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# NARROW RIVER NOTES

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Newsletter of the Narrow River Preservation Association

Spring 2000

## 13<sup>th</sup> Annual River Run

The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) proudly presents its 13<sup>th</sup> annual Narrow River Run. This year the race will be held on **Saturday, May 13**. Our presenting sponsor will be Citizen's Bank. We thank them for their sustained commitment and renewed support as a valued friend of the River!

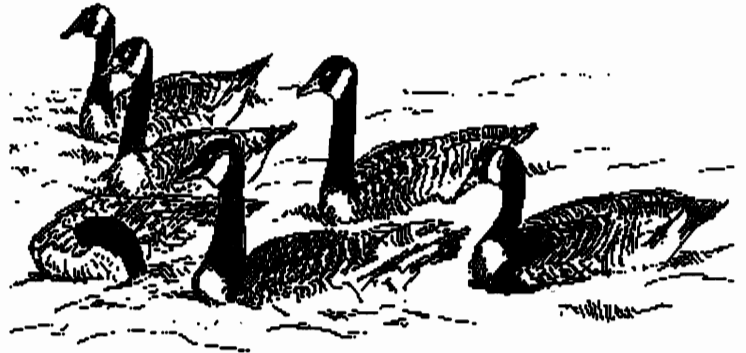
For the third year, NRPA will be offering a 5K run as part of the Narrow River Run. This course, like the 10K run and 5K walk, will be timed. Prizes will be offered for first place finishers in each age category for the runs and for first place overall for the walk. All junior entrants will receive a prize. A raffle will be held and post-race refreshments served. The first 400 registered entrants will receive a Narrow River Run T-shirt.

Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. at Mosby's on the URI Bay Campus. The 5K run and 5K walk will begin at 9:30 a.m. and participants will be bused to the starting point at Pettaquamscutt Park. They should plan to arrive at the Bay Campus to register before 8:45 a.m. in order to finish registration before the bus leaves. The 10K will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Bay Campus main parking lot. All walkers and runners will finish at the Narragansett Town Beach, North Pavilion Parking Lot. A vehicle will be available to carry light clothing and gear to the finish line. There will be a shuttle bus available at the completion of each phase of the Narrow River Run to transport race participants back to the start at the URI Bay Campus.

### REGISTER NOW!

If you would like to join the fun, please fill out the enclosed registration form and mail it to NRPA. Race applications are also available at all Citizen's Bank locations. For further information, or to volunteer to help at the Race, please call NRPA's office at 783-NARR. Whether you like to run or walk, come and enjoy the scenic beauty of the Narrow River!

~Lesia Meng



## DEM CONDUCTS BACTERIA STUDY

Narrow River consistently fails to meet Class SA (bathing and contact recreation; shellfish harvesting for human consumption; and fish and wildlife habitat) water quality standards for fecal coliform levels. Fecal coliform, a type of bacteria typically associated with the intestinal tract and feces of warm-blooded animals, is commonly used to indicate the possible presence of pathogens that can cause human health problems. This impairment has resulted in Narrow River being closed to shellfish harvesting and appearing on the State of Rhode Island's 1998 List of Impaired Waters.

When a waterbody is placed on this 'List,' the Clean Water Act requires that the State develop a plan for restoring the waterbody to its desired condition. This plan is called a Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL). The TMDL process includes evaluating existing water quality, locating pollutant sources, determining the amount of pollutants which can be assimilated without degrading water quality, and implementing control measures to eliminate or mitigate pollutant sources. The Narrow River TMDL will specify the reductions of bacterial loadings to the River needed to return it to a condition that meets Rhode Island water quality standards.

Over the past year, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) has coordinated with NRPA and other State and local stakeholders to develop a strategy for the Narrow River TMDL. As part of the TMDL development, RIDEM implemented an extensive fecal coliform monitoring program in the Narrow River watershed throughout the summer and fall of 1999. The objectives of the program were to obtain a comprehensive picture of current pathogen loadings to the River and to identify pathogen sources within the Watershed. It was designed based on data from previous studies, data provided by ongoing NRPA/Watershed Watch monitoring, and information obtained from stakeholders. NRPA's water quality monitoring programs provided most of the field data used to design RIDEM's study.

The monitoring program included six dry weather surveys, two multi-day wet weather surveys, and concentrated sampling in suspected problem areas. Over the course of the study, approximately 500 samples were collected from more than 35 locations. The study area included the entire River reach from Upper Pond to Pettaquamscutt Cove (including the area from Sprague Bridge to the mouth),

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## OPEN MEETING

DEM Presents:

Narrow River Water Quality Findings

Thursday, March 16

7:00 p.m.

Coastal Institute - Auditorium  
URI Narragansett Bay Campus

## The President's Cove



Plans for the second annual *South County Rivers Day* celebration on June 17 are streaming along. We are hoping to provide numerous tours and lecture sites along the historic shoreline of Narrow River, including visits to the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace, Casey Farm, Treaty Rock and South County Museum. The theme for the day will be basic: a fun affair designed for "Getting to Know Your River." The schedule of events is still being developed, so we will be sending out a flyer with all the details at a later date.

An exciting addition to this year's Rivers Day is a 'quest' to be held at the South County Museum. For those unfamiliar, a quest is basically a treasure hunt with a series of clues that, if solved correctly, lead to the 'treasure box.' The treasure box contains a visitor's log and a stamp specific to the quest site. Different approaches are used in developing quests. These can include rhyming clues, developed much like limericks; acrostics with clues that, when solved, fill in a crossword-like puzzle; quests based on specific historic or architectural details of an area; or math puzzles where dates or building numbers reveal the location of the treasure box. Questing is a novel approach to exploring a new destination and having some fun in the process.

We plan to add more quests in the Watershed as time permits and would welcome any volunteers who want to help out. So, any frustrated poets out there, or those with a passion for exploring new places, give us a call and get involved in developing some treasure hunts for the Narrow River watershed! This year's Rivers Day should prove to be a fun time for all ages! See you on the River...

~Richard Grant

## CREATING NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT NRPA

We are developing a series of creative ways for our friends and supporters to easily make significant tax-advantaged financial contributions to NRPA. Although these ideas are still in the planning phase, we would like to share them with you, so that you can begin thinking about the possibilities.

We are considering development of a simple endowment fund for NRPA, along with giving methods such as a Charitable Gift Annuity which can provide you with a tax deduction and guaranteed income based on the value of your gift. It would work like this: you would agree to give us money or another asset of value. In return, we would agree to pay you a set amount every year for the rest of your life.

We are also considering the

establishment of a Charitable Remainder Trust which can also provide you with a current tax deduction, avoidance of capital gains taxes, and no taxes on trust earnings until such earnings are distributed to the beneficiary of your choice. Such Trusts are somewhat complex and will need further research, explanation and professional advice from an estate planner. Another simpler way to make a gift provision would be to designate a bequest to NRPA in your will.

We will have more details on all of these ideas in a few months. Meanwhile, please remember the tax advantages of supporting NRPA. During the past two years, NRPA has significantly increased its efforts to provide community based services. We will need your continued support to finance this growth. ~Rob Leeson

# 6239

NRPA is part of the United Way Workplace Campaign.

6239 is our donor option number. If you plan to make a United Way donation, please consider designating a portion of your gift to NRPA.

### NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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#### *Narrow River Notes*

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and all of the major tributaries. In addition to fecal coliform sampling, in-situ water quality measurements, flow measurements, fluorescent whitening agent studies and extensive field reconnaissance were carried out.

The study identified several areas in the Watershed with fecal coliform levels above the State standard during dry weather. The most conspicuous among these were the Mumford Brook area (including the southern end of Pettaquamscutt Cove), the Gilbert Stuart Stream area, and the middle section of Narrow River, from Wampum Road south to Middle Bridge. Mumford Brook was found to be the largest contributor of fecal coliform (to Narrow River) with levels consistently well above even the swimming standard. Gilbert Stuart Stream and the middle section of Narrow River, while having levels above State standards for drinking waters and shell-fishing waters respectively, do not violate the State's standard for swimming waters. RIDEM has targeted these areas for additional monitoring or possible dye studies in order to pinpoint pollutant sources. Elevated levels in Mumford Brook, Gilbert Stuart Stream and the middle section of Narrow River can most likely be attributed to failing septic systems and/or waterfowl, wildlife and pet wastes.

During wet weather conditions, fecal coliform levels throughout the entire River exceed water quality standards and remain elevated until at least 72 hours after a rainstorm (depending on the quantity and duration of rainfall). The problem areas identified during the dry weather surveys also typically had the highest wet weather fecal coliform levels. In southern portions of Pettaquamscutt Cove, levels exceeded even the swimming standard. Wet weather fecal coliform sources are related to the those found in dry weather. However, the effect is magnified because a greater area contributes to the loading through stormwater runoff (which carries washed off pollutants to the River).

It is hoped that RIDEM's efforts to eliminate dry weather sources will decrease some of the wet weather loadings. However, it is apparent that wet weather water quality goals can only be achieved through additional stormwater treatment

measures. It is imperative that the towns of North Kingstown, Narragansett and South Kingstown find ways to mitigate stormwater pollutant loadings to Narrow River through the use of engineered control structures or best management practices. RIDEM further echoes NRPA's message in *The Narrow River Handbook - A Guide to Living in the Watershed*, to properly maintain septic systems, stop feeding waterfowl and clean up pet waste.

The results of DEM's study will be presented during an open meeting on Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in URI's Coastal Institute Auditorium, located on the Narragansett Bay Campus.

~Kevin Bartlett & Chris Turner, RIDEM



## Grants News

NRPA has been working to obtain funding support to expand its outreach capacity within the Watershed community. Recent efforts have proven successful, as NRPA has recently been awarded grants from two New England foundations.

The Rhode Island Foundation has approved funding to further the development of NRPA's outreach programs, including collaborative public education work with other South County watershed groups. The New England Grassroots Environment Fund has awarded funding support to purchase a new computer system so that NRPA may enhance its communications, advocacy and education programs.

NRPA is thankful for the generous support of these two foundations. Through the combined efforts of NRPA members, volunteers and staff, charitable foundations and the community, NRPA will continue to protect Narrow River into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

If you have experience in fundraising and would like to share your ideas, please call NRPA at 783-6277.

~Suzanne Vetromile

## River Monitors Needed

NRPA is looking for volunteers to join its water quality monitoring program. No previous experience is required, just an appreciation of Narrow River. Volunteers are of all ages and come from various occupations and educational backgrounds.

Now entering its ninth year, the monitoring program has greatly expanded the Association's knowledge of the water quality of the River. We hope to continue this success and welcome new volunteers into the program.

The monitoring season extends from May through October. Eleven sites along the River are monitored. Each monitor is matched with a monitoring location at the start of the season. Monitoring consists of biweekly water quality measurements of dissolved oxygen, temperature, salinity, and chlorophyll levels.

Additionally, five times a season, water is collected and delivered to the University of Rhode Island (URI) for bacterial analysis. If this sounds complicated, never fear, all new volunteers receive both classroom and field training in monitoring procedures from URI's Watershed Watch staff. Classroom training will be offered at URI on two dates: Thursday April 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday April 15<sup>th</sup>. New volunteers will be required to attend one session only. Volunteers are provided with a detailed manual and all necessary monitoring supplies. For additional information, please contact NRPA at 783-6277.

~Annette DeSilva

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual River Cleanup

As part of National River Cleanup Week, NRPA & the Mettatuxett Improvement Association will host the 10th Annual River Cleanup along Narrow River. Join the fun!

Saturday, June 10th

9:30 a.m.-12:00 noon

Mettatuxett Yacht Club

South River Road, Narragansett.

# Planning for Rivers Day Celebration Underway

NRPA, in collaboration with watershed protection groups for the Salt Ponds, Saugatucket and Wood-Pawcatuck Rivers, is pleased to announce that a day of festivities is planned for June 17<sup>th</sup> in celebration of the second annual South County Rivers Day.

Governor Almond proclaimed Rivers Day as the third Saturday in June, conceived as a time for all Rhode Islanders to celebrate their rivers. By focusing attention this one day in June, we hope residents and visitors alike will take the time to appreciate the treasure which winds its way through your backyard, at the end of

your street, or next to the local park. Here in South County, we are all fortunate to live in close proximity to both coastal and inland waters. It's a quick drive to the beach, or a short walk to your favorite pond or river.

Recreational events have been planned for Rivers Day including boat tours, kayak and canoe trips, nature and birding hikes, and tours of historic landmarks throughout South County. A flyer detailing the schedule of events will be mailed to all NRPA members and watershed residents.

All planned events are offered free of

charge! Additionally there will be no admission charged on Rivers Day to historic sites in the Narrow River watershed including the South County Museum, Casey Farm and Gilbert Stuart Birthplace.

Please plan to participate in this great community event. Try your hand at fly-fishing, dust off that canoe and head out to the river, or plan a hike with your kids. We look forward to joining all of you in this celebration of our beautiful Rhode Island waterways.

~Teresa McKinley

## Into the Web

NRPA is currently developing a Web site. The purpose is to provide people better access to information about Narrow River, its benefits and its issues, and to facilitate public outreach and participation. The Web site will allow NRPA to make its programs and educational resources more accessible, publicize meetings and help with logistics for events such as the Narrow River Run and South County Rivers Day.

A Web committee was formed, designed a site and is gathering text, photos and maps. Barry Doherty of PC Guide Services has very generously volunteered his expertise as our Webmaster in developing the site. Student volunteers from North Kingstown and South Kingstown High Schools will help keep the Web site lively and up to date.

The site will include information on Narrow River: maps, photos, educational materials, a calendar of events, information on land use, the water quality monitoring program, the new Narrow River Bibliography, membership and much more.

We hope to be online by early spring, in time to help with planning and race entries for the Narrow River Run.

If any readers have interesting photos of the River, maps, tidbits of history, or other items that could be enjoyed by all, please stop by the NRPA office, give us a call at 783-NARR, or e-mail them to: [nrpa@netsense.net](mailto:nrpa@netsense.net). ~Stephen Hale

## NRPA LIBRARY GROWS

*NRPA is developing a bibliography as part of our reference library. Recently Marty LaFarge, widow of W.E.R. LaFarge—one of NRPA's founders—donated six boxes of materials pertaining to Narrow River's history. At about the same time, Chris Collins offered to lend NRPA a helping hand. He writes:*

I became aware of NRPA a few years ago while looking to offer my volunteer services in the environmental field. After seeing how much impact humans have had on Narrow River, I felt that I should see what I could do to help.

I have been sifting through the recently donated materials which contain items such as maps, resource quality reports, back issues of *Narrow River Notes* and various correspondences. With each folder or obscure publication, I learn more about the history of NRPA and the River itself.

One of the most interesting pieces of information that I discovered was a back issue of *Narrow River Notes*, dated March 1982. The headline states: "THE ROCK SAVED!" This immediately caught my attention. After reading this article about the purchase of the Pettaquamscutt Treaty Rock as a park, I could not help but feel a stronger connection to the "Rock." Having been a frequent visitor to Treaty Rock over the years, I

overlooked the historical significance of this piece of land. It was here that in 1657 the bulk of what is now known as South County was traded by Indian sachems to a group of settlers.

Through articles like this one and other archival materials, I have gained a greater knowledge of Narrow River and its long and rich history. It is also interesting to see the names of current members of NRPA on documents dating back over twenty years. The long-term commitment of NRPA to the Narrow River Watershed has secured such places as Treaty Rock. Also, the Association's dedication to monitoring water quality and reviewing all land development proposals for the past thirty years has safeguarded the Watershed, as we know it, and will provide for Watershed protection into the future.

I look forward to reviewing more information in the coming weeks. I hope that, through this project, members of NRPA and other interested parties will be able to use these materials as they work toward the common goal of preserving and protecting the Narrow River Watershed. ~Christopher Collins

*Chris is a RI native and a senior at URI, majoring in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics. If you have materials to contribute to the Narrow River bibliography, or you would like to volunteer, please contact NRPA at 783-6277.*

