

NARROW RIVER NOTES

Newsletter of the Narrow River Preservation Association

Spring 2003

NARRAGANSETT GIVEN PRESTIGIOUS EPA AWARD

The Town of Narragansett was recently given a prestigious award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its decade-long effort to protect water quality and habitat in the Narrow River and its 3,200-acre Watershed. Recognizing the role that local governments play in protecting our nation's waters, EPA Administrator Christie Whitman honored local water pollution control agencies across the nation on April 1, 2003 with the "Clean Water Partners for the 21st Century Award."

Town Engineer Jeffrey Ceasrine, P. E. accepted the award on behalf of the Town at a ceremony held in Washington, D.C. Mr. Ceasrine thanked the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) for its many years of hard work and advocacy which were instrumental in helping the Town win this national award. In a recent letter to NRPA, Mr. Ceasrine wrote: "Some of the initiatives that we cited in our application package involved NRPA in some form or another and, while there is still work to be completed, we would not have achieved the successes noted to date without the help of your agency."

The Town was given this award for a series of Watershed initiatives undertaken over the past several years. NRPA members may remember how we worked with the Town to make some of the following initiatives a reality.

North End Sewers: Beginning in 1991, the Town embarked upon a \$9.8 million dollar program to install sanitary sewers to service 1200 properties in eight densely populated neighborhoods in Narragansett's North End. The Town worked with NRPA and Narrow River Land Trust to offer easement waiver options for property owners who wished to forfeit their development rights.

ISDS Management Plan: The Town completed a plan and passed an ordinance that requires regular septic tank

pumping.

TMDL Watershed Analysis: Along with RIDEM, the Town undertook a detailed study of the Watershed to locate any potential "smoking guns," particularly aging septic systems that may have failed.

Tri-Town Narrow River Stormwater Study: Along with NRPA and the other two Watershed towns, Narragansett started one of the first stormwater-based pollution studies in the State. This study provided a wealth of information on which to base abatement strategies and regulatory measures.

Comprehensive Plan: A new Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Town in 1998, led to several of the previously listed major Watershed initiatives and to environmental zoning to protect wetlands and water bodies.

Circuit Drive Water Quality Basin: Now under construction, this project will treat sediment and nutrient loadings at two of the worst outfalls in the River (see related story on this page).

Mettatuxet Beach Water Quality Basin: This project will treat runoff that empties into the River at the Mettatuxet Beach parking lot. It is currently under design review.

Salt Storage Facility: Constructed a new \$750,000 salt storage facility to control runoff into the Watershed.

Land Acquisition Strategies: The Town worked with the Narragansett Land Conservancy and the Narrow River Land Trust to acquire land in the Crooked Brook Watershed.

Phase II Stormwater Regulations: The Town is currently working with the State to implement new regulations designed to mitigate pollution from over a dozen existing stormwater outfalls throughout the Watershed.

NRPA applauds Narragansett for

receiving this award and looks forward to working with Town officials to complete similar initiatives in the future.

—Tony Lachowicz

CIRCUIT DRIVE STORMWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM



Stormwater basin under construction fall 2002.

Last fall, the Town of Narragansett started a long-awaited project: constructing a pair of water quality basins to eliminate direct pipe outfalls into the River. The project is located in the Rio Vista neighborhood of Narragansett, west of Circuit Drive between Wampum Road and Conanicus Road.

The basins are designed to intercept and treat runoff to remove suspended solids, nutrients and bacteria from stormwater before it enters the River. This treatment is achieved by routing the runoff through a series of sediment forebays, wet ponds and vegetated areas.

The project is expected to be completed this year. It will be landscaped and, once the vegetation has sufficiently been established, will blend into the environment. The recently-completed TMDL study by the Department of Environmental Management has identified a total of twelve outfalls in the Narragansett portion of the River serious enough to warrant similar treatment in the future. NRPA President Richard Grant hailed the project as the "beginning of the end" to stormwater pollution in the River.

—Tony Lachowicz

The President's Cove



There are two distinct ways one can support the achievements of NRPA. The first is personal—being a board member, a committee member or one of the many volunteers for a specific activity such as River Watch. The second is financial—contributing money in the form of membership. Membership dues and other contributions make up the bulk of the fund-raising for support of our land, water and education programs. It is my goal to have every home in the Watershed become a member of NRPA. I know that is a tall task, but since every home in the Watershed benefits from the advocacy of NRPA to protect the environment, I think that every home should contribute to the degree that they can. Some families participate in the specific programs, like the AWESome (Active Watershed Education) program, and give money as well. We realize that some families do not have time to participate, so contributing as members is their way of participating and being a part of the achievements of NRPA.

Over the last 33 years, hundreds of Watershed residents have contributed and, in return, they have received the following:

- Kelgrant land settlement
- Riverdell land settlement
- Sprague Park
- Middlebridge design
- Pettaquamscutt Rock Park
- Chafee Wildlife Refuge
- River Watch (ten sites)
- DEM commitment to upgrading water quality
- Sewer program
- Signage on stormwater drains
- LaFarge Park
- Robin Woods land settlement
- AWESome education program
- NRPA college scholarships
- News about the River
- Narrow River Handbook
- Library about the River
- Narrow River Land Trust
- Educational slide show
- Brown University archaeology study

To learn more about how to become a volunteer, or to find out more about any of the programs NRPA sponsors, please visit our web site at www.narrowriver.org or call the office at (401) 783-6277. To continue your membership or become a member, simply fill out and mail the form below. Thank you for your support.

— Richard B. Grant

PLEASE JOIN US OR RENEW!

We welcome your support
Narrow River Preservation Association

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____

<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$500.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$ 30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$ 50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$ 10.00
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other	\$ _____

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.*

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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CITIZENS BANK SPONSORS 16TH ANNUAL NARROW RIVER RUN

The Narrow River Run, presented by Citizens Bank, is the first 10-kilometer road race of the season in Rhode Island. This event attracts runners from all over Rhode Island and greater New England. NRPA has also organized a 5K run and a 5K walk for the same day, Saturday, May 10, 2003. More than 400 participants are expected. The Narrow River Run is a benefit for NRPA, with proceeds being used to fund our preservation, education and water-quality monitoring programs.

CITIZENS BANK will again be the presenting sponsor for the Narrow River Run in 2003, their sixth year in a row, marking their commitment to community and environmental efforts. NRPA thanks them for their generous sustained support!

Because of the closure of Middle Bridge, this year's course will be different from the one followed in previous years. The course still follows the River's winding path, beginning at URI's Narragansett Bay Campus against a backdrop of Narragansett Bay for the 10K start. Runners then will head west towards Boston Neck Road, turn south to Old Pine Road, which takes them down into the Narrow River valley, and then head south along River Drive. Coming back up West Bay Drive, they will turn



2002 Narrow River Run
Photo by Dan Dunn

south on Boston Neck Road once again. Finally they will cross the mouth of Narrow River at Sprague Bridge and continue on to the finish line at Narragansett Town Beach. This race is certified by the USATF.

The Narrow River Run will again include both a 5K run and a 5K walk. All three events will be timed. Prizes will be awarded to first place finishers in each age category for each run, and to first place overall for the walk. All junior entrants will receive a prize. Following the race, a raffle will be held and prizes distributed. Refreshments will be available for all.

Registration is \$15 if postmarked by May 3, and \$20 after May 3 and on the day of the race. Registration will be at Mosby's on the URI Bay Campus, located 500 yards east of the main

entrance to the Bay Campus, on the north side of South Ferry Road. Registration will begin at 8:00 AM. The 5K events—for runners and walkers—will begin at 9:30 AM, and the 10K race at 10:00 AM. Because 5K runners and walkers must be bused to their start, they should plan on registering at least 45 minutes prior to their event. **The first 400 registered entrants will receive a 2003 Narrow River Run T-shirt.**

The 5K Run and Walk will begin on West Bay Drive. The 10K runners will start at the Bay Campus main parking lot. All races will finish at the Narragansett Town Beach, North Pavilion parking lot. A vehicle will be available to carry clothing and gear to the finish line. There will be shuttle buses available at the completion of each phase of the Narrow River Run to transport race participants back to the URI Bay Campus.

REGISTER NOW! Registration forms are available at NRPA's office (750 Boston Neck Road, Narragansett), on NRPA's web site: www.narrowriver.org, and at all Citizens Bank branch offices. For further information, please call NRPA's office at (401) 783-6277. Whether you like to run or walk, come and enjoy the scenic beauty of the Narrow River!

—John Maciel & Lesa Meng

UPDATE: PERSONAL WATERCRAFT ON NARROW RIVER

Spring is finally here, the warm weather boating season is not far behind and, unfortunately, we do not have a ban on personal watercraft (PWC) in place in any of our Watershed towns.

Despite the fact that many of you have signed our petitions and written or spoken with your Town Council members, no positive action leading to a ban has yet been taken. The November '02 elections came and went, new Council people were elected, and the momentum slowed. In South Kingstown, the Conservation Commission has recommended a total ban on all motorized craft in the Cove to protect sensitive wildlife and their habitats. In Narragansett, both the Conservation Commission and Harbor Commission voted to take no action, but to wait to see the effects of Police Chief David Smith's promised increase in en-

forcement of boating regulations on the River. In North Kingstown, officials are waiting to see what actions are taken by Narragansett and South Kingstown.

At NRPA, we will be continuing to do our part to cause a ban to be enacted. We have met with each of the Town Councils, with the Harbor Commissions and with the Conservation Commissions. These efforts are ongoing and will continue.

Apparently, some feel "there is no problem with Jet Skis™," while others are convinced that effective enforcement of existing state boating regulations is both desirable and possible. Federal, state and municipal governments across the country with their own PWC problems have tried enforcement and have had no success. They

have concluded that a ban is the best solution.

We note these failed efforts and still feel that a ban will be the only way to effectively protect the environment in the River, the Chafee Wildlife Refuge and the Watershed in general. Recreational swimmers, kayakers, canoers, people fishing and others will only have their safety and rights protected when a PWC ban is in place.

If you agree with our position, you can help—and we need your help. Here's what you can do:

1. Sign our Petition to Ban these watercraft (call NRPA for a copy).
2. Write a short letter to your Town Council.
3. Speak directly to Town Council Members about this issue.

(Continued on page 4)

NARROW RIVER 10K RUN/5K RUN/5K WALK APPLICATION

Check one: 10K Run
 5K Run
 5K Walk

Name _____

Sex _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

I hereby for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages I may have against the sponsors, coordinating groups, and any individuals associated with the event, their representatives, successors and assigns, and will hold them harmless from any and all injuries suffered in connection with this event. I attest that I am physically fit to compete in this 10K/5K event.

(your signature)

Entry Fee: **\$15 before May 3, 2003**
\$20 May 3–May 10 (day of race)
 Make checks payable to NRPA

Please fill out all information, sign the application, and mail it with your entry fee to:
 Narrow River Preservation Association, Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874

UPDATE: PWCs ON NARROW RIVER

(Continued from page 3)

4. Convince your friends and neighbors to do likewise.
5. If you are unsure about any of this, please feel free to call NRPA to discuss.
6. Call your local police department to report any complaints about unsafe operations or violations that you see. Without citizens taking this responsibility, officials must conclude that a problem does not exist.

This is "Our River," "Our Watershed" and, for many, "Our Back Yard." We need to do our part to protect it for the present as well as for the future. Your positive actions now could make the difference between success and failure in this effort. Please do your part. Thank you from NRPA.

—Rob Leeson



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KAYAK RAFFLE

NRPA is raffling off a kayak donated by the Kayak Centre of Wickford. Tickets are only \$2 each or 3 for \$5

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY BENEFIT NARROW RIVER

The drawing will take place on September 9, 2003 at NRPA's Annual Meeting, held on URI's Bay Campus. You do not need to be present to win. The winner will be contacted promptly after the drawing.



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