

# NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River Watershed Since 1970 / August 2019

## Indigenous People in the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River

Lorén Spears, Executive Director of the Tomaquag Museum, led a small group of NRPA Board Members and volunteers on a kayak tour on July 12. Along the way, Lorén shared stories and history of Indigenous people along the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River and the watershed historically through today.

Below are selections from a transcript of Lorén's remarks. The first part of the full transcript can be viewed at [narrowriver.org/Indigenous-people](http://narrowriver.org/Indigenous-people).

Lorén:

So, first thing: Asco Wequasin. Nutussawese Mukhasunee Pashau ut Nahaiganseck. Nutussawese Lorén Spears ut Englishut. Neen Nahiganseck Nehantic. Kunoopem ut ahkee ut Nahiganseck. So I just said to you "hello" - [Asco weequasin], which is the most common way to say hello in the Narragansett language - and that my traditional name is [Mukhasunee Pashau], which is the moccasin flower or the lady slipper, and I am Narragansett-Niantic.

If you ask me what tribal nation I'm from, I'm just going to say Narragansett. But if you ask me who I am, I'm going to tell you I'm Narragansett-Niantic.

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Lorén Spears (left), Executive Director of the Tomaquag Museum, guides a kayak tour as she educates paddlers about Indigenous people's past and current connection to the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River.

*Photo by Bill McCusker.*

## NEW! Middlebridge Tide Charts

All are welcome to view and download tide charts for Middlebridge at [narrowriver.org/tides](http://narrowriver.org/tides).

The tide chart, developed by NRPA volunteers, includes daily high and low tides, sunrise, sunset and moon phase.

The tide charts are free and available to the public. Feel free to share!

Also available on the NRPA website is a map of the no wake zones on Narrow River as published by the Narragansett Harbor Commission.

However you enjoy Narrow River, please do so responsibly!



NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION  
[narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org) [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org)

Narrow River (Middlebridge) Tide Chart  
September 2019

Day	Date	High Tide		Low Tide		Rise	Sun	Set	Moon Phase
		AM	PM	AM	PM				
Su	1-Sep	11:36 AM	11:56 PM	5:26 AM	5:48 PM	6:12 AM	7:19 PM	7:19 PM	☾
Mo	2-Sep	****	12:29 PM	6:12 AM	6:40 PM	6:13 AM	7:16 PM	7:16 PM	☾
Tu	3-Sep	12:46 AM	1:23 PM	6:59 AM	7:34 PM	6:14 AM	7:16 PM	7:16 PM	☾
W	4-Sep	1:19 AM	2:18 PM	7:47 AM	8:31 PM	6:15 AM	7:14 PM	7:14 PM	☾
Th	5-Sep	2:29 AM	3:32 PM	8:38 AM	9:34 PM	6:16 AM	7:11 PM	7:11 PM	☾
F	6-Sep	3:22 AM	4:07 PM	9:33 AM	10:39 PM	6:17 AM	7:11 PM	7:11 PM	☾
Sa	7-Sep	4:18 AM	5:03 PM	10:30 AM	11:39 PM	6:18 AM	7:09 PM	7:09 PM	☾
Su	8-Sep	5:17 AM	5:59 PM	11:25 AM	****	6:19 AM	7:08 PM	7:08 PM	☾
Mo	9-Sep	6:17 AM	6:51 PM	12:12 AM	12:18 PM	6:20 AM	7:06 PM	7:06 PM	☾
Tu	10-Sep	7:13 AM	7:38 PM	1:19 AM	1:08 PM	6:21 AM	7:04 PM	7:04 PM	☾
W	11-Sep	8:01 AM	8:21 PM	2:02 AM	1:56 PM	6:22 AM	7:02 PM	7:02 PM	☾

Tide Charts for Middlebridge and the Narrow River no wake zone map are available at [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org).

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
Narrow River Preservation Association's 49th Annual Meeting  
Thursday, October 3 at 7pm  
Coastal Institute, URI Bay Campus

## Richard Grant Receives National Lifetime Achievement Award

On May 7, at the National Wetlands Awards Ceremony in Washington D.C., the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) honored long time NRPA President Richard Grant with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Introducing the award, Scott Fulton, President of the Environmental Law Institute said "This special award we are issuing this year commemorating the 30th Anniversary of this important program [National Wetlands Awards], we were, of course, looking for someone very special to whom to give this award who has shown an

*Continued on page 6*



Richard Grant (center) receives a Lifetime Achievement Award in Washington, D.C., from Scott Fulton (left), President of the Environmental Law Institute and Ben Grumbles, Maryland's Secretary of the Environment.  
*Photo courtesy of Environmental Law Institute.*

## Kayak Fishing Challenge on Narrow River

Saturday, September 28 Sunrise to 1pm

Four target species: striper, fluke, bluefish and shad

Longest combined total wins

BBQ, raffle, gifts and awards at Mettuxet Yacht Club after event

\$50 entry, proceeds benefit NRPA

Info at [narrowriver.org/kayakfishing](http://narrowriver.org/kayakfishing)



## President's Cove

Dear friends,

During the next 12 months, NRPA Board of Directors will be finalizing the details of the NRPA 50th Celebration events that will occur in 2020. We introduce you to this occasion by announcing the 50th Anniversary logo.

Throughout the year, we will be advising you of the schedule of events so you can plan a path of catching up with the history of NRPA, accomplishments and future plans that may include you.

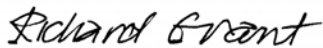
At this time, I would like to extend my gratitude to the hundreds of people who financially contribute to the cost of operating expenses for NRPA with their membership dues and donations for specific programs.

Without question, a grand thank you goes out to the hundreds of people that have volunteered to work alongside members of the NRPA Board of Directors on such programs as marsh seedling plantings and river clean ups.

Every step along the way, NRPA's Water, Land and Education programs lead to improving the quality of life in the Narrow River Watershed, and of course cleaner water. Thank you for your contribution.

Your support adds strength to Narrow River Preservation Association.

Best,



Richard Barker Grant  
President, NRPA



Special logo created to celebrate NRPA's 50th Anniversary year in 2020.  
*Many thanks to Johnson Ma for his design.*

### 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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## Three Free Raffle Tickets When You Join NRPA!

Join NRPA by mail or online at [narrowriver.org/membership](http://narrowriver.org/membership) and receive three free raffle tickets for our 2019 Kayak Raffle!

A winner of the 2019 Heron XT kayak, generously donated by Narrow River Kayaks, will be drawn at the NRPA Annual Meeting on October 3, 2019.

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 2019 Rhode Island State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA).

Our fund number is 6239.

## Rhode Island Rivers Council





## NRPA Awards 2019 Lesa Meng College Scholarships to Local Students

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. Congratulations to our 2019 NRPA Lesa Meng Scholarship winners: Olivia Kelly, Ben Forman, Quinn Jones and Deanna Phan!

**Olivia Kelly**, a graduate of South Kingstown High School, was also a 2018 NRPA Science Fair Award Recipient. In addition to many other science awards, she won the prestigious Rhode Island Science and Engineering Fair: First Grant for "How Ocean Acidification Affects Oyster Shells". Olivia plans to attend the URI Pharmacy program. She would like to become a hospital pharmacist where she hopes to participate in alternative, plant based medicine research. One of her science teachers described her as a 'natural renaissance woman'. She is a swimmer, in the SKHS orchestra and president of the Spanish Club. Olivia is a Girl Scout Gold Award winner, her project connected shut-ins and homebound residents to her church's weekly services.



**Ben Forman**, a Narragansett High School graduate will be attending the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, MI in the fall.



He plans to pursue a degree in engineering with a potential application towards the environment. Ben also plans to minor in Spanish. Ben is an outstanding student who was leader in many areas, including the schools Environmental Club. He had an internship with the University of RI's Coastal Resources Center, where he worked on the Narragansett Bay Initiative project. Ben was the Captain of the boys' tennis team and the math team. He volunteered his time to help struggling math students. Ben also served as an officer of the World Language Honor Society.

**Quinn Jones**, a graduate of Narragansett High School, will attend Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA in the fall. She plans to pursue a degree in environmental science with a double major in English. She is looking forward to Dickinson, which



has a working farm and the school is ranked number one in sustainability. She has been active in local beach cleanups with Clean Ocean Access, where she had an internship and lobbied for banning single use plastic bags. She also ran her own beach cleanup on Second Beach, where she had 40 college students from Asia that did not speak English – all worked out well!

**Deanna Phan**, a graduate of North Kingstown High School, plans to at-



tend the University of New Hampshire in the fall. She has chosen to major in Wildlife and Conservation Biology. Deanna is passionate

about environmental conservation as demonstrated by her active volunteer work. She has been active volunteer for the Audubon Society of Rhode Island focusing on their conservation and stewardship areas. She is currently participating in their Osprey Monitoring Program. She is also a volunteer for the Norman Bird Sanctuary and the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, where she is working on a coyote study.

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.

The scholarship applications are judged on the student's environmentally oriented activities in and out of high school; the quality of an original essay on the river; science teacher's recommendation and academic achievement in math and science courses.

### Osprey Pair Adopt Nest Platform Installed by NRPA and NRLT

In March 2019, NRPA partnered with Narrow River Land Trust (NRLT) to install a nest platform for osprey at Garrison House Acres, a property in South Kingstown, south of Middlebridge Road, protected by NRLT.

A few weeks after the platform was installed, a young pair of osprey adopted the nest. These birds appear to be immature as they showed signs of nest building, but did not prepare well enough to lay eggs and tend them this year.

Osprey tend to return to the very same nesting spot year after year, so our experts expect that the same pair will return next March and start a family.

NRPA is seeking funding to install a web cam on the platform so we can provide live video of the nest 24 hours a day on the NRPA and NRLT websites.



## Indigenous People, continued from page 1

And I said “welcome to the homelands of the Narragansett people.”

...One of our last chiefs of the 20th century Chief Strong Horse passed away last week, and the funeral was yesterday. So I want to have him in our hearts and our minds today because he did remarkable things in bringing us forth. (To learn more about him visit the Tomaquag Museum or website/podcast [www.tomaquagmuseum.org/podcasts](http://www.tomaquagmuseum.org/podcasts))

A lot of the work that we do today is to reclaim or continue culture that's been interrupted through colonization...

So, [blessing in Narragansett-not transcribed]. And so what I said to you is I asked the Creator or I said, we come here today all in a circle together with quiet hearts, giving thanks for the beauty that surrounds us. And that we give thanks for the fish and the birds and the animals, and for the sun, and the wind, and for all our beloved relations, which is literally, in our way of thinking, all living things. We don't differentiate between the grass that's over there, the animals, and the humans. To us, they're all the relations, because if you live in harmony with the land and the earth, they all have equal balance to make our existence in balance and sacred.

[Added later] **Pettaquamscutt** could mean round rock, or place near round rock. It is not definitive. ...there are lots of questions around the term Pettaquamscutt. However, round is petukqui or puttukqui in our language and rock is qussuk or chippipsqut. So it is possible, however the modern version of the word is close to lots of other words such as petukau which means he (she or it) goes into and saunkopaugot means cool water. So, it could be the place that goes into the cool water. Which would make more sense as the salt waters enter the fresh waters.

Usually the name describes the river in some way. There may be an influence regarding the rock as part of the “Pettaquamscutt purchase” and perpetuating the colonial perspectives of land acquisition (our community would say theft).

...Indigenous people were very creative in finding what they need in this environment, and so pretty much everything is useful. And even today with invasives - I think that's autumn olive behind us flickering there... it's edible, but it's an invasive, and a lot of things that we're having problems with today are invasive plants taking over the habitats of the indigenous plants, and literally wiping them out in some places...

And there's some of those animals that are also invasive as well that are taking over areas of other indigenous birds and indigenous insects, and taking over those habitats...

And our ancestors really worked at trying to live in balance. I know that can sound kind of cliché, but literally when your life depends on it, you do.

You know, when you're on the river, and... the herring are going upstream, all the different fish that are spawning, we didn't take them all.

There's actually a technique we would use using weirs, in the wider bodies of water. It's kind of like... a zigzag fencing. Sometimes it was curved, I've seen it both ways. And the goal was the running fish would go inside and it would slow them down.

...They would stand up on the pilings, with their spear and their nets to get the bigger fish...

In smaller streams... you would use what some people call a basket trap, but it's really a misnomer, because it's not a trap. If you envision a basket and the mouth of the basket... lay it down on its side it actually goes out here and you never close the back.

So the goal is for the fish to go through the basket and then out the other side. It just slows them down in order for them to be able to capture them with nets and with spears.

They're not really doing fishing with like fishing poles at that kind of environment. This was more netting and spearing fish as they were going upstream. So that's a really cool tech-



Cattails (*Typha latifolia* and *angustifolia*) grow in marshy areas along Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River and are useful in many ways. Traditionally, cattail reeds can be woven into mats, the pollen can be used medicinally to stop bleeding, the roots can be dried and ground into flour, the shoots can be eaten raw or cooked and the fluff inside the seed heads can be used as cushioning inside beds and moccasins, to insulate homes and to provide absorption when used in diapers. *\*Do not try or use unless guided by an expert.*

nique. We [The Tomaquag Museum] have a really beautiful basket weir...

Even today, we still eat a lot of things that are from the waterways.

...As we were leaving that water edge, it looked like there was quite a lot of clay sediment in the soil, and of course our ancestors did a lot of clay making. And you have to temper the clay with shell or other broken pots or sand. Gravel, not sand, gravel. Without the tempering the pot would just fall apart when we tried to fire it.

*Funding for the partnership between NRPA and the Tomaquag Museum was provided by the New England Grassroots Environment Fund.*

*Support for the kayak tour was provided by Narrow River Kayaks.*

*A full transcript of Lorén's remarks are at [narrowriver.org/Indigenous-people](http://narrowriver.org/Indigenous-people).*





## What Lives in the River

At What Lives in the River on June 15, explorers found oysters, mussels, horseshoe crabs, green crabs, blue crabs, hermit crabs, asian shore crabs, grass, ghost and crangon shrimp, pipefish, American eels, winter flounder, clams, sculpin, sticklebacks, cunner, mummichugs, periwinkles, whelks, silversides, barnacles, amphipods, polychaetes and more!

At left, budding scientists examine and show off fish and glass shrimp. Photos by Josh LaPlante.

More than 70 guests used hand nets and seine nets to catch critters in the Narrow River at Middlebridge. Captured animals were added to touch tanks for all to see during the event, then released back into the river at the end of the session.

Many thanks to the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Women's Club of South County who granted NRPA a Grow Hope Grant to engage Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale members in the event.

**All are welcome at What Lives in the River on Saturday, September 14 from 9-11am at Middlbridge.** The event is free and open to the public. Please preregister at [narrowriver.org/whatlivesinriver](http://narrowriver.org/whatlivesinriver).

## 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Narrow River Road Race

On Saturday, May 18, 235 runners and walkers enjoyed sunny skies and a light breeze as they ran and walked along and across the Narrow River in the 2019 Narrow River Road Race 10K Run, 5K Run and 5K Walk.

The 10K run starts at Narragansett Town Beach while the 5K events start at Treaty Rock Park on Middlebridge Road in South Kingstown. All races finish at the beach.

Ross McAndrew of East Greenwich won the 10K race with a time of 33:31. The top female 10K finisher was Aileen Keogh of West Roxbury, MA with a time of 41:55.

This year, Mwangi Gitahi of Wakefield and Erin Carberry of Smithfield, RI took top honors in the 5K.

Lucy Walker, age 9, of Narragansett, took the prize for female finisher in the 18 and under category in the 10K. Walker ran with her father, Kurt, while her mother, Caroline, ran the 5K.

Special thanks to the many volunteers who made this fun event a great success this year!



Participants running alongside Narrow River in the 32nd Annual Road Race, held on May 18.

*Photo by Bob Mohr.*

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual

## Narrow River Turnaround Swim

Raising awareness and funds for Narrow River Preservation Association, 110 swimmers enjoyed the beautiful Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River on Saturday, June 22.

Winning the non-wetsuit division of the swim were a father and daughter from Jamestown, RI. Bruce Novis, age 53 finished in 25 minutes and 27 seconds while his daughter Hailley Novis (age 23) was less than a minute behind at 26:41.

Matt Alford of Coventry won the men's wetsuit division. The women's wetsuit division was won by Jill Lancaster of Barrington, RI who completed the one mile swim in 25 minutes, 27 seconds.

Each year, the swim is organized by a dedicated group of volunteers. Many thanks to these committed planners and to all of the volunteers who make the swim fun and safe.



The 14th Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim gets started under the watchful eye of volunteer kayak spotter Ken McShane.

*Photo by Alison Kates*

## Grant Award, cont. from page 1

enduring and multifaceted commitment to wetlands conservation. In Richard Barker Grant, we found the perfect awardee.”

Says Grant “While I was recognized for my volunteer input, my speech was really a thank you to the hundreds of people that have volunteered on projects that have improved the quality of the water in the Pettaquamscutt (Narrow River) Watershed. I am just thankful to have been able to give back to the environment for what I have received from it.”

The love of nature and art has guided Richard Grant to merge his avocation and vocation through out his life. He joined NRPA in 1972, a few years after graduating from Brown University where he studied Art History and Studio Art.

In the first year of his business career, Richard created the nationally recognized Interlaken Art Program. As art director he produced celebrated artist’s art on book cloth. Shortly thereafter, Richard purchased the Cambridge Paper Box Company and followed with founding R. B. Grant & Associates, a packaging firm providing structural packaging and design to educational publishers nationwide.

Richard’s initial involvement with NRPA was to raise funds. The first year Richard led NRPA’s fundraising efforts, he organized a canoe raffle that raised \$183.

He continues to lead NRPA’s fund-



Richard Grant at Sprague Bridge along Narrow River.

raising programs today, along with supporting all other aspects of NRPA’s work. In 1996, Richard was elected NRPA’s President and has served in that role ever since.

Richard is especially proud that the water quality in Narrow River has shown improvement over the 29 years of NRPA’s River Watch water testing program. He says that he is comfortable that he has given a token back to nature.

NRPA Treasurer Ken McShane notes that under Grant’s leadership, NRPA has become a resource for agencies and organizations who need information about Narrow River. Those include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, municipal governments, Coastal Resources Management Council and Town, State and Federal entities.

Those who know Grant admire his unique ability to build bridges, even among opposing forces. Dr. Veronica Berounsky, Vice President of NRPA, remembers a contentious meeting a few years ago that included irate comments and angry outbursts. As people were leaving the meeting, Grant approached a person who had expressed anger at NRPA’s actions and invited him to get coffee together the following day. They did go and have been partners since.

Berounsky was on hand in Washington to see Richard accept his award. Also in attendance were long time NRPA supporter Bill Moylan and Richard’s family.



Richard Grant in his element: making art along Narrow River with young visitors.

## 12th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle

On July 19, Narrow River Kayaks hosted the 2019 Pettaquamscutt Paddle, with all proceeds benefitting NRPA.

The guided paddle featured Craig Wood’s remarks about osprey along the Narrow River, including the new nest platform at Garrison House Acres.

After the paddle, guests enjoyed dinner and conversation as the sun set.

Many thanks to Jason Considine and Narrow River Kayaks for hosting this fun and educational fundraiser.



## Pettaquamscutt Reading Group: Stories of Past & Place

Who are we in relation to the Narrow River watershed? Here, we are surrounded by ancestors—maybe our own blood ancestors, certainly others. These ancestors began relationships in this place; these relationships continue through our own lives. Together we’ll ask, “What does healing look like within these relationships?”

Our historical readings will be intentionally short and deep; we’ll select them as a group. We’ll meet once a month to talk about our readings together and hopefully share some food. This group is free and open to the public.

Our first meeting will be in September; if you’re interested in being part, email Evan McManamy at [evan.L.mcmanamy@gmail.com](mailto:evan.L.mcmanamy@gmail.com).



## Salt Marsh Planting in Lower Narrow River

Many thanks to the 187 volunteers who planted salt marsh grass seedlings along lower Narrow River in May and June 2019. In all, the teams planted 29,000 plants.

Like the similar project undertaken in 2017, volunteers planted salt marsh grass seedlings in marsh areas recently raised when dredged material was added to the marshes.

Learning from the 2017 project, this year teams planted at higher elevations, cultivated seedlings in a nursery for 1 1/2 years (instead of 6 months), loosened the sand around the seedlings prior to planting, planting more spike grass (*Distichlis spicata*) that is more drought and high salinity tolerant and protected seedlings from being eaten by Canada geese by erecting temporary fencing around newly planted areas.

Ben Gaspar, Project Leader for US Fish and Wildlife Service, says "Overall, the new plantings are doing well. It has been exciting see the new growth on the marsh grass plugs as they spread out and get established."

The project is intended to protect the marsh from rising sea levels.



Francisca, age 10, carries a tray of smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) seedlings to raised salt marshes to plant.

Photo by Alison Kates

## Narrow River Land Trust Upcoming Walks



**NRLT**  
Narrow River Land Trust

### Saturday, September 7 from 9-11am: Bugs and Bagels

Join David Gregg, Director of the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, for a quick bagel breakfast followed by an insect adventure at the Narrow River Land Trust's Garrison House Acres.

Did You Know: the insects of planet earth weigh at least 1.1 trillion pounds - while humans add up to a mere 632 billion pounds. In Rhode Island, there should be at least 15,000 (!!) species of insects. Recent studies, however, show that insects are declining around the globe. Don't you think it's time to start paying attention to insects? Join us, as we use various traps and nets to see what kind of insect activity there is in a coastal grassland habitat and how many different orders of insects we can find in an hour.

Wear close-toed shoes, socks, and long pants because poison ivy and ticks are part of our biodiversity, too! Bring a hand lens if you have one and binoculars if you like.



Left, David Gregg and crew with moth trap. At right, who scribbled on this leaf?

### Saturday, September 14 from 10am-12: Salt Marsh Walk as part of Narragansett Days

Salt marshes are a) the loveliest, most peaceful shoreline of RI, b) more biologically productive than a rainforest, c) the "nursery" for RI finfish, d) "species specific," many plants and animals can only live and breed here, e) in decline, but why?

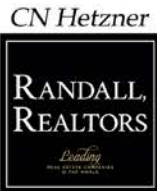
Join Nick Ernst, Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as he leads us on a tour of Garrison House Acres, a coastal Preserve of the Narrow River Land Trust. Learn about the role salt marshes play in the life cycles of plants and animals. Learn what is happening in salt marshes today, why they are changing and what measures are being taken to preserve them.

There are many things to see and observe, but most of all, a stroll through the salt marsh with a knowledgeable guide is a lovely way to spend the morning. Wear close-toed shoes, socks, and long pants because poison ivy and ticks are part of our biodiversity, too! Bring binoculars if you like.



Salt marsh walk. Photos by NRLT.

# MANY THANKS to NRPA's 2019 SPONSORS!



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