
NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River and the Watershed / Summer 2013



On June 15, scientists young and old explored the shoreline and marshes at Middlebridge to discover "What Lives in the River?" This was the first in a series of educational events sponsored by Narrow River Land Trust and NRPA in cooperation with Narragansett Parks and Recreation. See the story and additional photos on page 7. (Photo: John McNamara)

43rd Annual Meeting: October 3

What Will Happen When the Real 100-Year Storm Hits

On October 30, 2012 the five-foot surge from Superstorm Sandy inundated the salt marshes and other areas along Narrow River, closed Middlebridge, and prompted many to refer to the event as a *100-year storm*. But "Sandy was no 100-year storm," responds coastal geologist Jon Boothroyd, "Rhode Island only received a glancing blow." Jon says the impact of a storm of the magnitude of the 1938 Hur-

ricane would cause far more significant flooding.

So, just what should we expect in the coming years? More Sandy-like storms, more severe flooding in the river? And, just what is a 100-year storm anyway?

Jon will offer some answers to these questions when he keynotes the 2013 NRPA Annual

(Continued on page 3)

Mark Your Calendar

- ◆ Saturday, **September 21**, Guided Walk at Garrison House Acres, 9:00 a.m. (see page 7)
 - ◆ Thursday, **October 3**, 43rd NRPA Annual Meeting, Coastal Institute Auditorium, URI Bay Campus, 7:00 p.m. Keynote: State Geologist Jon Boothroyd discusses "The Pettaquamscutt Estuary Watershed and Climate Change"
- For more listings, go to **www.narrowriver.org** and click **Calendar**.

On Pettaquamscutt 2014

Winter speakers series, Sunday afternoons 1:00 to 3:00, Maury Loontjens Memorial Library, Narragansett:

- ◆ January 26, Peggy O'Connor, Director of the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum, on the painter and the snuff mill
- ◆ February 23, David Gregg, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, on the 2013 *BioBlitz* at the South County Museum
- ◆ March 30, photographer Jan Armor, on capturing the beauty of Canonchet Farm

For more information on the series, visit:

www.OnPettaquamscutt.org

President's Cove

The Osprey Returns

Each year, we select an image of a bird that frequents the watershed as the symbol for the Narrow River Road Race. Last year it was the Saltmarsh Sparrow; the year before, the Bald Eagle.

This year, we selected this photo by John McNamara of an osprey returning to its nest on Narrow River from a fishing trip. This is the second time an osprey has been featured on the T-shirt (but it is the first time for the unfortunate fish in the bird's clutches).



Ospreys have made a remarkable return (or should I say many remarkable returns) since the banning of DDT in 1972. Volunteers for the Rhode Island Audubon Society's Osprey Monitoring Program reported 178 successfully fledged young in 2012, the highest number in the program's 35-year history.

On Narrow River, the ospreys' most recent return includes rebuilding nests that were wiped from their platforms by Superstorm Sandy. Board member Charlie Biddle, who monitors the nest in Pettaquamscutt Cove and two others for the Audubon program, reports that the nest in the cove has three fledglings this year, as does the one further north at Sprague Bridge.

2013-2014 Membership Drive

With this issue of *Narrow River Notes*, we are kicking off our membership drive for the year starting September 1, 2013, and we are asking you to join us again as we work to monitor and protect the health of the Narrow River Watershed. Your support leverages the work of many volunteers who work to preserve the quality of life for all communities within the watershed. Thank you.

Richard Grant, NRPA President



NRPA is part of the *United Way Workplace Campaign*.

Our donor option number is **6239**

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



NRPA is participating in the 2013 Rhode Island State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA). Our fund number is **6239**.

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) River Estuary and Watershed.

www.narrowriver.org

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Narrow River Notes

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Rhode Island Rivers Council



(Storm from page 1)

Meeting in the Coastal Institute Auditorium at the URI Bay Campus on Thursday, October 3.

Jon will also comment on the newly revised Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance rate maps and the R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council's Shore Line Change Special Management Area Plan, which takes into account predicted sea level rise.

The Annual Meeting will also include:

- ◆ Reports on NRPA activities and highlights from the past year
- ◆ Updates on important issues affecting Narrow River including water and land use management efforts
- ◆ Presentation of the W.E.R. LaFarge Memorial Friend of the River Award
- ◆ Drawing for this year's kayak raffle.

So, please join us at our 2013 Annual Meeting on Thursday, October 3, at the Coastal Institute Auditorium, URI Bay Campus, South Ferry Road, Narragansett.

Refreshments will be served at 7:00 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Visit www.narrowriver.org for directions and the meeting agenda.

Science Fair Awards



South Kingstown High School Juniors Zach Perry (left) and Patrick Vaughan, winners of a 2013 Narrow River Preservation Association Science Fair Award, present their project "Water Pollution" to the NRPA Board of Directors at its regular meeting on March 4. The two young scientists each received an award certificate, a \$50 check and a student membership in NRPA, in recognition of the quality of their research and its relevance to NRPA's goal of protecting the Narrow River and its watershed. (Photo: John McNamara)

Celebrating Watershed Watch



From the left, river monitors Jennifer Carey (monitoring station NR10), Annette DeSilva (NR7, NR12), David and Rosemary Smith (NR5), Craig Wood (NR4), and Veronica Berounsky (NR2, NR13, NR14) represented NRPA at a brunch on March 16 that celebrated the 25th anniversary of the URI Watershed Watch program. Twenty-six Narrow River monitors began their work on the week ending May 4, testing temperature, dissolved oxygen and other variables at 14 different sites in the watershed. For more about the monitoring program, visit www.narrowriver.org/watershed.

Save the Bay Honors Annette DeSilva for Advocacy on Narrow River

Save the Bay honored Narrow River Preservation Association Board member Annette DeSilva at its Annual Meeting on May 23 with the 2013 Allison J. Walsh Award for Outstanding Environmental Advocacy.



Annette DeSilva thanks fellow volunteer river monitors after accepting the Allison J. Walsh Award. (Photo: Courtesy of Save the Bay)

The award recognizes Annette for her leadership of NRPA's River Watch program since its beginning in 1991.

Immediately after receiving the award, Annette took to the podium to thank the hundreds of volunteer river monitors that have tested the river for more than two decades. Under her direction, the volunteers test water quality at 14 locations in the Narrow River Watershed biweekly from May through October under the URI Watershed

Watch program. Annette is the Assistant Executive Secretary of the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System at the URI Bay Campus.

Four Receive NRPA Lesa Meng Scholarships

Since 1993 NRPA has awarded college scholarships to seniors graduating from high schools in the Narrow River Watershed. The \$1,000 scholarships, which are given in memory of former NRPA Board member Lesa Meng, are awarded based on the student's environmentally oriented activities in and out of high school, the quality of an original essay on the river, a science teacher's recommendation, and academic achievement in math and science courses.

The 2013 NRPA Lesa Meng Scholarship recipients are:

◆ **Chintanya Gopu**, a graduate of South Kingstown High School, will attend Northeastern



NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarship winners Rachel Moyer (left) and Chintanya Gopu are 2013 graduates of South Kingstown High School. (Photo: Sally Sutherland)

University in the fall, where she plans to major in Environmental Engineering. Chintanya was a volunteer at the Environmental Protection Agency for two summers and was an active Earth Day participant. At SKHS, she played varsity tennis and participated in numerous school plays.



NRPA awarded scholarships to Narragansett High School graduates Zachary Zuchowski (left) and Ben Lee. (Photo: Dick Lee)

◆ **Ben Lee**, a graduate of Narragansett High School, will study biology at St. Mary's College of Maryland in the fall. Ben has been a river monitor in the NRPA Watershed Watch program and volunteered with the annual Narrow River Turn-around Swim. He was the Captain of Narragansett's National Ocean Science Bowl Team from 2011 to 2013 and a member of the band and cross country team.

◆ **Rachel Moyer**, a South Kingstown High School graduate, is interested in a career in medicine and will begin her studies at Lehigh University in the fall. Rachel was a Save the Bay

volunteer and a counselor at the Save the Bay Camp. At SKHS, Rachel was a member of the drama club and literary journal, and had a major role in reorganizing the school's sailing club.

◆ **Zachary Zuchowski**, a varsity soccer player at Narragansett High School, will attend Brown University in the fall, where he plans to major in either molecular biology or biochemistry. For his senior project on human actions and their effects on marine ecosystems, Zach studied and created ecosystem biospheres from fish, snails and algae collected from Narrow River.

Veronica Berounsky Appointed to R.I. Rivers Council

On June 4, 2013 the Rhode Island Senate confirmed Governor Lincoln Chafee's appointment of NRPA Board member Dr. Veronica Berounsky to the Rhode Island Rivers Council.

The Rivers Council was created by state statute to coordinate efforts to improve and preserve "the quality of the state's rivers and other water bodies and to develop plans to increase river use."



Veronica Berounsky lowers a collection bottle to measure dissolved oxygen at a specific depth in the Upper Pond. (Photo: Rosemary Smith)

The Council is charged with coordinating state policies to protect rivers and watersheds and strengthening local watershed

councils as partners in river and watershed protection.

NRPA is one of nine watershed organizations designated by the Rivers Council and over the years has received enabling grants from the council for various initiatives, most recently to cosponsor a series of teacher workshops with the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association.

Veronica will serve as one of three Rivers Council members "with conservation organization experience," as specified by statute. And conservation organization experience she certainly has. Veronica, a marine biologist with the URI Graduate School of Oceanography, has been an active member of NRPA since 1990, with special focus on NRPA's education mission. She has also been a volunteer monitor in the NRPA Watershed Watch program and an organizer of the annual Narrow River Turnaround Swim.

Bike Path to Follow Sea View Railroad Grade

At its May 6 regular meeting, the Narragansett Town Council voted to recommend the *Sea View Route*, which travels on the abandoned Sea View Railroad grade along Pettaquamscutt Cove and then crosses to the upland in Canonchet Farm, as its preferred alignment for the completion of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path. The proposal is now with the R.I. Department

of Transportation for evaluation and preliminary design. The plan was developed by an ad hoc committee of representatives from the Friends of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path, Friends of Canonchet Farm, Narragansett Tree Society and NRPA, which was facilitated by State Representative Teresa Tanzi. "By using the railroad grade, we are able to cross the

wetlands on the west side of Canonchet Farm, protect the existing walking trails and provide users with a spectacular view of lower Narrow River," says NRPA's Jon Boothroyd, who did the mapping of the route.

For additional information on the proposed route, including a slide show and maps, visit:

www.narrowriver.org/bikepath

Narrow River Road Race Celebrates the River, Supports NRPA Initiatives

Each year NRPA puts on three recreational activities along the river that have the dual purpose of building awareness of the unique qualities of the Narrow River Watershed and funding NRPA initiatives to protect that environment.



The first and oldest of these is the Narrow River Road Race. More than 220 runners and walkers participated in the 26th Road Race on May 11.

Here are photos taken at Middlebridge and the finish line by Charlie Biddle of the top finishers in the three events: 10K Run, 5K Run and 5K Walk. For complete results visit:

www.narrowriver.org/roadrace

Many thanks to lead sponsor Citizens Bank and the 54 other organizations and individuals who contributed to the success of the event.



10K Run: Eric Rudman of North Attleboro, Massachusetts won the 10K Run in 41 minutes and 20 seconds. Claire Gadrow of South Kingstown was the top female runner in the 10K with a time of 42:18.



5K Run: In the 5K Run, Daniel and Catherine Faulkner of Cambridge, Massachusetts were the overall winner and top female runner respectively with times of 19:07 and 24:47.



Home Course Advantage

It was not a great surprise that Richard Rochette of Wakefield was the first to complete the 5K Walk, as Richard walks Middlebridge Road and Old Boston Neck Road frequently and at a good clip. NRPA President Richard Grant presents Rochette with a mounted print of the osprey photo used on this year's road race T-shirt. Similar prizes were awarded to the top male and female finishers in seven age categories in the 10K Run, 5K Run and 5K Walk.

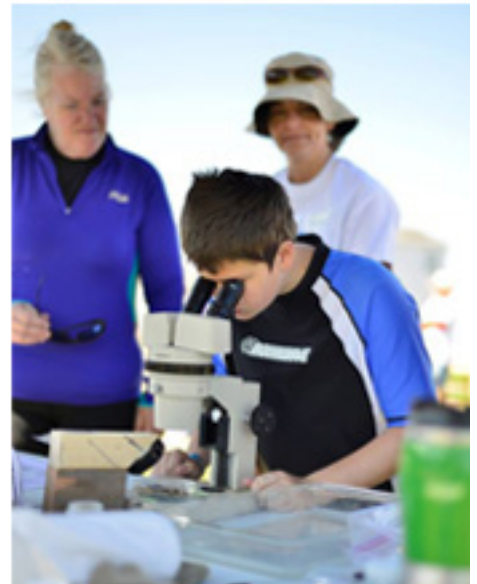
New Educational Programs at Middlebridge

NRPA and Narrow River Land Trust, in cooperation with the Town of Narragansett Department of Parks and Recreation, are offering a series of free Saturday morning programs at the town property at 95 Middlebridge Road. In the first event on June 15, families with elementary and middle school children discovered “What Lives in the River?” using seining nets and other hands-on activities.

“Our two organizations share common interests to preserve, protect, and restore the environment and the quality of life for all communities within the Narrow River Estuary and Watershed,” says Veronica Berounsky of NRPA. “As stewards of the watershed, education has always been a primary focus. With the recent acquisition of the Middlebridge property by the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, we foresee a tremendous opportunity for the property to serve as a center for educational programs and family activities to increase awareness of the unique cultural and natural history as well as the challenges facing the watershed.”

Other programs include:

◆ **Nature Photography 101** on Saturday, August 17 led by photographer John McNamara, an introduction to the basic principles of nature photography from landscapes to raptors.



Hands-on Science: More than 40 children and adults participated in the What Lives in the River? event on June 15 at Middlebridge, where they collected samples from the river and then took a closer look at the creatures, sometimes using a microscope on loan from one of the volunteers. For more photos, see the What Lives in the River album on the Narrow River Preservation Association Facebook page. (Photos: John McNamara)

◆ **Guided Tour of Garrison House Acres** on Saturday morning, September 21 from 9:00 to 11:00. This is Narrow River Land Trust’s contribution to “Land Trust Days,” a state-wide celebration of “special green spaces just outside your door.” Participants will cross the bridge to Garrison House Acres and

learn about the significance of the Jireh Bull Garrison House to King Phillip’s War, natural history and on-going activities to improve wildlife habitat.

For more information about the schedule of events at Middlebridge, visit:

www.narrowriver.org/calendar

Eighth Narrow River Turnaround Swim

A Great Way to Start the Summer



From the start of the 2013 Narrow River Turnaround Swim at the URI Campanella Rowing Center in the Lower Pond, participants swim a half mile down river, turn at a buoy and return to the boat ramp. This timed event provides some friendly competition, and celebrates the joy of open-water swimming and the continued improvement in water quality in Narrow River. (Photo: Charlie Biddle)

One hundred and twenty swimmers marked the first full day of summer with a one-mile loop swim in the Lower Pond in the 2013 Narrow River Turnaround Swim. This was the largest number of participants in the eight-year history of the event.

Brian McKenna finished the one-mile loop swim in 20 minutes and 26 seconds, followed by Albert Garcia who finished in 20:31.

Diane Leith-Doucett, who was fifth overall, finished in 22:14, the best time among female swimmers.

For complete results visit www.narrowriver.org and click **Turnaround Swim**.

2013 Pettaquamscutt Paddle

Many thanks to Jason Considine and the crew at Narrow River Kayaks for putting on the Sixth Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle on July 21.

This year's event featured a guided paddle of lower Narrow River during the waxing of July's Full Buck Moon, also called the Full Thunder Moon and Full Hay Moon. In addition to a beautiful moon rise and sun set, the more than 40 participants were treated to water-level views of egrets, heron, osprey and other wildlife feeding along the river.

The tour followed the course illustrated on one of two paddle maps created by NRPA in conjunction with the Rhode Island



Kayakers set out along the west side of lower Narrow River from Middlebridge in the Sixth Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle while a flock of small birds feeds on a nearby sandbar. (Photo: John McNamara)

Blueways Alliance. The maps show multiple places to put in, points of historical interest and suggested routes for exploring

the upper and lower river. The maps can be downloaded from the NRPA website for self-guided tours of the river.