



October 2018

Volume 13, Issue 3

# Autumn Newsletter

Save the River-Save the Hills, Inc., is dedicated to preserving the health of the Niantic River Estuary, its Watershed and the natural beauty of the Oswegatchie Hills.

[www.SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org](http://www.SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org)

## President's Message: A New Threat to the Niantic River

VP Deb Moshier-Dunn wrote the following letter to the editor to announce our new #SmartSolar Project. I wanted to share this news with you and thought that the letter was a good place to start. Stay tuned to our Facebook page for updates as we go through the intervenor process and hold the solar company responsible for water quality in its Petition to the CT Siting Council.

*"Save the River-Save the Hills has recently discovered that the 55,000 solar-panel project in Waterford is proposed to be on 93 acres in a currently forested area between two tributaries to the Niantic River: Oil Mill Brook and Stony Brook, not at the original site of the old Waterford Airport or the landfill. While we are a strong supporter of renewable solar energy, we feel that this site off Oil Mill Road in Waterford is an inappropriate place to install it.*

*Waterford has spent taxpayers money to study the tributaries to the Niantic River and to create plans to protect the water quality of this estuary. In 2009, the town paid for the creation of The Stony Brook Watershed Management Plan. In 2006, the state of Connecticut, with the help of the four towns in the watershed and some Clean Water Act federal monies, produced the Niantic River Watershed Protection Plan. Both documents contain guidelines and recommendations to reduce stormwater runoff, the number one cause of pollution in the Niantic River. The proposed plans supporting the petition for the solar installation ignore these two plans.*

*STR-STH has officially requested to be an intervenor in the solar company's Petition for a Declaratory Ruling from the Connecticut Siting Council to start the work on the installation this fall without a public hearing or environmental review. We have hired an attorney & a professional engineer to review the plans of the proposed installation and have confirmed our fears that the company proposing the solar project has not learned from the devastating results from the installation they created on Walnut Hill Road in East Lyme. (In 2014, the East Lyme site discharged silt and destroyed area wetlands on another tributary to the Niantic River. There is currently a lawsuit from downstream property owners against the same company.) The Waterford plans do not have sufficient stormwater mitigation built into the construction or the final product. STR-STH has worked too hard for too long on water quality in the Niantic River to allow it to be potentially destroyed by stormwater runoff from this proposed solar farm.*

*Also, it makes no sense to deforest an area and degrade water quality in the Niantic River to provide solar energy. We have been fighting for 15 years to keep development from happening in the Oswegatchie Hills which overlook the Niantic River, so that the ecosystem of the river won't be destroyed. This solar installation, as proposed, could do the same damage as developing the Hills, especially given the track record of the company in East Lyme.*

*Save the River Save the Hills is for solar energy, but not at the expense of water quality. This should not be a trade-off. The town and the state should find an area that creates a win for everyone. #SMARTSOLAR*

**Yours in Saving the River and the Hills, Fred Grimsey**



### Inside this issue:

President Fred Grimsey's message-#SmartSolar	1
Thank You to 3 Belles Marina & Outfitters!	2
Kayak Regatta results and pictures	2
Updates on Grant Programs	3
Rain Barrel & Water Conservation Festival!	3
Membership Update/ Volunteer Opportunities	4
Membership/Donation Form	4



**Fred backed by son Sean, daughter (& STR-STH Treasurer) Liz & wife Cordette at the dedication of Grimsey Beach at the Kayak Regatta**



**New and Exciting Changes to Our Holiday Fundraiser  
Fun Games, Delicious Food and Great Prizes  
Check the Mailbox for Tickets and Flyer with All Details!**



**A chicken joins the festivities during the Kayak Regatta!**

## A Big Thank You to Three Belles Marina & Outfitters!



*John Vaness, Lee Deer (holding certificate), Theo Maryeski of Three Belles.*

Many thanks to certified “Green Marina” Three Belles of Niantic and their shop Three Belles Outfitters for being such strong supporters of STR-STH over the years!! We gave them a Certificate of Appreciation that reads:

“In Appreciation for Continued Service and Support of Save the River-Save the Hills, Inc. at the **RIVER CHAMPION LEVEL**”

## Our 15th Kayak Regatta & Dedication of Grimsey Beach!!

Rain may have pushed the fifteenth annual Save the River-Save the Hills Niantic River Appreciation Day and Kayak Regatta from Saturday to Sunday, but it didn’t dampen the spirits of paddlers who came out in significant numbers to enjoy the river, the music & food, a blessing of the river and to recognize STR-STH’s founder.

On Sunday, Aug 12, Waterford First Selectman Dan Steward and Recreation and Parks Director Brian Flaherty announced the naming of the small beach (the land base of the Regatta) at 47 Oswegatchie Road as “Grimsey Beach”. The designation is in



*4 Generations of Grimseys listen to dedication of “Grimsey Beach” by 1st Selectman Dan Steward*



*Brian Flaherty’s office created the sign for Grimsey Beach. Brian announced the naming at the Kayak Regatta.*

recognition of our President Fred Grimsey, who spear-headed founding of our local environmental grassroots non-profit organization with other local environmentalists in 2001. "The strength, commitment, and love of all of you is what’s really important," Fred told Regatta attendees. "I’m embarrassed to have my name on this sign, because this [beach] is for all of you."

The day was made extra special by a Blessing of the Niantic River by Jay Levy, archeologist for the Mohegan Tribe. Jay recited the Blessing in the Pequot language then translated it to the crowd. His son Cacique and daughter Kisuq helped him prepare the offering and place it in the River. It was a beautiful addition to the festivities of the day! The Niantic River needs all the help we can give.



*Jay Levy reciting the Blessing with the help of his daughter and son.*



*Roger Reynolds of CFE addressing participants*

Speaking of helping the River, Roger Reynolds of CT Fund for the Environment’s legal team gave us an update on the fight to preserve the Hills. Since that update, we had a setback in the Water-Sewer appeal. The CT Superior Court upheld the previous decision favoring the developer. STR-STH has joined the town in petitioning the CT Supreme Court to appeal that decision. We also expect to hear soon from the judge who is deciding on the developer’s appeal of East Lyme Zoning Commission’s “approval with conditions” of the Application to change the zoning of the Hills from three acre lots to Affordable Housing. We will keep you posted!



*A kayak full of Fun! Deb Moshier-Dunn with daughters & puppy!*

A new addition was **music courtesy of Tyler Coleman**—and he was a big hit! Thank you Tyler! And thanks again to **Flanders Fish for the yummy clam chowder** and **The Dock for the Hot Dogs!** Always appreciated after our paddling upstream. And thank you to all of the volunteers and participants—it just wouldn’t work without all of you!!

*(Pics courtesy of Debbie Beckwith & Deb Moshier-Dunn)*

## Program Updates:

### Education/Outreach Grant Update

It's back to school for Save the River-Save the Hills, as we implement the environmental grants we reported in our last newsletter.

Thursday, September 27, was Niantic River Watershed Day at Waterford High School, which hosted a seminar and field trip for students from East Lyme and Montville High Schools. The program brought together young scientists from all four towns in our watershed to participate in a collaborative session explaining the causes of nitrogen pollution and what the towns, Niantic River Watershed Committee, and state and federal agencies are doing to reduce further degradation of water quality in the estuary and LI Sound.

Presenters included Kelly Streich, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Dr. Jamie Vaudrey, UConn Marine Sciences professor who is studying impaired embayments along Long Island Sound, Judy Rondeau of NRWC and James Gallagher, East Lyme Public Trust Foundation volunteer. Our thanks, also, to Victor Benni, East Lyme Public Works, for his guided tour of the town's Outdoor Stormwater Classroom at Hole in the Wall Beach, to Maureen Fitzgerald, Waterford Environmental Planner and to Mike Marelli for the Pumpout Boat demonstration.

In coming months, students will engage in public education and outreach projects and campaigns in their home towns, encouraging residents to reduce their pollution runoff into the region's tributaries.



ARCGIS map of Niantic River Watershed & Niantic Bay

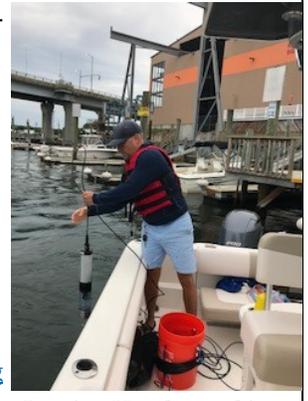
### Anchors Away – STR-STH participates in Save the Sound's Unified Water Study



Jamie & Dwaine Vaudrey on Ted Norris' boat on the Niantic River

Our thanks to captain Ted Norris and back-up Jim Paganetti for volunteering their time and boats to conduct our water quality samplings and measurements in the Niantic River in our second year in Save the Sound's Unified Water Study. Dr. Jamie Vaudrey, who wrote the UWS quality standards manual, conducted the early morning measurements with the assistance of her husband Dwaine and their teenage son.

Watch for Save The Sound's 2018 Long Island Sound Report Card, due out in late September, for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year of uniform data collection and reporting by citizen scientists on water quality in the Sound's embayments and tributaries. STS is a bi-state program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment, go to [LongIslandSound.ecoReportCard.org](http://LongIslandSound.ecoReportCard.org) to see the 2018 report and [www.ctenvironment.org/save-the-sound](http://www.ctenvironment.org/save-the-sound) for more information.



Dwaine Vaudrey taking Water Quality readings on the Sonde.

### Rain Barrel and Water Conservation Festival—by Petie Reed

Join us **Saturday, Oct 20 at Perennial Harmony**, (144 Boston Post Rd, EL) from **10am to 3pm** to **build your own Rain Barrel for Free!** Organized by an Eagle Scout prospect with Dan Mullins & sponsored by the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District (ECCD), this event will raise awareness about the need to protect and conserve our shared water resources. It features music and free refreshments, but more importantly, local conservation organizations will be there to raise awareness about the many issues facing our waterways including the Niantic River and Long Island Sound. The event is also supported by The Rivers Network and Coca-Cola, which have generously donated 20 rain barrel conversion kits and 40 rain barrels. Funding is provided by the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. EPA.

Niantic Village often experiences water shortages during the summer months, so this is the perfect opportunity for you to build a rain barrel and conserve water at home. **We have only 40 free rain barrels to give away, you must contact Dan Mullins to reserve one and you must attend the event on October 20<sup>th</sup> to build your rain barrel and bring it home.**

Dan Mullins' contact info: **Email is preferred:** [Dan.Mullins@comcast.net](mailto:Dan.Mullins@comcast.net) **But phone works too:** 860-319-8808

# Holiday Fundraiser—Friday, Dec 7th, 6:00pm-9:30pm

Save the River-Save the Hills, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) grassroots environmental organization based on the Niantic River Estuary in Waterford & East Lyme. We are dedicated to abating and preventing pollution of the river, its Watershed, and advocating the preservation of the Oswegatchie Hills.

To donate or become a member, clip & mail the form below, or call Eileen O’Pasek (860-439-1687)

## Volunteer Opportunities:

- ☺ Donate to our Fundraiser!
- ☺ Help with our mailings—stuffing & stamping
- ☺ Help with the Education Program
- ☺ An extra donation for our #SmartSolar program

Join us in anyway you feel comfortable and take action to Save the River and the Hills!

## Membership News

### Holiday Fundraiser “Dessert Extravaganza”

Save the River-Save the Hills would really like to make this Fundraiser different and very special. We thought of having a “Dessert Extravaganza” in addition to our dinner menu. Do you have a special dessert you only use for holidays, perhaps a favorite of family and friends that you would like to share? If you want to be a part of our dessert extravaganza, please call me and I can start our list of “Member Made Desserts” for the Holiday Fundraiser dessert table. Thank you!! **Call Eileen O’Pasek 860-439-1687.**



Also, please remember we are nearing the end of the year and your contributions are tax deductible. Thank you for your continued support in Saving the River and the Hills!

You can make this OUR BEST Holiday Fundraiser by being a Sponsor, donating a service or monetary amount or through ticket purchases even if you can’t attend (but we would LOVE to see you there!) Be on the lookout for the next mailing with the flyer and the tickets—coming soon to a mailbox near you!

Sincerely, *Eileen O’Pasek*

### Membership & Other Contributions:

New     Renewal

Basic Family \$25

River Keeper \$50

River Saver \$100

River Protector \$250

River Neptune \$500

River Champion \$1000+

All members receive our quarterly newsletters.

Note: first \$25.00 of any membership category goes to the general fund and is used as required for all programs. Additional amounts may be directed as below:

Water Quality (testing, education, pumpout programs)

Legal Defense Fund & #SMARTSOLAR Fund

Please make checks payable to:

Save the River-Save the Hills, Inc.

P.O. Box 505

Waterford, CT 06385

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Corporate Match By:

(please let us know if your employer will match!)