals that live on our shores – or actually about most any subject related to the natural world!

Sheldon's work on Narrow River dates to at least around 1970, when he helped fellow graduate student (and early NRPA Board member) Arthur Gaines with sampling throughout the river. Sheldon has continued to take samples in Narrow River for various projects, such as the 2007 ventilation of sulfur-rich water in Upper Pond.

Since at least the mid 1990's, Sheldon has been wrangled into participating in school field trips, patiently sharing his knowledge about benthic animals with legions of school kids – and turning their comments about "what is this slimy thing?" into "this is cool, I never saw this up close before!" Ever since the NRPA program "What Lives in the River?" started in 2013, Sheldon has been our benthic animal expert. Sometimes he even goes snorkeling to get deep water bottom samples. He loves to show children and parents the details seen under the microscope. Sheldon has NEVER said no to a request to take part in field trip or sampling event.

A number of years ago Sheldon joined the Narrow River Land Trust, which gives him an excuse to explore their new land acquisitions to see what's living there. Although he didn't formally study it, Sheldon's expertise and experience in ecology extends to include the land animals.



Richard Grant, President of NRPA, left, presents the 2018 W.E.R. La Farge Friend of the River Award to Sheldon Pratt at the NRPA Annual Meeting on October 2, 2018.

Photo by Veronica Berounsky

Kayak Fishing Challenge a Success

by Jim Kaczynski, Tournament Director

The trial run of NRPA's Kayak Fishing Challenge on Narrow River went off without a hitch this past October. Fishermen from RI and MA met for a Captain's Meeting on a Friday night to review the rules and go over safety information, then hit the water early the next morning.

The purpose of the event was three-fold; primarily to promote the mission of NRPA to a new group of users, secondly to begin collecting data on the river's fisheries, and lastly to enjoy the beauty of the river. The format of the tournament was 'CPR', where anglers fishing from kayaks catch, photograph, and release four different species of fish without harm. The length of each angler's longest fish of each species is added together for their total combined length. At the Captain's Meeting, Craig Wood gave a great talk about all the events NRPA holds throughout the year, the importance of the watershed, and some of the issues the NRPA Board of Directors works on in regards to the health of the river.

Jim Kaczynski, the tournament director, made sure the anglers filed float plans, spoke about the life jacket requirements, and answered questions about the rules. Each fisherman received a bag filled with items donated by sponsors including magazines, safety lights, lures, and a coupon for a flight of beer from Whalers Brewing Company. Some of the anglers were so excited that when they left the meeting, they went directly to Middlebridge and caught a few stripers and snapper blues (although they did not count for the tournament).

That Saturday morning began as a cold, cloudy, and windy day with anglers dressing in layers and launching their vessels at sunrise from Sprague

Bridge, Pollock Avenue, and Narrow River Kayaks. The tide was outgoing and using a variety of rods, baits and techniques, an angler landed the first fish a little past 7am: a shad measuring 16 inches. Throughout the morning, reports kept coming of many shad being caught, but not much else. Then came the first photo of a summer flounder, or fluke, a nice 14" fish, followed shortly after by a striper. In all, over fifty shad, three fluke and two stripers were logged. The bluefish proved to be elusive on this day. The sun broke through and the wind relaxed as the lines were coming out of the water at 1pm. The fishermen then made their way to Mettuxet Yacht Club for a cookout and awards ceremony.

First place honors went to Bob Weiss, who caught three species with a total combined length of 49 inches, while Norm Czech, Mike Smutok, and Thom Houde were not far behind. Prizes included a Bending Branches kayak paddle, an NRS fishing life jacket, lures from Al Gags and Al's Goldfish, t-shirts, Brite Strike kayak gear, certificates for fishing rods and Bass Pro Shops, and many other items. All anglers went home smiling with full bellies, stories to tell, and a new or renewed connection to the Narrow River. They all said they would be back for next year's event, which is scheduled for September 28, 2019 and will include all types of paddle craft including kayaks, SUPs, and canoes.

Special thanks go out to committee members Richard Grant, Craig Wood, Jason Considine, Phil Capaldi and Alison Kates; volunteers Emily, Sam and Stewart Kaczynski who helped with registrations, donations, and cooking; Tony and Jane Columbo, our hosts from the Mettuxet Yacht Club; Riley Barrett who designed the logo; and

Todd Corayer who wrote an excellent article for the Narragansett Times which can be found at <https://fishwrapwriter.com/2018/11/18/its-officially-an-unofficial-win-for-the-narrow-river>.

Editor's note: Special thanks to Jim Kaczynski for all of his hard work on this new event!



River Cleanup

Thanks to twenty volunteers, the trash in these photos is no longer in or around Narrow River.

At the end of September, helpers picked up lots of cigarette butts, broken glass, food wrappers, cans, and bottles.

By boat, teams picked up trash in the marsh areas along Upper and Lower Ponds and on Gooseberry Island. On foot, others cleaned up the mouth of the river (by the Dunes Club) and around Sprague Bridge.

Interesting items included: 3 tennis balls, 1 ping pong ball, 2 fish hooks, 3 corn cobs, a helmet, part of a garden hose, and half of a flip flop.

You can pick up trash anytime (as long as it's safe) or you can email us at nrpa@narrowriver.org to sign up for our seasonal cleanups.



GO GREEN!!

To receive *Narrow River Notes* digitally and in full color, please email us at nrpa@narrowriver.org.

You'll save us precious resources and reduce waste!



NRPA Richard Barker Grant Endowment

Narrow River Preservation Association is pleased to announce the creation of an endowment in honor of Richard Barker Grant, long time NRPA President and Friend of Narrow River. The permanent endowment will be managed by The Rhode Island Foundation and provide yearly grants for the benefit of the Narrow River Watershed.

The endowment was started with \$10,000 and NRPA is seeking donations to match that initial investment. Checks made out to "NRPA" may be sent to Narrow River Preservation Association, PO Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874. Online donations are welcome at narrowriver.org/grant



Narrow River Watershed Plan by RIDEM

NRPA has been working with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) to develop a Narrow River Watershed Plan.

Jenny Paquet, Senior Environmental Planner in the RIDEM Office of Water Resources, Nonpoint Source Program presented at NRPA's Annual Meeting in October and provided the following summary of the Watershed Plan:

The Narrow River Watershed Plan is for the protection and restoration of clean water and healthy aquatic habitats throughout the watershed. In discussing and researching the water quality and aquatic habitat conditions of the watershed, the following seven goals for the plan have emerged:



Jenny Paquet presenting at NRPA's Annual Meeting on October 2.
Photo by Veronica Berounsky.

- Improve Water Quality for Shellfishing and Swimming in the Narrow River, at areas closed due to Bacteria
- Protect and Improve Water Quality for Fish and Wildlife Habitat in the Narrow River which is threatened by excess Nitrogen
- Improve Water Quality for Fish and Wildlife Habitat in the Freshwater Ponds of the Narrow River Watershed, which are impaired by excess Phosphorus
- Improve and Protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Recreational Use in the Freshwater Ponds of the Narrow River Watershed, some of which are impaired by Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), and others of which are threatened by AIS
- Restore Connectivity of Aquatic Habitat for Fish and Wildlife, impeded by dams and sub-standard culverts
- Protect and Restore Wetlands, Aquatic Habitats, and their Buffers for Fish and Wildlife Habitat and as a Resiliency Strategy for Flooding, Sea Level Rise, and Climate Change
- Maintain Good Quality Groundwater in the northern portion of the Watershed, which is a well-protected Drinking Water Source.

Over the past year, I have met with representatives from each of the three towns in the watershed (Narragansett, North Kingstown and South Kingstown), and held two workshops with stakeholders who are involved in or interested in protecting and/or restoring the water resources and aquatic habitats in the watershed.

I also plan on having a presentation for the neighborhood groups and other interested parties about the plan sometime this winter.

If anyone would like to know more about the project, please feel free to contact me by phone or by e-mail. I can be reached at (401) 222-4700 ext. 7263 or jenny.paquet@dem.ri.gov.

Changes to NRPA Board of Directors

Please join NRPA in welcoming the newest member of the Board of Directors, **James Dean Vogel, P.E.** Jim

is the Founder and Director of The BioProcess Institute in North Kingstown, and the Director of URI's Pharmaceutical Development Institute. He enjoys kayaking, boating and swimming in the Narrow



River. Jim hopes to contribute to the monitoring of the Narrow River Watershed, to help preserve the biodiversity of the Narrow River and to assess the impact of events, both natural and man made.

We give our thanks to **Molly Mageau**, who is stepping back from the Board of Directors, but will remain an active volunteer with NRPA.



Molly Mageau, right, with Alison Kates, NRPA Program Coordinator, cleaning trash from Narrow River in September.

Photo by Alison Kates.

No. 1 Resource, cont.

at the very top of a list of the 250 natural resources considered most valuable-and most fragile-in the state.

That report came from George Seavey, Rhode Island Director for the New England Natural Resources Project, a federal program designed to catalog the six-state region's most valuable natural resources.

His group, now that it has completed its work, must now decide what action to take, Mr. Seavey told the association.

The river, about 12 miles long, runs from its mouth in Narragansett to a terminus at Pettaquamscutt Pond south of Gilbert Stuart Road in North Kingstown, passing through large areas of South Kingstown, also.

It is a major recreational attraction in all three communities, and teems with fish and with the wildlife which lives along its marshy banks.

Dr. O'Neill said his group hopes, depending on public response in all three towns, to have a study under way by either next summer or fall.

The preservation unit began a few years ago to ask landowners along the shores of the river to donate their property so the waterway's banks could be turned into a huge wildlife sanctuary and would be protected forever.

That project has been turned over to the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, which is still working on it, Dr. O'Neill said.

Dr. O'Neill said Mr. Seavey's group is reluctant at present to identify all the areas it considers most valuable in the state because of the danger to them that publicity might bring.

However, it is believed that such areas as South Kingstown's great Swamp and the Green Hill barrier beach are high on the list.

Special thanks to Richard Vangermeersch for providing this article to NRPA.

NRPA Annual Meeting, continued

a concern.

Also at NRPA's Annual Meeting, Dr. Bruce Corliss, Dean of the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography, welcomed guests as the host of the event. The Bay Campus generously hosts NRPA meetings and events throughout the year.

Jenny Paquet, Senior Environmental Planner with Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, spoke about the Narrow River Watershed Management Plan, currently in development. Read more about the Watershed Plan on page 5.

Jason Considine, Owner of Narrow River Kayaks (NRK) drew a ticket from all of our kayak raffle tickets to determine who would win the kayak that NRK donated. The winner, Joan D'Agostino, is a watershed resident and is very excited to go kayaking with her friends. NRK generously added a paddle and life jacket to the prize.

The meeting was attended by more than 50 guests.



From left, Veronica Berounsky, NRPA Vice President, Carol Hagan McEntee, RI Representative, and Alicia Eichinger, Executive Director of Salt Ponds Coalition at the 2018 NRPA Annual Meeting.
Photo by Alison Kates.

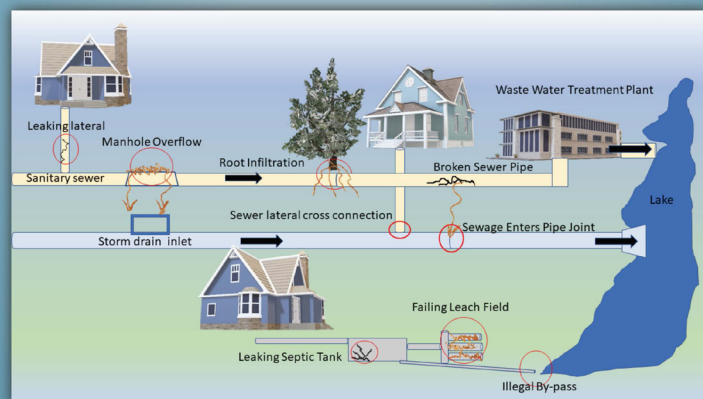


2018 Kayak Raffle winner Joan D'Agostino of Saunderstown.
Photo by Jason Considine.

WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL CANINE SERVICES DOGS DETECT

Sewage in stormwater systems or surface waters from

- Leaking or broken sewer lines
- Faulty septic systems
- Illicit connections



The canines give an "alert" (bark, sit, down) to the handler when they detect sewage.

Courtesy of Environmental Canine Services, LLC

Canines like those who visited Narrow River in June are specially trained to detect sewage leaks and problems as illustrated above.

Linear Park at Canonchet Farm

An update from Friends of Canonchet Farm:

The proposed Linear Park along the shores of Lake Canonchet and Littleneck Pond along Boston Neck Road (across the street from the southernmost parking lot for Narragansett Town Beach) continues to move toward reality!

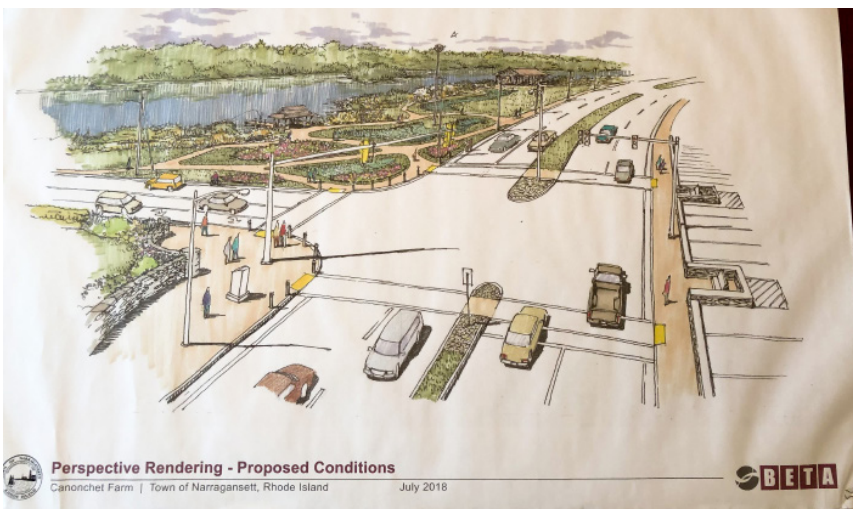
Beta Group, the landscape architectural firm that Friends of Canonchet Farm (FOCF) hired last May, has completed conceptual plans and FOCF has presented the plans to Narragansett Parks and Recreation, the Planning Board, Town Manager Jim Manni, and the Conservation Commission where it has been received with interest and enthusiasm. FOCF will also make a presentation to the Narragansett Town Council before they authorize Beta Group to complete a more detailed plan with pictures and specifications for paths, structures and gardens.

All are invited to learn more about the proposed project at *On Pettaquamscutt: Presentations on the Environment and the History of the Narrow River Watershed* on Sunday, January 27, 2019 from 1-3pm at the Maury Loontjens Memorial Library in Narragansett (see back page of this newsletter for more details.) Landscape Architect Randy Collins will discuss the conceptual designs of the park.

A highlight of the concepts detailed in the plan would be the creation of berms and rain gardens to mitigate rainwater draining from Route 1A (Boston Neck Road) that is currently dumped directly into the ponds through pipes from the catch basins. With the new plan, this water will be treated naturally through the interconnected rain gardens and nourish a range of native plants. This innovative approach may attract the interest and partnership with RI Dept. of Transportation.

Proposed permanent structures in the plan include a partially covered dock for fishing and wildlife viewing by the shore of Lake Canonchet as well as a centrally located picnic pavilion that would provide picnic tables and shade for visitors enjoying the park. Further along the lakesides at the southern end of Little Neck Pond, the plan proposes a boardwalk across the wild flower meadow that would allow visitors to reach a higher area featuring elevated views of the pond. When completed, landscaped, and equipped with seating, this area is envisioned as a serene meditation spot.

The Friends of Canonchet Farm is excited to have arrived at this point and take pride in their volunteers' accomplishments and members' support over the past seven years. They will keep reporting updates on the Linear Park progress on their website (canonchet.org) as our organization, in partnership with the town of Narragansett, moves toward turning the Linear Park vision into reality!



Conceptual drawing of the proposed linear park at Canonchet Farm, including wider sidewalks, public access to the water and gardens to prevent stormwater runoff.

Graphic courtesy of Randy Collins, BETA Consulting.

Art and Science on the River



Above: Pati Sylvia paints by the river while Christina Machinski (left) and Erin Chille show fish prints and seaweed art made at Art on the River in August.

Below: Jaiden Spears examines a small blue crab he found at What Lives in the River held at Middlebridge during 'Gansett Days in September while Emily Kaczynski (left) and Betty Gomes fill touch tanks with critters for visitors to explore.

All photos by Veronica Berounsky.



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On Pettaquamscutt

2019

Presentations on the Environment and the
History of the Narrow River Watershed

The Friends of Canonchet Farm, Narrow River Preservation Association, South County Museum and the Maury Looijens Memorial Library along with generous support from Trio Restaurant, are collaborating for the eighth year to sponsor the Winter Speaker Series *On Pettaquamscutt: Presentations on the Environment and the History of the Narrow River Watershed*.

Winter 2019 presentations:

Sunday, January 27, 2019 1-3pm Friends of Canonchet Farm will present: "**Linear Park at Canonchet Farm**" by Randy Collins, BETA Group

Landscape Architect Randy Collins will discuss the design of a linear park on the east side of Canonchet Farm along Boston Neck Road.

Sunday, February 24, 2019 1-3pm South County Museum will present David Chidakel speaking on "**The History of Shadow Farm.**"

Resident and local historian David Chidakel will trace the ownership of Shadow Farm from the Colonial times of the Hazards and Robinsons to its development as a condominium project in the 1980s.

Sunday, March 31, 2019 1-3pm Narrow River Preservation Association will present: "**Waves of Blue, Waves of Green**" by Jane Henneidy, Site Manager of Historic New England's Casey Farm

Casey Farm stretches from Narragansett Bay to the Narrow River. The talk traces centuries of changes to the land and compares it to its sister, Watson Farm. Their shared mission of historic preservation, landscape conservation, producing local food, and innovative educational programs comes through when following the seasonal rhythms of the farms in pictures and stories.

The presentations are free and open to the public. All will take place at the Maury Looijens Memorial Library, 35 Kingstown Road, Narragansett. After each event, participants are encouraged to continue the conversation at Trio Restaurant, 15 Kingstown Road, Narragansett.