

# NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Protecting, Preserving and Restoring the Narrow River Watershed Since 1970 / January 2022

## Oyster Recruitment Survey

by Will Helt, Coastal Restoration Scientist  
with The Nature Conservancy



TNC scientists Will Helt and Heather Kinney.

Maybe you've seen our small skiff with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) logo traveling the river and wondered, "Just what are they up to?" I'm writing to tell you we have been conducting an oyster survey!

Oysters benefit the environment in numerous ways. Known as "ecosystem engineers," they not only provide habitat for many other species but also filter and clean the water. However, due to a variety of human-

caused reasons, the number of wild oysters in Rhode Island today is a fraction of what it used to be. That is why studying the oyster population and tracking the annual recruitment of new oysters is important work for us at TNC.

Narrow River is unique in that it is one of the few waterbodies in Rhode Island that still supports a noteworthy wild oyster population. As TNC scientists, we are interested in tracking and monitoring the oysters in Narrow River so we can ensure that they continue to thrive and enhance the health of the river's ecosystem.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about this survey, please contact TNC scientist Will Helt ([william.helt@tnc.org](mailto:william.helt@tnc.org)).



Oyster spat on shell.

## NRPA Silent Art Auction Planned for October 2022

by Alison Kates, Advisory Director



The North Kingstown Branch of People's Credit Union now holds three works of art to be featured in NRPA's 2022 Art Auction. From left, Ben Tallman, People's Credit Union Facilities Manager, Erin Connor, People's Credit Union North Kingstown Branch Manager, Alison Kates, NRPA Advisory Director, and Richard Grant, NRPA Board President show the artwork.

NRPA is pleased to announce that we are planning a Silent Art Auction for Fall 2022.

Oil paintings, woodblock prints, photography, mic-a-rt, weavings, and other works by local artists will be available for purchase starting October 7, 2022. All proceeds benefitting NRPA's various preservation, monitoring, and education programs. Many pieces will feature Pettaquamscutt Estuary (Narrow River) as the subject of the artwork.

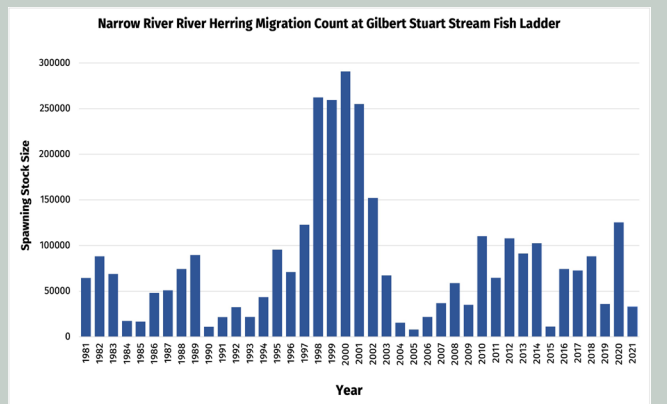
The Wakefield and North Kingstown branches of People's Credit Union are currently hosting original works of art that will be available for purchase during the auction.

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## 2021 Annual Herring Count at Gilbert Stuart Birthplace

by Patrick McGee, Fisheries Biologist with RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM)

The annual count of river herring at Gilbert Stuart in 2021, was 32,760 fish. This was lower than the last several years, but herring counts were down state-wide in 2021. All of us with RIDEM hope numbers will bounce back in 2022 and continue to improve going forward. More information about the annual river herring migration at [narrowriver.org/river-herring](http://narrowriver.org/river-herring)



## President's Cove

Dear Friends of the Narrow River,

Happy New Year! NRPA begins this year with our 'sails full' of gratitude for all the volunteers and partners who contributed to the successful wrap-up of 2021 events and programs, including many thanks to our members, donors, and sponsors who responded to our annual membership drive last October.

At this beginning of 2022, NRPA works to deepen and broaden our outreach and partnership-building throughout the Watershed by streamlining program operations while continuing to strengthen our water quality monitoring, education, and outreach activities.

Our dedicated Board Directors and Advisory Directors have worked hard to bring in new grant money and we are pleased to announce receipt of a grant award from the Ocean State Charities Trust totaling \$4445.00 to purchase two deep water probes to expand, and literally deepen, our River Watch monitoring program's reach. This is another progression forward in our mission to supply the public with accurate information on water quality constituents.

As we all continue to navigate the uncertain waters of ongoing public health precautions, our Board continues to meet virtually, with ad-hoc working groups focused on future planning and program restructuring so NRPA becomes even more resilient for these times. To broaden our reach through the Watershed, new committees are taking shape to steer all seven of our Strategic Plan focus areas including: Administration, Financial Management, Fundraising & Development, Water Quality, Land Issues, Education, and Events.

Water quality improvement has been a steady trend, measured and recorded through our River Watch program for 30 consecutive years of water quality monitoring. This trend is affirmed by happy community members- like yourselves- who enjoy boating, swimming, fishing, birding, and hiking in this extraordinary watershed. Now entering our 52nd year of operations, NRPA looks forward to ongoing engagement with our member-volunteers, partners, and other stakeholders to continue protecting water quality in the Narrow River. We thank you so much for your ongoing support and volunteerism and we wish you all a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Respectfully Yours,



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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## Join NRPA!

Membership is NRPA's largest source of funding and connects you with all NRPA's activities, events, and advocacy! Our annual membership cycle runs from January 1 through December 31 each calendar year. Renewals or signups received after our membership drive in the fall, are considered active from date received through the end of the following calendar year. If memberships are renewed in the spring, they will be active through the end of that same calendar year. To get the most from your membership, we encourage renewal or signups in the fall or winter, or simply schedule recurring monthly donations. For example, \$4.25/month would total \$50 Family level membership each year. Join by sending a check to NRPA, PO Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874 or online at [narrowriver.org/join-donate](http://narrowriver.org/join-donate). Thank you!

United Way of  
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.

Rhode Island  
Rivers Council



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

# Sally Sutherland Honored with 2021 Friend of the River Award

by Alison Kates, Advisory Director

Sally Sutherland was honored with the 2021 W.E.R. La Farge Memorial Friend of the River Award at NRPA's 51st Annual meeting on October 5, 2021.

Sally was recognized for her hard work and dedication over many years to NRPA's community outreach programs, particularly NRPA's Lesa Meng College Scholarship Program and the Town of Narragansett's Environmental Awareness Day at the Beach, and overall service to the Narrow River Preservation Association. An ocean engineer and Narragansett resident, Sally has served on the Board of Directors of the Narrow River Preservation Association for 16 years and has been involved in many of NRPA's efforts. Her most visible work for NRPA has been running the NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarship Program since 2009 (13 high school graduations).

She has also been a dedicated volunteer at the Narrow River Turnaround Swim, What Lives in the River family exploration event, the Narrow River Road Race, and the installation of the osprey nest platform overlooking Narrow River. Sally has quietly put in a long-term effort to help NRPA and the Narrow River, particular in our outreach to local communities, and our area is much the better for her efforts.

NRPA presents the W.E.R. La Farge Memorial Friend of the River Award to an individual or



Sally Sutherland, winner of the 2021 W.E.R. La Farge Friend of the River Award pictured with her award with Narrow River behind her. (Photo courtesy of Sally Sutherland)

organization whose work in protecting the Narrow River (Pettaquamscutt Estuary) reflects the spirit of W.E.R. La Farge, a founding member of NRPA. More details about the W.E.R. La Farge Memorial Friend of the River Award, including a list of past recipients is available at [narrowriver.org/friend-of-the-river-award](http://narrowriver.org/friend-of-the-river-award).

## 2021 Kayak Raffle Winner

by Jason Considine, Board Member and Owner of Narrow River Kayaks

### And the lucky winner is... Marc Blevins!

On November 2, 2021 Narrow River Preservation Association held the annual kayak raffle drawing during its monthly Board of Directors Meeting. The lucky winner was Marc Blevins of Narragansett. A proud resident of the watershed, Marc is looking forward to paddling his new Ocean Kayak Malibu 9.5 generously donated by Narrow River Kayaks to NRPA for our raffle prize. Congratulations, Marc, and thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets and for your support of NRPA!



Marc Blevins received his winning raffle ticket award at the bank of the Narrow River onsite at Narrow River Kayaks (Photo credit: Jason Considine)

## NRPA Thanks the 35 River Watch Volunteers from 2021!

by Annette DeSilva, River Watch Coordinator and Advisory Director



River Watch volunteer Eric Kohlsaad testing a Narrow River water sample for Dissolved Oxygen (DO). (Photo courtesy of Eric Kohlsaad)

In 2021, 35 volunteers participated in NRPA's River Watch Program and 30th monitoring season. From May through October, these volunteers contributed their time to make measurements and collect water samples on the Narrow River. Their assistance and dedication is greatly appreciated!

This year's volunteers included: Veronica Berounsky, Margaret Bradley, Jennifer Carey, Kate Dolan, Elizabeth Donovan, George and Suzanne Faucher, Michelle Goldman, Chris Gouveia, David Hilliard, Marcia Izzi, Helen Johnson, Karen Killian, Eric and Jennifer Kohlsaad, Alison Kutcher, Ted Kutcher, and Lily Kutcher, Marc Lamson, Nancy McLean, David Moore, Betsy Motyl, Perry Moylan, Jill O'Neill, Linda and Eric Peterson, Michael Remington, Paula Santos, Rick Schultz, Mark Silverman, Rosemary and David Smith, Clare Stone, Kate Sullivan, and Craig Wood. Special recognition goes out to Rosemary Smith who reached the milestone of completing 15 years of monitoring this year!

The continued success of NRPA's River Watch Program is due to the dedicated service of the volunteers. It is through their efforts that we continue to learn more about the quality of the Narrow River waters. NRPA greatly appreciates the many hours of service provided by the volunteers. Thank you very much!

More information about River Watch, including findings and how to volunteer at [narrowriver.org/riverwatch](http://narrowriver.org/riverwatch).

## Town Renews Agreement with Friends of Canonchet Farm

by Thomas Hoagland, President of Friends of Canonchet Farm



FOCF volunteers managing invasive plants during a community workday out on one of the trails. (Photo courtesy of FOCF)

A notable milestone for The Friends of Canonchet Farm (FOCF) occurred last Spring, when the Narragansett Town Council approved the renewal of the working agreement with FOCF for an additional 10 years. After a short presentation given by President Tom Hoagland, the Council was shown the before and after video of the volunteers working to remove invasive plants from the last significant section of the eastern section of the Nature Trail. There were only appreciative comments from the audience and the new agreement was approved unanimously by the Council. You can view the video here: [youtube/jTyPxxgHOa1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTyPxxgHOa1E).

Our volunteers have accomplished much in the nearly ten years of working in the Canonchet Farm property; first by restoring the eastern edge of Lake Canonchet and then by maintaining and restoring the overgrown Nature Trail a few years later. The vote of confidence given by the town in granting the new ten-year partnership will enable us to build on our established work and expand the trail network, extending the lake clearance to Littleneck Pond.

With so many RI residents now vaccinated, program walks have resumed on the property. Visit [canonchet.org](http://canonchet.org) for a list of upcoming opportunities, access to trail maps, and background information on the projects of this local organization.

# How We Celebrate World Rivers Day

by Erin Chille, Board Member



URI's Coastal Society members participate in the Fall River Cleanup. (Photo courtesy of the URI Coastal Society)

This year, NRPA celebrated World Rivers Day 2021 as we usually do, with a river cleanup event! On the weekend of September 25-26, four teams of volunteers, including the University of Rhode Island Coastal Society, removed trash from Middlebridge down to the mouth of the river.

This year was the first in which the fall cleanup was recognized as part of Save the Bay's International Coastal Cleanup event, which runs from September-October every year. Thanks to our collaboration with Save the Bay, we were better able to document the quantity and types of trash removed from the river this Fall. This Rivers Day, our dedicated volunteers managed to remove over 200 pieces of trash, including 77 pieces of food-related trash, 62 cigarette butts, 49 pieces of plastic and foam!

Special thanks to Helen Johnson, Joseph O'Farrell, Maria Kadison, Renay Houle and Rebecca Jane Farnolf and Captain David Hill and the other 29 volunteers from URI's Coastal Society who came out for river cleanup in late September! An estimated 60 pounds of trash once along - and in - the Narrow River was collected and disposed of

properly. NRPA offers special thanks to the Dunes Club and Narrow River Kayaks for the use of their dumpsters and to Narrow River Kayaks for coordinating the use of kayaks with nearly half of the Coastal Society members who collected trash from watercraft, while others collected trash on foot alongside the River banks and associated parking areas.

On December 11, NRPA's river cleanup efforts continued with the help of volunteers from the Wakefield branch of People's Credit Union. Molly Mageau, a long time NRPA supporter and Lead Teller at the Wakefield Branch and two of her colleagues, Ann Maguire and Melissa Barros, led the December cleanup at La Farge Park next to the URI Boathouse, the site where we host the annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim. As many of the annual swim participants know, this site was certainly in need of a cleanup!

We are so grateful to all of our amazing volunteers for helping us to keep the river clean. If you are interested in volunteering for future cleanup efforts, please fill out the Volunteer Interest form at [narrowriver.org/volunteer](http://narrowriver.org/volunteer).



Community volunteers Renay Houle and Rebecca Jane Farnolf, keeping Narrow River clean. (Photo credit: Rebecca Russell)



Community volunteer Helen Johnson, keeping Narrow River clean. (Photo credit: Rebecca Russell)



NRPA Board volunteers Richard Grant and Sarah Gaines (with daughter), People's Credit Union staff Ann Maguire, Molly Mageau, and Melissa Barros, removing trash from La Farge Point Park on a mild December day. (Photo credit: Kathy Byington)

# NRPA Volunteers Receive Prestigious 2021 EPA Environmental Merit Lifetime Achievement Awards for their work on Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River

by Alison Kates, Advisory Director



NRPA volunteers Veronica Berounsky (left) and Annette DeSilva were recently honored with Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1, for their decades of dedication protecting and preserving the Pettaquamscutt Estuary (Narrow River). (Photo credit: Alison Kates)

Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) is proud to announce that longtime volunteer Board members Veronica Berounsky, Ph.D., and Annette DeSilva received Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1 in September 2021. NRPA nominated these dedicated people in recognition of their 30-year commitment to the ecology and health of Narrow River and its watershed. We are thrilled that their extensive contributions to our environment have been publicly honored.

## **ANNETTE DESILVA of Narragansett, Rhode Island**

Annette DeSilva is being recognized for her 30 years of outstanding and sustained stewardship of the Pettaquamscutt Estuary, known locally as the Narrow River. In 1992, Annette, with Veronica Berounsky and others, founded Narrow River Preservation Association's River

Watch Program in concert with the University of Rhode Island's Watershed Watch program. Monitoring water in the estuary allows the association and local officials to identify problems and find remedies.

Since the start of the River Watch program, Annette has been coordinator of the all-volunteer program, supporting over 200 volunteers who spent over 8,800 hours at the Narrow River taking over 47,400 field measurements and obtaining more than 13,700 water samples.

Under Annette's leadership, the program has expanded to 13 sites, which includes streams and stormwater outfall pipes. Having found high bacteria counts that could not be explained by processes within the river, Annette advocated adding new sites so inputs could be examined. Shortly after the program started and one test site showed high bacteria counts, an outhouse along

Gilbert Stuart Stream was removed, resulting in clean water samples within weeks. Since then, countless projects informed by River Watch data have been installed. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service needed water monitoring done in 2015, it came to the association because of its reputation for reliable river monitoring.

Annette and colleague Veronica Berounsky have presented detailed findings, trends, and summaries of decades of River Watch data. These show improvements in water quality and identify problematic areas that require more research and mitigation. Having served on the association's board of directors from 1990 to 2018, she is now an advisory director to NRPA's Board.

Annette's 30 years of commitment to the River Watch program has resulted in improved water quality in the estuary. This well-established program will continue to lead to improvements for decades to come.

## **VERONICA BEROUNSKY of Narragansett, Rhode Island**

Veronica Berounsky, Ph.D., is being recognized for her 30 years of outstanding and sustained stewardship of the Pettaquamscutt Estuary, known locally as the Narrow River. As both a board member and vice president of the Narrow River Preservation Association, Veronica's environmental advocacy has led to environmentally responsible development and the protection of the watershed.

A powerhouse of energy and dedication, Veronica was instrumental in creating the association's River Watch program in 1992, which has directly led to better water quality in Narrow River. In 2018, after high bacteria was found in two spots on the river, Veronica secured the funds

# Barry Devine, Rosemary and David Smith Presented with Environmental Appreciation Awards

by Alison Kates, Advisory Director

At NRPA's 51st Annual Meeting in October, Barry Devine and Rosemary and David Smith were all recognized for their dedication to Narrow River.



Barry Devine at the 2019 Narrow River Road Race. Barry is standing beside T shirts from past Narrow River Road Races, five of which feature prints of Barry's artwork. (Photo Credit: Veronica Berounsky)

**Barry Devine**, Ph.D., was applauded for his efforts editing, writing, and publishing *The Pettaquamscutt Estuary: The Narrow River Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, which is not only a literary and educational resource, but has also generated significant funds for NRPA within the first year of publication.

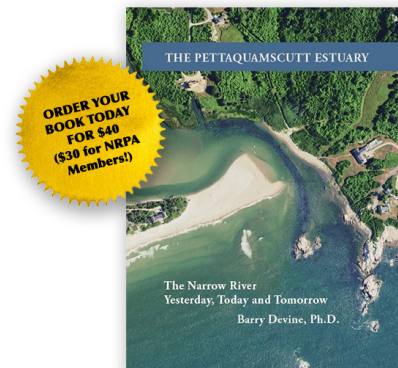
Barry, a resident of Slocum, RI, recently retired from the NRPA Board but for the last several years he had been occupied with writing and editing a new volume on

history and ecology of the Narrow River estuary. *The Pettaquamscutt Estuary: The Narrow River Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* focuses on the critical link between landscapes and seascapes, emphasizing the importance of the ecosystem, the impact of human beings and our responsibility as global stewards of the Earth.

In addition to a trove of historical documents and articles, the book includes fifteen detailed maps of the watershed, each of which

highlight different environmental and natural history aspects of the watershed. Through the development of these maps, Barry also compiled a comprehensive GIS database of the Narrow River watershed, which is an amazing resource for anyone interested in watershed conservation.

And generously, all profits from the sale of Barry's book have gone to the NRPA, to support conservation and educational efforts for years to come. The book is available for sale at [narrowriver.org/nrbook](http://narrowriver.org/nrbook).



Front cover of Barry's book

Continued on page 8

then organized and oversaw an innovative program that uses trained dogs to detect human bacteria. The failing septic systems the dogs identified are now being repaired.

Veronica works to involve the public in protecting the health of the watershed. She has led educational tours for students and visiting academics, teaching them about the estuary's ecology. She also led a program to educate teachers on teaching students about watershed ecology. Veronica founded "Art on the

River," inspiring artists and families to create art along the river's edge. She also began "What Lives in the River," an event inviting families to discover the creatures in the Pettaquamscutt Estuary area with volunteer experts on hand. In 2005, Veronica led the creation of the "Narrow River Turnaround Swim," a fundraiser highlighting the river's excellent water quality. In 2020, she initiated a swim that had participants swimming the six miles from a tributary to the mouth of Narrow River.

Veronica has shared her talents with other organizations, serving as chair of Rhode Island Rivers Council since 2013, contributing to the Coastal & Estuarine Research Foundation and New England Estuarine Research Society, and working with the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography.

Veronica's sustained, consistent, and outstanding efforts have directly led to better water quality in the Pettaquamscutt Estuary.

David and Rosemary Smith at the 2021 Pettaquamscutt Paddle.  
(Photo Credit: Alison Kates)



Rosemary and David Smith were celebrated for their efforts creating and hosting ten years of the wonderful and informative speaker series, On Pettaquamscutt: Presentations on the Environment and the History of the Narrow River Watershed.

In 2012, David and Rosemary, a married couple from Narragansett, created the On Pettaquamscutt winter speaker series. In doing this,

they developed a partnership with Friends of Canonchet Farm, Narrow River Preservation Association, South County Museum, and the Maury Loontjens Memorial Library. They garnered sponsorship from Trio Restaurant, who generously supported the series. Rosemary and David facilitated and hosted the speaker series for ten years, retiring it in March 2021.

Free and open to the public, the

presentations were held during the winter months (Jan., Feb., Mar.), so they provided a new opportunity for educational programming during a time of year when field programs in the watershed typically wind down.

The lectures concentrated on the environmental and local history of the Narrow River watershed and spanned a range of topics over the years including: historic farms in the watershed, salt marsh habitat restoration, common amphibians and reptiles in the Narrow River, the impacts of sea level rise, and in 2021, a virtual tour of coastal defenses in Narragansett presented by David Smith himself.

Although the speaker series is now retired, the On Pettaquamscutt website, [onpettaquamscutt.org](http://onpettaquamscutt.org), remains available and offers video recordings of recent presentations as well as resources from many of the informative and interesting programs throughout the ten-year series.

For an organization like NRPA, volunteers are fundamental to the success of our programs and community events. NRPA Environmental Appreciation Awards recognize individuals who's volunteer efforts to preserve and protect have gone above and beyond.

## Thanks to NRPA's Major Donors

NRPA is beyond grateful to receive the generous support of local family foundations, who also share a stake in the quality of life in the Pettaquamscutt Estuary. Special thanks go out to these family foundations supporting our watershed preservation efforts in 2022:



**JOHN & BARRY  
DARIA FAMILY  
FOUNDATION**



**WILMOT WHEELER  
FOUNDATION**



**HAZARD FAMILY  
FOUNDATION**



# NRPA Silent Art Auction Planned for October 2022

*Continued from front page*



*'Narrow Ways' by Lorraine Hynes, accompanied by informational card.*



*Richard Grant (left) NRPA President, stands with Molly Mageau, Ben Tallman, Melissa Barros, and Kyla Wilkinson of People's Credit Union in front of original artwork to be offered at NRPA's Silent Art Auction in Fall 2022.*

Featuring the beauty of the Pettaquamscutt Estuary, or Narrow River as it's commonly known, three original oil paintings by Pati Sylvia, Christine Webb, and Lorraine Hynes are available to view at People's Credit Union, 150 Old Tower Hill Road, Wakefield. The public is welcome to the Wakefield and North Kingstown branches of People's Credit Union to view the artwork. The North Kingstown branch is located at 7490 Post Road, North Kingstown.

More artwork will be hung at other People's Credit Union Branches and other local businesses in the coming months. Photos and descriptions of artwork to be included in the auction as well as more details are available at [narrowriver.org/art](http://narrowriver.org/art).

On Friday, October 7, 2022, the art auction will kick off with a gallery opening at Studio Blue at the Coastal Institute on the URI Graduate School of Oceanography campus. The gallery opening will coincide with NRPA's 52nd Annual Meeting, to be held in the adjacent Auditorium the same evening.

Sarah Gaines, Chair of NRPA's Art Auction Committee says, "This art

exhibition and auction presents a wonderful opportunity to celebrate both the beauty and talent found in our watershed, while supporting important work to protect it."

NRPA is grateful to People's Credit Union and all of our contributing artists. More donations by local artists welcome! Please email [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org) for more information and interest in donating original artwork of the watershed.



*Ben Tallman, Facilities Manager for People's Credit Union, carefully hangs an informational card about original oil painting by local artist Pati Sylvia at the Wakefield Branch of People's Credit Union. All are welcome to view the artwork during business hours.*

## Preserving the Rhode Island Greening Apple

*by Christopher Cunningham, Assistant Director of the South County Museum*

A century ago, the Rhode Island Greening apple was among the most popular varieties of all apples across the Northeast. These rather tart apples are excellent raw but are especially good when cooked. When baked, the Rhode Island Greening apples become richer and sweeter, while still holding their shape, making them an ideal apple for pies. Unfortunately, because the tree only produces a substantial harvest every other year, the Rhode Island Greening saw a general decline in popularity in the early 20th century.

Nevertheless, the Rhode Island Greening apple has survived in select orchards across New England and in recent years has begun to make a modest comeback. The South County Museum is proud to preserve its very own Rhode Island Greening trees at its campus in Narragansett and invites you to keep an eye out for future programming about these historic fruits and the pollinators that keep them thriving!



*RI Greening Apple trees grown onsite at South County Museum in Narragansett. (Photo courtesy of the South County Museum)*

# Welcome back, What Lives in the River!

by Sally Sutherland, Board Member



Volunteers Jake Pietrzak (left) and Sally Sutherland wearing waders, using a seine net to capture river creatures (catch & release) for observation in holding tanks by WLITR participants. (Photo credit: Veronica Berounsky)

The Narrow River Preservation Association is delighted to have returned, after a year absence, to our in-person 'What Lives in the River' educational event. On Sunday September 19, NRPA volunteers donned their waders, set up their microscopes and fish holding tanks, and welcomed in the public.

The free What Lives in the River event occurred during the Town of Narragansett's 'Gansett Days' weekend activities. The event was hosted at the Middlebridge Marina, in Narragansett RI, all ages were invited to join NRPA for this hands-on exploration of fish, shellfish, crabs and other inhabitants of the Narrow River.

Participants included many families with children of all ages. The NRPA volunteers showed participants how to seine (fishing with a net) to catch river creatures. If interested, the participants were welcome to get into the water with the NRPA supplied gear, including a variety of large and small seining nets.

The captured river creatures could then be examined up close and in

some cases under a microscope. Volunteers set up holding tanks filled with river water, magnifying glasses and the microscopes to examine the river inhabitants. There were also several guidebooks to help with identification. NRPA had experts on hand, to discuss the importance of estuaries as nurseries for fish and shellfish, the migration of river herring, and the role of river plants in the food web. All the sea creatures were returned to the river after the event.

It can be surprising to many people the variety of sea creatures that live in the river. Participants did find a variety of plants, fish and shellfish including a few blue crabs and lots of eel grass. The blue crabs thrive in parts of the Narrow River with shallow and brackish waters, muddy bottoms, and eelgrass beds. The eel grass (a rooted, flowering plant that grows beneath the water's surface) continues to do well in the Narrow River. This is important because it plays a vital role in the function of the Narrow River ecosystem, including providing critical habitat for many species of fish and

invertebrates. By dampening wave energy and holding marine sediments in place, eelgrass can also provide protection of the shoreline.

At the event, we were also fortunate to have our partner, the Narrow River Land Trust, provide a guided trail walk (Garrison House Acres trail) along the intertidal zone and salt marsh to observe the inhabitants. The one-mile walk follows a loop trail through deciduous woodlands, freshwater marshes, open fields and along salt marsh fringing the Narrow River. Past photos and videos from this event available at [narrowriver.org/whatlivesinriver](http://narrowriver.org/whatlivesinriver)



Future scientist observing microbiology at September's WLITR event. (Photo credit: Veronica Berounsky)

# Source to Sea: a 6-mile Swim from the Headwaters to the Mouth of the Narrow River

by Rebecca Russell, Program Coordinator



Spotters and swimmers celebrating the successful long-swim of 2021, with Narrow River behind them. (Photo credit: Ann Walsh)



All three swimmers, Lori Pugh (left), Veronica Berounsky (middle), and Mary Phelan (right), glowing after in their NRPA Anniversary T-shirts after completing the 10K (6-mile) swim. (Photo credit: Ann Walsh)

On Friday, September 3, 2021, Lori Pugh, Mary Phelan and Veronica Berounsky swam the 6-mile (10K) length of Narrow River!

Lori Pugh is an internationally recognized artist from North Kingstown, and Mary Phelan is a realtor with the Narragansett office for Residential Properties. Veronica Berounsky is a coastal ecologist and staff member at the University of Rhode Island, Vice President of Narrow River Preservation Association, and Chair of the RI Rivers Council.

Veronica was also swimming to raise awareness for “Donate Life” which encourages people to sign up to be an organ donor, because she donated a kidney 6 years ago and understands how the decision to donate saves lives. Even with one kidney, Veronica is physically fit to swim the length of Narrow River! For more information about Donate Life, visit: [donatelife.net](http://donatelife.net).

Source to Sea swimmers raised over \$900 in funds for NRPA during its 51st anniversary year, highlighting the river as a wonderful and safe place to swim. Additional photos of the 2021 and 2020 long swim can be seen on NRPA’s website at: [narrowriver.org/sourcetosea](http://narrowriver.org/sourcetosea) and on the NRPA Facebook page, which also includes videos.

NRPA gives many thanks to Jerry Prezioso, Walter Berry, Ann Walsh, Debra and Greg Rosche and Peter Scalora, for their support as spotters on the water alongside our swimmers in their kayaks and stand-up-paddle board.



Ecstatic swimmers Mary Phelan (left) and Lori Pugh (right) after finishing their 6-mile swim, with the Mouth of the Narrow River behind them. (Photo credit: Ann Walsh)



Swimmer Veronica Berounsky, smiling for the camera while on her way to the mouth of the river, with kayak spotter and bridge on Middlebridge Road behind her. (Photo credit: Jerry Prezioso)



NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

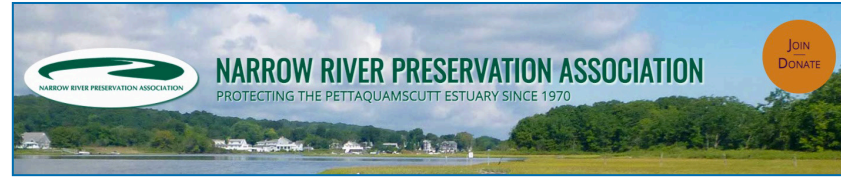
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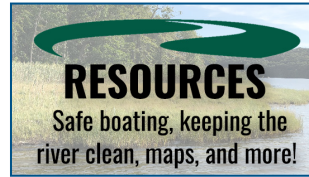
## NRPA's all new website [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org)



Thanks to a generous grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, NRPA's website was revamped in 2021. Visit [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org) for information about our programs.



**Membership Cycle**, Renew or join in the fall or winter, to get the most from membership January 1 through December 31 each calendar year. Members receive printed newsletters, discounts on book purchases, votes during our annual meeting, and more. Visit [narrowriver.org/join-donate](http://narrowriver.org/join-donate)



**Resources** for safe boating, kayaking, paddleboarding and swimming, guides for keeping the river clean, information on wildlife in the watershed, scientific, historical, and cultural research articles, paddle and walking trail maps, tide charts for Middlebridge, no wake zones on the river, and more.



**River Watch**, NRPA's core water quality testing program, is now 30 years old! Our website includes summaries of 29 years of river watch data and the implications of the findings. We also have information on how you can become a community scientist!



June 25, 2022

**Events** like the 2022 Turnaround Swim (June 25), What Lives in the River science exploration day, Annual membership meeting, and more all available at: [narrowriver.org/event\\_calendar](http://narrowriver.org/event_calendar)



**Osprey webcam**, our live, 24 hour osprey webcam along Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River. Watch the nest live or scroll down the page to watch a seven minute video of the 2020 Osprey Family's Year and many other video clips. Free activity pages, an osprey observer form, resources and lesson plans all available at [narrowriver.org/ospreycam](http://narrowriver.org/ospreycam)