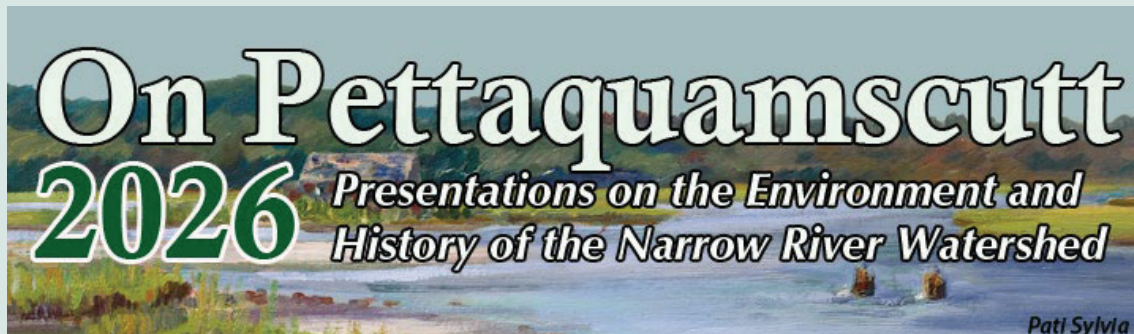


# NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Protecting, Preserving and Restoring the Narrow River Watershed Since 1970/ March 2026



## Dredging the Mouth of the Narrow River

History, Current Conditions and Future Plans

Narrow River Preservation Association  
James Dean Vogel and Craig Wood  
8 February 2026

## Riveting Updates on River Dredging

The Maury Loontjens Library conference room was filled on February 8 as NRPA Vice-President Craig Wood and Board member Jim Vogel delivered their 2026 report on "Dredging the Mouth of the Narrow River - History, Current Conditions and Future Plans". They drew a strong and engaged audience for this important community update. The full presentation is available on our website at [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org).

Thank you to David and Rosemary Smith for their continued dedication to supporting engaging and thought-provoking presentation for their On Pettaquamscutt Speaker Series.



NRPA Vice-President Craig Wood, Rosemary Smith, David Smith, (organizers of the "On Pettaquamscutt" Speaker Series) and NRPA Board member Jim Vogel.



Scan for full dredging details



Full house!

# Presidents Cove

## Observations and Questions

Dear Friends of Narrow River,

I'm writing this as we dig ourselves out from the historic blizzard. Snow totals in our watershed ranged between 28-35 inches, though we know there were drifts that were higher.

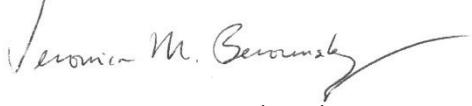
The Blizzard of 2026 was a good time for observations, whether it was looking out your window as you were snowed in or checking around you while outside. The snow allowed me to see animal tracks crisscrossing my unplowed road. There were signs that a deer had bedded down overnight next to my porch. From the southern end of Lower Pond, I could watch the open water flow north with the tide, opening the ice. I observed the skim ice melting in the sun then reforming during the cold night. Upper Pond appeared to be frozen over, an unusual occurrence for this brackish water. Pausacaco Pond also appeared to be frozen over, but since that is freshwater, it was not surprising. My daily NRPA social media posts, Veronica's View, have photos from different angles while I work on shoveling a path to my usual place on the River. What did you observe?

Some observations led to questions. After the snow stopped, robins were out looking for food, what were they finding? As the snow melted on a warm day, how would the runoff affect our river? How thick was the ice on the river?

I also observed neighbors helping each other shovel or use snowblowers on driveways and walkways. Watershed residents made social media posts about the snow and ice on the River. Even in winter, we are a community bordered by Narrow River and intrinsically bound to it.

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

PO Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874  
nrpa@narrowriver.org  
www.narrowriver.org

Narrow River Notes published three times per year by NRPA.

Past issues at  
narrowriver.org/narrow-river-notes

Editor: Shirley Freitag

Graphic Designer: PrintSource

#### Board of Directors

**Veronica M. Berounsky**, President

**Craig Wood**, Vice President

**Paula Santos**, Secretary

**David Allaire**, Treasurer

**Kathleen Couchon**

**Kathleen Dolan**

**Peter Gelhaar**

**Brian Mattiucci**

**Denise Murphy**

**James Vogel**

Submissions and correspondence to nrpa@narrowriver.org



NRPA is once again among the hundreds of local nonprofits that are participating in these statewide days of giving. By donating to NRPA during 401Gives, you're helping us grow our conservation education, and advocacy efforts here in Rhode Island.

We're counting down the days to March 31st and 401Gives. From 6:00 a.m. on March 31 to 6:00 p.m. on April 1 you will have the chance to give where your heart is! To support our campaign, go to <https://www.401gives.org/organizations/narrow-river-preservation-association>



# NRPA Announces 2026 SKHS Science Fair Winners!

**Miles Licht** and **Andrew Englander** are both sophomores at South Kingstown High School with strong academic interests in STEM. Both participate in the school's newly developing engineering program, as well as extracurriculars such as the math team. Taking home 2nd place in the judge's scoring and winning the public voting at their school's science fair, the duo will take their project to the statewide fair on March 14-15.

## Project Summary: "The Idling Effect"

Vehicle idling during school drop-off and dismissal contributes to localized air pollution that directly affects students. This project investigated how severely idling impacts air quality at two schools within the South Kingstown district. A custom-built air quality monitoring system was used to continuously monitor and measure carbon dioxide and fine particulates in the areas where students frequent during arrival and dismissal. Data was collected for two weeks at each school and compared between normal conditions and peak idling periods. During low-traffic times, average carbon dioxide levels measured approximately 510 parts per

## NRPA CONGRATULATES SKHS SCIENCE FAIR 2026 WINNERS!

# Introducing the Remarkable Winners of the South Kingstown High School Science Fair



Miles Licht(R) and Andrew Englander (L) explain their project "The Idling Effect," a study of the effect of vehicle emissions, to the NRPA Board of Directors at our recent meeting



Certificates presented to Andrew and Miles by Kathy Couchon, NRPA Board member and former Narragansett High School science teacher.

million (PPM), consistent with typical outdoor air. However, during high traffic periods, concentrations increased to around 700 PPM, along with large increases in fine particulate matter. Additional testing of exhaust emissions from individual vehicles under different idling conditions helped confirm that idling was the primary contributor to these pollution increases. These findings show that consistent vehicle idling during school arrival and dismissal greatly degrades local air quality. Reducing idling at schools would lead to a meaningful decrease in pollutants and better health for the students.

# Every Yard Counts

This month, NRPA is excited to kick off a new community campaign called **“Every Yard Counts.”** Through this initiative, we’re highlighting the simple yet meaningful actions each of us can take in our own yards and gardens to help protect our local watershed and the broader ecosystem we all depend on.



*Ladybugs feasting on Aphids*

Even small amounts can harm aquatic life, disrupt fragile ecosystems, and ultimately impact human health. What we apply to our lawns doesn’t just stay there — it travels.

The good news is that protecting our environment doesn’t mean sacrificing a healthy or beautiful yard. In fact, reducing or eliminating chemical inputs often leads to stronger, more resilient landscapes over time. By shifting our perspective and recognizing that the many insects, plants, and microorganisms in our gardens each play an important role, we can support thriving, balanced ecosystems right outside our doors. A diversity of life — from pollinators to beneficial insects to healthy soil microbes — is a sign of a vibrant yard.

In the coming weeks, we’ll be sharing practical tips and seasonal guidance on topics such as sustainable gardening practices, managing common pests

Many common lawn and garden products, including pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, can quickly run off into nearby streams and storm drains, contaminating soil and waterways.



*Pollinator Monarch on Zinnias*

naturally, building healthy soil, and reducing reliance on pesticides and fertilizers. Our goal is to make it easy and approachable for everyone to take part.

The campaign will be led by Charlotte Canner with

support from NRPA staff and volunteers. Before moving to Rhode Island almost two years ago, Charlotte lived in San Francisco where she worked as an “Integrated Pest Management Advocate” for the Our Water Our World program. With this program, she provided outreach and education about sustainable gardening practices and keeping waterways clean by reducing pesticide use. By teaching the methods of integrated pest management, Charlotte focuses on prevention, supporting overall garden health, using simple tools and barriers, and inviting diversity, especially the “good” bugs. Charlotte is also the Recycling Coordinator for the towns of South Kingstown and Narragansett and operates a “micro” community compost site out of her Westerly backyard. Her website is [www.earth-ally.com](http://www.earth-ally.com)

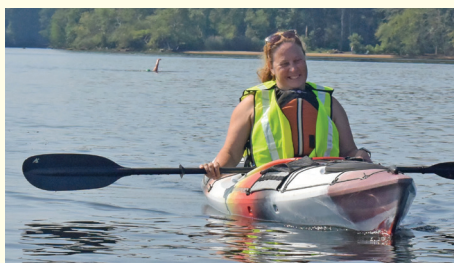
If you have suggestions or specific topics you’d like us to cover as part of “Every Yard Counts,” we’d love to hear from you. Please email us and join the conversation — because every yard truly does count!



*Charlotte Canner*

## Meet Betsy

The Narrow River Preservation Association is excited to announce that we have hired a new Seasonal Events



Coordinator, Elizabeth “Betsy” Motyl. Betsy is a versatile educator and curriculum designer with experience in middle-school STEM and literacy instruction, adult education, environmental education, and horticulture. She has taught in diverse settings—urban and rural, formal and

informal, public, private, Montessori, and charter. Betsy also has extensive experience with environmental education and preservation nonprofits throughout Rhode Island, including Save the Bay, the RI Wild Plant Society, URI’s Master Gardener program as a school garden mentor. For the past five years, she has been a water quality tester with NRPA River Watch at Gilbert Stuart Stream, and she was a safety kayaker at last year’s TurnAround Swim. Betsy possesses a sincere enthusiasm, a watershed community focus, and a bit of tech savvy. She’s also working as the Education Coordinator for the Gilbert Stuart Museum, furthering the upstream and downriver nature of watershed preservation work.

## 2026 Preparing for the return of the osprey!

And another season begins! NRPA Vice-President Craig Wood and amazing technology volunteer wizard Bob Facey do their annual clean-up and check of conditions before our couple returns. There have been sightings—have you been watching the osprey cam?



Craig and Bob with the nest towering above. They need a BIG ladder!!!



**THANK YOU!!!**

### 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](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org).*

*Thank You*

# 2026 NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION EVENT SCHEDULE

**18**  
APRIL

### NAVIGATING THE NARROW

Saturday, 10 am to noon  
@ Mettatuxet Yacht Club

**Join us to learn about watercraft safety. Boaters, paddleboarders, kayakers & swimmers are welcome!**

**2**  
MAY

### NARROW RIVER WATERSHED CLEAN-UP

Saturday, 9 am to 11 am  
@ 95 Middlebridge Rd

**With ORCA! Volunteer to help honor & steward our watershed by picking up & disposing of trash & debris.**

**6**  
JUNE

### WHAT LIVES IN THE RIVER

Saturday, 9 am to 11 am  
@ 95 Middlebridge Rd

**Bring the kids! Together, we'll search for the wonderful wildlife that call the Narrow River home. Hands-on & muddy!**

**20**  
JUNE

### NARROW RIVER TURNAROUND SWIM

Saturday, 9 am  
@ URI Boathouse, North Kingstown

**Swim the beautiful waters of the Narrow River - one mile open-water - online pre-registration required**

**8**  
AUGUST

### ART BY THE RIVER

Saturday, 9 am to 11 am  
@ 95 Middlebridge Rd

**Join us for plein air painting & creative activities - art for all ages - to deepen connection with the Narrow River.**

**19**  
SEPTEMBER

### WHAT LIVES IN THE RIVER

Saturday, 9 am to 11 am  
@ 95 Middlebridge Rd

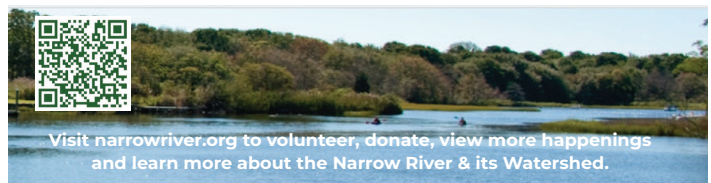
**Bring the kids! Together, we'll search for the fish, crabs & hidden critters of the Narrow River. Hands-on & muddy!**

**6**  
OCTOBER

### NRPA'S ANNUAL MEETING

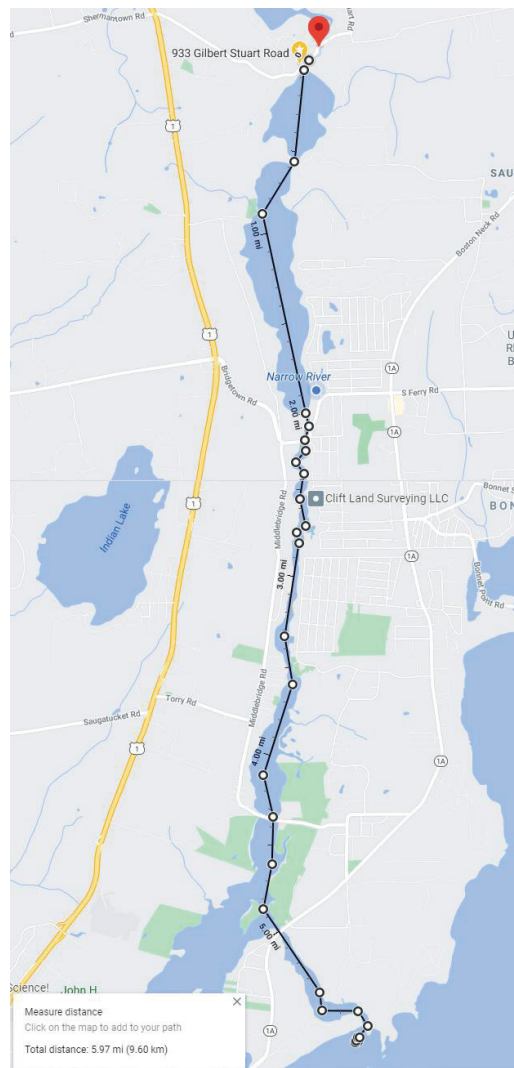
time & location TBD

**Celebrate with delicious eats, annual awards & Narrow River presentations.**



Visit [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org) to volunteer, donate, view more happenings and learn more about the Narrow River & its Watershed.

# SOURCE TO SEA – a 6 mile (10K) swim from the headwaters to the mouth of the Narrow River



Monday, September 8, 2025, Lori Pugh and Veronica Berounsky swam the 6 mile (10k) length of Narrow River for the sixth year in a row, Mary Phelan swam it for her fifth time and Marianne Chronley swam it for the first time!

Lori Pugh is an internationally recognized artist from North Kingstown, who has painted scenes of Narrow River. Veronica Berounsky is a coastal ecologist and alum coordinator at the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island (URI) and is also the President of Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) and a member of the RI Rivers Council. Mary Phelan is a realtor at the South Kingstown office of Residential Properties LTD. Marianne Chronley is a retired chemical technician, a retired travel agent and former NRPA Events Coordinator.

They swam for the love of open-water swimming and the challenge of a long swim. They regularly swim in various sections of the Narrow River and appreciate the beauty of the River and the uniqueness of this special ecosystem. The swimmers were accompanied by three kayakers: Beth Etter, Kim Jones, and Ann Piascik. The map on the right shows their route.

The above photo is of (left to right): Beth Etter, Marianne Chronley, Veronica Berounsky, Ann Piascik, Mary Phelan, Lori Pugh, and Kim Jones.

If you would like to honor their swim with a donation, the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) is the state-designated watershed council charged with coordinating efforts to protect and preserve Narrow River and its watershed. Donations to NRPA are welcome online or by checks made out to NRPA and mailed to PO Box 8,

Saunderton, RI 02874.

Veronica is also swimming to raise awareness for “Donate Life” which encourages everyone to sign up to be an organ donor. Veronica donated a kidney 9 1/2 years ago and understands how the decision to donate save lives. Even with one kidney, Veronica is physically fit to swim the length of Narrow River! Veronica’s friend, Cindy Pregeluber (aka Miss Cindy) is a retired URI swim instructor who taught Veronica’s children to swim. Cindy needs a kidney. She has been on dialysis for 5 years and on the donor list for over 4 years. Her family members cannot donate due to having a similar genetic condition to the one causing Cindy’s kidneys failure. You can find out more about donating a kidney at the Rhode Island Hospital website or call their Transplant Coordinator at 401-444 -3091 and reference Cindy Pregeluber or email Veronica at [vmberounsky@uri.edu](mailto:vmberounsky@uri.edu).

The swimmers and kayakers would like to thank Steve Sterling of The Dunes Club and Michelle Lee Leonard of the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum for allowing them to park support vehicles in parking lots near the river.

For further information, please contact Veronica M. Berounsky at 401-932-5141 or via email at [vmberounsky@uri.edu](mailto:vmberounsky@uri.edu).



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](mailto:office@narrowriverlandtrust.org).

[www.narrowriverlandtrust.org/](http://www.narrowriverlandtrust.org/)



**Apply now**

# NRPA Lesa Meng SCHOLARSHIPS 2026

Since 1993, NRPA has awarded scholarships through its Youth Environmental Education Program to graduating high school seniors who reside in the Narrow River Watershed. The award was renamed the NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarship in honor of former NRPA Board member Lesa Meng, recognizing her dedication to environmental stewardship.

To date, NRPA has awarded 102 scholarships.

## Scholarship Requirements:

- ✔ Demonstrated commitment to environmental activities both within and beyond the classroom
- ✔ Quality and originality of an essay focused on the river
- ✔ Letter of recommendation from a science teacher and overall academic achievement

Contact your high school guidance counselor for applications.

**Complete and submit to the counselors by APRIL 27**

### Our Website

 [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org)



### Rhode Island Rivers Council



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

### NRPA Needs You! Volunteer Grant Writer

Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA), is seeking a volunteer to assist with grant writing. Help us secure funding to protect and preserve our watershed and natural habitats.

Ideal for someone with strong writing skills and an interest in conservation. Flexible schedule.

Interested? Reach out to Shirley at [nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org) to learn more!

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Newport, RI  
Permit 286



PO Box 8  
Saunderstown, RI 02874



NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

# NAVIGATING THE NARROW

## WATERCRAFT SAFETY EVENT

at the Mettatuxet Yacht Club  
36 South River Drive, Narragansett, RI



APRIL 18, 2026  
10:00 AM

### About Our Event

The Narrow River Preservation Association warmly invites boaters, kayakers, paddle boarders, and all who simply love the Narrow River to learn more about how to safely and responsibly enjoy this amazing natural resource!

### Event Highlights

#### Informational Displays

Learn more about the Narrow River ecosystems, water quality, and watershed

#### Panel of Experts

Discussion about safe boating and ways we all can protect delicate river and estuarine ecosystems

#### Questions & Comments

We welcome questions and comments submitted ahead of the event. Please scan the QR code to take the short survey:



**\*\*FREE & Open to the Public\*\* Doors Open at 10am!**