



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



Our New Pumpout Boat has Arrived!

The collaborative effort to obtain a new Pumpout Boat for the Niantic River has been successful. The boat was delivered on November 8 to STR-STH's Pumpout Program Administrator Jim Paganetti and CT DEEP's Program Coordinator Kate Brown at Mago Point in Waterford. The new boat was built by Marine Boatbuilders Company in Warwick, Rhode Island and was delivered before the grant deadline for a 75% coverage of cost by CT DEEP. The remaining 25% for the \$106,684.00 specially made boat was paid for by the towns of East Lyme and Waterford along with members and supporters of STR-STH. The ongoing support of the program is a collaboration of STR-STH with CT DEEP, the towns of Waterford and East Lyme, the Waterford-EL Shellfish Commission (WELSCO), local marinas (Three Belles and Niantic Boats, Inc.), as well as grants from Dominion Foundation. It is truly a community effort.



From Left Top: Crew Members Aiden Grimsey & Nick Caruso, Bottom row: Rick Kanter (WELSCO), Waterford 1st Selectman Rob Brule, Kate Brown (CTDEEP), Eileen O'Pasek, Deb Moshier-Dunn, Jim Paganetti, East Lyme 1st Selectman Kevin Seery

The Pumpout Program was started in 2001 when Fred Grimsey (founder of STR-STH) purchased a skiff to retrofit into a pumpout boat. He then went to CT DEEP and asked them for a grant to run the program. CT DEEP has been funding a grant of 75% of the program's costs ever since. The monies for the grant come from the US Fish and Wildlife Service funding that the state distributes to programs that focus on Water Quality. The money originates from the federal tax on boat fuel and the pumpout service is free to boaters on the Niantic River and Bay.

STR-STH's Pumpout Program pumps the highly concentrated human waste off boats to be properly disposed of in a sanitary sewer. Each year the pumpout boat collects more than 14,000 gallons of sewage during the boating season. The town of EL has allowed the sewage to be pumped into their sewage system at the Niantic Dockominiums Marina and the town of Waterford allows the boat to dock at the town dock. With the ongoing collaborative effort and donations from the towns, WELSCO and STR-STH members and supporters, this new boat will continue for years.

The Niantic River and Bay was the last embayment on the CT coast without a pumpout program, and after STR-STH got the program up and running, the state closed the entire CT coast to the dumping of marine sewage. STR-STH is proud to know we are actively protecting the health of the Niantic River & Bay, and thus the Long Island Sound, by keeping sewage out of our waters!

"Gratefulness" – VP's Message by Deb Moshier-Dunn

Thanksgiving reminds us to reflect on what we are grateful for. As we close out this year, STR-STH is very grateful for a number of people:

- 1) Steve Trinkaus, PE, our engineer who is an expert in Low Impact Development and is willing to review other engineer's plans for us so we may give advice to the towns about stormwater plans. Not all engineers are willing to do this. Thank you Steve!
- 2) Jim Paganetti who runs the Pumpout Program and took on extra grant writing, insurance review and boat procurement above and beyond his administrative duties this year! Jim has been filling the big shoes of Fred Grimsey—now we all know how much work it takes to run this program! Thank you Jim!
- 3) all of our members and supporters who have, over the years, continued to donate to support our programs. We wouldn't be able to do all that we are doing without you! Thank you all!

All of us on the STR-STH Board wish you Peace & Joy during this Holiday Season!



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Our New Pumpout Boat at Mago Point Nov 8, prior to being wrapped for storage for the winter



CT DEEP electrofishing in Oil Mill Brook on 9/9/22 to capture and measure local fish before releasing them



Measuring slippery fish isn't easy! They found American eels, brown trout, brook trout and even a large mouth bass!

Niantic River Appreciation Day—2022 Kayak Regatta in Pics!

(See our Facebook and Website Kayak Regatta page for more—pics by Anne Ogden)



Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers & participants! Music, Kayaks and Food—what a fantastic day!

Pumpout Program Update

Pumpout Season 2022 review: Well folks, we made it through, whew! A combination of our 21-year-old backup boat (designed and built by Fred Grimsey), a very positive and upbeat crew along with the cooperation of you, the people we serve, made this year a success! I would like to thank the crew, Aiden Grimsey, Emma Grimsey, Nick Maksim, Louis Dharvilly and Nick Caruso for maintaining a high standard of service.

Although the price of gas and diesel was high and the weather was hot at times (remember!?), the demand for our service was still in much needed demand. Thank you all for helping us keep this beautiful river and bay clean!

Our brand new boat was delivered just after our season ended and we look forward to serving you all next year on this terrific vessel. We are planning a “Name the Pumpout Boat” contest—so start thinking of some fun, clean (get it?) names!

We will also be expanding our days of operation next year, which means we will be looking for part-time, paid operators to help out. For those interested, please contact me at jim@paganetti.com. Have a safe and happy holiday season, see you next year!

~ Jim Paganetti, Pumpout Program Administrator

Kayaker Regatta Participants Remember Dan Steward



First Selectman Dan Steward was fondly remembered at the 2022 Kayak Regatta. His presence was missed as he was a kayaking participant each year—even raced Senator Formica one year! STR-STH has purchased a bronze plaque to be placed at Grimsey Beach this coming Spring. We presented a blown-up version of the plaque to Dan's daughter and her family at the Kayak Regatta. Senator Richard Blumenthal, Congressman Joe Courtney, State Senator Paul Formica, State Representatives Kathy McCarty and Holly Cheeseman and Waterford First Selectman Rob Brule were all in attendance and remembered Dan with their stories. Dan will live on in our hearts! [pic by Anne Ogden]

Eelgrass Restoration Study



Eelgrass woven by volunteers into burlap with added soil amendments

Eelgrass, an important aquatic plant that supports healthy shellfish and fish communities, is a critical feature of Niantic River and eastern Long Island Sound. One goal for healthy ecosystems is to restore eelgrass throughout the Sound. Eelgrass depends on excellent water quality, but even under great water quality conditions, establishing new plants can be difficult. Just like land plants, aquatic plants experience transplant shock. Dr. Craig Tobias, Dr. Jamie Vaudrey, and Shannon Jordan, working with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, are testing a new method which may give newly planted eelgrass a boost, using the Niantic River as the testing site. Soil amendments were applied to three different locations of eelgrass transplants. We'll know next year whether the treatment was helpful. Thank you to all the volunteers who showed up to weave the eelgrass and to Three Belles Marina for hosting the weaving event!

- Jamie Vaudrey, PhD, Professor in the Department of Marine Sciences at UConn & Niantic River Watershed Committee Program Coordinator

“STR-STH Cherishes our Members—Please Stay Safe!”

~ End of Year Appeal ~

We are Counting on Your Help

Dear Members,

We hope this finds you well and smiling. We were very disappointed to have to postpone our Fundraiser in November. But we felt it was best for our members and their families as Thanksgiving was so close to the event and respiratory diseases are increasing rapidly. We would not want to jeopardize our members' holidays in any way! We are looking forward to planning and enjoying a “Spring Fling” with you in 2023.

Fundraising has been incredibly difficult and we appreciate your generosity and understanding when sending your membership contributions. With the Holidays arriving, we ask that you include us when shopping with Amazon Smile and remember us on “Giving Tuesday”, November 29th, 2022. Please check for matching programs with your place of employment or place of banking. (Thank you to those who already do!) It is a great way to increase your donations. Our members are the Heart and Backbone of this wonderful organization!

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving, Chanukah, a Very Merry Christmas and Happy Healthy New Year! PLEASE think of Save the River-Save the Hills when making your end of year donations.

Invite your neighbors and friends to join us! It's easy: go to our Website, Facebook Page, or call Eileen O'Pasek 860-439-1687. Also, please add your email address below to receive our short news emails to stay up-to-date!

Thank you for all you do to Save The River and The Hills! See you all in the New Year.

Sincerely, *Eileen O'Pasek*, Membership Chair

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

☐ General Fund



Please make checks payable to:

STR-STH, Inc.

and mail to

Save the River-Save the Hills

P.O. Box 505

Waterford, CT 06385

Name:

Address:

Phone:

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(We will use your email only for STR-STH Action Alerts and updates, we will never give it out to others.)

Referred by: