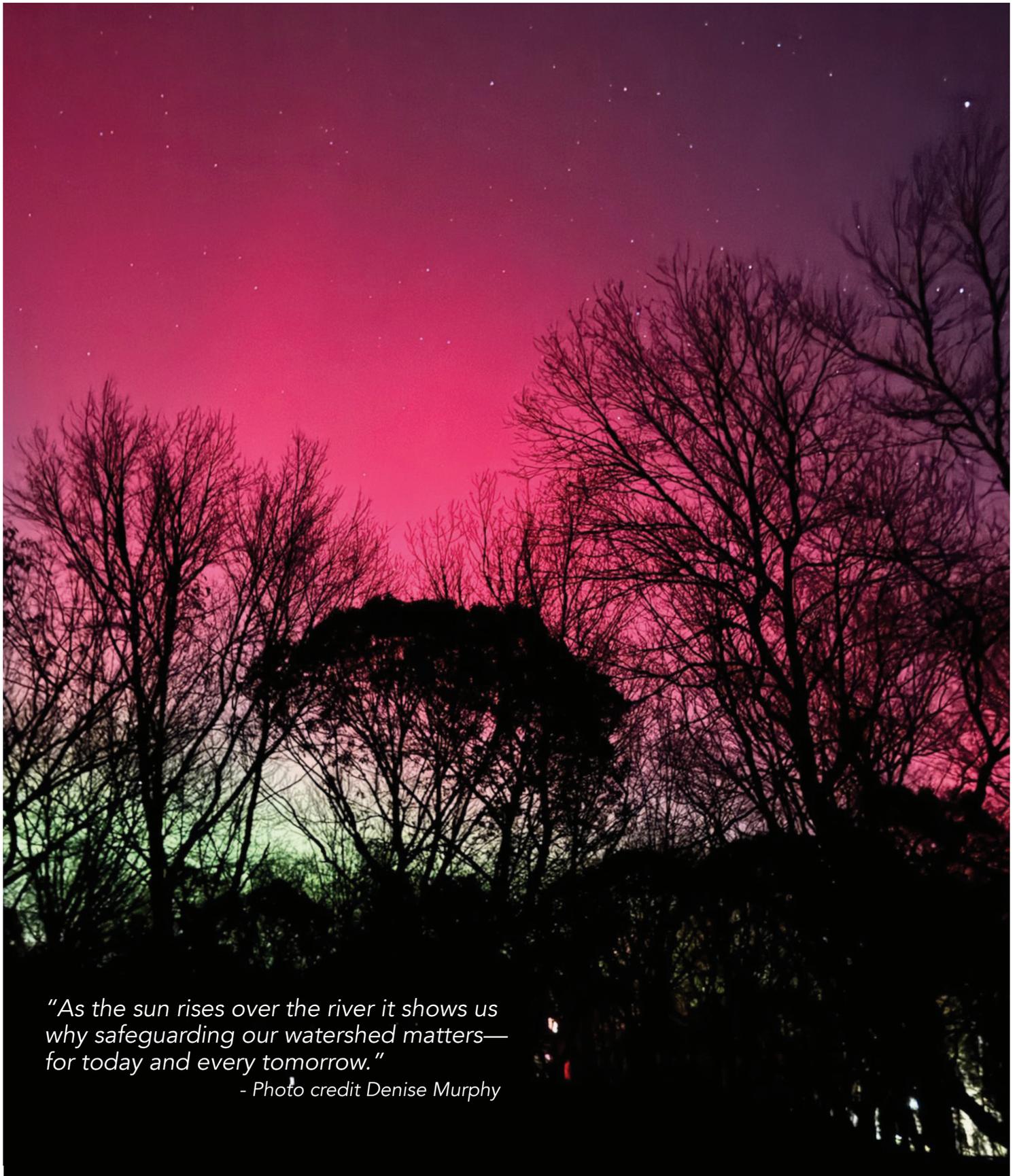



NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Protecting, Preserving and Restoring the Narrow River Watershed Since 1970/ December 2025



"As the sun rises over the river it shows us why safeguarding our watershed matters—for today and every tomorrow."

- Photo credit Denise Murphy

Presidents Cove

Spreading the Word

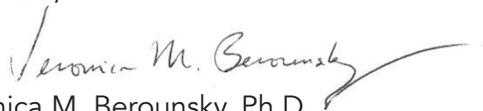
Dear Friends of Narrow River,

Having recently returned from the scientific conference of the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) where I interacted with 15,500 scientists, educators, and managers working in coastal and estuarine systems around the world, I'm reminded of what is unique about our Pettaquamscutt Estuary and what it has in common with other estuaries. Like all estuaries, salt water and fresh water meet and mix here. Like other estuaries, there are concerns about activities in the watershed and how that affects the quality of the water. But we are fortunate here that we have over 30 years of water quality data that we can use to analyze the impacts of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for bacteria in stormwater, as did Katherine Thompson, who in August completed her Master of Science degree at the Graduate School of Oceanography. Katherine used NRPA's data for both her thesis and her talk at CERF. The overturns in the deep basins of Narrow River are unusual events, unique to a handful of estuarine systems that also have deep basins. I have been working on analyzing the data we have from before, during and after the overturn last November in the Upper Pond to see if we can predict future overturns and what affect climate change might have on overturns. I gave a talk on this at CERF.

Katherine and I introduced the Pettaquamscutt Estuary to a conference full of people interested in estuaries and coasts and heard comments about what an amazing system it is. We are all advocates for this unique and interesting ecosystem. Who are you going to introduce Narrow River to?

And thank you for all YOU do for Narrow River and its watershed.

Take care,



Veronica M. Berounsky, Ph.D.
President, NRPA Board of Directors

MISSION STATEMENT

The Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) engages people to preserve and protect the Narrow River (Pettaquamscutt Estuary) and its watershed.

NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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David Allaire, Treasurer

Kathleen Couchon

Kathleen Dolan

Peter Gelhaar

Brian Mattiucci

Denise Murphy

James Vogel

Submissions and correspondence to nrpa@narrowriver.org

Join NRPA!

Membership is NRPA's largest source of funding and connects you with all of NRPA's activities, events and advocacy. We accept checks payable to NRPA, credit cards, or your registered PayPal account. The mailing address is NRPA, P.O. Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874



Individuals wishing to donate via a Stock Transfer or a Qualified Charitable Distribution from an IRA please contact nrpa@narrowriver.org.

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 the Narrow River and its watershed.

NRPA Annual Meeting

NRPA celebrated our 55-year anniversary in style on Tuesday October 6.

The evening brought together more than 100 guests, including local residents, community members, and distinguished guests. Maeve Laplante with her Dad Joshua greeted the guests outside the gift shop at Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum where they were directed through the shop to check in under the large tent. Here members and neighbors mingled and enjoyed delicious bites created and curated by talented Patty Waring Ward. Special thanks went to retiring directors **Sally Sutherland** and **Christine Ariel**, pictured in the lower left of the photo at right, for their years of dedication and service on the board.

NRPA thanks our partners who were in attendance and displayed information about their organizations in the science building - **Friends of Canonchet Farm, Narrow River Land Trust, South County Museum,** and the **On Pettaquamscutt Winter Speaker Series.**

Recognition was extended to the many volunteers without which NRPA could not have achieved the successes that we have had during the 55 years since our founding. **The 2025 Youth Environmental Achievement Award** was presented to **Chloe Wild**, who has volunteered at many events over the years, including *What Lives in the River* and *Art by the River*. From carrying equipment to getting deep in the water to catch critters, Chloe has been a tremendous help to NRPA and is a joy to be around.

The 2025 Environmental Achievement Award was presented



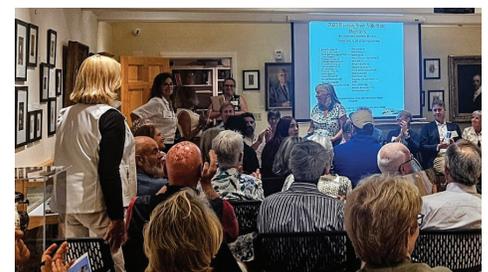
Celebrating 55 years!



to **Walter Berry, Ph.D.** Walter is knowledgeable and consistent in his efforts with NRPA. This award recognizes his willingness over many seasons to share his scientific expertise at *What Lives in the River* and his ability to convey wonder and awe about the inhabitants of Narrow River.

Special thanks to **Michelle Lee Leonard** for allowing NRPA the use of the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum for the meeting, and for sharing additional insights

about Gilbert Stuart himself. Vice-President Craig Wood summarized three key issues facing the watershed today.



Continued on page 4



A heartfelt thank you to our current newly elected board members from back row left: **Whitley Saumweber**, **Paula Santos**, **David Allaire**, **Peter Gelhaar**, **James Vogel**, **Denise Murphy**, and **Craig Wood** joined by Executive Coordinator **Shirley Freitag**. Front row from the left **Kathy Couchon**, **Veronica Berounsky**, and **Kate Dolan** joined by Events Coordinator **Skylar Ceceri**. Board member **Brian Mattiucci** had to leave early and missed the photo shoot!

The Stars of the Event ...

The evening wouldn't have been such a success without the fabulous food and display from **Patty Waring Ward**, the comforting tent, tables, linens, and lights from **Top Notch**, the libations from **O'Neil's Package Store**, the bartending of **Nicole Eddy**, the delightful photography of **Louise Romano**, and **Steve's** wonderful cookies. We also appreciate the welcoming team of **Joshua and Maeve Laplante** and our parking attendant **Ben Allaire**.

Thank You

Eelgrass Monitoring

NRPA continues to monitor the Eelgrass in the watershed. Surveys took place in July and November this year by both drone and boat. Eelgrass levels were increased this year over last year, with most of the Eelgrass located between Sprague Bridge and Middlebridge. More pockets of growth were observed this year south of Sprague Bridge and north of Middlebridge.

The data will be reviewed with NRPA's partners over the winter, and plans will be generated for observations in the 2026 season.

NRPA is looking for members interested in assisting with the observations. Specifically, a coordinator who will schedule activities and summarize the data.

Please contact Shirley – nrpa@narrowriver.org



Live Underwater Eelgrass



View from Middlebridge - dark areas indicate eelgrass growth.

Navigating the Narrow

NRPA will be organizing our annual Navigating the Narrow Boating Safety Event on Saturday, 11 April 2026, with the Mettatuxet Yacht Club. Please save the date and send any questions or suggestions to Shirley – nrpa@narrowriver.org

NRPA is looking for members interested in assisting with our Boating Safety Efforts. Specifically, assistance with education efforts, including making videos and updating the content for the website for all types of watercraft.

Call for Volunteers

NRPA is looking for members to get more involved. These are perfect opportunities for members to find enjoyment giving back to the community and/or students to get their community service credits. Reach out to Shirley – nrpa@narrowriver.org if you are interested.

Eelgrass-

- Coordinator of the annual Eelgrass Observations and tracking. (May-December)
- Field observers to assist with field observations. (June and October)

An infographic with an orange background and a dark green central shape containing the title. It lists six items in numbered circles, each with a corresponding action in a dark green rounded rectangle. A QR code is on the left, and decorative leaf patterns are on the sides. The website nrpa@narrowriver.org is at the bottom.

What Residents Can Do to keep Narrow River Clean

- 1 DON'T use lawn fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides
- 2 DON'T dump lawn clippings, leaves, or trash into river
- 3 DON'T dump anything down storm drains.
- 4 DO keep pet waste away from river
- 5 DON'T feed waterfowl
- 6 DO operate watercraft responsibly.

Scan Me!

nrpa@narrowriver.org

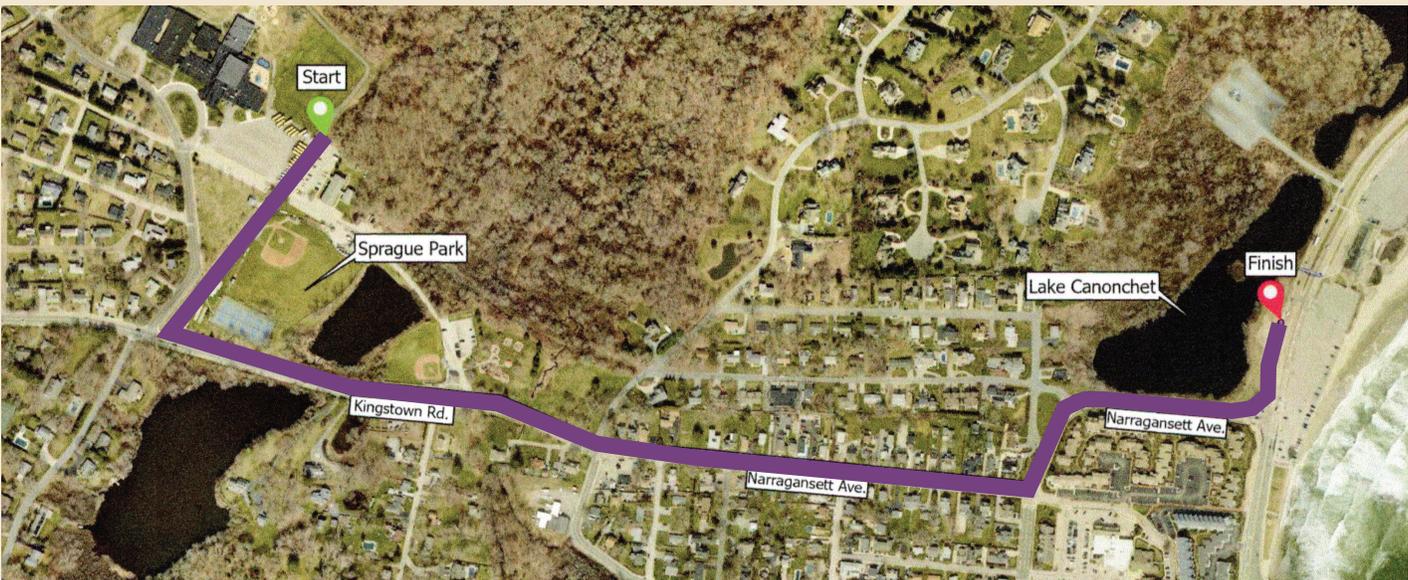
Narragansett Town Council to Decide on Bike Path Route in December

South County Bike Path Update #72
November 23, 2025

The Town of Narragansett held its second work session on the completion of the William C. O'Neill / South County Bike Path on Monday, November 10. The session began with a member of the Ad Hoc Committee presenting the Committee's recommendation (on a 4-2 vote) that the Town Council select a plan to complete the path with a bi-directional bike lane on the north side of Narragansett Avenue. Plans to complete the path using Strathmore Road and Wanda Street received

one vote each. There was vigorous community comment on all three plans. There was no discussion from the Town Council. There are two Town Council meetings in December, and the plan is for the council to deliberate on December 1 and then make a decision on December 15. **Go to narrowriver.org/bikepath to see maps of the three routes – Narragansett Avenue, Strathmore Road, and Wanda Street.** Also, there is an attached comparison of the three routes that we have found helpful in evaluating them. Just a reminder that if you haven't sent your comments to the Town Council, this is a very good time to do so at towncouncil@narragansettri.gov.

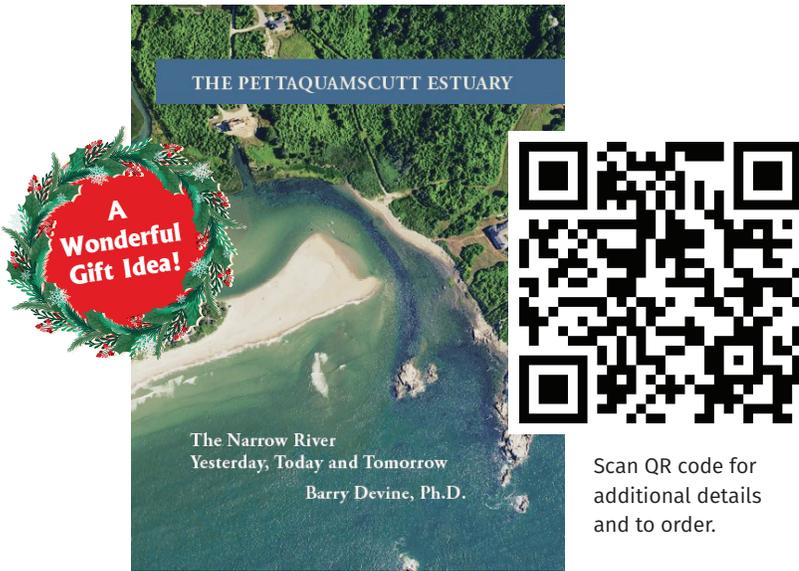
Proposed Route on Narragansett Avenue



NRPA Needs YOU!

NRPA is actively soliciting a new Seasonal Events Coordinator (SEC). Are you looking for an opportunity where you can demonstrate your creativity and work with a great range of volunteers while helping the environment? We are looking for a high energy individual who has great organizational skills and a passion for the watershed. The SEC for NRPA supports the organization's mission by planning and managing our year-round events. They will coordinate and promote in-person activities held primarily from April through October—such as What Lives in the River, the Turnaround Swim, Art by the River, cleanups, fundraising events, and the Annual Meeting—as well as identifying new opportunities. They will help with volunteer solicitation and perform additional duties as the need arises. The role is part-time, hourly, and largely work-from-home. The SEC works closely with the Executive Coordinator, Board members, and advisors, and uses tools including Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, Adobe Acrobat, Canva, and Little Green Light CRM (with training provided). Experience with WordPress and Photoshop is highly desirable. **For complete description with details contact nrpa@narrowriver.org.**

The Pettaquamscutt Estuary Book



The Pettaquamscutt Estuary: The Narrow River Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow by Dr. Barry Devine is a book primarily about the river environment through time. Historical documents, articles, eighteen informative maps, accounts and 155 full color photographs portray the river and watershed through time.

The work of many people and organizations over more than fifty years, is meant to educate people, act as a reference and highlight this rare and matchless natural area. The book is intended to teach about 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.

Read about the geologic origins of the watershed, the history of Casey Farm and Gilbert Stuart Birthplace, conservation efforts by US Fish and Wildlife and Narrow River Land Trust, and learn about bobcats, oysters, osprey and more in the 'Wildlife in the Watershed' features.

Fifteen full color, detailed maps of the watershed each spotlight different facets of the area. From River Zones and Ecological communities to Wetlands and conservation open space, these fascinating maps provide an overview of many of the incredible aspects of the river and its watershed.

All profits from the purchase of the book benefit Narrow River Preservation Association

Barry Devine is a biologist and cartographer who has worked in the Caribbean, Florida and the Northeast. He is the author of the field guide "Island Peak to Coral Reef", about the Virgin Islands and two fictional novels. He was an early member of the Board of Narrow River Preservation Association and organized the first Narrow River Run in 1988.

Scan QR code for additional details and to order.



Narrow River Land Trust (NRLT) was founded in 1982 with the mission of preserving land in the Narrow River (NR) Watershed to protect water and agricultural resources, wildlife habitat, and open space for recreation. Since their founding, NRLT has conserved over 660 acres of land in the watershed, protecting it from development. They work cooperatively with private owners and local communities to ensure that these areas are protected for now and for future generations. Garrison House Acres, located near Middlebridge, is one of the important ones with its pastoral open space and a beautiful walking trail that abuts the river.

For more information about NRLT, please contact office@narrowriverlandtrust.org.

<https://www.narrowriverlandtrust.org/>



CORRECTION:

Please note that in the September 2025 newsletter article "*Too Close for Comfort - a shark in the river*", we incorrectly spelled the name of the Couchon family. We apologize for the error.

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On Pettaquamscutt

2026

Presentations on the Environment and History of the Narrow River Watershed

Pati Sylvia

Mark your 2026 calendar for **Season 13** of On Pettaquamscutt, Presentations on the Environment and History of the Narrow River Watershed and join us for three great Sunday afternoon talks (all starting at 1:00) at the Narragansett Library at 25 Pier Marketplace.

January 25: NRPA's Jim Vogel and Craig Wood discuss "Dredging the Mouth of the Estuary: History, Current Conditions, Future Plans." Registration begins [January 18](#).



Aerial views show the changes at the mouth of Narrow River from 2020 (left) to 2025.

February 22: The Tick Guy, **Dr. Tom Mather**, talks about tick behavior. The Tick Guy is sponsored by the Friends of Canonchet Farm. Registration begins [February 15](#).



March 29: South County Museum Executive Director **Rebecca Kelly** presents "Treasured Possessions: Objects from the Museum Collection." Registration begins



[March 22](#).

On Pettaquamscutt is a collaboration between the [Friends of Canonchet Farm](#), [Narrow River Preservation Association](#), [South County Museum](#), and the [Maury Loontjens Memorial Library](#). All talks are free and open to the public. You can register at the library calendar page (<https://narlib.org/calendar/>) to reserve a seat. Registration will open the week before the presentation. For more information, visit [OnPettaquamscutt.org](#).