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# NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River and the Watershed Since 1970 / Summer 2014

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## Record Number Compete in Narrow River Turnaround Swim

The Narrow River Turnaround Swim has grown each year since the first swim in 2005. On June 28, a record 142 swimmers took part in this one-mile loop swim in the Lower Pond of Narrow River.



Many thanks to the sponsors, participants and especially the

Swim Committee: Co-chairs Paul McCaffrey and Mick Westcott, Veronica Berounsky, Shelagh Donohoe, Pat Gannon, Richard Grant, Perry Moylan and Felix Sarubbi.



*Stuart Cromarty of Foster, R.I. reaches for a token at the finish line from Mick Westcott, as he completes the 2014 Narrow River Turnaround Swim in 20 minutes, 50 seconds, first overall and top male swimmer in the Wetsuit Division. See page 5 for the times for all 142 who swam in this year's event.*

## Kayakers Enjoy Sunset Tour of Narrow River During Seventh Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle



Two weeks after the Turnaround Swim, the focus moved to the lower Narrow River where more than 60 kayakers enjoyed a guided tour of Pettaquamscutt Cove and the Narrows, witnessed a spectacular sunset and the rising of July's "Super Moon," and then returned to Narrow River Kayaks for refreshments, all part of the Seventh Pettaquamscutt Paddle.

Many thanks to Jason Considine and the crew at Narrow River Kayaks for sponsoring

and running this always enjoyable annual event to benefit NRPA.



*NRPA's Charlie Biddle, second from the left, and Ron Wofford, naturalist and guide at Narrow River Kayaks, describe the ospreys that nest above the Narrows, as paddlers pause near Sedge Island.*

## President's Cove

### Remembering W.E.R.

This issue of *Narrow River Notes* leads with a story about the 2014 Narrow River Turnaround Swim, which for some – and the number is growing – is an essential part of every June. The Turnaround Swim starts and ends at the URI Campanella Rowing Center on the Lower Pond of Narrow River, a spot made all the more beautiful by the sight of hundreds of participants and volunteers celebrating the improving health of the river.



*W.E.R. La Farge*

The Turnaround Swim always reminds me of W.E.R. La Farge, who donated portions of his family's River Farm for the Rowing Center and the nearby park. W.E.R., a founding and active member of the Narrow River Preservation Association, was committed to preserving watersheds, farmland and public access to recreational and scenic areas. He believed that we are all stewards of the land, inextricably bound to it and to each other. The value of the gift was used as matching funds, allowing Narrow River Land Trust, with the assistance of The Champlin Foundations and The Nature Conservancy, to preserve additional land on the Upper Pond.

Decades later, the legacy continues. A month after the Turnaround Swim, the R.I. Department of Environmental Management announced partial funding for the purchase by Narrow River Land Trust and the Town of North Kingstown of another 45 acres of undeveloped land across the river from La Farge Point Park for public access and conservation space. Additional funding will come from the town and The Nature Conservancy.

Now, we do not all have a family farm to donate to protect the special places like Narrow River, but we can all do our part, whether it be volunteering for activities such as the Turnaround Swim and NRPA River Watch, serving on the boards of NRPA, Narrow River Land Trust or similar citizen environmental groups, or providing financial support to these organizations.

Richard Grant, NRPA President



*W.E.R. La Farge's children, Albert and Louisa, and grandchildren, Will and Claire LaFarge and Lindsay and Andrew Rosston, enjoy an afternoon on the Upper Pond during a recent visit. (Photo: Veronica Berounsky)*

#### 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](http://www.narrowriver.org)

#### NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

PO Box 8, Saunderstown, RI 02874  
(401) 783-NARR (6277)  
[nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org)  
[www.narrowriver.org](http://www.narrowriver.org)

#### Narrow River Notes

Published three times per year by  
Narrow River Preservation Association

#### Editor

David Smith

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David Smith, Program Coordinator

Submissions and correspondence to  
[nrpa@narrowriver.org](mailto:nrpa@narrowriver.org)

### Rhode Island Rivers Council





## Rivers Council Founder to Keynote 44th NRPA Annual Meeting

Dr. Ken Payne, who was instrumental in the formation of the R.I. Rivers Council and the group's first Chair, will recount the early years of the Council and discuss the evolving and increasingly important role of watershed groups today, when he keynotes the 44th NRPA Annual Meeting on Thursday evening, October 2, at the URI Bay Campus.

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**NRPA Annual Meeting  
Thursday Evening, October 2  
Refreshments 7:00  
Program 7:30  
URI Coastal Institute  
South Ferry Road, Narragansett**

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Payne, who has a Ph.D. in Regional Planning from the University of Massachusetts, is principal of Systems Aesthetics LLC, administrator of the Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership, and a consultant on climate change policy to the Center for Environmental Studies at Brown University.

The Annual Meeting will also include:

- ◆ Reports on NRPA activities from the past year

- ◆ Updates on important issues affecting Narrow River including water and land use management efforts
- ◆ Highlights from NRPA's education programs
- ◆ Presentation of the W.E.R. La Farge Memorial Friend of the River Award
- ◆ Drawing for this year's kayak raffle.

## Guided Walk Completes Middlebridge Series

Narrow River Land Trust and NRPA will wrap up the 2014 Educational Series at Middlebridge with a guided walk at Jireh Bull Garrison House Acres on the South Kingstown side of the river on Saturday, September 27.

The walk is the third in the series following "What Lives in the River?" in June, when children seined and netted crabs, eels and other creatures living along the shore line, and "Art on the River" on August 16, when Patti Silvia and other local artists demonstrated their techniques "en plein air."

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**Garrison House Acres Walk  
Saturday, September 27  
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
Meet at Middlebridge Marina  
95 Middlebridge Road  
Narragansett**

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Garrison House Acres is a beautiful 26-acre coastal property nestled in South Kingstown along Narrow River. This property has been managed by Narrow River Land Trust since

1990 and is of particular ecological interest because of its variety of habitats and because it abuts other conserved lands including the 554-acre John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge at Pettaquamscutt Cove and land conserved by the Audubon Society.

This walk is part of the Land Trusts Days, a calendar of more than 60 events presented by member councils of the Rhode Island Land Trust Council (visit: [rilandtrusts.org/landtrustdays](http://rilandtrusts.org/landtrustdays)).

This one-mile walk will follow a loop trail through deciduous woodlands, freshwater marshes and open fields, and along salt marsh fringing Narrow River.

The trail is an easy one-mile walk; however, it is not handicapped-accessible. Please wear shoes and long pants appropriate for a walk in the woods.

## The Constant Steward



*At the 2012 Annual Meeting, Dick White received the Environmental Appreciation Award for his initiative and unassuming commitment to a cleaner environment. When he saw the results of a 2007 Earth Day clean-up along Middlebridge Road in South Kingstown, Dick decided to keep the road litter-free and has picked up trash along the road almost every day of the last seven years.*

# NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarships

Each spring, the members of the NRPA Education Committee have the privilege of judging applications for the NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarship, and then presenting the \$1,000 scholarships at the graduations and award nights at the high schools in the watershed.

## Shannon Emrich and Kyle Sayre, North Kingstown High School



*Shannon Emrich and Kyle Sayre with NRPA Board member Lynn Wolslegel who presented the awards at North Kingstown High School.*

**Shannon Emrich** will attend the University of Miami in the fall and plans to major in environmental and civil engineering. Shannon was a member of the NKHS National Honor and Spanish Honor Societies, and the indoor and outdoor track teams. An animal lover, she has devoted many hours volunteering at the North Kingstown Animal Shelter.

**Kyle Sayre** will attend the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg where he plans to major in environmental and civil engineering. Kyle was a varsity athlete in tennis and outdoor track, in addition to being a member of the National Honor and Foreign Language Honor Societies. Kyle recently completed his Eagle Scout project.

## Omar Zaki, South Kingstown High School



*Sally Sutherland had the honor of presenting the scholarship award to Omar Zaki at South Kingstown High School.*

**Omar Zaki** will attend Yale University in the fall and major in applied physics or molecular biochemistry with an eventual goal of MD/PhD. Omar was an NRPA river monitor for the past four years and won the 2010 NRPA Youth Environmental Achievement Award. Omar was the Principal Bassoonist in the SKHS Orchestra, captain of the Academic Decathlon, a varsity swimmer and an Eagle Scout.

## Gennifer Keller, Narragansett High School



*Veronica Berounsky congratulates Gennifer Keller at the Narragansett High School graduation.*

**Gennifer Keller** will study environmental science at URI, which is not surprising as Gennifer was an NRPA river monitor and was an active member in Future Farmers of America, serving as a state officer and national representative delegate. She won First Place in both Soils Competition and Environmental Issues at the R.I. Envirothon.



*Start of the Narrow River Turnaround Swim on June 28, 2014 near the dock at the URI Campanella Rowing Center. Participants swim a half mile down river to a buoy and then return to the dock area.*

## 2014 Narrow River Turnaround Swim

This year the Turnaround Swim recognized the top male and female swimmers in two divisions: those wearing wetsuits (which, by providing greater buoyancy, can improve a swimmer's time) and those not using a wetsuit.

Stuart Cromarty was first male in the Wetsuit Division and first overall, while Jill Lancaster was the first female in the Wetsuit Division and fourth overall. In the Non-wetsuit Division, Beatrix Lavigueur was the first female and seventh overall, and Brian McKenna was the first male and eighth overall.

Here is the order of finish with the times for the 142 swimmers.

1	20:50	<b>Stuart Cromarty, Foster</b>	18	24:31	Cuan Coulter, Medfield, Mass.	 <p><i>All eyes, and cameras, are on starter Fred Bartlett, top finisher in the 2012 Turnaround Swim</i></p>
2	21:07	Matthew Gilson, Albion	19	24:32	Bob Nelson, Arrowsic, Maine	
3	21:29	Jon Wilkinson, Rye, N.H.	20	24:33	Anne Galliher, Old Lyme, Conn.	
4	21:58	<b>Jill Lancaster, Barrington</b>	21	24:55	Jen Morin, Swansea, Mass.	
5	22:01	David Coté, Wakefield	22	25:01	Kate Bruck, East Greenwich	
6	22:50	Kaan Duru, Seekonk, Mass.	23	25:07	Christopher Doppke, Warwick	
7	22:53	<b>Beatrix Lavigueur, Newport</b>	24	25:15	Stephanie Hevenor, No. Kingstown	
8	23:10	<b>Brian McKenna, Wakefield</b>	25	25:26	Katie Evans, Warwick	
9	23:24	Diane Leith-Doucett, Wakefield	26	25:27	Rozie Moylan, Saunderstown	
10	23:26	Craig Frenz, Rome, Italy	27	25:28	Jane Cheney, Templeton, Mass.	
11	23:42	Merin Troutman, Mystic, Conn.	28	25:58	Stephen Imbusch, Barrington	
12	23:53	Timothy Clancy, Providence	29	26:10	Mark Morin, Providence	
13	24:01	Lindsay McKenna, Dover, N.H.	30	26:13	Kimberly Minnette, S. Easton, MA	
14	24:04	Douglas Sayles, Barrington	31	26:18	Matthew McKee, Saunderstown	
15	24:05	Ray Palmer, Wrentham, Mass.	32	26:32	Alfred Allen, Pascoag	
16	24:11	David Binkley, Wakefield	33	26:58	Michael Mancini, Middletown	
17	24:18	Thomas Gleason, Portsmouth	34	27:03	Kristen Lynch, East Greenwich	
			35	27:04	Ron Chofay, Wakefield	
			36	27:05	Alan Hollenbeck, Coventry	
			37	27:06	George Alexandre, Barrington	
			38	27:07	Geri Guardino, Cranston	
			39	27:08	Richard Lagala, East Greenwich	
			40	27:09	Lorena Pugh, North Kingstown	
			41	27:10	Paige Morganti, East Greenwich	
			42	27:11	Regina Hand, Warwick	
			43	27:12	Robert Records, Wakefield	
			44	27:13	Lee Coulter, Narragansett	
			45	27:14	Christine Pasterczyk Cambridge, Mass.	
			46	27:22	Robert McCreanor, Sunnyside, N.Y.	
			47	27:30	Christopher Roman, Wakefield	
			48	27:40	William Lavigueur, Newport	
			49	27:42	Frank Zelazo, Saunderstown	
			50	27:47	Neil Greenspan, Barrington	
			51	27:50	Frank McQuiggan, East Providence	
			52	27:53	Chris Digman, West Warwick	
			53	28:07	Helen Lin, Quincy, Mass.	
			54	28:09	Bruce Rose, Haverhill, Mass.	
			55	28:10	Stephen Haughton, W. Greenwich	
			56	28:22	Deb Merrill, Rye, N.H.	
			57	28:23	Andreas Ladas, Wakefield	
			58	28:24	George Lusignan, Warwick	
			59	28:35	Carolyn Kiely Kilpatrick East Greenwich	
			60	28:44	Jeffrey Yant, East Greenwich	
			61	28:55	Rebecca Doran, Lincoln	
			62	29:10	Chris Shardlow, Foster	
			63	29:29	Kathy Lewis, Newport	
			64	29:35	David Bouglough, No. Kingstown	
			65	29:38	Rick Nicastro, North Kingstown	
			66	29:40	Bethany Healey, Narragansett	
			67	29:52	Sarah Carter, Narragansett	
			68	29:53	Bruce Fleming, Providence	
			69	30:00	Onne van der Wal, Jamestown	
			70	30:09	Thor Johnson, Saunderstown	
			71	30:14	Christina Lorenson, Coventry	
			72	30:22	Frank Johnson, Saunderstown	
			73	30:42	Tim Morse, Seekonk, Mass.	
			74	30:50	Alan McLaughlin, Saunderstown	
			75	30:56	Mary Phelan, Wakefield	
			76	31:02	Jeremy Collie, Jamestown	
			77	31:03	Arlene Schollaert, Kansas City, Mo.	
			78	31:20	Kendra Pinard, Concord, N.H.	
			79	31:32	Lauren Sommers, Marina, Calif.	
			80	31:34	Martin Sinnott, East Greenwich	
			81	31:35	Brian Sullivan, Saunderstown	
			82	31:48	John Carter, Saunderstown	
			83	31:49	Alison Cleary, Narragansett ▶	

84	31:55	Gigi Moylan, Saunderstown
85	32:01	Brooke Morganti, East Greenwich
86	32:16	Dave Doucett, Wakefield
87	32:23	Don McGovern, Narragansett
88	32:27	Marc Lamson, Narragansett
89	32:30	Karen Livsey, Coventry
90	32:34	Nicole Raineault, Saunderstown
91	32:35	John Lodise, Narragansett
92	32:40	Marc Belanger, Shrewsbury, Mass.
93	32:44	Jay LaPlante, North Smithfield
94	32:50	Niall Howlett, Providence
95	32:53	Kim Raymond, Coventry
96	33:07	Michael Garr, Kingston
97	33:12	James Burden, Cranston
98	33:58	Joe Serdakowski, East Greenwich
99	34:12	Scott Kilpatrick, East Greenwich



*The Turnaround Swim takes place under the watchful eye of Safety Director Felix Sarubbi and his crew of lifeguards and kayakers.*

100	34:13	Lisa Sarubbi, Narragansett
101	34:16	Ann Walsh, Riverside
102	34:20	Dick Wallace, Wakefield
103	34:25	Jamie Gross, East Greenwich
104	34:28	Dianna Shaw, Barrington
105	34:29	Mike Hirst, Wakefield
106	34:30	Richard Limbird, Saunderstown
107	34:31	Susan Hannel, North Kingstown
108	34:38	Ben Schermack-Moore, Cranston
109	34:39	Brian Gardner, Jamestown
110	34:40	Alicia Torborg, Coventry
111	34:42	Jennifer Martin, Arcadia, Calif.
112	34:43	Bill Holt, Cranston
113	34:44	Elise Hedglen, Wakefield
114	34:45	Harvey Hohl, Narragansett
115	34:46	Jorge Matesanz, Albion
116	34:47	David Hankins, Warwick
117	34:50	Stephen Bartholomew, Saunderstown
118	35:10	Stephanie LaPlante, Narragansett
119	35:15	Kathleen Gorman, Wakefield

### 2014 Narrow River Turnaround Swim Sponsors

**Bill and Perry Moylan**

**Paul Choquette**

Swim Sponsors: The 2014 Turnaround Swim was made possible by the generous support of the organizations and individuals shown above and the 15 participants who contributed when they registered as "Swim Sponsors": Veronica Berounsky, Jane Greenleaf Cheney, Cuan Coulter, Michael Garr, Stephen Paul Houghton, Marc Lamson, Diane Leith-Doucett, Julie Lynn Marcotte, Renae Martin, Brooke Morganti, Paige Morganti, Bob Nelson, Ann Walsh, Jeffrey James Yant and Frank J. Zelazo.

120	35:27	Andrew Neil, East Greenwich	132	37:15	Nichole Danis, Canterbury, Conn.
121	35:29	Edgar Mercado, North Kingstown	133	37:30	Tara Wood, East Greenwich
122	35:30	Chuck Mahoney, Providence	134	37:40	Patrick Carr, Coventry
123	36:05	Katherine Bell, Narragansett	135	37:58	Solange Morrissette, Barrington
124	36:07	Jonathan Cooper, Newport	136	39:20	Marc Lattinville, Warwick
125	36:08	Richard Bell, Narragansett	137	41:04	Kathy McGuire, New York, N.Y.
126	36:28	Robert Tessier, Warren	138	41:07	Renae Martin, Narragansett
127	36:39	Richard Terek, Providence	139	41:10	Michael Nelson, Warwick
128	36:40	Janet Emison, East Greenwich	140	41:44	Billie Crawford, Newport
129	36:46	Stephanie White, Wakefield	141	45:09	Julie Marcotte, Lincoln
130	36:50	Dana Sarubbi, Narragansett	142	46:18	Carol Sarubbi, Narragansett
131	36:52	Cynthia Blanthorne, E. Greenwich			

# Late Spring Alga Bloom Not a Good Sign

The alga bloom that suddenly appeared on both sides of the river north and south of Middlebridge at the end of May was the largest since 2007, says Jason Considine of Narrow River Kayaks. "The nuisance persisted for about two weeks, broke up with winds and tides, but left as suddenly as it arrived."

This sea weed bloom was the accumulation of alga whose growth was stimulated by the prevailing temperature, light and nutrient conditions, says Dr. Ted Smayda, an NRPA Board member and an internationally recognized authority on alga blooms like those that occur on the river and the more devastating microalga blooms that cause massive fish kills. "The alga accumulates because it is not eaten by fish or aquatic birds. Its distribution and the size of the surface mats are influenced by the tidal and natural flow of Narrow River currents. This species commonly blooms at the end of spring and dissipates as the summer progresses."

The growth of the weed was accelerated by high nutrient load, especially nitrogen, washed into the river by the rain in the last two weeks of May. The



*The alga bloom at Middlebridge was thick and expanding on May 31, 2014.*

source of the nutrients can include fertilizers, the large flock of Canada geese and other waterfowl in the area, and even nitrogen from septic systems that persists in the ground water long after the homes in the area were connected to sewer systems.

"While posing no long-term threat to boating, fishing or swimming," says Smayda, "the bloom was not a very good sign. We need to be watchful about what is being introduced into the river."

## Update on Planned Marsh Restoration

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is finalizing plans for a marsh restoration project (described in the spring issue of Narrow River Notes), in which it will dredge selected areas between Sprague Bridge and Middlebridge and spray the dredged sediment on marshes in the John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge.

Once the procedures are finalized, USF&WS will produce an environmental assessment (EA) – not an environmental impact statement (EIS) – and hold at least one public hearing.

A mixture consisting of 5% sediment and 95% water will be spread on the marshes using a high-pressure hose (like a fire hose) and a high discharge trash pump, raising the center of the marsh

to a crown up to 4 inches high. Small ponds on the marshes will be filled in. Larger ponds will be allowed to drain via existing or new marsh channels.

Pettaquamscutt Cove will not be dredged because it is too shallow for the dredging vessel and the quality of the sediment is less than desirable for marsh restoration. However, the dredge will need to deepen the flood channel on the west side of Sedge Island in order to reach some marsh areas to be restored. The dredge would then back fill its way out the channel when the marsh restoration is complete.

▶ *continued, back page)*

*(Marsh Restoration, continued from Page 7)*

On the east side of Sedge Island, a channel adjacent to the island will be filled to prevent further erosion of the marsh edge by ebb-tidal current flow. A channel midway between the island and the shoreline will be deepened to become the main ebb channel that will handle outflow from Pettaquamscutt Cove. The channel adjacent to the mainland will be left unchanged.

The project will be staged using the USF&WS property at Sprague Bridge (on the north bank, west of the bridge), where one vessel will be assembled to carry the dredging equipment and



*In 2013 the Delaware Department of Natural Resources sprayed dredged sediment on the marshes along Pepper Creek in Dagsboro. The thin-layer spray application promoted the growth of beneficial marsh grasses and will help the marsh keep up with sea-level rise. USF&WS plans to use a similar technique to restore the marshes in the John H. Chafee Wildlife Refuge.*

another will be used to hold the material and transport it to the target marshes. Use of this site will mean closing it to kayak launchers and other recreational users for the duration of the project.

The dredging must be accomplished in a two-month window from November 15 to January 15 in order to protect herring populations. This is a two-year project with the first year to prove the equipment and the second year (November 15, 2015 to January 15, 2016) for the marsh building.

## Art on the River

On Saturday, August 16, NRPA and the Narrow River Land Trust sponsored “Art on the River,” the second event this summer in the Educational Series at Middlebridge.



The event was led by local artist Pati Sylvia (left), who gave instruction to adults in drawing and painting scenes of the Middlebridge area, and Board member Veronica Berounsky, who showed children how to make seaweed prints.



Layla and Sydney Morris (above) did not wait for instructions from anyone and got to work right away sketching river scenes.

The final event in the series is a guided walk at Garrison House Acres on September 27. For information on the walk and other NRPA events, visit [narrowriver.org](http://narrowriver.org) and click **Calendar**.