



NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River and the Watershed

Spring 2010

Narrow River Turnaround Swim 5th Annual Swim Set for June 19th

Despite ice on the River during the winter and lots of rain this spring, river water temperatures are warming up, the water quality is fine, and open-water swimmers are returning to the waters of Narrow River. Now in its fifth year, the 2010 Narrow River Turnaround Swim takes place at 9 am on Saturday, June 19th. The Swim will start from the beach at the URI Campanella Rowing Center off Walmsley Lane in North Kingstown, round a buoy half a mile down the River, and return back to the start at the beach. Registration forms for the 1-mile Swim can be found on the NRPA web site, www.narrowriver.org. Due to the popularity of the Swim, pre-registration by June 9 is strongly encouraged. There will be free t-shirts for the first 100 swimmers. When you register for the Swim you can also become a member of NRPA by paying

\$40 total. This is a discounted membership rate, exclusively for our swimmers! So come on out and celebrate the 5th year of the Turnaround Swim and the 40th year of the Narrow River Preservation Association!

This year we are very happy to announce that we have a Presenting Sponsor, Washington Trust Company. We hope that the Swim raises awareness of the River as a scenic area and place to swim, and promotes open-water swimming as a lifetime activity for local residents. But it is also helpful that the Swim raises monies for NRPA's education, preservation, and protection programs. One program is the River Watch volunteer monitoring program, now starting its 19th year, which has been testing and documenting the water quality of the River. Elizabeth Herron from URI's Watershed Watch program said the follow-

ing about the NRPA River Watch data at the Turnaround swim site: "according to the long-term fecal coliform data, and the much more limited enterococci data, the lower pond area does not exceed recreational contact levels for either indicator species even following heavy rainfall."

Since the inception of NRPA, thanks to NRPA and others, water quality in Narrow River has improved. In the words of Narragansett Elementary School physical education teacher Paul McCaffery, who co-chairs the Swim with URI swimming and diving coach Mick Westkott, "the title Turnaround was indicative of the path we chose for the course of the swim and also for the course of the River; the Narrow River has been turned around from one that wasn't healthy to one that is."

(continued on page 4)

NRPA President Wins EPA Award

The New England Office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected Narrow River Preservation Association Richard B. Grant to receive an Environmental Merit Lifetime Achievement Award. The Award was in recognition of his years of dedication to cleaning up and protecting Narrow River. Richard was nominated for the award by Rob Leeson, Jr., who retired after many years of service on the NRPA Board of Directors.

The award was presented at a ceremony held in Fanueil Hall in Boston on April 22nd—the 40th anniversary of Earth Day—by Curt Spalding, the

New England regional administrator for EPA. "Today, on this milestone anniversary of Earth Day, I'd like to acknowledge and honor people, communities, and businesses that have made significant strides in protecting New England's health," said Spalding.

EPA Environmental Merit Awards are presented each year to recognize outstanding environmental advocates who have dedicated their lives toward preserving and protecting New England's natural resources. This year there were 40 awards to individuals and organizations from all across New England. Award winners ranged from two Harvard professors who founded

an Environmental Management program as part of the Harvard University Extension School Distance Education Program, to a sixth-grader from South Berwick, Maine who convinced her school cafeteria to start a composting program and then spread the program to two other schools.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

President's Cove	pg. 2
Pettaquamscutt Paddle	pg. 3
Environmental Awareness	pg. 4
Ocean Breeze Update	pg. 5
Science Fair Awards	pg. 6

The President's Cove

Each year I find on my desk the fund-raising items for which I am responsible in part or in whole. The next thing I see coming up is the Narrow River Road Race—10K Run, 5K Run, and 5K Walk—on the agenda for the 15th of May. A month after that is the Narrow River Turnaround Swim, and then in July comes the Pettaquamscutt Paddle kayak tour. And I find myself once again asking for your assistance.

As we all know, fund-raising is never easy; everyone's budget is straining even in good times, and these are not exactly good times. We normally have a few heavy hitters for our Road Race whose generosity at least covers the expenses of the awards and t-shirts. This year we didn't seem to get that much of a response from the heavy hitter category. So I am asking every member and past member to do what they can in a small way so the total support for the year will be the same as in previous years. Our Education, Land, and Water programs need to be financed in order to keep the ball rolling on protecting and enhancing the environment of the Narrow River and the Watershed.

If you have not sent in your membership form for 2009-10, respond by going to www.narrowriver.org, signing up, and making a donation. We will apply your donation to the balance of this year and also assign it for next year—September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2011. Thank you so much for helping NRPA.

As a final note, I also want to say "thank you" to all of you present and past NRPA members who were the true recipients of the EPA Environmental Merit Lifetime Achievement Award. I was happy to accept it for you all. It was a beautiful day at Faneuil Hall in Boston—all the more so because it was Earth Day, and the 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day in 1970. A special thanks goes to Rob Leeson for nominating me. It was such a privilege to be included among the collection of individuals and organizations from around New England who received the awards this year. I truly believe that the work of all the volunteers who have participated in making NRPA a successful grassroots watershed organization should be complimented, and you all share in the light that is shone from this award. You know I really only care that

NRPA gets recognized, and this is just one of the ways to get publicity for an organization that gets little recognition for the fine work it does for the citizens of North Kingstown, South Kingstown, and Narragansett. It does give me a sense of accomplishment, though, and I appreciate that. I am sure that this recognition of our association will carry weight in the future.

—Richard B. 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 with the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River Estuary and Watershed.

www.narrowriver.org

NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

Mail: P.O. Box 8, Saundertown, RI 02874
Phone/Fax: (401) 783-NARR
E-mail: nrpa@narrowriver.org
www.narrowriver.org

Narrow River Notes

Published three times per year by Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA)

Editor

Robert Kenney

Board of Directors

Richard Grant, President
Ken McShane, Treasurer
Jon Boothroyd, VP Science
Veronica Berounsky
Jason Considine
Annette DeSilva
Rose Epstein
Melissa Hughes
M.J. Kanaczet
John McNamara
Rosemary Smith
Sally Sutherland
Chris Tompkins
Richard Travisano

Staff

Jeremy Doak, Program Coordinator

Submissions & Correspondance to
NRPA.Notes@verizon.net

6239

NRPA is part of the United Way Workplace Campaign. This is our donor option number.

If you plan to make a United Way donation, please consider designating a portion of your gift to NRPA.

Third Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle

Registration Now Open for July 10 River Tour

Narrow River Kayaks, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Blueways Alliance, is sponsoring the Third Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle, a guided kayak tour on the Narrow River, on July 10 to benefit the Narrow River Preservation Association.

Participants in the Paddle will set off from Middle Bridge in Narragansett at 9:00 a.m., says Jason Considine of Narrow River Kayaks, “and enjoy a morning on one of the most beautiful rivers in New England, getting a water-level view of shore birds and other wildlife. The event is open to both experienced and first-time kayakers.”

The cost of the tour is \$10 per person for those who bring their own kayak. Rental for a solo kayak with personal flotation device and paddle is \$20; rental for tandem kayak, PFDs, and paddles is \$30.

In addition to the tour, there will be discounted rentals throughout the day so kayakers can explore the River on their own. There will also be refreshments, exhibits about local history and the unique features of the Narrow River Watershed, and raffles for kayak and canoe accessories, gifts certificates, and more.

All proceeds from the guided tour, rentals, and raffles will benefit NRPA, a non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration, preserva-

tion, and conservation of the Narrow River Watershed.

Registration for the event is now underway. To reserve your spot in the Third Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle, call Jason at 401-789-0334 or email

NarrowRiverKayaks@verizon.net.

Narrow River Kayaks is located at 94B Middlebridge Road in Narragansett, Rhode Island.

—Rosemary Smith



The best view of River wildlife is from the water.



Participants in last year's Pettaquamscutt Paddle get ready to tour the River by kayak.



Swim (continued from page 1)

We are pleased to be returning to the URI Rowing Center, a beautiful spot on Narrow River's Lower Pond, and also the location of LaFarge Point Park. W.E.R. LaFarge was one of the founders of NRPA in 1970 and remained active in NRPA until his death in 1994. He bequeathed a piece of his farm as land for the Rowing Center. The URI rowing team will again provide invaluable support.

Many comments have been received about how-well organized and safety-conscious the Swim has been, and the same committee will again run it. In addition to Paul and Mick, other people on the Swim Committee are: Felix Sarubbi, Jason McNamee, Lori Pugh, Perry Moylan, Richard Grant, Pat Gannon, Shelagh Donohue, Karen DeQuattro, and Veronica Berounsky. They will be assisted by

the many friends, relatives, and colleagues who have offered to return to help make the Swim run smoothly and efficiently again.

More information about the swim is on the NRPA web site, www.narrowriver.org. Application forms for swimmers can be printed from the website and mailed with a

check for the registration fee to NRPA at P.O. Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874. The pre-registration deadline is June 9, 2010. If you are interested in donating to the swim or having your business be a sponsor, those forms are also on the website.

—Veronica M. Berounsky



Environmental Awareness from Here to the Arctic

Greetings! My name is Jennifer Castro and I am a senior at Narragansett High School. Part of my graduation requirement is the Senior Project, which is a year-long task that includes a learning stretch for the student and a variety of steps that eventually lead to a presentation at the end of May. Along the way, each student has to choose a mentor to guide them with their project, with whom they will complete fifteen hours of mentoring and fieldwork. For my Senior Project, I decided on promoting Environmental Awareness.

Last summer, I had an amazing opportunity to travel to the Arctic on a *Students on Ice Expedition* with 100 other students and staff from around the world. Onboard the ship, we learned about the effects of climate change at the poles, especially above the Arctic Circle. As the trip came to an end, we learned about ways to communicate what we learned in the Arctic to other people once we returned home. I decided to take my experiences and bring them to our

community in the form of my Senior Project.

My mentors, Dr. Veronica Berounsky and Mrs. Kathleen Couchon, helped me create a PowerPoint presentation along with a handout on Environmental Awareness that I would present at the Land and Water Summit at URI on March 27th. I was nominated by NRPA and awarded one of the Land and Water Summit Scholarships to attend the conference. At the symposium, the morning began with a keynote speaker, Tom Horton, an award-winning author from Chesapeake Bay. I learned about different ways to improve Narragansett Bay, based on the findings of Mr. Horton. After the presentation I attended two breakout sessions—"Planning for Climate Change: Current Science, Future Scenarios & Tools for Adaptation," and "GIS-Guided Tour of New & User-Friendly Maps on the Internet." I gained a significant amount of information from each talk, which I will be able to apply to my life. At the NRPA display

between presentations, I showed my Environmental Awareness PowerPoint presentation on a laptop for all who came to see and answered questions that arose. I also handed out a brochure that I produced on Environmental Awareness globally and locally. The conference overall was a success and I feel as though I acquired and developed necessary skills from presenting my product to a diverse audience.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Narrow River Preservation Association board, especially Dr. Jon Boothroyd, who also shared his knowledge on the local area of Narragansett Bay and its environmental issues. I would also like to thank my mentors, Dr. Veronica Berounsky and Mrs. Kathleen Couchon, for all of their time and dedication to assisting me with my project. Thank you. Remember...*Protect the Poles, Protect the Planet!*

—Jennifer Castro

Ocean Breeze Development Update

Ocean Breeze Condominium L.L.C. and Warden's Pond Builder, Inc. developer Tony Fiore have appealed the Narragansett Planning Board's denial for expanding the number of condos and/or rental units adjacent to Narrow River to the State Housing Appeal's Board (SHAB).

The developer's original plan was to build 32 units, with 8 affordable, on two lots. The proposal was pared down to building 16 units of multi-family elderly housing, with 4 affordable, on Lot 125 on Starr Drive across from Pettaquamscutt Cove. Ocean Breeze filed a comprehensive permit application to the Planning Board on November 7, 2008 for low and moderate income housing. The developer's request was to allow Lot 125 to be re-zoned from R-80 to R-10 or R-10a density. In addition, Ocean Breeze also sought relief from 13 land-use regulations.

Over the course of several hearings the developer presented testimony from specialists in engineering, biology, and architecture who stated that the project was reasonable. More than two dozen "Intervenors" joined the town in the opposition to the development.

Although Narragansett has a goal of 10% affordable housing by 2025, the Narragansett Planning Board con-



The location of the proposed Ocean Breeze development in Narragansett. (aerial photo by John McNamara)

cluded that the "benefits to be gained by creation of the affordable housing development as proposed, do not outweigh the standards and provisions of several zoning and subdivision regulatory requirements." They found that limiting the elderly high-density allowance to R-10 or R-10a was intended for assimilation of elderly housing in areas of town where high density already exists. The board felt that the conditions of the Starr Drive neighborhood did not meet the criteria

SHAB that the Town has an Affordable Housing Board and a plan to meet the 10% affordable housing goal.

The Town was also concerned about the physical limitations of the property, as it is adjacent to wetlands and has a high water table. The proposed project would create a large area of impervious surface, which would cause runoff into Pettaquamscutt Cove. The neighborhood is made up of family dwellings on medium to large lots, and several lots which are owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Narrow River Land Trust.

The Board will present to

—Rosemary C. Smith



Jennifer Castro (right) at the NRPA display at the March Land and Water Summit at URI, with NRPA Board members Rosemary Smith (left) and Veronica Berounsky (center). (photo by Carissa Koski)

NRPA 2010 Science Fair Awards



NRPA science fair award winners, presented at the board meeting on March 2nd (left to right):

Ailsa Petrie, Jamestown, North Kingstown High School, "How Does the Distance that Water Sources are from Heavy Fertilizers Affect Nitrates and Total Alkalinity of that Water Source?"

Omar Zaki, Kingston, Curtis Corner Middle School, "The Ultimate Insulation for Rhode Island Homes."

Ryan Thomas, Wakefield, South Kingstown High School, "Levels of Fecal Coliform Along the Saugatucket River."



Printed on recycled paper

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NORTH KINGSTOWN,
RI 02852
PERMIT No. 3

Narrow River Preservation Association
P.O. Box 8
Saunderstown, RI 02874
Return service requested