

NARROW RIVER NOTES

Narrow River Preservation Association: Protecting, Preserving and Restoring the Narrow River Watershed Since 1970 / April 2020

NRPA Honored by Narragansett Chamber of Commerce

The Narragansett Chamber of Commerce recently honored Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) with the 2019 Jim Kelso Community Service Award.

The award originated in 1999 to recognize the service of State Representative and local business owner Jim Kelso, who was a prominent leader, known for his generosity in the local community. The award recognizes a local resident or organization that has provided exceptional volunteer service and shown an outstanding commitment to both the community and its residents.

Peg Fradette, Operations Manager of The Narragansett Chamber of Commerce, said, "This is the first time that this award is being given to an organization. After 50 years of continuous contribution and dedication to our community at large, we can think of no better choice but [NRPA]."

NRPA thanks all volunteers who have made our work possible for the past 50 years.



From left, Annette DeSilva, NRPA River Watch Coordinator, Veronica Berounsky, NRPA Vice President, Peg Fradette, Narragansett Chamber of Commerce Operations Manager, and Richard Grant, NRPA President, at the Narragansett Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner at Spain Restaurant on January 22.

Photo courtesy of Phil Cozzolino

NRPA Kicks Off 50th Anniversary Year

NRPA kicked off our Golden Anniversary year with the On Pettaquamscutt presentation 'NRPA's 50 years of Protecting and Preserving the Narrow River and its Watershed' in January.

NRPA's Vice President, Veronica M. Berounsky, Ph.D. opened the presentation by saying "What has kept NRPA vibrant all these years is having caring individuals with dogged determination to identify problems and find ways to address them and eventually solve them, sometimes using innovative techniques, for the good of our river, so we are making an impact locally".

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Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (left) presents a citation in honor of the 50th Anniversary of Narrow River Preservation Association to NRPA Vice President Dr. Veronica Berounsky and NRPA President Richard Grant while NRPA Board members Paula Santos, Sally Sutherland (at right) and others look on.

Photo credit Sandra Reynolds

Treatment Swales help Water Quality in the Narrow River

By: Mark Pereira, PE, CFM, Fuss & O'Neill – Providence, RI

The Town of South Kingstown is about to construct measures to improve the water quality in the Narrow River. Maintaining a healthy water quality in the Narrow River is not only important for the preservation of fish and wildlife habitat, it is necessary to keep the river safe for fishing and recreation. Poor water quality may not only restrict access for these activities, but it may also alter the environment where fish and wildlife thrive.



Schematic of a Landscaped Bioretention Swale

The Town of South Kingstown and Fuss & O'Neill conducted a study to identify measures that would improve water quality in the Narrow River. The study resulted in a list that included structural treatment prac-

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NRPA and People's Credit Union Partnership

People's Credit Union (PCU) recently donated \$5,000 to NRPA. In addition to their generous financial contribution, PCU will partner with NRPA by volunteering at events and cleanups throughout the year!

Thank you People's Credit Union for your continued support!



President's Cove

Dear friends,

LET'S FACE IT. We are all in the midst of a very strategic time with the Coronavirus possibly affecting us at every step. NRPA is facing the challenge and adjusting.

NRPA's Board of Directors is working still, holding virtual meetings online and carefully considering options for the events planned for 2020.

We have already decided to modify 'Navigating the Narrow', our watercraft safety event, by posing your questions to our experts. We plan to provide a 'Frequently Asked Questions with Answers' resource to the public by early May.

We have cancelled the official 'Narrow River Cleanup', but encourage people to pick up trash in their part of the watershed (as long as it's safe to do so).

And we have cancelled the 2020 Narrow River Road Race.

We will always proceed in compliance with local, state and federal guidelines.

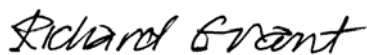
NRPA is in the middle of raising funds to support the activities of 2020-21. It was going well with membership exceeding previous years, but sponsorship of NRPA events is lagging. Probably the cancelling of the Road Race is motivating a hesitation to sponsor. Sponsor donations are what allows NRPA to operate our many Water, Land and Education programs.

We are also keenly aware that this is a precarious time for many businesses financially. NRPA appreciates any contribution you can make.

NRPA appreciates your continued support that keeps environmental projects operating in the Narrow River Watershed.

Whether we meet in person or not, NRPA will keep you abreast of issues, concerns and successes in the Narrow River Watershed by email, on our website narrowriver.org, through our newsletter and on NRPA's Facebook, twitter and Instagram pages.

I wish you good health,



Richard Barker Grant
President, NRPA

Donations welcome at narrowriver.org/donate
Sponsorships welcome at narrowriver.org/sponsor



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.

NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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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 2020 Rhode Island State Employees Charitable Appeal (SECA).

Our fund number is 6239.

Rhode Island Rivers Council



Narrow River Road Race Cancelled

At the recommendation of local, state and federal authorities, NRPA has cancelled the 2020 Narrow River Road Race.

We are saddened to have to cancel what would have been the 33rd annual road race, but we are proud to do our part to slow the spread of COVID 19 to protect the community.

NRPA's Board of Directors will be following recommendations as it affects our other upcoming activities and events.

Updates will be posted on NRPA's website (narrowriver.org), on NRPA's Facebook page and emailed to people who sign up.

We wish you all good health.

Grant receives Blueways Stewardship Award

Richard Grant, NRPA President, was honored with the 2020 Blueways Stewardship Award in recognition of his decades of dedication to the Narrow River (Pettaquamscutt Estuary) and its Watershed.

Upon receiving his award at the RI Land and Water Conservation Summit at URI on March 7, Grant commented "I just want to say thank you, thank you, thank you. Without the assistance of NRPA members, friends of Narrow River, and organizations... I wouldn't be here today to receive this award. I am sharing it with everybody who has been involved with Narrow River Preservation Association."

Annually, the Blueways Stewardship Award is given to an individual who exemplifies dedication to the stewardship and conservation of Rhode Island's rivers, lakes and coastal waters.

Grant joined NRPA's Board of Directors in 1972 and has been President since Fall 1995.



From left, Rupert Friday and Meg Kerr of The RI Blueways Alliance, Richard Grant, 2020 Blueways Stewardship Award winner, and Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D) District 33.

NRPA Presents Awards for Local Science Fair Projects

In order to encourage curiosity in, and respect for, the environment and the Narrow River watershed, each year Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) judges projects at local school science fairs, separately from the fair program itself.

Every year we are amazed by the caliber and quality of the projects that we judge, and 2020 was no different. This year, NRPA judged projects at North Kingstown and South Kingstown High Schools.

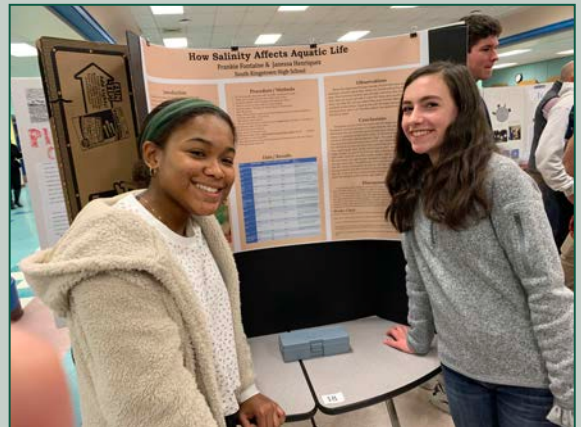
Janessa Henriquez and Francesca Fontaine were the South Kingstown High School winners for their project 'How Does Salinity Affect Living Organisms', in which they demonstrated the adverse effects of increased salinity on our ocean's fish species.

Ella Junge won the 2020 Narrow River Preservation Association Science Fair Award for North Kingstown High School with her project 'The Effect of Oxybenzone on Brine Shrimp Hatching Rates'. Ella's project clearly demonstrated that Oxybenzone, a chemical commonly found in sunscreen and cosmetics, is devastating to aquatic life. An Honorable Mention was awarded to Isabella DeGregory of NKHS.

Both of our winning projects illustrated the fragile condition of the world's waterbodies. More importantly, these projects and science fairs demonstrated the commitment of our students and their educators to improving and restoring our environment.

Does your school hold a science fair? Let us know, we would love to include it in our judging next year!

All schools in Narragansett, North Kingstown and South Kingstown are eligible. Email nrpa@narrowriver.org.



At top: Janessa Henriquez (left) and Francesca Fontaine, South Kingstown High School Students with their 2020 NRPA Science Fair Award winning project. Bottom: Ella Junge (left) winner of the 2020 NRPA Science Fair Award for North Kingstown High School receives her award from Chris Hubbard, NRPA Board Member.

Photo credits this page from top: Veronica Berounsky, Chris Hubbard, Veronica Berounsky

The Nature Conservancy Oyster Study

The Nature Conservancy and NRPA would like to give a big thank you to all the volunteer scientists who helped us track oyster recruitment last summer! We were amazed by the response from NRPA members. Within hours after publication of *Narrow River Notes*, we already signed up a dozen eager volunteers. Unfortunately, the oysters themselves were not as enthusiastic, as we only found one recruit on the 30 tiles at our volunteers' docks.

While disappointing, the tiles corroborated what TNC scientists were finding (or not finding) on bags of oyster shell in the field. In 2017 and 2018, we generally found 100 to 150 new oysters on the shell bags. Last year we only found three oysters in total! We are hoping that last season was an anomaly, which can perhaps be explained by the exceptionally wet Spring, and we are very excited to continue the study this year. Did you know that oysters spend up to three weeks as larvae before settling? While in their larval stage, they are swimming in the water column and being transported by the winds and tide. When ready, oysters prefer hard surfaces to settle upon and begin their next life stage as spat. Our goal with this study is to learn where Narrow River oysters settle most frequently.

The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island (TNCRI) is seeking volunteers who have a dock in Narrow River for the summer 2020 study.

TNCRI will meet you at your dock and attach a few 12"x12" tiles that will hang off the dock into the water. Then you check them monthly for oyster growth and measure any that appear.

If you are interested in becoming an oyster recruitment volunteer scientist this summer and have access to a dock on Narrow River, please contact Will Helt at william.helt@tnc.org.



Top: Oysters found in Narrow River
Bottom: Settlement tile with caliper used for measuring size of the spat (baby oyster).

Photo by Marc Lamson.



Invasive Species Removal

Narrow River Land Trust 2020 Workdays

Join NRLT to maintain trails and remove invasive species every second Saturday of the month from 9am- 12pm (Rain date –same time the following Sunday)

Sign up by emailing office@narrowriverlandtrust.org Please put "Workday [date]" in the subject line. All updates will be done by email. Thanks!

May 9, Saturday 9-12 at Walmsley Woods Preserve

June 13, Saturday 9-12 at Walmsley Woods Preserve

July 11, Saturday 9-12 at Lower Pond Overlook Preserve

August 8, Saturday 9-12 at Benson Preserve

September 12, Saturday 9-12 at Benson Preserve

October 10, Saturday 9-12 at Winter Preserve

November 14, Saturday 9-12 location TBD

What to wear: Light-weight and light-colored clothing. Long-sleeved shirts and long trousers with legs tucked into light-colored socks. A hat with a brim to block the sun and sturdy shoes or boots for uneven ground.

What to bring: Gloves, hand clippers and loppers. Water, snacks, sunscreen and bug spray.

What we'll have onsite: Water, sunscreen, wipes and bug spray.

Work can be grubby, but we'll have plenty of water, good cheer, and the enormous satisfaction of caring for our preserves and improving their accessibility.



Jim Kaczynski

Thanks to Jim Kaczynski for his efforts while on the NRPA Board of Directors. Jim recently retired from the NRPA Board to focus on other areas of the state, but continues to care deeply about Narrow River and its Watershed. Thank you, Jim!



Jim Kaczynski, third from left, March 2019. Photo by Jonah Namzoff.

Ctenophora (*Mnemiopsis leidyi*)

By Catherine Alves, Marine Ecologist

Ctenophores (the “C” is silent – pronounced “Teen – oh – fore”) are a type of gelatinous marine plankton, also known as comb jellies. They can be found in marine habitats from shallow coastal waters to the deep sea.

Many people get ctenophores confused with their jellyfish relatives, but they are in different phyla – jellyfish are in Cnidaria while comb jellies are in Ctenophora. Both have existed for 500 million years. Ctenophores are invertebrates, so they don’t have a backbone and have pretty simple body plans. However, they play an important role in coastal and marine ecosystems and have an interesting biology.

Anatomy and Movement

Like their jellyfish relatives, ctenophores have gelatinous body plans, but unlike jellyfish, the comb jellies you would find in Rhode Island can’t sting you! The most distinctive feature on ctenophores is their eight rows of cilia, which they move like little oars to propel them through the water.

Although they live in the water, they do not possess gills or lungs. Instead, they are able to “breathe” through the cells; i.e. oxygen and nutrients easily pass through the cell layers. Their bodies are made primarily of water, with several structural proteins, muscle cells and nerve cells making up the internal skeleton. They do contain one mouth-like opening, through which food and waste pass.

Feeding

All ctenophores are carnivores, which means they are animals that eat other animals. Their prey consists of zooplankton including copepods, krill, amphipods, and clam and snail larvae. Because of this generalist feeding behavior, they are able to optimize what they eat based on prey availability. Some ctenophores have tentacles with colloblasts lining them. These colloblasts release a glue-like sub-

stance to stick to the prey item, which the comb jelly then reels in to their mouth (like a fishing line, sticking to food, and reeling it in). Other ctenophores have two flattened lobes that reach below their mouths. Additional ctenophores without tentacles simply use their mouths to open wide, swallow their prey whole, and then close their mouths shut. These ctenophores have small cilia in their mouths that act like teeth to pull the food apart and direct it to the gut (the gastrodermis).

Defense Mechanisms

Ctenophores are preyed upon (eaten) by some jellyfish species, sea turtles, and some fish. They have adapted the ability to produce light, likely to avoid getting eaten, and in some cases, to attract prey. The ability of animals to produce light is known as bioluminescence and is made possible by special proteins that produce light from a chemical reaction. Ctenophores contain genes that code for the green-fluorescent protein (GFP), which glows bright green, and enables them to be bioluminescent. However, the bioluminescence can only be seen in the dark/at night. You might be able to see the rows of cilia illuminating/reflecting light during the day. That is due to visible light scattering and reflecting off the moving cilia within the ctenophore’s clear body.

Life Cycle

Ctenophores spend all of their life cycle as plankton. Plankton are small plants and animals that live in the water and cannot swim against a current (so mostly move with the water). Most ctenophores are hermaphroditic, making them able to release egg and sperm into the water, as frequently as every day. The egg and sperm cells eventually find other sex cells in the water. Once the egg gets fertilized, the embryo develops into a small larva that resembles a small adult. Through-



Ctenophora, also known as sea walnuts, are plentiful throughout the Narrow River. They are bioluminescent, so are especially visible at night when they appear to glow.

Photo by Marco Faasse, *World Register of Marine Species*

out its life, it just grows larger.

Ecology

The most common ctenophore species found in Rhode Island coastal waters is the sea walnut (*Mnemiopsis leidyi*). It is native to the east coast of North and South America. The ctenophore is most abundant during the warm spring through early fall, primarily in temperate waters. During the summer months, they can dominate the planktonic communities, becoming the food source for a variety of fishes and turtles, and compete with other fish for zooplankton food. The winter is too cold for them to reproduce, so they often move offshore to deeper waters. They can tolerate temperatures between 0 – 32 degrees Celsius, and a wide range of salinities; from nearly freshwater to hypersaline lagoons. Therefore, ctenophores can even be found in estuaries, like the Narrow River Estuary, which has brackish (half fresh, half salt) water.

Check out narrowriver.org/ctenophora for more images, links to articles and videos of ctenophores in action.

Treatment Swales, continued from page 1

tices and pavement removal projects that would reduce pollutants to the Narrow River. The Town reviewed this list and identified several projects that would advance to the construction stage.

Measures that reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff play an integral part in maintaining water quality. Stormwater runoff picks up and transports pollutants as it flows over surfaces such as lawns and driveways. These pollutants include sediment, bacteria from sources such as pet waste, and trash. Once these pollutants end up in waterbodies, the pollutants negatively impact water quality. It is for this reason that measures that reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff are important.

The Town of South Kingstown is moving forward with constructing bioretention swales in the Narrow River watershed. Bioretention swales are shallow channels that capture stormwater runoff from adjacent roadways. The runoff water then infiltrates through the special media at the bottom of the swale. This media includes “engineered” soil and organic material that removes pollutants as runoff passes through it, thus reducing the amount of pollutants that reach the Narrow River. The surfaces of the bioretention swales are comprised of vegetation that is similar to the

vegetation adjacent to it.

The bioretention swales will have additional features that help maximize their efficiency to treat stormwater runoff. Pretreatment measures - small settling basins and stone filled trenches - will remove larger pollutants such as trash before runoff enters the bioretention swale, reducing the likelihood that the bioretention media will clog. Small check dams will help slow the velocity of runoff as it passes through the swale, reducing the likelihood of erosion.

Periodic maintenance will be important to maximize the efficiency of the bioretention swales. Maintenance will include removing accumulated sediment and trash and also inspecting for and repairing erosion. Residents can also do their part by picking up trash and sweeping any accumulated sediment from their driveways (always in a safe manner!). These steps will help prevent debris from ending up in the bioretention swales and the Narrow River.

Editor’s Note: Please note that the plans for Middlebridge Road do not include installing sidewalks. The NRPA Board thanks Fuss & O’Neill Engineers, South Kingstown, North Kingstown and Narragansett for their continuing work towards protecting the water quality of the Narrow River.



Bioretention Swale in Cranston, RI. Photo courtesy of Fuss and O’Neill, Inc.

50th Kickoff, continued from front page

NRPA President Richard B. Grant reviewed the first twenty years of NRPA’s history. Annette DeSilva, NRPA River Watch Coordinator and Board member for over 25 years, spoke about 1991-2000, an era that saw the start of the River Watch water quality monitoring program.

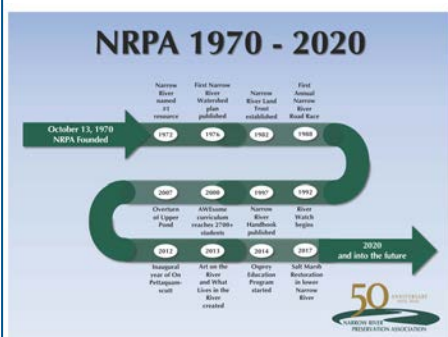
Sarah Gaines reviewed the past ten years and looked toward NRPA’s future goals. Paula Santos invited everyone to events throughout 2020 in celebration of NRPA’s Golden Anniversary.

After the presentation, more than 50 NRPA members and friends gathered to celebrate at Trio Restaurant. Many thanks to Trio for providing free appetizers!

Representative Carol Hagan McEntee presented NRPA with a citation from the RI House of Representatives congratulating NRPA on its 50th Anniversary and its “commitment to preserve, protect, and restore the natural environment and the quality of life for all communities within the Narrow River Estuary and Watershed”.

NRPA President Grant thanked Rep. Hagan McEntee for the citation and her strong support of NRPA through the years.

All are welcome to see ‘NRPA’s 50 years of Protecting and Preserving the Narrow River and its Watershed’ at narrowriver.org/about-NRPA.



See this timeline and more at narrowriver.org/about-NRPA.

Culture and History of Indigenous People in Pettaquamscutt Watershed

Lorén Spears, Executive Director of the Tomaquag Museum led a small group of NRPA supporters on a kayak tour on July 12, 2019.

Along the way, Lorén shared stories and cultural practices of Indigenous people historically through today in and around the Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River and throughout the watershed.

Below is a transcript of the third and final part of Lorén's remarks.

... We had relationships, kinship relationships between communities. That's how we survived here.

We went on rivers like this and met up and had ceremonial gatherings. You know, ceremonies get followed by social gatherings of feasting and fun. We did games of chance, which you might call gambling – moccasin game, hubbub, other kinds of more physical games. But that was a means of exchanging goods. It was a way to move things around the territory and a fun way where people are having some fun and getting together.

That's how we ended up with copper and brass from Ohioan tribes is through these trade routes. We had relationships with many tribal nations.

You know, we alligator dance – I don't know about you, but I've never seen an alligator in Rhode Island, but yet, that's in the documentation and we've done it for hundreds of years. How? People visiting other people on these trade routes, and exchanging during these social times.

And today, in historical records, sometimes it gets to be a lot of ownership for one community for something based on a book that's written. But often, lots of communities did similar type dances.

One in particular that I think of is the Smoke Dance. If you lived in a longhouse, you did the Smoke Dance, because the smoke dance was meant to help you in a fun way, if the building got too smoky, to get it up and out the smoke hole.

The Narragansett people, there's historical record that we've been doing that

dance for hundreds if not thousands of years, but if you hear it today, only Iroquois people Smoke Dance, is the way it's written in the historical record, in books, you know.

So sometimes in writing things down, it locks it in as someone's vs a region's of different kinds of things. There was lots of sharing and lots of relationships. And we really were allied together from, you know, New England over to like Long Island, Montauk area.

The other thing that you have to keep in mind: in the last 400 years, the landscape was far apart to those places, although we still traveled them. But over the thousands of years that we've been here, those places were not far and that they used to be land.

... David Robinson and some of the other people from the team from URI did the deep water archaeology out in the sound, I guess it is, and, you know, proved that our villages we're out there, they're just underwater today. And so that's really remarkable to think about.

So any questions?

Eventgoer: Were the corn caches in the ground?

Lorén: They were in the ground. They were in the ground because that was like refrigeration. In the wintertime the ground is cold, and you would line them with mats – mats of corn husk bull rush, cat tails, whatever, you know, you could weave cordage out of dogbane and milkweed and things like that. And those fibers would be woven into mats and those mats would line those caches. Also cedar was often used in that.

You can make cordage out of cedar and the cedar, just like your cedar closet today, keeps the bugs out. We use cedar in our homes for the same reason to help with that, and in the caches as well.

"Woven in Time" film by Marc Levitt shares the history from both archeo-

logical and Narragansett perspectives regarding the Salt Pond site (also known as Site 110).

[Note: NRPA featured Woven in Time and Marc Levitt as the presentation at our 2016 Annual Meeting.]

Yeah, it's a really good film. You know, he interviewed a lot of people from our community, including several from Tomaquag Museum for it.

You know, there's also Stories in Stone that he did that's on Narragansett stonemasonry. You know, we had a lot of history with stone before stone walls in the modern sense were a thing. But we were using stone tools and stone outcroppings and ceremonial stone walls as well.

Parts one and two of Lorén's remarks were published in the August and December 2019 issue of Narrow River Notes and are available online at narrowriver.org/indigenous-people.

Funding for the partnership between NRPA and the Tomaquag Museum was provided by the New England Grassroots Environment Fund.



Support for the kayak tour was provided by Narrow River Kayaks.



Thanks to Jonah Namzoff for his assistance transcribing Lorén's remarks.



The Mission of Tomaquag Museum is to educate the public and promote thoughtful dialogue regarding Indigenous history, culture, arts, and Mother Earth and connect to Native issues of today.

More information at tomaquagmuseum.org



NARROW RIVER PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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Permit No. 3



NEW! Live Osprey Webcam

Thanks to more than sixty-five donors, generous support from local businesses and hundreds of hours donated by volunteers, the osprey webcam on Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River is now available at narrowriver.org/ospreycam.

The live video features the osprey nest at Garrison House Acres along Narrow River in South Kingstown with the river, Sedge Island, and Sprague Bridge in the background.

Craig Wood, NRPA Board Member and volunteer, initiated the project and has led a team of dedicated volunteers as they set up every detail of the webcam.

Operating costs of this webcam for its first year have been donated in loving memory of Eileen Farrell by her family.

The camera is on a wild osprey nest and anything can happen. While we hope that healthy osprey chicks will end up fledging from the nest this summer, things like sibling rivalry, predators, and natural disasters can affect this osprey family and may be difficult to watch. As hard as it may be to see anything happen to our osprey, we will let nature take its course



Webcam view of the osprey nest on Narrow (Pettaquamscutt) River March 2020.

2020 EVENTS

We have many events planned for our 50th anniversary year.



Please check our website as we will make adjustments to our planned events to cooperate with guidelines regarding COVID 19. The health and safety of our community is our highest priority.

What Lives in the River - June 13

All ages explore life in Narrow River

Narrow River Turnaround Swim - June 20

One mile swim in the river

Pettaquamscutt Paddle - July 17

Discounted rentals and guided sunset paddle

Art on the River - August 1

Art for all skill levels along the river's edge

What Lives in the River - September 19

Explore life big and small in Narrow River

Narrow River Cleanup - September 27

Help keep Narrow River clean by picking up trash

50th Annual Meeting - October 1

Learn about Narrow River and NRPA

Golden Gala - date TBD in November

Dance the night away in celebration!

All details available at narrowriver.org.