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# NARROW RIVER NOTES

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Newsletter of the Narrow River Preservation Association

Fall 2001

## RHODE ISLAND DEM DIRECTOR JAN REITSMA TO SPEAK AT NRPA'S ANNUAL MEETING

The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) cordially invites our members and the public to our 2001 Annual Meeting. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 2nd, at the Coastal Institute Auditorium, URI Bay Campus, South Ferry Road, Narragansett. Refreshments will be served at 7:00 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.

The evening will feature a presentation by Mr. Jan Reitsma, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM). Mr. Reitsma has been asked to address two very important issues of interest to our community.

The first issue is water quality in Narrow River. In 1999 and 2000 RIDEM conducted a bacterial study of the River and three locations along the River were determined to have unacceptable fecal coliform levels. The agency's follow-up activities relating to the study will be discussed.

The second discussion item will cover boating regulations and their enforcement, as they pertain to Narrow River. Mr. Reitsma has been asked to report on DEM's findings and recommendations from public hearings held on personal watercraft about a year ago. He has also been asked to provide suggestions for making the waters of Narrow River safer and cleaner.

This year marks the tenth year of volunteer water-quality monitoring of Narrow River. The program has been instrumental in providing a

better understanding of the health of the River. A brief overview of the program and its findings will be presented.

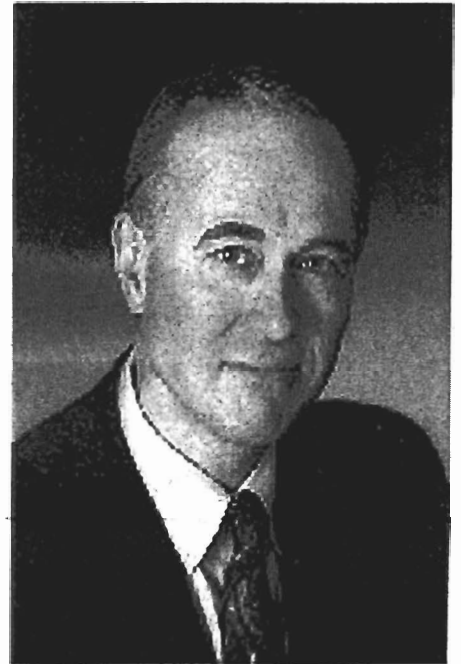
Most importantly, the volunteer water-quality monitors will be honored. NRPA will take this opportunity to extend special recognition to those monitors who have been with the program since its start in 1992. The success of the water monitoring program is credited to the time and dedication of these volunteers. NRPA hopes that you will join us in honoring these individuals.

Additionally, a discussion is planned to provide updates on important issues affecting Narrow River. These will include the

Middle Bridge replacement status, habitat restoration/dredging, water quality improvement projects, land conservation efforts, and a review of education programs. The meeting will also include presentation of NRPA's Environmental Achievement Awards.

The meeting will conclude with our traditional Kayak raffle drawing and it's not too late to buy your tickets! Raffle tickets will be on sale at the meeting. We hope to see you on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

—Annette DeSilva



**Jan Reitsma, Director of DEM,** oversees a broad range of environmental programs, ranging from permitting and enforcement to fish and wildlife management, agriculture, forestry, open space preservation, and management of the state's parks and beaches.

Through his years in public service, Reitsma has focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental programs. He continues to lead efforts to evaluate and streamline regulatory processes. He is also a strong advocate of innovative strategies such as those focusing on pollution prevention, community-based watershed protection, and a bottoms-up approach to growth management called "Planning for Growth."

# The President's Cove



Each Fall another year of protecting the Narrow River Watershed begins at NRPA. It seems a good time to remember that, if we all make a minimum effort to treat the Narrow River Watershed with care, our efforts will have a maximum effect on the Watershed in general. One year ago in this newsletter, we distributed a "Do's & Don'ts for Narrow River" magnet. If you haven't looked at yours in awhile, please re-read it and re-commit to helping us preserve Narrow River. If you didn't receive a magnet, please call and arrange to stop by the office and we'll give you one. Meanwhile, the following list is a reminder of some of those simple things we can do to create a maximum effect.

If you have a septic system, check it regularly—at least once every two years. Be aware, when selecting and using lawn fertilizers or herbicides, that the chemicals eventually end up in the River; so please use them as little and as seldom as possible. Also be aware that whatever goes down your drains at home or into local storm drains will have an impact on the River.

Please operate and clean your watercraft responsibly. Pick up and dispose of all pet waste. Feeding the geese and ducks is a hard thing not to do, but please don't. The DEM study of bacteria levels in the River found that geese and ducks are probably a major source of fecal bacteria.

One message on the magnet that seems to have already made an impact was "Don't dump lawn clippings, leaves, or trash into or along the River." Recent River clean ups have been easier, since everyone appears to have been more careful about trash along the River's banks.

If you are aware of any suspected problems pertaining to the environmental care of the Watershed, please call RI DEM at (401) 222-1360. Visit our web page at [www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org) for more information and remember: every minimum effort you make will have a maximum effect on the quality of water in the Narrow River watershed.

In closing, I would like to thank the many volunteers who participate, in one form or another, at NRPA or through their local River organization. All of your efforts help improve the environment which has given us all so much. Thank you for helping to maintain the Watershed as a great place to live.

—Richard Grant

## 6239

NRPA is part of the United Way Workplace Campaign. This 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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Mail to: NRPA - P.O. Box 8 - Saunderstown, RI 02874

The Narrow River Preservation Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.  
 The mission of NRPA is to preserve the quality of the communities and natural environment within the Narrow River Watershed.



# DETENTION PONDS PROMOTE A HEALTHIER RIVER

The basic idea behind a detention pond is that it will hold back or contain some of the stormwater runoff that goes into a body of water during storm episodes. This stormwater runoff is typically polluted by domestic as well as wildlife waste that has been deposited on the road or roadside during dryer weather periods.

Stormwater runoff can also carry excess lawn fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and miscellaneous pollutants from motor vehicles such as motor oil, antifreeze and gasoline. All of these various contaminants can increase the levels of bacteria and waste in a body of water if left uncontrolled.

It is here that a detention pond can help to protect a body of water like the Narrow River. Once the

stormwater runoff has been collected in a detention pond, Mother Nature takes over. The high levels of bacteria in the water, contained in the pond, can be diminished quite significantly by ultra-violet light from the sun. While the sun is doing its job, gravity also helps to settle much of

the sediment from the roadways to the bottom of the pond.

Finally, as water flows into the pond from the bottom, the water level will rise. As the level increases the spillway on the riverside of the pond will allow the water, which will presumably have a reduced count of bacteria and sediment, to flow into Narrow River.

For more information on detention ponds and on specific sites that NRPA will be targeting, please contact the NRPA office at (401) 783-6277 or by e-mail at [NRPA@netsense.net](mailto:NRPA@netsense.net).

—Jeremy Doak



## 2001 SCIENCE FAIR WINNERS



Kristen Bannon (*left*) of South Kingstown Junior High and Gina Bessacini (*right*) along with Katie Henderson and Dan Murphy (*unavailable for photo*) were all first place winners in NRPA's Science Fair. ***Congratulations to you all!***



Alison Marshall (*above*) of Narragansett High School is describing her environmental activities and is discussing her future college plans.



Timothy Smith (*left*) and Ryan Murphy (*right*) display their certificates as the recipients of NRPA college scholarships.

### GIFT IDEAS □


- NRPA sweatshirts make a heart-warming gift. Natural colored, pre-shrunk cotton sweatshirts, with the NRPA logo in teal, are available in L and XL sizes for \$25 each. Call 783-NARR to make arrangements.
- NRPA T-shirts, with teal river logo plus cattails and flying geese in lovely colors, are available in M, L and XL sizes for \$12 each.
- Consider giving the gift of an NRPA membership to family, friends and neighbors. See the coupon on Page 2 for information.

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Events will include a presentation by Mr. Jan Reitsma, Director of Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. Mr. Reitsma has been asked to discuss water quality as well as boating regulations and enforcement, as they pertain to the Narrow River. Other presentations will cover NRPAs year-in-review, updates on Middle Bridge replacement, habitat restoration, land conservation, water quality, and education programs. Along with recognition of the Narrow River volunteer water quality monitors, there will be a special thanks to the 10-year monitors. The Environmental Achievement Awards will be presented and the evening will conclude with the kayak raffle drawing—tickets will be on sale at the meeting. For more information or directions please call NRPAs at 783-NARR.

7:00 pm – Refreshments 7:30 pm – Meeting Begins

Tuesday, October 2, 2001  
Coastal Institute Building Auditorium  
URI Narragansett Bay Campus



**NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION  
INVITES YOU  
TO THE 2001 ANNUAL MEETING**