

NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Protecting, Preserving and Restoring the Narrow River Watershed Since 1970 / September 2021

River Watch is funded by RI State and Municipal grant awards



NRPA Board President Richard Grant receiving award check from Rep. Carol McEntee with Narrow River in background. (Photo credit: Veronica Berounsky)

On Wednesday July 14 along the Narrow River in Narragansett during a break between rains, RI House Representative Carol Hagan McEntee of House District 33, presented Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) Board President Richard Grant and Vice President Veronica Berounsky with a \$2,000 FY2021-22 grant award from the RI House of Representatives' District 33 in support of NRPA's River Watch water quality monitoring program.

Grant and Berounsky expressed many thanks to Rep. McEntee for her consistency in sponsoring this sustaining grant request from NRPA to the RI House of Representatives.

Notably only one week later, Rep. McEntee again supported NRPA in the 14th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle fundraiser event hosted by Narrow

River Kayaks.

This spring, NRPA also received another RI Legislature grant award to additionally off-set operation costs of River Watch. RI Senator Bridget Valverde of Senate District 35 sponsored another year of monitoring support with a \$2,000 award.

Due to strong support like this, River Watch is proudly in its 30th monitoring season in 2021!

The key success to our River Watch program is credited to NRPA's community volunteers who devote their time and efforts taking measurements and collecting samples every other week during the monitoring season that runs from May through October annually. In 2021, 37 volunteers are sampling from 13 locations on the Narrow River; this is an all-time annual high of volunteers! Since 1992, more than 200 hundred individuals have volunteered their time and service to participate in this program.

Additionally, Municipal grant support from the towns of South Kingstown, North Kingstown Water Department, and Narragansett also helps cover River Watch operational costs. This support allows NRPA to continue preserving, protecting, and restoring the natural environment and quality of life for all communities within the Narrow River watershed!

2021 Pettaquamscutt Paddle in Review

by Rebecca Russell



Paddlers get ready to set out onto Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River at the 14th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle (Photo credit: Alison Kates)

On Friday July 23 the 14th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle fundraiser event was hosted by Narrow River Kayaks business owner and NRPA Board Member, Jason Considine. The 14th annual was a great success with sunshine most of the day and over 130 paddlers enjoying the twofold benefit of discounted kayak, canoe, and stand-up paddle rentals while also supporting the annual fundraiser for NRPA. Generously, Narrow River Kayaks also absorbed all operational costs on event day, including staff wages, so that 100% of all rental proceeds from the 14th Annual Paddle were donated to NRPA.

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Spring River Cleanup by Rebecca Russell



April 17, 2021 river cleanup crew (some folks missing as they were still out collecting) and members from three fishing associations: Rhody Fly Rodders, RI Saltwater Anglers Association, and RI Trout Unlimited. (Photo credit: Brian O'Connor)

This past April and May, scheduled closely with Earth Day 2021, NRPA had eight different river cleanup crews go out into different parts of the Narrow River watershed to pick up trash and clean up the Pettaquamscutt Estuary.

Given health precautions, NRPA coordinated cleanup teams by separate self-identified households, or family and friend groups and accommodated cleanup dates for one school group and professional associations including: Rhody Fly Rodders, RI Trout Unlimited, RI Saltwater Anglers Association, People's Credit Union, Quest Montessori Middle School, as well as five separate socially distanced cleanup

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President's Cove

Dear Watershed Friends,

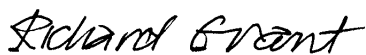
NRPA's Board of Directors is proud to be in our 51st year of programming to improve water quality and watershed habitat, while successfully navigating the public health precautions needed to ensure safe operations and execution of our programs. We extend our sincere thanks for your support during the last two years. During this unusual time in world events, NRPA has taken advantage of not having as many spring and summer activities to coordinate, enabling us to strengthen the backbone of NRPA. For example, our administrative committee is in the process of ensuring each board member is assigned to one or more projects that fits their acumen, and we are designing new fundraising strategies and up leveling our accounting procedures. I've also been mentoring other watershed advocacy groups; sharing lessons learned and tips from my years with NRPA development.

Speaking of other successful watershed groups- I'd like to share highlights from our partner, Save the Bay (STB), who this past spring, organized a campaign to rally RI voters to "Vote Yes on Question #2". In the statewide special election in March, 78.3% of Rhode Islanders approved the Beach, Clean Water and Green Bond. During the coming years, the funds from this bond promise to improve RI's waterways, recreational areas, greenways, parks and beaches. The project list includes Wastewater Treatment facilities and practical steps for achieving Municipal Resilience.

STB magazine, Tides, spring 2021 volume 52, includes an excellent article about Rain Gardens by David Prescott; staff profile about Letty Cass a STB Education and Curriculum Specialist written by Mackensie Dupont Crowley; and a fascinating overview of RI's Coastal Resources Management Council history and organizational structure. Additionally, there is a great article about a large-scale volunteer effort marking Storm Drains by Katy Dorchie. NRPA could not be more pleased to have partners such as STB, who are committed not only to water quality protection work but the outreach and educational initiatives required to sustain such work within a community framework. As STB so aptly put it: "Clean water is essential for Rhode Islanders' quality of life."

I am happy to close this President's Cove message by saying that NRPA has financially stayed afloat during the global pandemic that drastically changed non-profit operations in the early Spring of last year. Our growing concentration of watershed membership, business sponsors, and adaptive response events and programs including virtual fundraisers, socially distanced river cleanups, virtual osprey education programming for local 4th graders, and vision of a silent art auction for 2022, demonstrate our organization's ability to adjust course and adapt along with the changing times.

Thanks again for your support and stewardship!



Richard Barker Grant, President, NRPA

MISSION STATEMENT

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

NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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Rhode Island



You can give back to NRPA through your **United Way workplace campaign**. Simply write in Narrow River Preservation Association on your pledge form or search/write-in and add us via electronic pledging.

Join NRPA!

Membership is NRPA's largest source of support! Membership connects you with all of NRPA's activities, events and advocacy.

Join by sending a check to NRPA, PO Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874 or online at narrowriver.org/join-donate. Thank you!

Rhode Island Rivers Council



Rhode Island Rivers Council has designated NRPA as the official watershed council of Narrow River.

2021 Pettaquamscutt Paddle in review

Continued from front page



Stand-up and kayak paddlers on the Narrow River at the 14th Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle in Narragansett. (Photo credit: Alison Kates)

Considine said “We feel the event promoted awareness of Narrow River Preservation Association, educated the public and fostered stewardship of the Narrow River Watershed. Narrow River Kayaks is proud to host this event and to contribute to an organization that seeks to preserve one of our greatest local natural resources.” NRPA is super grateful for Jason, his staff, and the other professionals who were stationed along the river providing expert knowledge including Charlie Biddle, Ron Wofford, Mark Allio, Steve McKanna, DEM’s Katie Rodrigue, and Friends of the Saugatucket’s Bill McCusker. Thanks to everyone who made this a memorable day for all participants!



KAYAK RAFFLE

\$5.00 PER TICKET
OR

3 TICKETS FOR \$10.00

KAYAK DONATED BY NARROW RIVER KAYAKS
@narrowriverkayaks.com

Raffle tickets are available for purchase at Narrow River Kayaks and three free tickets are offered with all new membership sign-ups! Raffle drawing will happen in early October.

Upcoming NRPA Event Announcements

WHAT LIVES IN THE RIVER AT GANSETT DAYS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | 9AM - 11AM

GARRISON HOUSE ACRES TRAIL WALK WITH NARROW RIVER LAND TRUST AT GANSETT DAYS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | 10:30AM

FALL RIVER CLEANUP SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 - WORLD RIVERS DAY | 9AM - 1PM

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5 | 7PM - 8PM | OPEN TO ALL

2021 Lesa Meng College Scholarship Award Recipients

by Sally Sutherland

Since 1993, NRPA has awarded scholarships to seniors graduating from high schools in the Narrow River Watershed, as part of its Youth Environmental Education Program. Even through the challenges of COVID-19, this year was no exception. We are very pleased to announce our **2021 NRPA Lesa Meng Scholarship winners: Shelby Lefoley and Taylor Hurrell**

In 2007, the scholarship was renamed the NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarship in honor of a former NRPA Board member who passed away. Lesa Meng served on the Board and was chair of the Narrow River Road Race. The scholarship applications are judged on the student’s environmentally oriented activities in and out of high school; the quality of an original essay on the river; science teacher’s recommendation and academic achievement.



Shelby Lefoley, will be attending the University of Rhode Island (URI) in Kingston, RI in the fall. She is considering majoring in Marine Biology/ Science with a minor in Education. Shelby was an Ocean Science Bowl Team member for four years in high school. A scholarship winner to the Ocean Exploration Navy Science & Technology Summer Program at URI, she was also a member of the Northwest Passage Project’s high school team, where she had an opportunity to present some of

her research on climate change effects on the Northwest Passage ecosystem at the American Geophysical Union in Washington, DC. After that trip, she, her teacher and another student co-founded the high school Eco Club, where they have helped reduce plastic waste. Shelby, along with her father, has been a URI Watershed Watch volunteer. Shelby also has her student shell fishing license.



Taylor Hurrell is a recent graduate of South Kingstown High School. She was accepted to the Direct Entry Master of Science in Physician Studies program at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, CT. Taylor is a National Honor Society member, National Spanish Honor Society member, and a Girl Scout (GS) Gold Award recipient. For her Gold Award project, she installed a medicinal herb garden at Broad Rock Middle School. For her GS Bronze Award she refurbished the nature walk at

Tuckerton Park and installed a storybook walk. In 2020, Taylor developed a cloth mask-making operation to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic, where she constructed and delivered over 600 masks. In August, Shelby will be traveling to Ghana to help distribute educational healthcare material to women and girls in underprivileged regions.

Middlebridge Marina Building Improvements

by Alison Kates

The Town of Narragansett recently invested nearly \$57,000 to improve the Middlebridge Marina Building at 95 Middlebridge Road, Narragansett.

The improvements to the Marina Building include an entirely new exterior with new siding, windows, doors, and trim. No improvements have been made to the interior of the building. According to Michelle Kershaw, the new Director of the Parks and Recreation Department in Narragansett, a decision has not been made regarding the interior of the building or its future use.



Undated postcard showing the Marina building (left) and old marina at Middlebridge.



Middlebridge Marina building as it looks today.
(Photo credit Alison Kates)

Herring Run at Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum

by Catherine Campbell



The Nature Conservancy, US Fish & Wildlife Service and RI Department of Environmental Management are improving river herring passage at the Gilbert Stuart Museum.

River herring are attracted to running water. For years there has been a problem with false attraction with high rainfall and operations of the mill wheel, which floods the tailrace (channel leading flows away from the wheel) below the dam, and attracts the herring away from the proper bypass stream to the existing fish ladder. Fish are trapped at the bottom of the dam and expire and rot on site unless netted over the ladder.

To remedy this, the team will construct a picket weir system that will prevent the fish from entering the mill tailrace and direct them to the bypass channel up to the ladder. We aim to install an in-water video camera system that will act like an "E-Z Pass" to count fish passing upstream. The museum will set up a viewing station within their building to enhance their current environmental display and the video feed will be broadcast on the web. This will complement NRPA's Osprey cam in terms of showcasing wildlife on the river. Construction will begin this fall. Stay tuned!

RI Walks Challenge

by Julia Sharpe of the Narrow River Land Trust

The Rhode Island Land Trust Council's RI Walks Challenge has officially begun! This means folks can go search for the 30 different nature-inspired "creatures" hidden on land trust trails throughout the state!

The Challenge is designed to entice people to get outside and explore land trust trails around the state, the perfect way to reduce stress and anxiety and improve health. From the Sweetgum seed pod to the Chanterelle mushroom, each creature has a QR code to scan with your smart phone so you can track which creatures you have found.

The goal of the Steel Yard artist – Greg Rebis, who designed the creatures - was to "elicit a sense of wonder, surprise, and mystery. The resulting designs

are whimsical characters – an anthropomorphization that dances between fantasy and reality – to appeal to the imagination and let people relate to our native flora while out in nature."

Take on the Challenge by visiting riwalks.org/challenge.php – to find a list of trails where creatures are hidden. You can also print a checklist of creatures that you can use to track where and when you find them. Snap a selfie or picture of each creature you find and share it on Instagram and Facebook using #RIWalksChallenge.

The Narrow River Land Trust is happy to be participating in this project to entice Rhode Islanders to discover and explore land trust trails around the state. Look for one of the "creatures" in the Narrow River Watershed!

Navigating the Narrow: A Guide to Boating on the Narrow River

by Jim Vogel

The NRPA Supports and Encourages Safe and Responsible Boating on the Narrow River!



Boating safety (Image credit: Amsa.gov.au)

Many residents and visitors to the Narrow River enjoy kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding and boating and indeed these are some of the best ways to enjoy the watershed! NRPA works to preserve, protect, and restore the natural environment and quality of life for all communities within the Pettaquamscutt estuary, river, and watershed. This includes those who utilize the watershed in boats and personal and paddle watercraft.

Narrow River is under the jurisdiction of the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and three local municipalities of Narragansett, North Kingstown, and South Kingstown.



Narrow River No Wake Zone Map map available at narrowriver.org/boating.

Each municipality has their own harbor master who is responsible for rule enforcement. Safe and responsible boating requires the proper attention and education of boaters.

NRPA's Navigating the Narrow webpage narrowriver.org/boating/ contains some basic boating information and answers to Frequently Asked Questions. NRPA will be planning an in-person meeting in 2022 and in advance of that will be generating a series of videos regarding boating safety. Topics being considered are:

- Overall summary of the river and the rules of boating
- Wakes and safely navigating the narrow section and bridges
- Beach area, sand and tides, and safely navigating mouth of the river
- Upper river and lakes considerations
- Paddle craft rules

NRPA wishes safe and enjoyable boating to you!

Spring River Cleanup

Continued from front page

teams comprised of community members.

Long-standing board members and community volunteers believe that it was a record high volume of trash collected this past spring. In fact, the amount of waste removed along Sprague Bridge was so impressive that a major donation was made by one of our friends who followed our Spring



Two river cleanup volunteers carrying a large item of trash. (Photo credit: Brian O'Connor)

Cleanup updates through our social media posts!

NRPA is most grateful for our enthusiastic cleanup volunteers young and old who came out and made this past Spring River Cleanup a phenomenal success.

Special thanks to the Dunes Club and URI Boathouse for providing use of their dumpsters for waste collections that occurred around those sites, and also to local United States Fish & Wildlife Service and the Town of Narragansett Public Works who offered to pick up trash that was too big to be disposed safely by volunteers.

Next Narrow River Cleanup is scheduled for Sunday September 26 on World Rivers Day!



River cleanup trash collection site at Sprague Bridge on April 17, 2021. (Photo credit: Brian O'Connor)

'Three Sisters' RainKeep

by Jane Hennedy Site Manager, Southern RI Historic New England



Imagine visiting Casey Farm, walking past its spare white farmhouse and across its green lawns. Suddenly, you wonder what is that rising above the stone wall in the garden? A shower of shining stars? A giant psychedelic flower? When you get up close you will see that shiny aluminum, yellow, and purple sight

to behold is a modern sculpture in the farm landscape: the 'Three Sisters' RainKeep. The piece is not only an embellishment, it is the most gorgeous rain barrel we have ever seen. And, more than that, it tells the Eastern Woodlands creation story of the Three Sisters—corn, beans, and squash—which you will see growing nearby.

The upper canopy collects the dew and the rain, which flows down the chain past aluminum figures into a floral-form collector whose petals guide the water into a 500-gallon rain barrel. Our gardeners and children at farm programs will draw water from its spigot to nurture the garden beds, even as they absorb the story it tells. The work of art will call attention to and honor the Indigenous heritage of the land and the lessons of sustainability and harmony with nature that heritage teaches.

The sculpture is the result of a collaboration between two artists, Allison Newsome and Deborah Spears Moorehead. Newsome is an internationally acclaimed artist based in Warren, Rhode Island, who describes herself as a "functional sculptor." Her nature-inspired pieces are her reaction to climate change and one solution for providing water for growing things sustainably. Three Sisters is one of the latest in her patented RainKeep series, and we couldn't be more proud making it the first permanent modern outdoor sculpture in the collection of Historic New England.

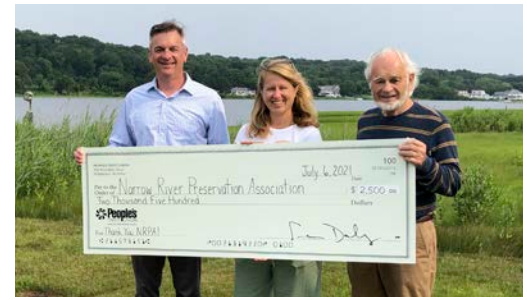
Moorehead says "My art, songs, stories, performances and literary works serve to assert, promote, value and validate the identity of the past, present and future generations of Eastern woodland Native American Tribal Nations." This visual and performing artist drew upon her cultural heritage to create figures of the Sky Woman and others in the creation story of the Three Sisters that were translated through the repoussé technique into aluminum charms by Newsome.

The journey of the two artists and the sculpture's context were described in great detail at the dedication ceremony held on June 25. This meaningful journey will soon be added on Casey Farm's virtual tour experience @casey.farm/and on our YouTube channel.

Now in its new home, 'Three Sisters' RainKeep will withstand the coastal weather and work in harmony with the coastal weather to nurture the garden. It will greet and intrigue all of our visitors to children's education programs, special events, the CSA, and farmers' market. We are so looking forward to seeing how this sculpture changes as it plays with the sky above, helps grow living things around it, and how it sparks imaginations and conversations.

Next, in partnership with NRPA, we plan to install a companion piece—a R.I. Slave History Medallion—and to make them both centerpieces of new education initiatives for all to share.

People's Credit Union sponsors NRPA



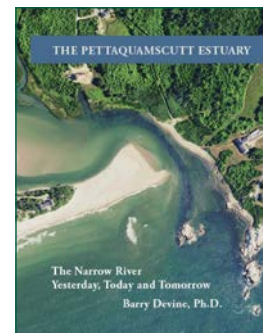
Sean Daly (left), President and CEO of PCU, presented a check to Alison Kates (middle), NRPA Advisory Board Member, and Richard Grant (right), NRPA President. (Photo credit: Courtney Hunter)

People's Credit Union (PCU) recently donated \$2,500 to Narrow River Preservation Association in sponsorship and support of NRPA's preservation, restoration, and educational efforts

People's Credit Union is a true community partner, providing volunteers for Narrow River cleanups (see photo in Spring Cleanup article), partnering in outreach, and other NRPA efforts.

Earlier this Spring PCU employees collectively donated \$500 to NRPA from their March employee Casual for a Cause dress down day. Thank you friends at PCU!

'The Pettaquamscutt Estuary' Book

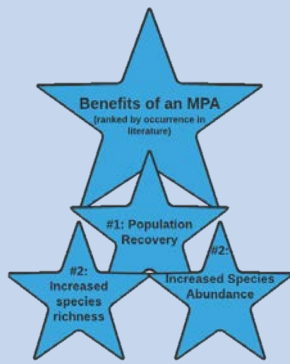


The Pettaquamscutt Estuary: The Narrow River Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' by Dr. Barry Devine, was first published and made available publicly in the fall of 2020. This book provides a wealth of information about the history and geology of the Narrow River

watershed, as well as the osprey and other wildlife living in the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River.

Barry's book is available online at the incredible price of \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members; please visit narrowriver.org/nrbook/. 100% of book sales goes directly to programs and projects of NRPA. As such, purchase of this book is another way you can help NRPA in our mission to preserve, protect, and restore the Narrow River and its watershed. NRPA extends many thanks to Barry Devine, NRPA Advisory Board member, for his generous contributions developing this book for all who are interested to learn more about our favorite Estuary, River and Watershed!

Marine Protected Area Graduate Research *by Zach Sirowich*



As a resident of Narragansett and graduate student at Slippery Rock University based in Butler County Pennsylvania, I partnered with NRPA to gather evidence to validate the intervention of obtaining sanctuary status to improve the overall health of the Narrow River Watershed. A Marine Protected Area (MPA) is a clearly defined area that

protects and conserves an ecosystem.

Data was extracted from 14 different articles covering eleven MPAs. From this, a great deal of information was found on beneficial ways to go about protecting a marine area and what to focus on when trying to protect it. Some of the successful strategies include focusing

on functional traits rather than specific species and the strengths behind connected conservation corridors within a watershed.

After conducting a systematic review and analysis, I concluded that obtaining sanctuary status improves the overall health of a watershed and/or marine ecosystem. Several key benefits of obtaining a protected status include 1) target population recovery, 2) increased species richness, and 3) increased species abundance, with 4) target population recovery being the most common.

This review provides evidence that marine protected area status designation is a successful conservation strategy and illustrates the types of benefits that can result from achieving an MPA status. I am confident that pursuing an MPA status for the Narrow River Watershed will lead to health benefits for the site in the future and I look forward to collaborating with NRPA in the years ahead.

2021 Osprey Family Exploits *by Rebecca Russell*

In late March and early April, the osprey male and female returned from their annual migration to the nest located along Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River, a site hosted by the Narrow River Land Trust and their partnership with NRPA. The nest is outfitted with a live, 24-hour webcam that was launched in spring of 2020. Since then we have received unanimously positive responses from members and community people alike who have found great entertainment and wildlife education from watching this live video feed of last year's and this year's osprey family. The general consensus has been that watching Narrow River osprey has lifted many people's spirits during some of the hardest shelter-in-place periods throughout the past year and a half. NRPA is pleased that people are now regularly viewing osprey family activity through our website and NRPA's YouTube channel!



Osprey bond with their nest for life. On March 29, a female arrived at the nest and was accepted by last year's male, even though she was a different bird from last year. Over a few days,

these two engaged in housekeeping together and were even seen starting to copulate.

Then on April 1, the female from last year returned and the two females competed for the nest. The photo above shows the 2020 female asserting her dominance to win back the nest. After several physical challenges like this, the new female vacated and last year's female prevailed.

NRPA was thrilled to have the return of the osprey on the same day as last year and two healthy chicks hatched in June. In late July one of the two chicks fledged and in the month of



August both chicks have been learning how to fly! Check out narrowriver.org/ospreycam for live feed video and select short recorded video clips of major family milestones throughout the past two years. These clips are created by NRPA Advisory Board member Alison Kates, who aptly identifies and selects out of hundreds of hours of recorded footage, the memorable moments of the Osprey family's exploits. This second photo above shows the entire Osprey family in one incredible image that is featured on this year's 51 for 51 T-shirts. Look for #NRPA51for51 on our social media accounts! Registration open through September 30 @narrowriver.org/51for51/.

NRPA thanks Osprey webcam technical crew Bob Facey, Alison Kates, Craig Wood, and Jason Considine for their diligence keeping the webcam up and running after acts of nature cause occasional technical interference or disruption of cam service.

NRPA extends special gratitude to Alison Kates for her authorship of the Osprey article series, that has been featured in the Narragansett times throughout this year.

NRPA hopes that every resident and friend of the Narrow River Watershed, as do the osprey, appreciates that the water is becoming cleaner and more hospitable!



MANY THANKS TO NRPA's 2021 SPONSORS!



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