



***50 Years of Protecting,  
Preserving, and Restoring the  
Narrow River and its Watershed***

**On Pettaquamscutt Winter Speaker Series  
January 26, 2020**

# Welcome and Introductions

**Dr. Veronica  
Berounsky,  
NRPA Vice President**





## **Presenters:**

- **Richard Grant review of 1970-1990**
- **Annette DeSilva review of 1991-2010**
- **Sarah Gaines review of 2011-2020**

**Questions and Answers**

**50th Anniversary Events**

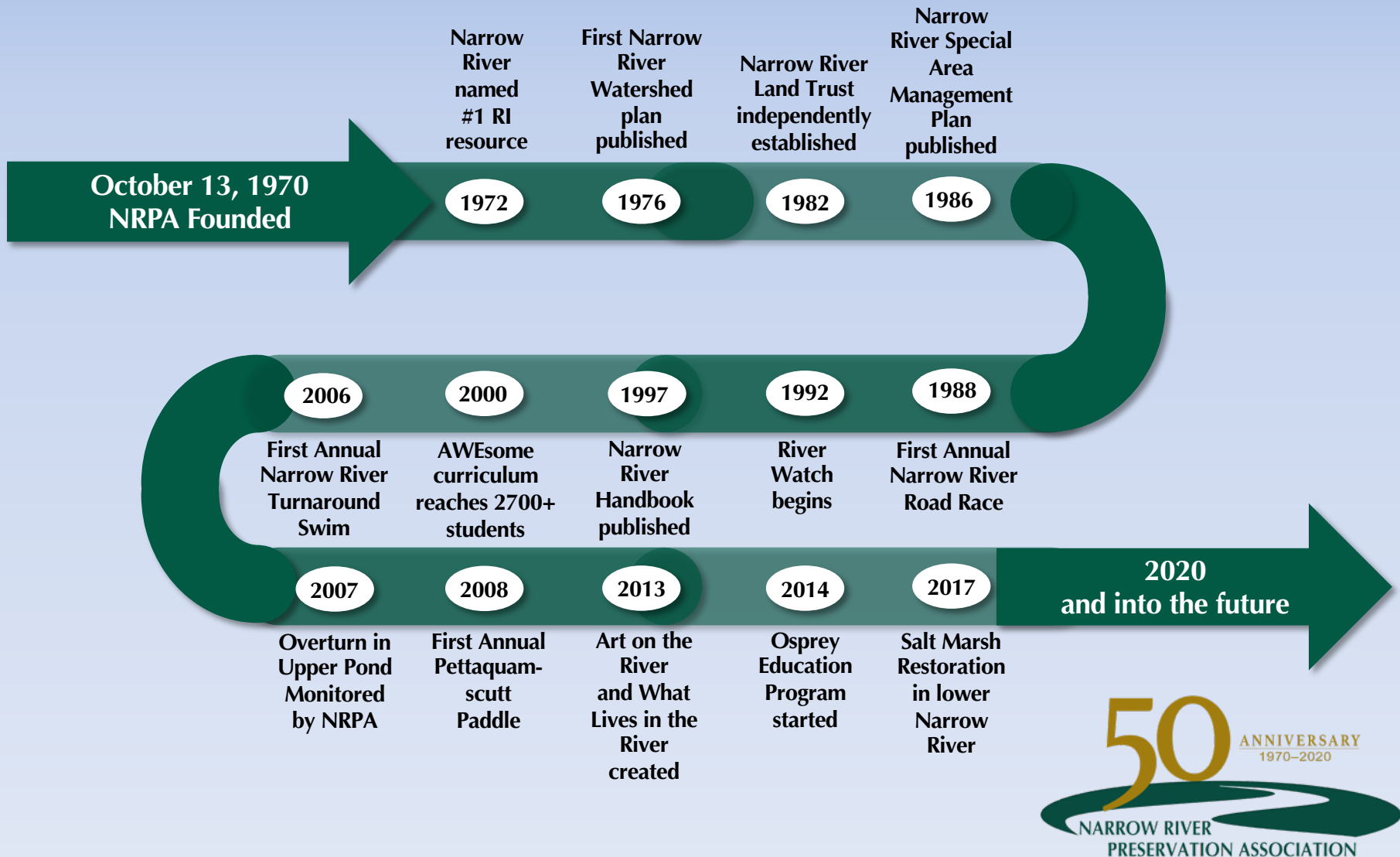
**Continue the conversation at Trio**



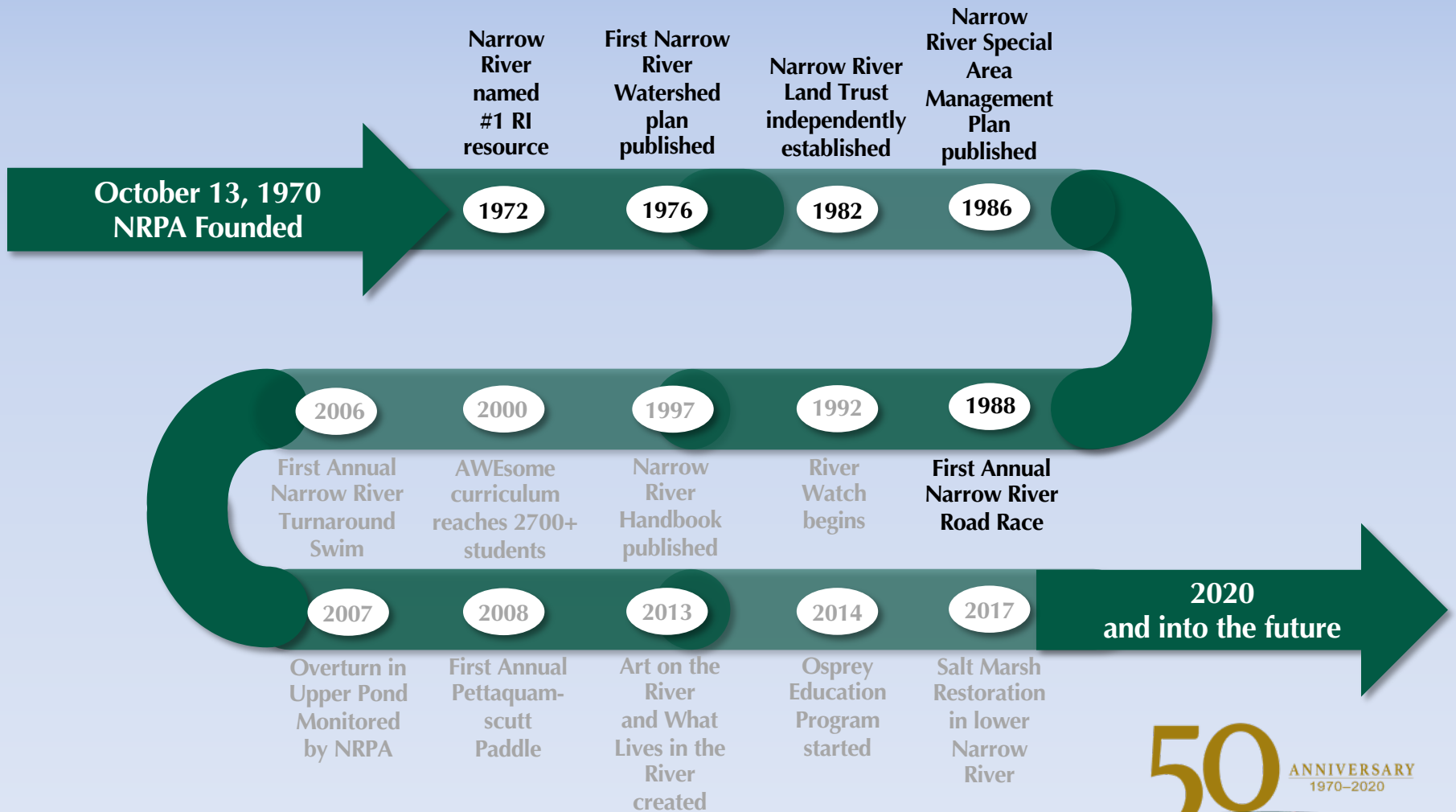


**The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) works to preserve, protect, and restore the natural environment and the quality of life for all communities within the Narrow River (Pettaquamscutt Estuary) and Watershed.**

# NRPA 1970 - 2020



# NRPA 1970 - 1990



# **Richard Barker Grant**

**NRPA President**

**NRPA 1970-1990  
The first 20 years**



# 1970 NRPA

In 1970, NRPA was established to oppose the possible sale of the 'Kelgrant' property in the watershed

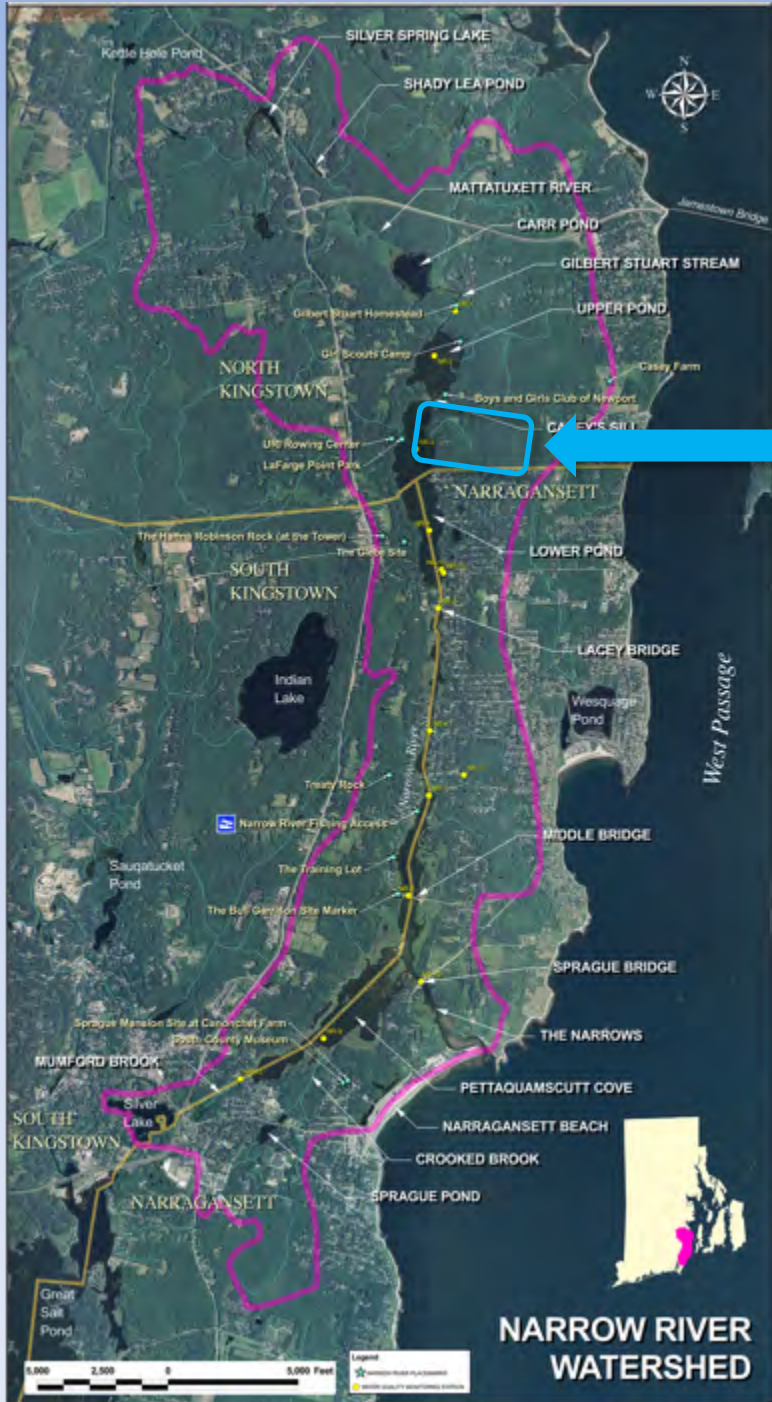
- The 225 acre Kelgrant property was willed to the Boy Scouts of America in 1958.
- In 1970, the Boy Scouts planned to put the land up for sale as they were no longer using the property
- Residents, concerned that developers would buy the property and ruin a valuable wildlife preserve, create NRPA





# 1970 Kelgrant Property

225 acres on the eastern shore of  
Pettaquamscutt River  
Located in North Kingstown



# 1970 NRPA Incorporated

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

I, AUGUST P. LAFRANCE Secretary of State  
hereby certify that John W. Peirce,  
Joseph T. Houlihan, Linda E. Griffith,  
Yolande Veilleus, Elizabeth W. Smith

filed in the office of the Secretary of State on the thirteenth  
day of October, A. D. 19 70, an original and a duplicate  
of the articles of association for forming a corporation under the name of  
The Narrow River Preservation Association, Inc.

and that the foregoing is the duplicate of said articles of association.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of the State of  
Rhode Island this thirteenth  
day of October, in  
the year 1970

*August P. LaFrance*  
Secretary of State



**October 13, 1970**

**Narrow River  
Preservation  
Association, Inc.  
files Articles of  
Association with  
Rhode Island  
Secretary of State.**



# 1970 First NRPA General Meeting

## October 19, 1970, there was a general meeting of Narrow River Preservation Association

- 250 members were noted (about 75% of those attended the meeting)
- In addition to the Kelgrant property, leaders were concerned about other projects in Narrow River, including:
  - A petition by the URI Crew club to install a dock (at its current location)
  - A motel and restaurant proposed by Mr. Rao to be built on 8 acres on Tower Hill Road, within the Narrow River drainage basin
- NRPA's mailing address was established as PO Box 8, Saunderstown, the mailbox we use to this day
- NRPA leaders asked for \$1.00 per member in annual dues
- Dr. Ted Smayda elected President, Arthur Gaines - Vice President for scientific affairs, Joseph Houlihan -VP for legal affairs, Laura Fortune -VP for financial affairs, Stuart Hale - VP for public relations, and Patricia MacLaughlin - secretary

### Narrow River Preservation Unit Elects Officers

The Narrow River Preservation Association, which formed in August to preserve the boy scout-owned Kelgrant property in Saunderstown for conservation and recreation, met earlier this week to elect officers and approve bylaws and a constitution.

The association also reiterated a request to meet with scout officials to discuss conservation and recreational uses of Kelgrant. The association is seeking to include land restrictions to conservation and recreation in the deed.

Although the group, which now has about 180 members, formed to seek a solution to use of the Kelgrant property, it is also concerned with other conservational aspects of the Narrow River area.

The officers are Dr. Theodore J. Smayda, president; Joseph Houlihan, vice president for legal affairs; Mrs. Laura Fortune, vice president for financial affairs; Stuart Hale, vice president for public relations; Arthur Gaines, vice president for scientific affairs, and Mrs. Patricia MacLaughlin, secretary.

Elected to the board of directors were Albert Carlin, Mrs. Helen Handell, Robert Anderson and John Perce.

# 1972 Report Ranks Narrow River #1 in RI, NRPA Initiates Follow-up Study

## '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 off 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.

The river was put 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."

### Study effort under way

## *Narrow River: No. 1 resource*

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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 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 upon public response in all three towns, to have a study under way by

either next summer or fall.

The preservation unit began a plan 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.

# 1974 Great Canoe Race

**In 1974, NRPA starts a Great Canoe Race fundraiser**

The caption of this photo reads:

*Todd Grant, 9, of Kingston and Lee Freeman, 12, of Smithfield, near the finish line of the children's race, sponsored by the Narrow River Preservation [Association] ...*

In its inaugural year, the race brought in \$183 in funds for NRPA.

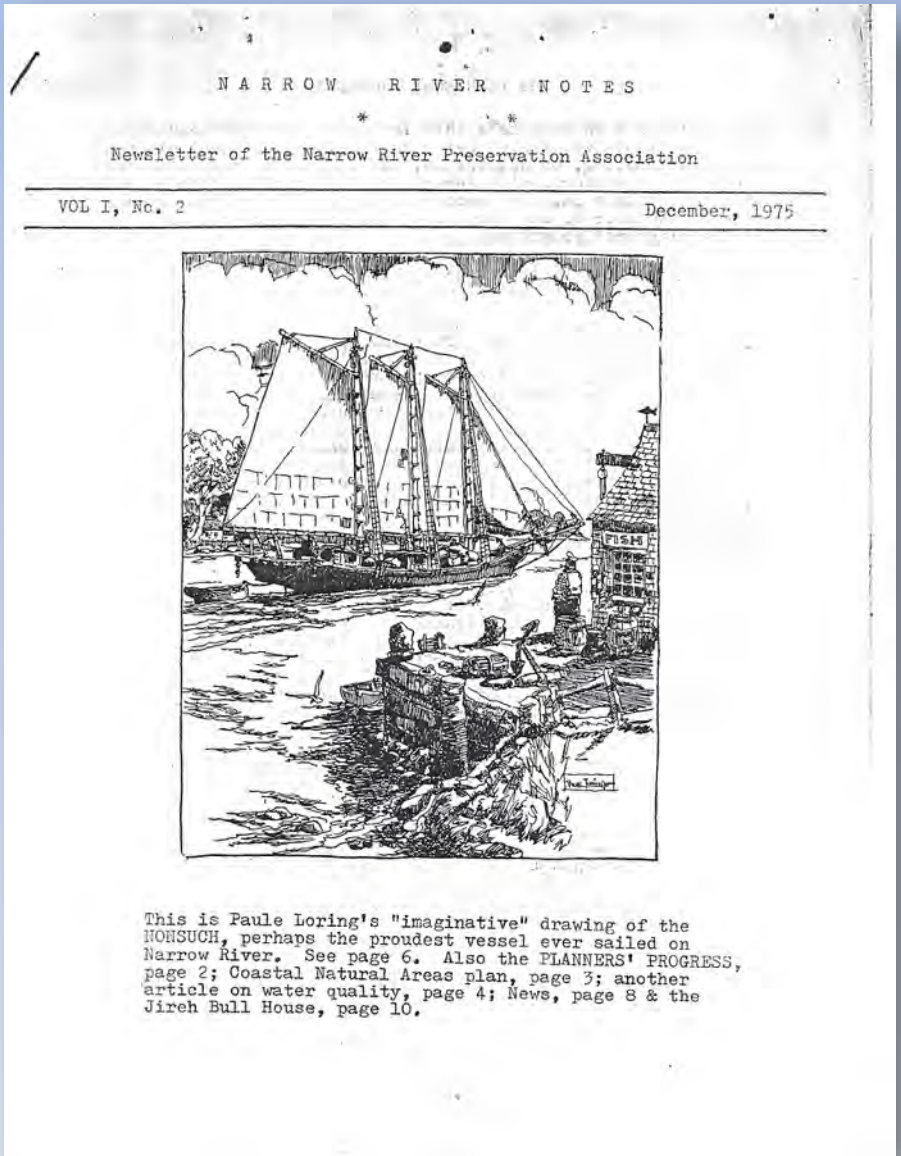


# 1975 *Narrow River Notes*

In 1975, NRPA publishes the first issue of *Narrow River Notes*, our newsletter

*Narrow River Notes* shares information about the watershed with residents, partners, sponsors and others.

The December 1975 issue, VOL I, No. 2, contained a sketch of the Nonsuch, one of many ships built in the Narrow River.

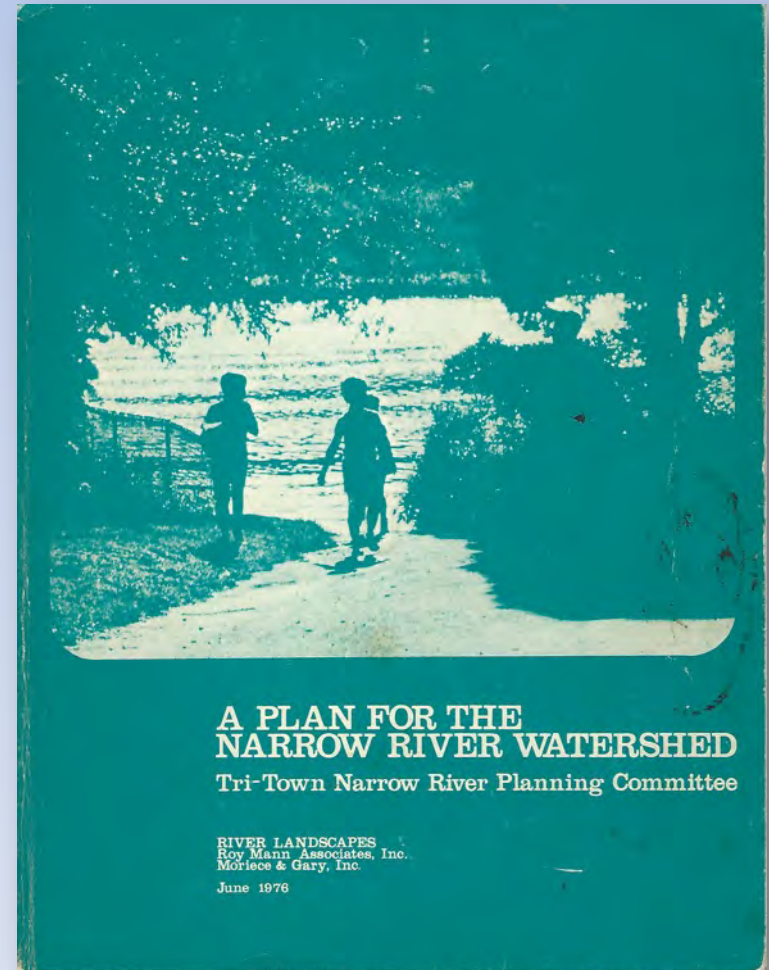


# 1976 Watershed Plan

## A Plan for the Narrow River Watershed is published

The study was commissioned by the Tri-Town Narrow River Planning Committee, which included: NRPA, Narragansett, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown. Support for printing the study was provided by the Dunes Club, Mettatuxet Yacht Club and the Pettaquamscutt Lake Club.

The study concluded that **“The Narrow River watershed possesses many outstanding natural scenic and cultural resources and should be granted special attention by the public, as well as private individuals, to ensure perpetuation of the watershed’s value to all.”**



# 1976 Watershed Plan

## A few of the many recommendations:

- “Support and encourage the formation of a watershed land trust to solicit and maintain privately dedicated open space land.”
- “Study the need for treatment of urban runoff, particularly from the middle river area, and, to the degree necessary, require the provision of oil and grease traps, retention basins, and other ameliorative measures.”
- “Develop streamside and bluff trails and access points where conditions permit.”



## watershed analysis

### introduction

The Narrow River, draining 14 square miles in South Kingstown, North Kingstown, and Narragansett, is located in the heart of the Southern Rhode Island region, one of the fastest-growing areas in the state (Map 1). Between 1950 and 1970, the population of the three towns increased by 212% (Narragansett), 101% (North Kingstown), and 66% (South Kingstown). The watershed itself, though, has not experienced the brunt of development to date, that has taken place in the bay shore areas and on the more easily buildable lands of the three towns. Except for a number of relatively small subdivisions and older communities, the lands of the Narrow River valley are predominantly undeveloped, a rural "wedge" between the more intensively settled areas on the east and south.

The region has proven highly attractive for commuter residential use and for coastal recreation and tourism. Some industrial development has also taken place, and energy-related facilities may be further developed in the future because of the region's highway and rail system and its





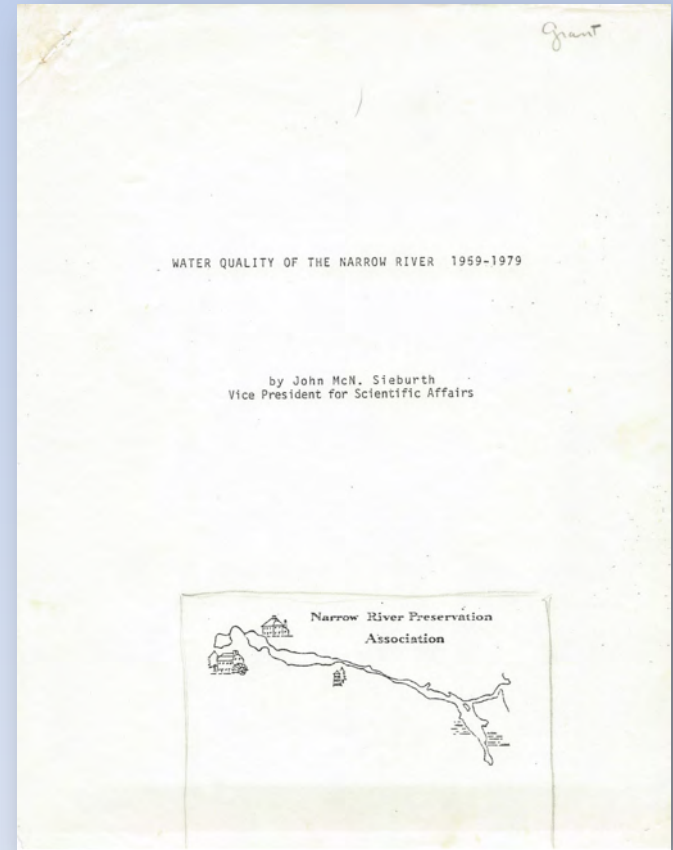
# 1979 First Narrow River Water Quality Report

With Kelgrant almost resolved, NRPA turned its attention to water quality under the direction of two VPs for Scientific Affairs, Dr. Paul Hargraves (1973-78) and later Dr. John Sieburth (1979-1980) who authored the 1979 report.

**Mr. W.E.R. LaFarge was President (1979-80).**

The state took water samples from the 3 bridges in 1959-1961 and found high fecal coliform bacteria levels in the summer. But shellfishing was not banned, additional sampling was not done, and the results were only made public in 1979.

NRPA fecal coliform bacteria testing of the River at 5 stations in 1974-75 and at 10 stations in 1978-1979 documented levels too high for shellfishing. As a result, the state carried out additional testing and then closed the River to shellfishing in August 1979, but re-opened it in 1980. In 1986, after more testing the River was closed to shellfishing and remains closed.



# 1980 Kelgrant finally resolved

Due to the efforts of the NRPA and the North Kingstown Planning Department, a Seven Farms Residential Compound Plan was approved and recorded on April 9, 1980 restricting development on the former Kelgrant property to seven residential building sites and 170 acres of Open Space.

A Conservation Easement on the “Preservation Easement” and the “Open Space” portions of the property plan was granted to the Town of North Kingstown and recorded on May 28, 1980. The owners of the residential lots privately own the conservation land.

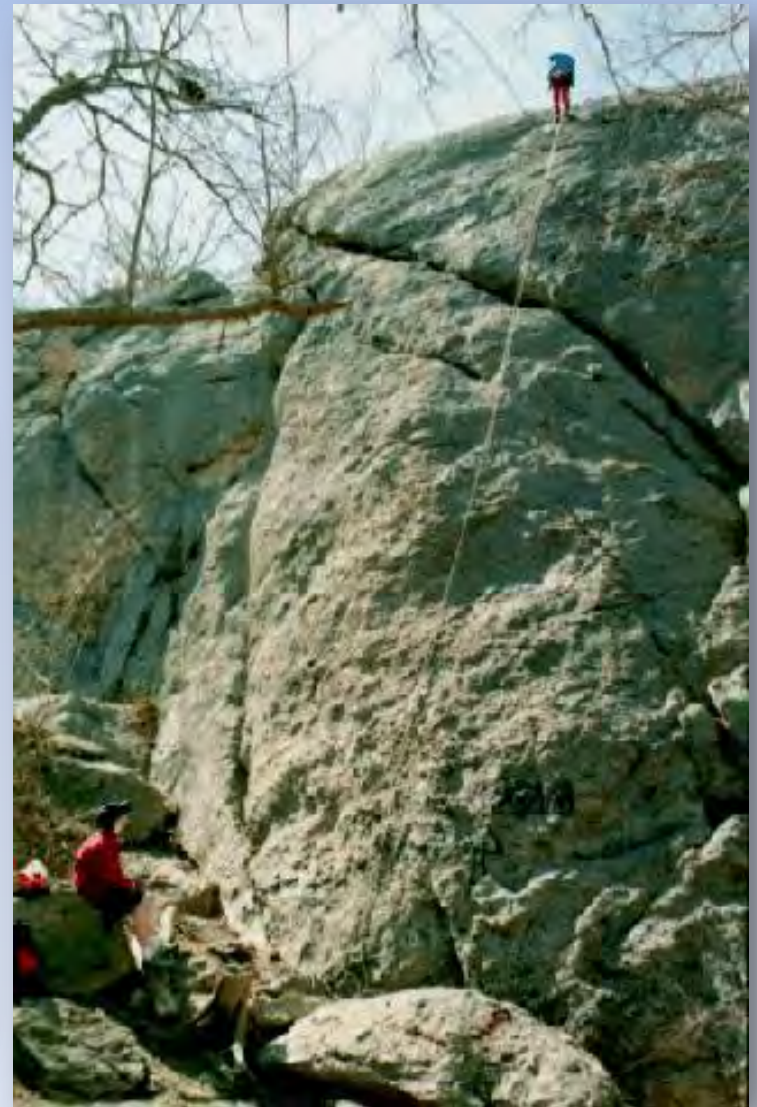


7 residential lots  
plus open space



# 1982 Pettaquamscutt Rock

Along Middlebridge Road, today the park hosts a large open area, a playground, basketball court and hiking trails to Pettaquamscutt Rock.



# 1982 Narrow River Land Trust

## Narrow River Land Trust Founded

Originally a committee of NRPA, the Land Trust became so busy with land and rights acquisitions that in 1982, it was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

To date, the Narrow River Land Trust has protected 667 acres in the Narrow River Watershed.

NRPA and NRLT work closely today to protect and preserve the Narrow River Watershed.



**NRLT**  
Narrow River Land Trust



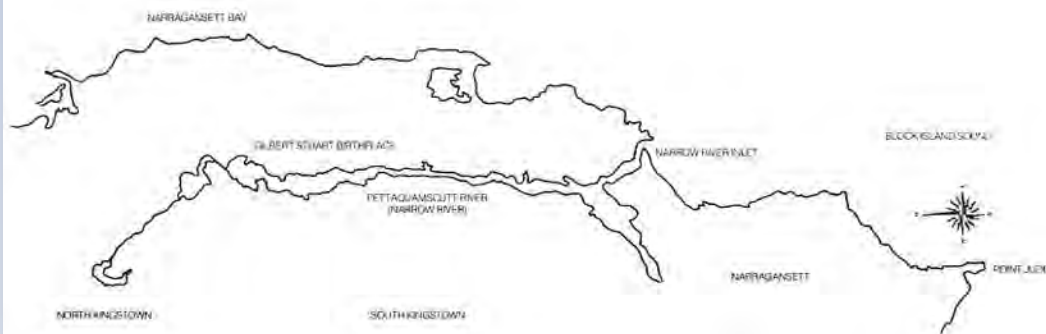
# NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

BOX 8  
SAUNDERSTOWN  
RHODE ISLAND  
02874

## RACE THE RIVER

### Narrow River Canoe Race

- WHEN:** July 15, 1984
- WHERE:** From Forest Lakes Beach to Middlebridge and return
- TIME:** 10:00 AM  
Registration: 9:00 - 9:30 AM  
Coffee and donuts available
- COST:** \$5.00 per participant (includes a free T-shirt)
- BEST TIMES:** 41 minutes - 1982  
76 minutes - 1983
- Great time - under 50 minutes  
Good time - under 90 minutes  
No time at all - over 90 minutes
- PURPOSE:** The NRPA Canoe Race develops interest in the NRPA activities which strives to maintain the preservation of the River.
- Racing the River challenges every crew no matter what the mix is. The length, the depth and the weight of the canoe is insignificant as each canoe is its own class. Challenge yourself, as you challenge the River. Enjoy Narrow River while testing your canoeing skills amongst others who are enjoying their time.



# 1984 Canoe Race

**In 1984, the Narrow River Canoe Race still going strong**

“The NRPA Canoe Race develops interest in the NRPA activities which strives to maintain the preservation of the River.”



# 1984 Science Fair Awards

## Awards given to Science Fair projects at local middle and high schools

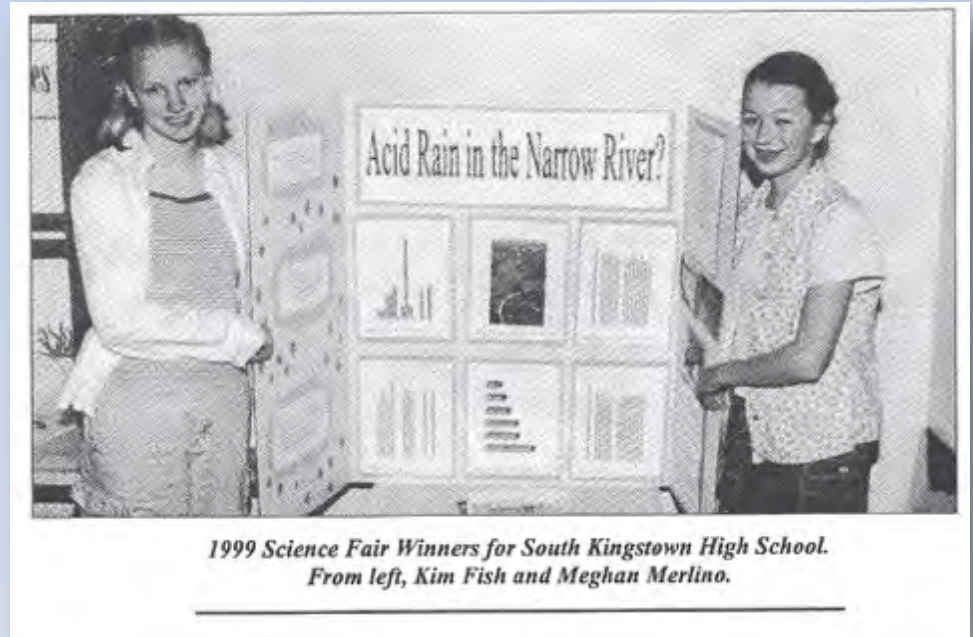
In order to encourage the curiosity of young scientists and to help them gain respect for the environment, NRPA has judged high school and middle school science fairs in Narragansett, North Kingstown and South Kingstown since 1984.

The ideal science projects will:

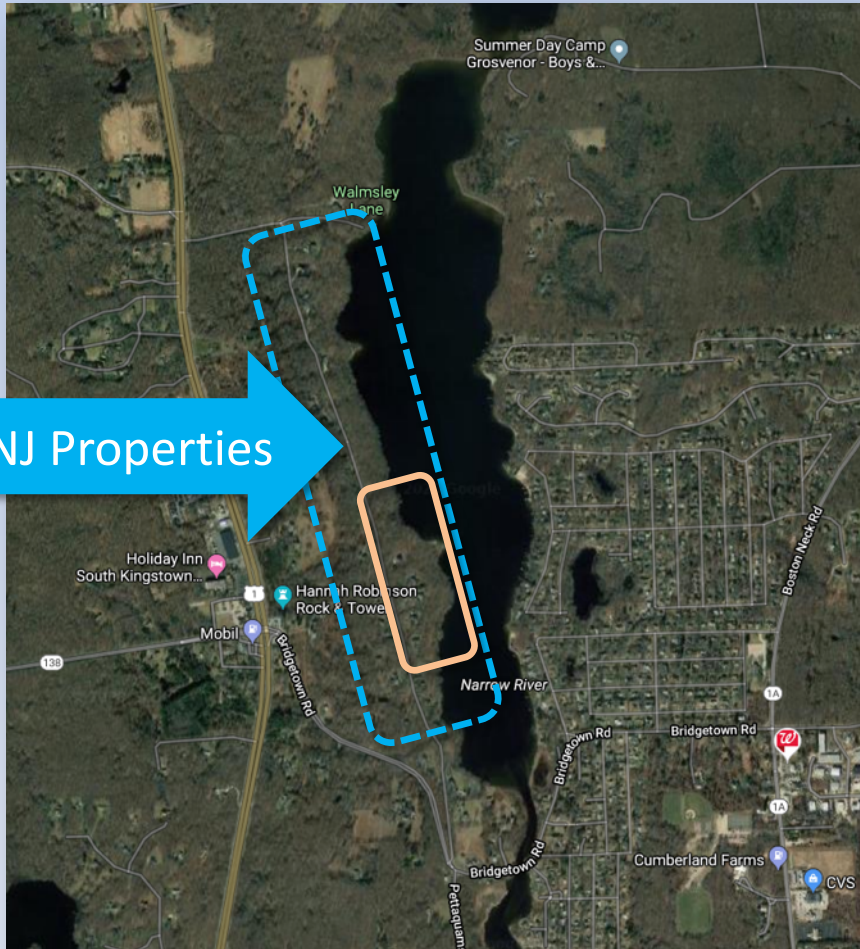
- be on any relevant topic,
- follow the scientific method, and
- show originality and creativity.

Since its inception, NRPA has awarded 60 Winners and 83 Honorable Mentions.

In 2020 and forward, judging will include environmental art projects.



# 1984-1991 Water's Edge Development



In 1984, SNJ Associates revealed their plan for “Water’s Edge”, a 30-acre, 17-house development on Walmsley Lane, North Kingstown. NRPA worked to prevent this development because of their concerns that the plot’s steep slope “would be subject to severe erosion” and that sewage from the development’s septic systems would pollute the river.

In 1991, after a costly and contentious legal battle, SNJ was allowed to build a more sustainable subdivision on 15 acres of the Walmsley Lane property consisting of 9 properties. The remaining properties were sold to the Narrow River Land Trust.

In the years following the Water’s Edge legal battle, NRPA focused more on working with developers to draft sustainable communities along the river, rather than opposing new development altogether.



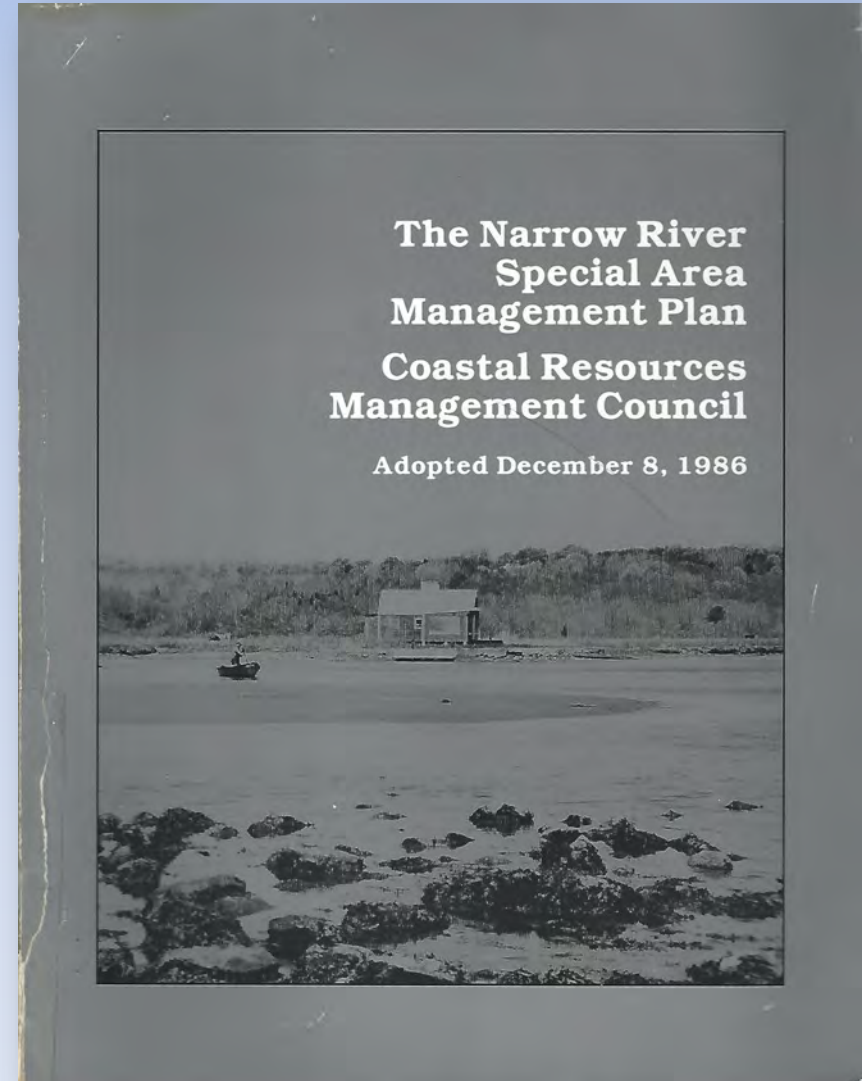


# 1986 Narrow River SAMP Adopted

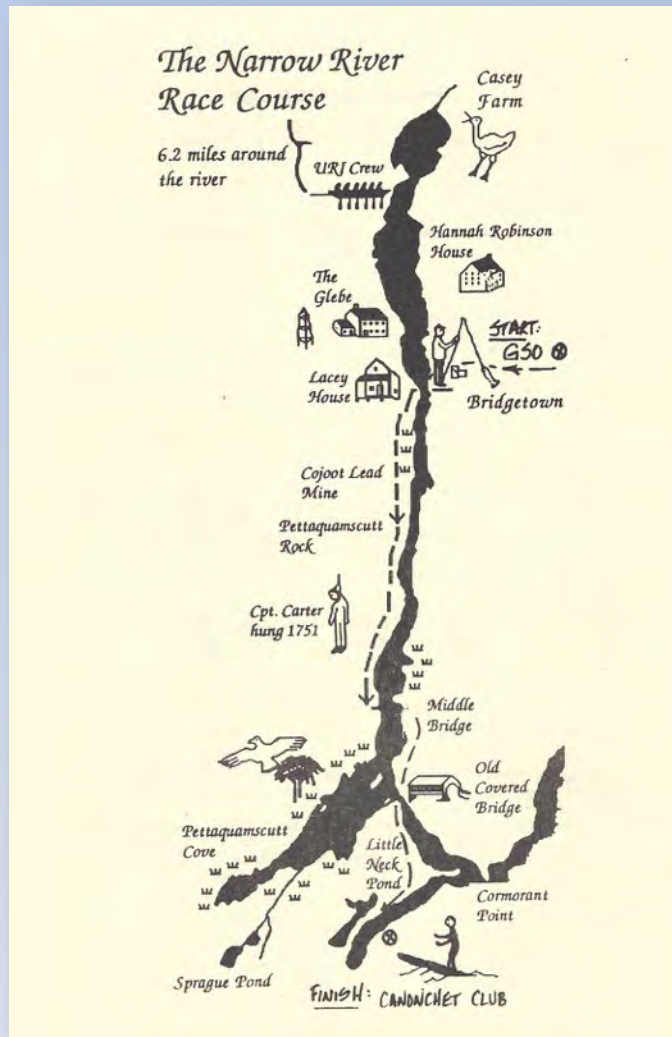
## Narrow River Special Area Management Plan (SAMP)

NRPA collaborated with the Coastal Resources Management Council and other stakeholders to write a Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) for the river.

“The Narrow River Special Area Management plan describes the present status of the river, characterizes its watershed, identifies sources of pollution, and recommends specific actions to restore, protect and preserve this highly regarded natural resource....The strategy behind the development of the Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) is to recognize how water quality, land-use, habitat, storm hazards and geology all interact on an ecosystem level to impact the health of the Narrow River.... There was .... the urgent need to develop strong management policies within the Narrow River watershed, which encompasses several unique water bodies. Past building practices and current building pressures within the watershed had led to water quality degradation, human encroachment on critical habitat areas, limited public access, and a decrease in the aesthetic value of the watershed”.



# 1988 First Annual Narrow River Road Race



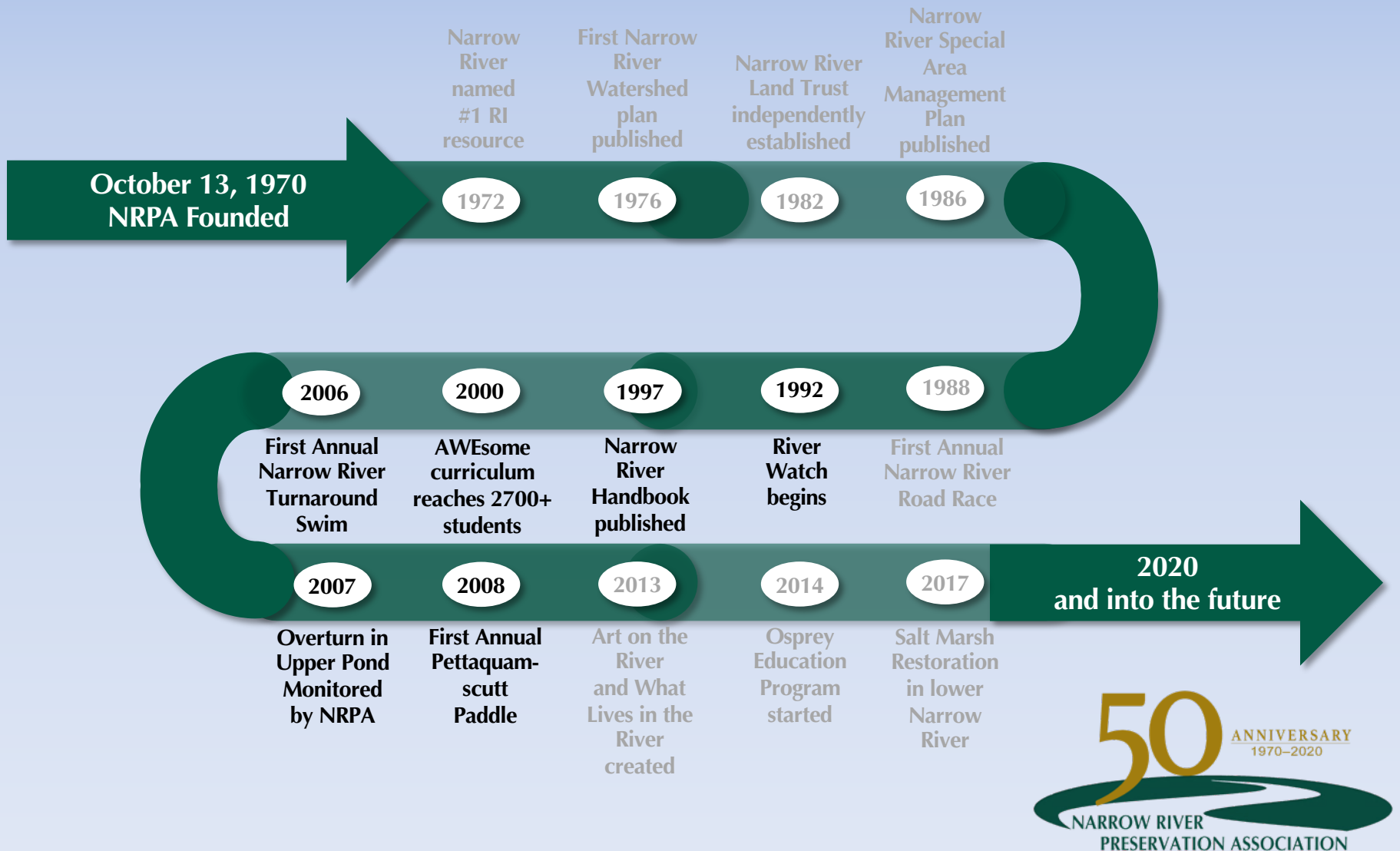
Started in 1988, the Narrow River Road Race is NRPA's longest running fundraiser.

The original 10K race started at the URI Bay Campus and ended at the Canonchet Club at Narragansett Town Beach.

Today, the 5K race starts at Treaty Rock Park in South Kingstown, the 10K race starts at Narragansett Town Beach, turns around at Treaty Rock Park. Both races end at Narragansett Town Beach.



# NRPA 1990 - 2010



# **Annette DeSilva**

**NRPA Associate Board  
Member**

**NRPA Board of Directors  
1990-2018**

**NRPA River Watch  
Program Coordinator**

**NRPA 1991-2010  
The second 20 years**



# 1992 River Watch Established

## River Watch

NRPA's signature program was started in 1992.

Citizen volunteers monitored water quality at 10 sites in Narrow River.

Between 1996 and 2004, the program was expanded to include 14 sites.

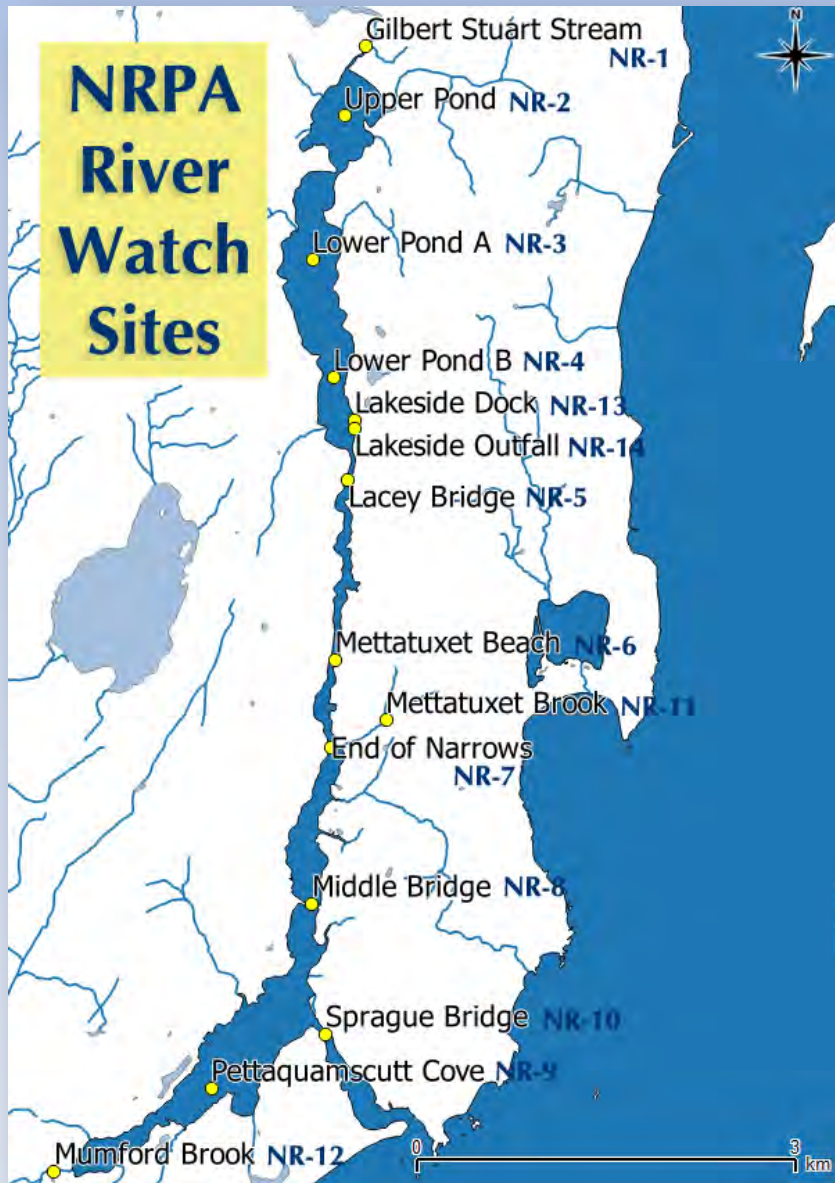


## Watershed Watch & River Watch Goals:

- To promote active citizen participation in water quality protection
- To educate the public about water quality issues
- To obtain multi-year surface water quality information in order to ascertain current conditions and detect trends
- To encourage sound management programs based on water quality information



# 1992 River Watch Established



## Monitoring Locations

Yellow circles on map (started in 1992 unless other year given):

- NR1 - Gilbert Stuart Stream
- NR2 - Upper Pond
- NR3 - Lower Pond A
- NR4 - Lower Pond B
- NR5 - Lacey Bridge
- NR6 - Mettatuxet Beach
- NR7 - End of the Narrows
- NR8 - Middlebridge
- NR9 - Pettaquamscutt Cove (1992-2017)
- NR10 - Sprague Bridge
- NR11 - Mettatuxet Brook (1996)
- NR12 - Mumford Brook (2000)
- NR13 - Lakeside Dock (2004)
- NR14 - Lakeside Outfall (2004-2017)



# 1992 River Watch Established

## River Watch

NRPA now has 28 years of River Watch data – a robust and detailed set.

### Actions taken based on River Watch data:

- Shortly after the program started, an outhouse along Gilbert Stuart Stream was removed, resulting in clean water samples within a few weeks after the removal
- Detention ponds were installed at Circuit Drive (2004) and Mettatuxet (2006)
- A Stormwater BMP (Best Management Practices) system was installed at Edgewater and Pettaquamscutt Terrace in 2010. The sand filter at that location slows down the flow of stormwater, keeps it in the sunlight, and filters it to reduce the amount of bacteria and nitrogen that flow into the river



# 1989 Friend of the River Award

## Friend of the River Award

NRPA established the Friend of the River Award in 1989 to honor people whose efforts to protect and preserve the Narrow River Watershed merited recognition.

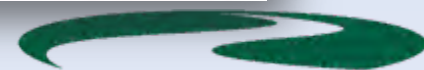
W.E.R. La Farge, NRPA President, Treasurer and long time Board member received NRPA's Environmental Award in 1991.

In 1996, after W.E.R.'s passing, the award was renamed The W.E.R. La Farge Friend of the River Award in his memory.

The award is presented at the NRPA Annual Meeting each October.



At top, Richard Grant (left) presents the 2014 W.E.R. La Farge Friend of the River Award to Jason Considine. At bottom, W.E.R. La Farge.





# 1993 Mission Statement

## Narrow River Preservation Association Codifies its Mission Statement



NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

BOX 8 ~ SAUNDERSTOWN, RI 02874

### NRPA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Narrow River Preservation Association is to preserve the quality of the communities and natural environment within the Pettaquamscutt watershed.

To accomplish this the NRPA, through its Board and members, will provide interested and expert volunteers to:

- A. Cooperate with environmental groups and local, state and federal agencies in planning and monitoring development within the watershed.
- B. Through education and outreach programs, work to make the community aware of the history, problems and potential of the watershed.
- C. Maintain awareness of changes proposed in the watershed and insure that they are of benefit to all communities in the watershed.

# 1995 College Scholarships

## College Scholarships to High School Seniors in the Watershed

In 1995, NRPA awarded three \$500 scholarships to seniors graduating from high schools in the Narrow River.

In 2007, the scholarship program was renamed in Memory of Lesa Meng, a former NRPA Board Member and the award was increased to \$1,000.

Open to High School seniors who plan to pursue a college education in science and attend

- Narragansett High School
- North Kingstown High School
- South Kingstown High School or
- Prout School



Since 1995, 79 scholarships have been awarded, with a total of \$60,500 granted to local students.



# 1996 AWEsome curriculum

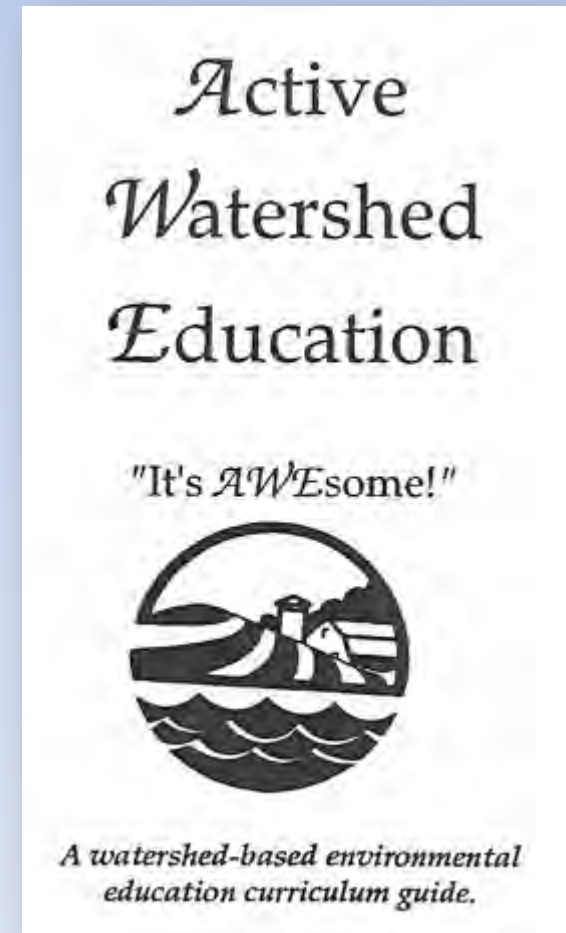
## Active Watershed Education Curriculum created

In partnership with the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District, NRPA developed a curriculum guide specific to the Narrow River Watershed.

Topics of this curriculum include

- definition of a watershed,
- wetland ecology and exploration,
- water resources,
- soil resources and
- the effects of land use on the watershed.

By 2000, 27 teachers had been trained in the curriculum, bringing the Narrow River AWEsome curriculum to over 2,700 students attending schools in the watershed.



# 1997 Narrow River Handbook

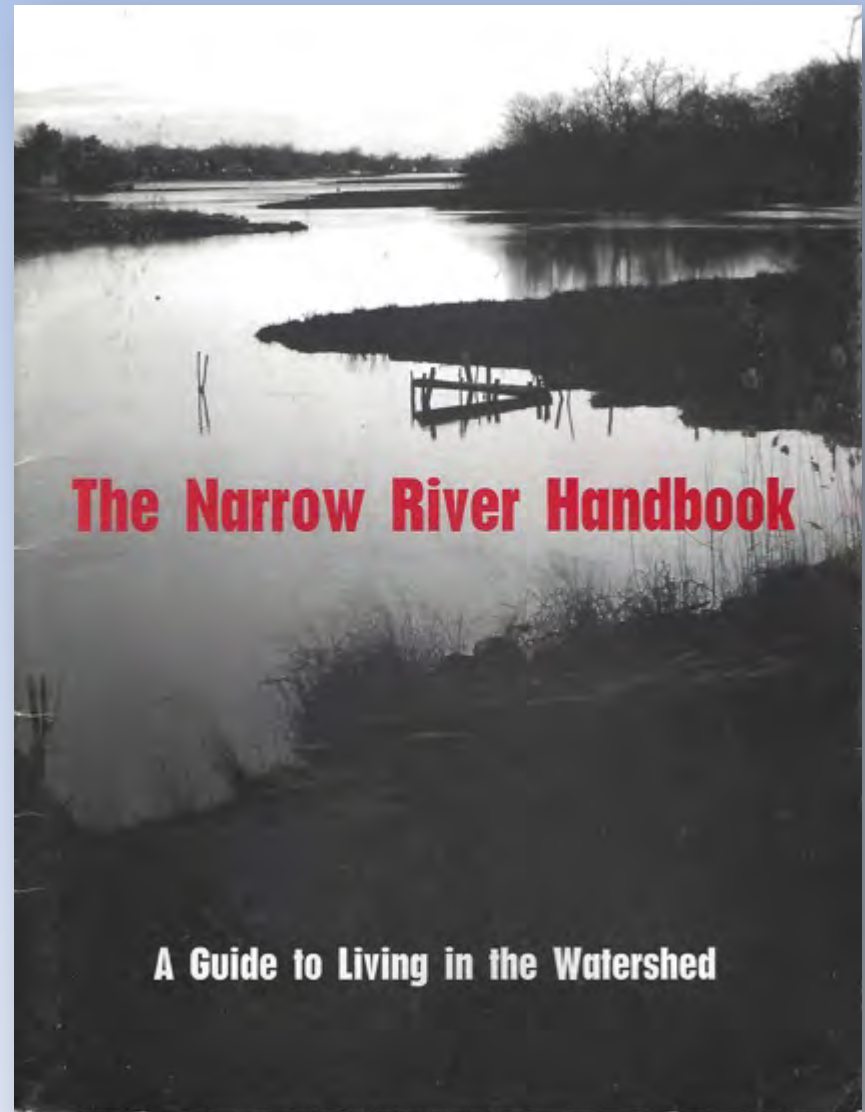
## **Narrow River Handbook: A Guide to Living in the Watershed is Published**

The first version of the Narrow River Handbook included resources for

- boating safety,
- watershed friendly lawn care and construction practices,
- composting and recycling
- car and boat care,
- pets,
- wildlife,
- coastal buffer zones,
- land conservation and much more.

NRPA sent a copy to every household in the watershed free of charge.

Updated versions of the handbook were printed in 2002 and 2008.



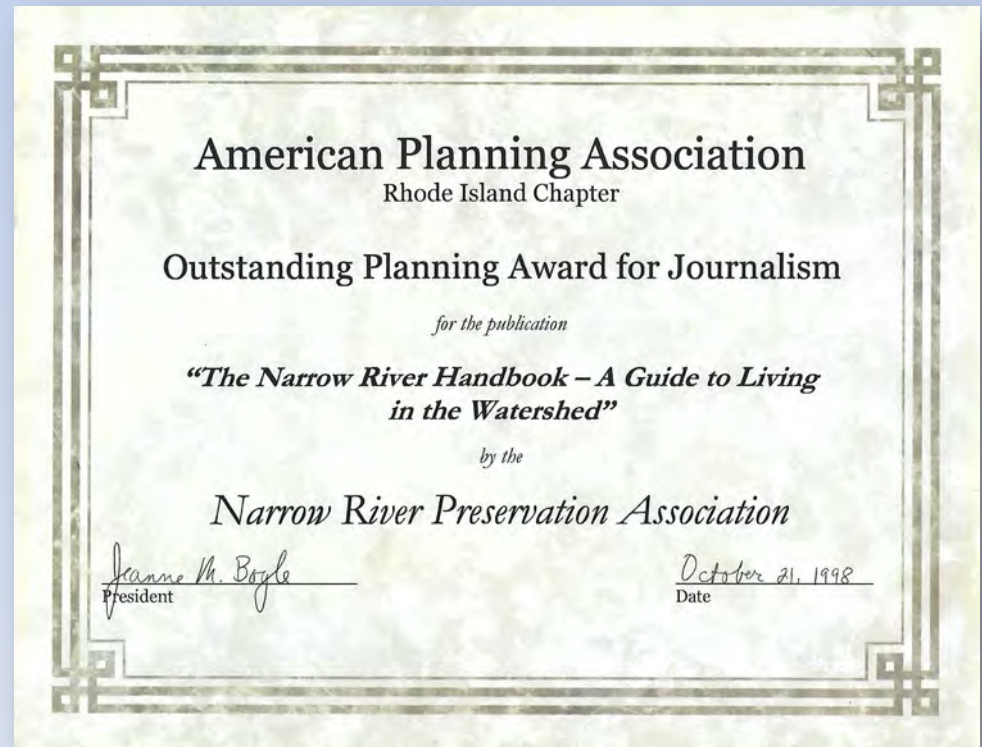
# 1998 Narrow River Handbook Receives Award

## Narrow River Handbook honored with “Outstanding Planning Award for Journalism”

The American Planning Association, Rhode Island Chapter presented NRPA with this award at the 1998 RIAPA Holiday Reception.

Michael DeLuca, in presenting the award remarked “What I appreciate most about the Narrow River Handbook is the NRPA’s commitment to ‘deliver’ the message. ... A group of concerned citizens got together and pooled their knowledge, then shared it with their friends. A simple, yet sometimes overlooked, task that exemplifies the term ‘community involvement’.”

At the time, Michael DeLuca was the Principal Planner for the City of Cranston Planning Department. Today he is the Community Development Director for the Town of Narragansett.



# 1999 Rivers Day

## South County Rivers Day

On June 19, 1999 NRPA hosted activities for all to enjoy Narrow River, including:

- crafts and soil exploration for children,
- touch tanks of critters and river plant life,
- a flycasting demonstration,
- nature hikes,
- kayak tours, and
- surf-bike demonstrations.



*Narrow River Kayak Birding Tour - led by Phil Owens*



# 2000 Storm Drain Marking

**Please Don't Dump – Drains to River environmentally friendly adhesive marker**


This campaign sought to discourage people from using storm drains as trash cans by dumping oil, paints and other hazardous materials into them.

The effort was coordinated by NRPA and painted by the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1, Narragansett, Boy Scouts of America, Troop 15 of Charlestown, school groups, neighborhood groups, camp groups, and others.



# 2000 NRPA Web site launched

In 2000, NRPA  
joined the digital  
world by publishing  
our first website




## Narrow River Preservation Association

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### NRPA Home Page

The Narrow River, also known as the Pettaquamscutt River, is located in southern Rhode Island. It is a narrow tidal inlet that opens into the Atlantic Ocean at Narragansett Beach. The mission of the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) is the restoration, preservation, and conservation of the Narrow River watershed.



#### River

A sea,  
a sunset,  
clouds of purple,  
red and yellow.  
An evening walk  
nature in all its glory;  
foxes of fire-red, tipped in  
white,  
snow white doves cooing their  
love song,  
and you, and you, in all this  
beauty, is you, is you.

by Pier LaFarge  
Winner of 1999 River of Words poetry contest


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*NRPA is grateful to [PC Guide Services](#) for helping set up this Web site.*

Narrow River Preservation Association Post Office Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874  
401.783.6277 Email: [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org)

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Last revised 30 June 2000

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# 2002 RI Rivers Council

## Rhode Island Rivers Council

The RI Rivers Council was created in 1991 to coordinate, oversee, and review efforts to improve and preserve the quality of the state's rivers and other water bodies and to develop plans to increase river use.

In 2003, NRPA was officially approved as the State Designated Watershed Council for Narrow River Watershed and retains that designation.

On June 4, 2013 the Rhode Island Senate confirmed Governor Lincoln Chafee's appointment of NRPA Board member Dr. Veronica Berounsky as a member of the Council. In September 2013, she was elected Chair of the Rhode Island Rivers Council.



# 2002 New Middlebridge

## Breaking ground for new bridge at Middlebridge

NRPA President Richard Grant (center) joined other community leaders in ceremonially breaking ground for the new 170 foot bridge over Narrow River.

As early as 1995, NRPA had lobbied for a wider span in order to permit increased water flow under the bridge and to improve the safety of the various types of watercraft using the river.

The new Middlebridge opened in 2003.



# 2004 Environmental Days at Camp Sprague



NRPA collaborated with the Town of Narragansett Recreation Department to take children attending the Town's day camp out to explore 5 sites in the Narrow River watershed over the summer and take part in environmental activities such as eel catching, seining, seaweed pressing, water testing, and birdwatching.

Funded by: R.I. Foundation, Inez Sprague Fund, Buckley Heating Co.



# 2004 Inaugural Narragansett's Environmental Awareness Day at the Beach



**NRPA has been a part of this event at Narragansett Town Beach every July since its inaugural year, 2004.**

NRPA President Richard Grant and Board member Sally Sutherland and her son Jake (at left with Veronica Berounsky) send beach goers on a scavenger hunt to find special beach items to help people learn about our environment.

The day also has an open water swim and a SUP board race so there are lots of people visiting our NRPA display!



# 2006 Narrow River Swim

## First Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim

A group of swimmers approached NRPA and proposed holding a one mile swim to raise funds for NRPA and to highlight the fact that Lower Pond had excellent water quality and was safe for swimming.

2020 will be the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim.



# 2007 Natural Overturn of Anoxic Water

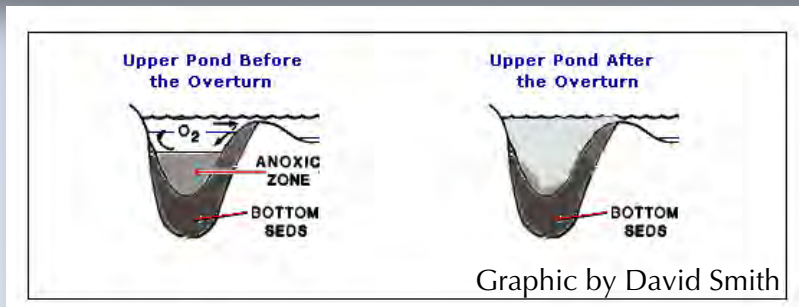
Narrow River has had ventilations in 2007, 1990, 1971, 1957 and probably earlier



Aerial photo taken October 17, 2007 by Don Bousquet

## How does an overturn happen?

- + Three layers of water – upper level of mixed oxygenated fresh and saltwater and a lower level of anoxic water (no oxygen) - become closer in density due to decreasing air temperature in the fall
- + Reduced freshwater inflow caused by drought conditions in the late summer and fall
- + Rapid decline in water temperature
- + Strong wind
- + This last happened here on October 12, 2007



# 2007 Natural Overturn of Anoxic Water, continued

NRPA Board members and colleagues have been monitoring the deep waters of the ponds ever since the overturn in order to anticipate the next one.

They have found out about other scientifically interesting phenomenon such as the high intensity chlorophyll thin layer, the magnetotactic bacteria, and the chloroplast stealing plankton.

Scientists come from all over to study the ponds and NRPA members help them.

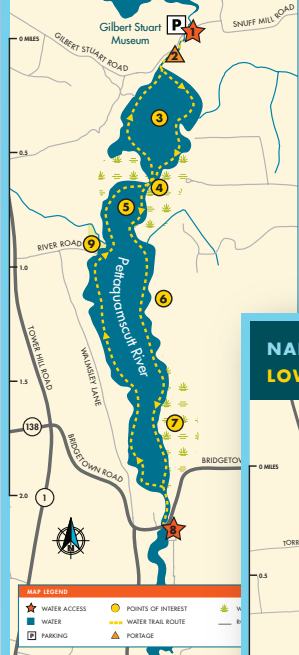


Milky colored water due to sulfur settling out



# 2008 Pettaquamscutt Paddle

## NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION: UPPER PETTAQUAMSCUTT RIVER



**LEVEL** Beginner to Intermediate  
**START/END** Gilbert Stuart Birthplace & Museum  
**RIVER MILES** 4.5 miles roundtrip  
**TIME** Approximately 2 1/2 hours for the loop  
**DESCRIPTION** Flatswater, Tidal  
**SCENERY** Coastal woodlands, residential neighborhoods  
**ACCESS** Unimproved, rough natural access

**ACCESS POINTS**  
 Start this loop from either the lower parking lot across from Gilbert Stuart Birthplace & Museum or the small lot southeast of the Bridgetown Bridge (a.k.a. Lacey Bridge) on Pettaquamscutt Ave. The lower lot across from Gilbert Stuart Birthplace is privately owned by the Museum. If there is no big event planned, they do not mind kayakers using the launch. A small donation or a paid visit to the museum or gift shop is greatly appreciated. The upper lot is reserved for their groups and is off-limits. The launch at the end of Pettaquamscutt Ave. has limited parking on the roadside for up to 5 cars (without trailers). There are no official tide charts for Narrow River, but typical tides for this area run about 3-4 hours later tidal times at Narragansett Pier.

## NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION: LOWER PETTAQUAMSCUTT RIVER & COVE



**LEVEL** Beginner to Intermediate  
**START/END** Pollock Avenue Ramp  
**RIVER MILES** Approximately 5 mile loop  
**TIME** Approximately 2.5 to 3 hours  
**DESCRIPTION** Flat Water, Tidal  
**SCENERY** Saltwater cove, Tidal Flat, Historic, Wildlife Refuge  
**ACCESS** Pollock Avenue Boat Ramp, Sprague Bridge Launch, Narrow River Kayaks

**LOWER NARROW (PETTAQUAMSCUTT) RIVER**  
 The Lower Narrow River offers some of the most scenic paddling Rhode Island has to offer. While this portion of the river becomes especially congested on weekend afternoons during the summer months, it can all be avoided by opting to paddle in and around Pettaquamscutt Cove instead of the more popular beach area at the mouth of the river. This area is part of the John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge at Pettaquamscutt Cove established in 1988 through a bill sponsored by the late Senator, then renamed in his honor in 1995. The refuge is home to a multitude of wildlife including white tail deer, fishers, foxes, otters, osprey, black ducks, willets, marsh sparrows, hawks, herons, egrets, terns, wild turkeys, turkey vultures, Canada geese and mute swans among others. This particular loop starts at the Pollock Avenue boat ramp north of Middlebridge. The loop can be abbreviated by accessing the Cove from Sprague Bridge.

Depart the Pollock Avenue boat ramp and head straight across to the eastern bank of the river. This side is less developed and offers better opportunity to view wildlife and explore the salt marsh. Continue paddling south on the east bank of the river toward Middlebridge. Beware, there is a sandbar just to the north of the bridge. Middlebridge is home to Narrow River Kayaks. Paddlers can exit here for a stretch or to grab a snack or drink. Bull Garrison Acres and Bull Garrison Monument are located on the western side of the bridge. Bull Garrison Acres includes a walking trail maintained and established by the Narrow River Land Trust. Jim Bull built the first European trading post in the watershed, which was later attacked and burned by Narragansett Indians in December 1675 at the beginning of King Phillip's War. This led to the Great Swamp Massacre.

Avoid sandbars and motor boats by staying right and hugging the western shoreline south of Middlebridge. As a general rule of thumb, all paddlers should stay off to the side in single file, giving motorized boats the right of way. Stay on the right side to where the salt marsh comes to a point. Remain on the right hand side to enter

*Continued on the back >>>*

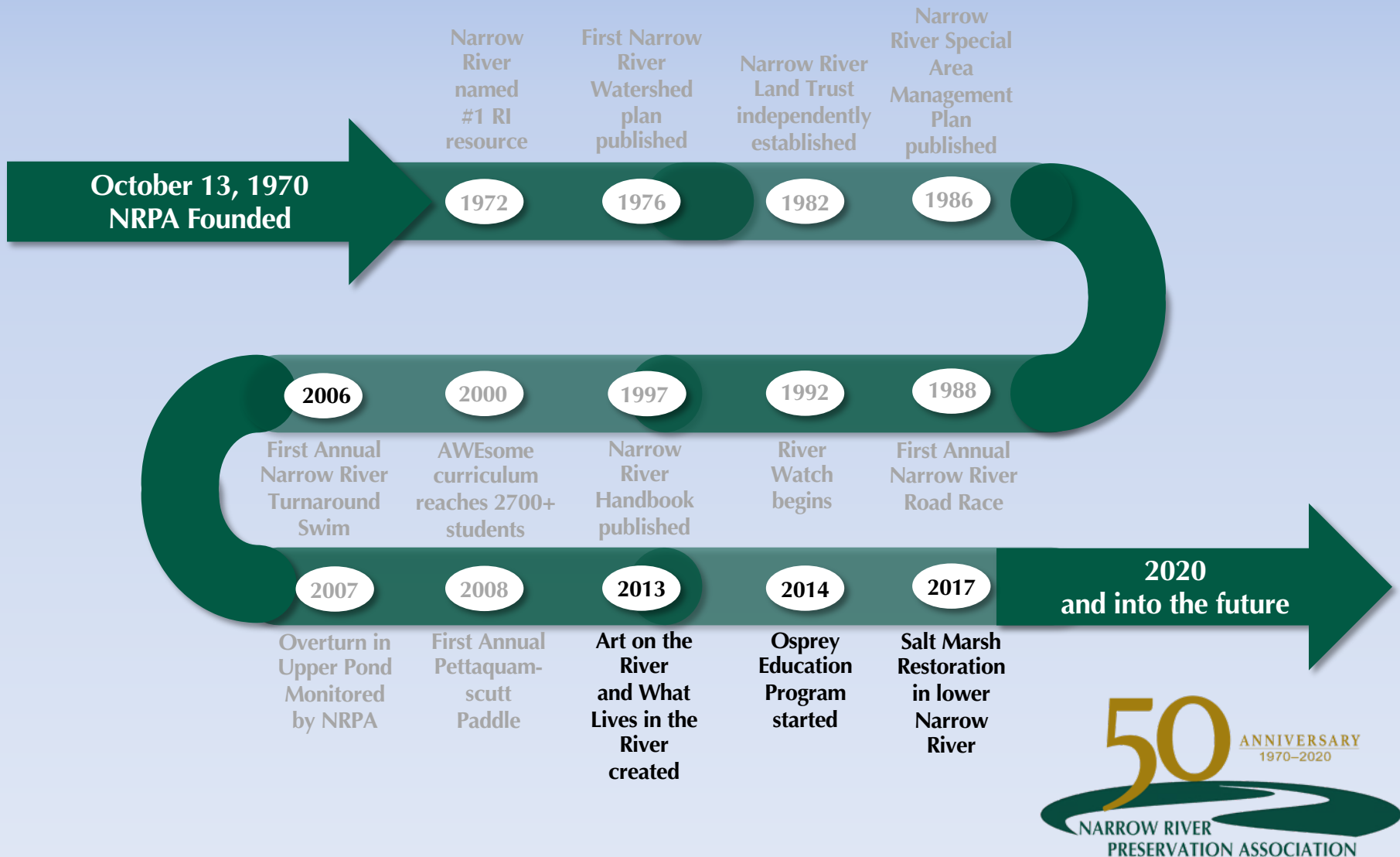
## First Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle

Narrow River Kayaks introduced the Pettaquamscutt Paddle as a fundraiser for NRPA and to share new paddle maps created by NRPA and the RI Blueways Association.





# NRPA 2010 - 2020



# Sarah Gaines

**NRPA Board of Directors 2016 – present**

**NRPA 2011-present**  
**The most recent 10 years**



# 2012 *On Pettaquamscutt*

## *Inaugural season of On Pettaquamscutt: Presentations on the Environment and the History of the Narrow River Watershed*

The winter speaker series is organized by Rosemary and David Smith in collaboration with NRPA, Friends of Canonchet Farm, South County Museum and with the generous support of Trio and the Narragansett Public Library.

NRPA hosted the first ever event with Veronica Berounsky presenting “Narrow River – Past and Present” in January 2012.



# 2012 Narragansett Acquires Middlebridge Property

In September 2012, the Town of Narragansett officially acquires the Middlebridge Property, stating:

*The Middlebridge Property is a 9.51 acre river front recreational area located directly on the Narrow River in the Town of Narragansett. The acquisition and protection of this unique property provides the Town of Narragansett an opportunity to provide residents access for kayaking, fishing, marine activities along with wildlife viewing and interpretation for future generations.*

**The Town of Narragansett asks NRPA to host educational activities at the site starting in 2013.**



# 2013 What Lives in the River



## First What Lives in the River event

Since 2013, twice a year, NRPA has hosted **What Lives in the River**, a hands-on, all-ages introduction to fish, shellfish, crabs and other inhabitants of Narrow River featuring:

- Seining with experts to catch river creatures,
- Guided walks along the intertidal zone and salt marsh to observe the inhabitants,
- River-water tanks and microscopes to examine river creatures and guidebooks to help identify them, and
- Experts to discuss the importance of estuaries as nurseries for fish & shellfish, the fascinating migration of river herring, and the role of river plants in the food web.



# 2013 Art on the River

**Art on the River held on a Saturday morning each August at Middlebridge**

Artists of all ages and skill levels are invited to make art along the river.

Plein Air artists set up easels and paint and sketch.

NRPA also hosts guided art activities including making fish prints and seaweed art.

Prior to hosting events at Middlebridge, NRPA hosted field trips and other activities at the Sprague Bridge area.



# 2014 Osprey Program

## Osprey Education for Fourth Graders

In 2014, NRPA started an in-school educational program for fourth graders about ospreys.

The program has grown since its first year reaching more than 400 local fourth graders in 2019 alone.



Above, Craig Wood teaches fourth graders at Monsignor Clarke Elementary School about ospreys.



In 2017, NRPA acquired our own osprey mount, which we affectionately named 'Pette', short for Pettaquamscutt (at left and above).



# 2015 La Farge Park Dedication

## NRPA Develops and installs new sign at La Farge Park

W.E.R. La Farge donated land to the Town of North Kingstown at the time of his passing, creating La Farge Point Park.



In 2015, NRPA dedicated a new sign to the park, which is the site of the Annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim.

Pictured: W.E.R. La Farge's daughter, Louisa (center), and two of his grandchildren.





# 2017 River Watch 25th Year

## River Watch completes its 25<sup>th</sup> year

A summary of the many findings:

- Increasing water temperatures are typical as indicators of global warming
- Dissolved oxygen levels are high enough to support life, despite occasional low measurements
- Increases in salinity at sites that are closer to the mouth of the River indicate sufficient inflow of RI Sound water
- Enterococci bacteria levels are lower in more recent years indicating improvements
- Average bacteria levels are lower at all sites since 2004, likely due to sewer expansion and stormwater BMPs (best management practices)
- After major rain events, we see elevated levels of bacteria and nutrients, so stormwater is a source
- Recent lower dissolved phosphorus levels are good overall, but problems may exist at Pettaquamscutt Cove, Gilbert Stuart Stream, and Mettatuxet Brook



# 2018 Canine Detection

## Canine detection of human sources of bacteria

A collaboration with Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, The Nature Conservancy and the Towns of Narragansett and South Kingstown.

With funding provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, NRPA coordinated a team of canines and their handlers to literally sniff out sources of human contamination in areas where river watch data showed high bacteria counts.

The Towns of Narragansett and South Kingstown are now following up on areas of concern to attempt to remediate problems.



# 2018 Narrow River Cleanups

**In 2018, NRPA revived our Narrow River Cleanup program with cleanups every spring and fall at locations throughout the watershed**

NRPA has coordinated volunteers to pick up trash on foot and by boat along the marshes, at Sprague Bridge, at the mouth of the river, on Gooseberry and Sedge Islands, at La Farge Park, Treaty Rock Park, the Mitchell Avenue public boat launch and many more sites.



# 2019 Osprey Nest Platform

## Narrow River Land Trust and NRPA install osprey nest platform

In March 2019, NRLT and NRPA built an osprey nest platform at Garrison House Acres Preserve in South Kingstown in the hope of attracting a nesting pair of osprey.

In April, a young pair of osprey did indeed adopt the platform as their home (pictured).

This pair was too immature to build a full nest and lay eggs, but we expect that the same pair will return to the nest in 2020, complete the nest and lay eggs.

NRPA and NRLT are currently seeking funds to install a live webcam on the nest.



# 2017 & 2019 Salt Marsh Restoration

**In collaboration with US Fish and Wildlife Service, NRPA coordinates more than 200 volunteers to plan 35,000 salt marsh grass seedlings in 2017 and 32,000 seedlings in 2019 in restored marshes in lower Narrow River.**



In the Spring of 2017 and again in Spring 2019, volunteers of all ages removed salt marsh grass plugs from the trays in which they had been growing all winter long, loosened the roots, and tucked them into newly raised marshes.

Several areas of marsh were raised in the dredging and 'thin layer deposition' stage of the project completed in January 2017 and January 2019.



# 2019 National Award

## Richard Grant honored with National Lifetime Achievement Award from Environmental Law Institute in Washington, D.C.

Richard Grant was presented with the National Wetlands Awards Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his 47 years of dedication to Narrow River Preservation Association.

Said 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 who have improved the quality of the water in the Pettaquamscutt (Narrow River) Watershed. I am just thankful that I have been able to give back to the environment for what I have received from it.”



Richard Grant (center) with Scott Fulton (left), President of the Environmental Law Institute and Ben Grumbles, Secretary of the Environment, Maryland Department of the Environment.



# 2019 Sedge Island Shack Panel

## **Favorite icon of locals, the Little Red Shack on Sedge Island is removed**

After the removal of the beloved shack, an outpouring of public sentiment led NRPA and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to create and to dedicate a commemorative panel overlooking former site in Fall 2019.

NRPA maintains a page on our website of photographs and stories about the shack through the generations.





*2020 and forward*





# 2020 The Future of NRPA

## New and continuing initiatives and concerns

- Sea Level Rise and Climate Change
- Monitoring development proposals and/or plans in the watershed
- Education – sharing the science of Narrow River with children and adults
- Keeping the river and watershed clean
- Continued monitoring of water quality
- Advocating for the health of the river
- Connecting with everyone who loves the area
- Continue collaborations and research partnerships in the watershed



# Thank you!

**Many volunteers contributed to this presentation.**

Thank you to

- Veronica Berounsky
- Erin Chille
- Annette DeSilva
- Sarah Gaines
- Richard Grant
- Alison Kates
- Danielle Perry
- Paula Santos
- Richard Vangermeersch

**Thank you to ALL of NRPA's supporters and volunteers.**



# NRPA Partners



RI Rivers Council



Audubon Society of Rhode Island



New England Grassroots Environment Fund





# *Questions*





***Paula Santos, NRPA  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Planning Committee  
Chair***



50

ANNIVERSARY

1970-2020

NARROW RIVER

PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION





# NRPA's 2020 Events



## NRPA 2020 Events

### Jan 26, On Pettaquamscutt Speaker Series

Sunday 1-3pm @ Narragansett Public Library  
Topic: NRPA's 50 years of Protecting the Watershed  
Followed by gathering at Trio restaurant at 3pm.

### Feb 23, On Pettaquamscutt Speaker Series

Sunday 1-3pm @ Narragansett Public Library  
Topic: The Rhode Island Bear Story

### March 29, On Pettaquamscutt Speaker Series

Sunday 1-3pm @ Narragansett Public Library  
Topic: Camp Varnum and RI Coastal Defenses

### April 4, Safely 'Navigating the Narrow'

Saturday from 1-3pm @ Mettatuxet Yacht Club  
Join us to learn about watercraft safety. Boaters, kayakers, paddleboarders & swimmers welcome!

### April 26, Narrow River Cleanup

Sunday throughout the day @ sites along the river  
Volunteer with us to keep the watershed clean.

### May 9, 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Narrow River Road Race

Saturday, 10am @ Narragansett Town Beach  
10K run, 5K run and 5K walk along Narrow River.

### June 13, 'What Lives in the River'

Saturday 9am-1:30pm @ Middlebridge  
Bring the kids! Explore what lives in Narrow River.

More details about these events at [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org)

## NRPA 2020 Events

### June 20, 15<sup>th</sup> Narrow River Turnaround Swim

Saturday 9am @ URI Boathouse, North Kingstown  
One mile open water swim in Narrow River.

### July 17, 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle

Friday (rain date Saturday) @ Narrow River Kayaks,  
all day rentals, 5pm guided paddle and gathering  
Enjoy Narrow River by kayak, canoe or paddleboard  
on your own or on a guided sunset paddle.

### August 1, 'Art on the River'

Saturday 9-11am @ Middlebridge  
Art for all ages and skill levels along the river.

### September 19, 'What Lives in the River'

Saturday 9-11am @ Middlebridge  
Find fish, crabs, microscopic critters, and more!

### September 27, Narrow River Cleanup

Sunday throughout the day @ sites along the river  
Volunteer to help us pick up trash along the river.

### October 1, NRPA's 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

Thursday 7pm @ URI Coastal Institute, Narragansett  
Presentations about the river, Friend of the River  
Award, and silent art auction.

### November, NRPA's Golden Gala

An evening in November to be determined  
Music, dancing, food, raffle and silent auction.

Visit [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org) for more happenings  
and general information concerning the  
Narrow River Watershed.



Protecting and Preserving the Narrow River and its Watershed since 1970.





*Thank you for attending!*

*Please join us at Trio for complimentary  
appetizers and conversation.*

*Special thanks to Trio!*







The sun may set on Narrow River,  
but it never sets on the activities of the Narrow River Preservation Association!