
NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Preserving the Narrow River and the Watershed Since 1970 / Summer 2015

Narragansett Middle School Scientists and Artists Explore Narrow River



The buses rolled into the Middlebridge Marina parking lot at 9:30 on Tuesday morning, June 9, with 100 Sixth Grade students from Narragansett Pier Middle School ready to explore Narrow River through science and art activities developed by NRPA Board members Veronica Berounsky, Charlie Biddle and Richard Grant, and by Janet Stone, science teacher at the school. The students used seine nets to collect river creatures, sketched the riverscape, made fish prints on T-shirts, tested the water for salinity and other parameters, and pressed seaweed prints. But more importantly, they got wet, they got curious and enjoyed the hands-on learning. The event was sponsored by NRPA with a grant from the R.I. Rivers Council.

Swimmers, Volunteers Score a Perfect 10

“The best ever” has been the common refrain after each Narrow River Turnaround Swim, as each year we are joined by new swimmers and old friends for the one-mile open water swim that celebrates the preservation of the river. But this year, we have to say it was a 10 out of 10, and not just because it’s the tenth anniversary of the event. We had the maximum number of registrations, added new sponsors and, most important of all, 20 volunteers made sure the event ran without a hitch. See the back page for results and photos of the perfect swim.



NRPA has repaired and updated the interpretive sign at the URI Boat Dock in the Lower Pond that tells the story of how W.E.R. La Farge donated parcels from his River Farm to help protect the river he loved so much. W.E.R. was a founding member of Narrow River Preservation Association and each year NRPA presents the Friend of the River Award in his name.

President's Cove

Team Effort

Every spring we select an image of a bird that frequents the watershed as the symbol for the Narrow River Road Race. Sometimes it's a large bird; we've had an Osprey and a Bald Eagle, two mighty predators that speak to the recovery of a species and a habitat. Sometimes the mascot is a bit smaller like the Saltmarsh Sparrow, a fragile character threatened by sea level rise and saltmarsh degradation. And last year our mascot was a Black-crowned Night-Heron that emerges from its perch near Gilbert Stuart Birthplace at dusk to forage in the wetlands.

Large or small, obscure or familiar, it has always been a single bird. Until this year, that is, when John McNamara offered his photo of a quartet of Sanderlings scurrying across the sand near the mouth of Narrow River. With our first multiple, there were multiple interpretations. My favorite spin is that the mascots moving together with purpose demonstrate the benefits and beauty of teamwork.

As NRPA starts its 45th year in October, the cooperative efforts of our members will continue to be an essential ingredient in protecting the watershed. And we will continue to partner with other organizations such as Narrow River Land Trust, the Rhode Island Rivers Council and URI Watershed Watch to provide outreach and programs to protect and enhance the Narrow River Watershed.



With this issue of *Narrow River Notes*, we are kicking off the membership drive for our 45th year, 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 together to preserve the quality of life for all communities within the watershed.

Thank you,

Richard Grant, NRPA President

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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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 2015 Rhode Island State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA).
Our fund number is **6239**.

Rhode Island Rivers Council

Four Receive NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarships

NRPA has awarded \$1,000 college scholarships to four recent graduates from high schools in the watershed. The recipients of the 2015 NRPA Lesa Meng College Scholarships are:



Jacob Baretta, a graduate of South Kingstown High School, will be attending the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg,

Virginia. He plans to study Oceanography/Marine Biology. He is a member of the National Honor Society and the Italian Honor Society. Jacob has been a volunteer for Save the Bay. A varsity baseball player on the SKHS team, Jacob was a volunteer and mentor for the South Kingstown Little League.

Erin Chille graduated from North Kingstown High School and will study Wildlife Conservation and Biology at the University of Rhode Island. Erin was a member of the R.I. Envirothon Team and President of the NKHS Science and Math Investigative Learning Experience (SMILE) team. She is a Girl Scout lifetime member and a Gold Award recipient.

Jack Hall, a Narragansett High School graduate, will study journalism at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. For the past three years, Jack has been a river monitor at Middlebridge for the NRPA



River Watch program. He has also been an active participant in the Narragansett Chapter of the Future Farmers of America.

Dean Kareemo graduated from North Kingstown High School where he was a National Honor



Society member, a member of the NKHS Symphonic Band and a guitar player for his own blues band. Dean will attend the

University of Rhode Island and major in Pharmaceutical Sciences and Molecular Biology. Dean is a volunteer for Clean Ocean Access, participating in many beach clean-ups.

45th Annual Meeting

2015 NRPA Annual Meeting
Thursday Evening, October 1
Refreshments 7:00
Program 7:30

URI Coastal Institute
South Ferry Road, Narragansett

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has been testing various marsh restoration techniques as part of a project to enhance the resiliency of the John H. Chafee Wildlife Refuge in the face of sea level rise and the increased severity of storm events. These include dredging south of Middlebridge to promote eel grass growth and provide material for increasing marsh elevation. You can learn more about the project at the Annual Meeting on Thursday evening, October 1, when Nick Ernst and Jennifer White of USF&WS will give us an update on the work that will take place in December and January, during a *dredging window* when the work will not impact fish habitat.

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.

28th Narrow River Road Race

Two hundred runners and walkers participated in the 28th edition of the Narrow River Road Race on Saturday, May 9. Here are top ten finishers in each event:

10K Run

- 1 36:47 Brian McNeiece, Narragansett, R.I.
- 2 37:52 Josh Parks, Red Bank, N.J.
- 3 40:02 Jeffrey Vuono, Westerly, R.I.
- 4 40:12 Peter Meegan, Providence, R.I.
- 5 42:04 Kate Cushing, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- 6 42:14 Kenneth Bager, Warwick, R.I.
- 7 42:33 Neil Mehrotra, Providence, R.I.
- 8 43:19 Harry Seidler, Jamestown, R.I.
- 9 43:30 Audrey Zaferos, Cambridge, Mass.
- 10 45:34 Christopher Scott, Coventry, R.I.

5K Run

- 1 19:22 A.J. Fournier, Saunderstown, R.I.
- 2 20:02 Gary Marn, Smithfield, R.I.
- 3 20:39 Kevin Kielty, Narragansett, R.I.
- 4 20:42 Zach Levenson, Canton, Mass.
- 5 21:43 Kevin Ryan, Narragansett, R.I.
- 6 21:51 Adam Banks, Middletown, R.I.
- 7 21:55 David Cote, South Kingstown, R.I.
- 8 22:53 Joseph Gleason, East Greenwich, R.I.
- 9 23:02 Leslie Battle, Warwick, R.I.
- 10 24:01 Marty Aldrich, Narragansett, R.I.

5K Walk

- 1 33:25 Richard Rochette, Wakefield, R.I.
- 2 41:57 Russell Brown, Wakefield, R.I.
- 3 47:25 Rae McPhail, Warwick, R.I.
- 4 48:28 Sarah Humphrey, Cumberland, R.I.
- 5 52:34 Ann Ricci, North Providence, R.I.
- 6 56:05 Tony Benedict, Colchester, Conn.
- 7 56:09 Deborah Chasse, Colchester, Conn.
- 8 56:09 Kelly Benedict, Colchester, Conn.
- 9 56:50 Beth McLaughlin, Wakefield, R.I.
- 10 56:50 Lynn Ewart, Bristol, R.I.



Kate Cushing of Brooklyn, N.Y. completed the 10K Run in 42:04, first among female runners and fifth overall. Brian McNeiece was building a substantial lead over the other 10K runners when he made the turn at Treaty Rock Park on Middlebridge Road in South Kingstown. McNeiece finished in 36:47.



NRPA President Richard Grant presents Leslie Battle of Warwick, R.I. with an award for winning the 5K Run in the Women's Division with a time of 23:02. Leslie was ninth overall.

Small Steps, Big Finish. In the spirit of the four scurrying sanderlings that served as the Road Race mascots this year, Iris Hatchett of Jaffrey, N.H. sprints to the finish line in the 5K Run ahead of her mother Jamie.

Visit narrowriver.org/roadrace for complete results and additional photos.



Runners and walkers in the 2015 Narrow River Road Race step out from the 5K starting line at Treaty Rock Park in South Kingstown. A.J. Fournier (center, wearing ball cap) lead the 5K Run from the start and finished in 19 minutes, 22 seconds. Fast walker Richard Rochette (111, far left) recaptured his 5K Walk title with a time of 33:25.

Four Events at Middlebridge

NRPA and Narrow River Land Trust have four more events scheduled for August and September at Middlebridge. All are free and open to the public, and start at the Middlebridge Marina, 94 Middlebridge Road, Narragansett.



Join us for **Art on the River** on Saturday morning, August 15, from 9:00 to 11:00 for art activities for adults and children. Sign up at narrowriver.org/calendar.

On Sunday morning, September 20, from 9:00 to 11:00 we will reprise our popular **What Lives in the River** event where



children explore the river and marshes for critters large and small. And then Narrow River Land Trust will conduct a **Salt Marsh Tour** from 11:00 to 1:00. Both events are part of Gansett Days, a three-day celebration of the history, culture and beauty of Narragansett. For more information visit narragansetttri.gov.

Members of Narrow River Land Trust will lead a guided walk on **Garrison House Acres** on Saturday, September 26, from 10:00 to noon. The walk is an R.I. Land Trust Days event. For more information and to sign up, visit narrowriver.org/calendar.



Mapping the Soils in Narrow River

One of the resources available in planning and evaluating marsh restoration projects in Narrow River is the MapCoast survey of soils and sediment in the river completed in 2011. Here Jim Turenne of the Rhode Island USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service provides some background on the project. Links to maps and a YouTube video of the survey work are available at narrowriver.org/soil.

MapCoast

by Jim Turenne, NRCS

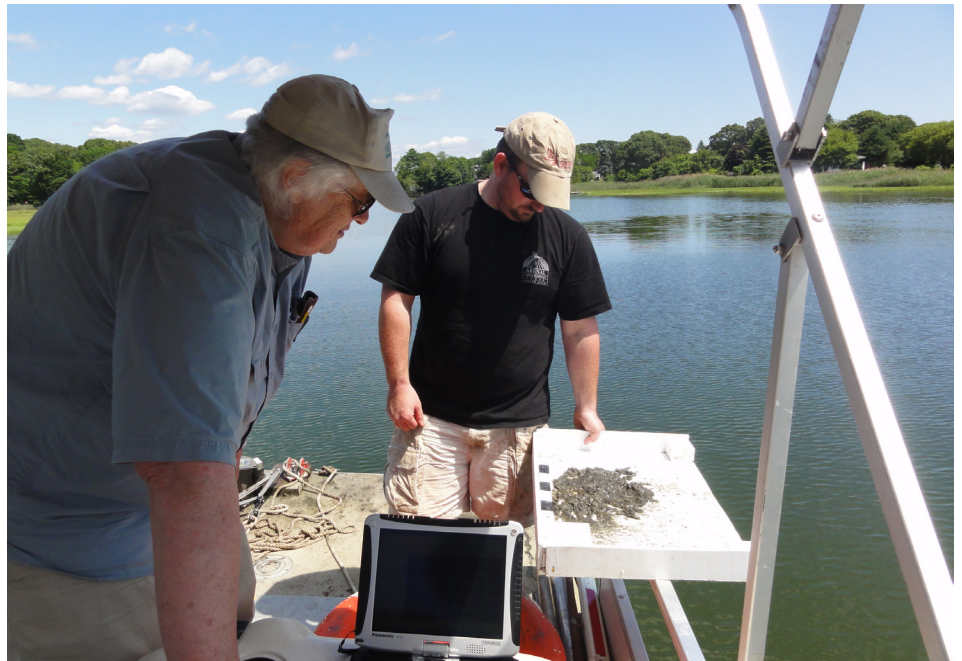
The National Cooperative Soil Survey has been mapping and classifying soils for over 100 years. Soil surveys provide detailed maps and data for a wide-array of land uses such as agriculture, woodland, recreational, urban, and even military. Over 50 “soil interpretations,” descriptions that predict how the soil will behave under various conditions, have been developed to help planners, farmers, engineers, and anyone using soil better manage and protect this resource. For most of the history of the soil survey, the mapping has been made on land. In the early 1990s soil scientist George Demas was mapping in the Chesapeake Bay area and noticed eel grass growing in some areas but not others. So he cored the submerged land and identified soil horizons and pondered the question “Why do we stop our soil map-

ping at the water’s edge?” Dr. Demas spent the decade developing the concept of subaqueous soils and had them recognized as soil in the National Cooperative Soil Survey.

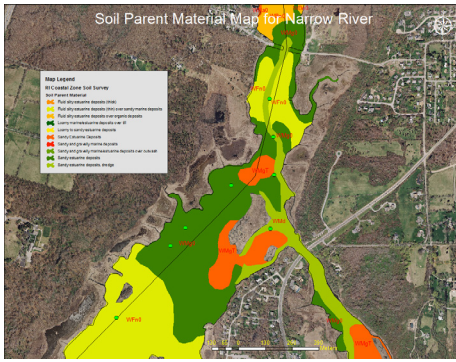
In 2001 a graduate thesis study was conducted by URI’s Mike Bradley and Dr. Mark Stolt on Ninigret Pond in Charlestown. The work caught the attention of the State Conservationist for the Rhode Island USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the lead agency for soil survey. In short, R.I. NRCS wanted a complete coastal zone soil survey to provide coastal planners with an important tool to protect our coastal and submerged lands. The R.I. NRCS and URI’s Coastal Institute gathered a

consortium of geologists, benthic ecologists, soil scientists, and other disciplines working in shallow subtidal areas to form the Mapping Partnership for Coastal Soils and Sediment (www.mapcoast.org). The partnership has been working to map submerged lands and provide data collected to anyone interested in the data. In 2011 R.I. NRCS completed the first subaqueous soil survey for the U.S.

The Narrow River soils and geology were mapped in 2011 and is currently part of the soil survey. The mapping was completed by first conducting a detailed bathymetric map of the river. R.I. NRCS provided funds for the URI Geosciences



Geologists Jon Boothroyd (left) and Bryan Oakley examine subaqueous soil cored from Lower Narrow River as part of the MapCoast project completed in 2011. Jon is a Research Professor Emeritus with the URI Geosciences Department and NRPA’s VP - Science. Bryan is Assistant Professor of Environmental Geosciences at Eastern Connecticut State University.



A map of the subaqueous soil types in lower Narrow River is available on narrowriver.org, along with other links for information about soil surveys, both on land and under water.

Department to conduct a side-scan sonar survey and map the benthic geologic habitats of the river. The soils were then mapped by taking many soil cores throughout the river, analyzing the cores in the lab and completing the map in digital format. The marshes and beaches along the river were also mapped to provide additional interpretations.

The MapCoast data proved to be very useful for the current USF&WS restoration projects in the river. Information on the soils and geology in the planned dredge areas, acid sulfide weathering, bathymetry, soil interpretations, and the soil strength for thin layer deposition is available to the planners of restoration projects in the river.

For more information, contact me at jim.turenne@ri.usda.gov or 401-822-8830.

DEM Partners with NRPA, NRTL on Narrow River Watershed Plan

NRPA and Narrow River Land Trust are working with the R.I. Department of Environmental Management on a watershed plan for Narrow River, as described in the following article by DEM's Lisa McGreavy and Ernie Panciera.

Developing a Narrow River Watershed Plan

by Lisa McGreavy, RIDEM and Ernie Panciera, RIDEM

Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.

Alan Lakein

On June 23, DEM met with NRPA and NRTL representatives to garner feedback on an appropriate approach to develop a watershed-based plan for the Narrow River Watershed and begin a discussion on current issues facing the watershed. The boundary line of the watershed was also discussed and NRPA agreed to play a lead role in working with DEM to develop the Plan and use the Plan as a tool to address issues in the watershed.

In Rhode Island, utilizing the watershed approach for protection and restoration of water quality and aquatic habitat (including wetlands) is imperative for any successful outcome since Rhode Island's watersheds

often include multiple municipalities, such as the three towns in the Narrow River Watershed (Narragansett, North Kingstown and South Kingstown). The watershed planning process will involve participation from a wide range of stakeholders including government, local organizations, and businesses.

The development of the Narrow River Watershed Plan will be a two-step process. First, DEM will compile land use and water quality information, gather information and proposed actions from existing reports and plans, and disseminate a preliminary draft to stakeholders. DEM will then meet with stakeholders to:

- ◆ Identify any missing or new issues or action items
- ◆ Further define problems in the watershed
- ◆ Prioritize action items
- ◆ Assign responsibilities
- ◆ Create timelines.

A revised plan will then be disseminated for final comments.

DEM invites input from all residents of the Narrow River Watershed and other stakeholders. If you are aware of any issues or problems that you would like DEM to know about, or you wish to be added to a mailing list to receive information and updates, please contact Lisa McGreavy at lisa.mcgreavy@dem.ri.gov.

Tenth Narrow River Turnaround Swim



It took Keenan Novis of Jamestown, R.I. 20 minutes and 43 seconds to complete the one-mile loop in the Lower Pond of Narrow River and place first in the Tenth Narrow River Turnaround Swim on Saturday, June 27. Last year's winner, Stuart Cromarty of Foster, R.I. was second overall and first in the Wetsuit Division with a time of 21:09. Jessica Ackerman of Warwick, R.I. finished in 22:11, the best time among women and sixth overall. Jillian Schneider of Narragansett, R.I. was first in the Women's Wetsuit Division and 15th overall with a time of 24:31.



Keenan Novis (left) receives a Turnaround Swim hoodie from Swim Committee Cochair Paul McCaffrey for his first place finish. Paul is then joined by Cochair Mick Westcott to present awards to division winners Jessica Ackerman, Stuart Cromarty, and Jillian Schneider.

Here is the order of finish with the times for the first twenty swimmers to complete the swim:

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------|------------------------------------|----|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | 20:43 | Keenan Novis, Jamestown, R.I. | 12 | 23:09 | Beatrix Lavigueur, Newport, R.I. |
| 2 | 21:09 | Stuart Cromarty, Foster, R.I. | 13 | 23:13 | Timothy Brown, Lincoln, R.I. |
| 3 | 21:24 | Joey Sbordon, Franklin, Mass. | 14 | 23:45 | Merin Troutman, Mystic, Conn. |
| 4 | 21:40 | Matt Gilson, Manville, R.I. | 15 | 24:31 | Jillian Schneider, Narragansett, R.I. |
| 5 | 21:54 | David Coté, East Matunuck, R.I. | 16 | 24:40 | Derek Jakoboski, No. Kingstown, R.I. |
| 6 | 22:11 | Jessica Ackerman, Warwick, R.I. | 17 | 24:44 | Ashley Recklet, Middletown, R.I. |
| 7 | 22:17 | Brian McKenna, Narragansett, R.I. | 18 | 24:57 | Jane Cheney, Templeton, Mass. |
| 8 | 22:25 | Bruce Novis, Jamestown, R.I. | 19 | 24:58 | Brian Sweenor, Wakefield, R.I. |
| 9 | 22:30 | Ron Gillooly, Stow, Mass. | 20 | 25:00 | Matt McKee, Saunderstown, R.I. |
| 10 | 22:36 | Derek Jennings, So. Easton, Mass. | | | |
| 11 | 23:00 | Katherine Denmead, Champaign, Ill. | | | |

Visit narrowriver.org/TurnaroundSwim for complete results and more photos.