



www.SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org

May 2021

Volume 15, Issue 2

Spring 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.

President's Message: Into the "New Normal"...

Thank you to all who have continued your support of STR-STH during this trying time! We hope that all of our members are well and staying safe. STR-STH has continued the work of our mission through the pandemic and now into the "new normal", whatever that may look like. Last season, our Pumpout Program kept over 15,000 gallons of concentrated sewage out of our beautiful River. Our Water Quality Program continued testing the waters as part of Save the Sound's Unified Water Study. Our #SmartSolar initiative was successful in getting the CT Siting Council, and thus the solar company, to take stormwater mitigation seriously at the Oil Mill solar installation site (although not to our satisfaction). We missed you all in August & December, as we had to cancel our fun and meaningful events, but we had to keep the safety of all of our wonderful members at the forefront, and we continue to do so. With vaccines in arms and CT State starting to open everything back up this month, this year looks much more promising!

In that spirit, we will be kicking off our Pumpout Program the Friday before Memorial Day weekend (see more about the challenges we are having with that program on Page 3), we are re-starting the water quality testing this month, we will be working with the Niantic River Watershed Committee in outreach to homeowners in the watershed about proper lawn fertilization, and we are currently planning on having our Kayak Regatta on August 14th. We will, of course, be checking with the town and following State guidelines as we create what the "new normal" on all of these efforts will look like. Stay tuned!

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

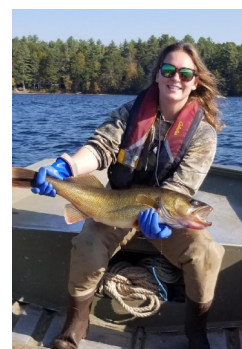


Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Upcoming Event Dates	1
It Takes a Team! Saving the Hills	2
Meet our New Board Members	3
Pumpout Program	3
Volunteer Opportunities	4
Membership message/ Donation Form	4



Kayak Regatta 2021! Currently planned for Saturday, August 14 (raindate: Sunday Aug 15)



New Board Member Lillian Glynos with her walleye!

Upcoming Events:

- ☺ STR-STH Annual Meeting—TBD
- ☺ Our 17th Annual Kayak Regatta - August 14, 10am-2pm
- ☺ Earthfest CT 2021! September 25, 10:30am-3:30pm McCook Park (Stop by our table!)
- ☺ Annual Fundraiser at Flanders Fish—December 10, 2021



"LIKE" our Facebook page or go out to our website at SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org and click the Facebook icon at right to stay up-to-date on what's going on. (You don't have to have a Facebook account to see our Facebook page!)

It Takes a Team! By Liz Paganetti

East Lyme, Waterford and all Southeastern CT residents are extremely fortunate to have **three** non-profit organizations working to protect the Oswegatchie Hills from overdevelopment: *Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve*; *Save the River-Save the Hills*; and our bi-state partner *Save the Sound*. All three share a common goal of preserving the Hills and work together to make it a reality. The Oswegatchie Hills are 700-plus acres of rocky woodlands. Thankfully, over 400 acres have been preserved forever as a nature preserve! However, the adjacent 236 acres, including a mile of waterfront coastal forest, are still in danger of high-density development.

All three organizations believe the best use of the remaining 236 acres of this vulnerable coastal forest is preservation, not an 840-unit development with 1767 parking spaces. Each entity brings unique skills and focus, while maintaining a common purpose to protect the magical Hills. We ALL know that once the Hills are paved over, they are gone forever – impacting the river, the Sound and beyond. Here's a quick overview:



Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve (FOHNP), a grass-roots organization of volunteers established in 2001, joined forces with local, state and federal legislators and local organizations to raise the funds used in acquiring the initial acreage of the preserve. Because of these efforts, the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve was created and formally dedicated in 2007.

FOHNP volunteers maintain the 457 acre preserve that includes over 7 miles of hiking trails. The preserve provides critical protection to the Niantic River watershed. We manage the preserve responsibly and promote conservation and education while working diligently to ensure hikers and resident wildlife are safe and protected.

FOHNP remains committed to its mission “to acquire the undeveloped land within Oswegatchie Hills and to add it to the adjoining Nature Preserve for future generations to enjoy.”

Save the River-Save the Hills, Inc., (STR-STH) is dedicated to preserving the health of the Niantic River Estuary, its watershed which includes parts of East Lyme, Salem, Montville and Waterford, and the natural beauty of the Oswegatchie Hills. STR-STH protects the river through protecting the Hills.

Preserving the health of the Niantic River is crucial not only to locals who boat, swim, fish and live along the River, but also to the well-being of the entire Long Island Sound. The Niantic River, an approximately 790 acre tidal estuary, flows directly into the Long Island Sound carrying with it all runoff from the watershed.

While FOHNP are the ‘boots on the ground’, STR-STH focuses on keeping the river clean and safe. It runs the pumpout boat program and advocates to protect the entire watershed.

STR-STH works tirelessly to keep the Niantic River clean and to help ensure that the Oswegatchie Hills remain unspoiled forever.

Save the Sound (formerly CT Fund for the Environment) provides legal support as well as community and regional education and outreach. Since 2015 its team of environmental lawyers and advocates has provided critical legal assistance to FOHNP and STR-STH. Save the Sound supports important environmental action throughout Connecticut and eastern New York. It helped acquire “The Preserve” in Old Saybrook and is a founding member of Preserve Plum Island coalition.

In 2016, Save the Sound, FOHNP and STR-STH formed the “Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition”. This brings increased regional visibility and provides an opportunity for organizations and citizens across the state to join the fight to protect the Hills. Over 20 local, regional, and state-wide organizations have already joined the effort, along with nearly one thousand concerned citizens. If you haven't already, please join our efforts and sign the online petition.

Details below:

You can show your support by signing our on-line petition at SaveTheSound.org



Jim Paganetti

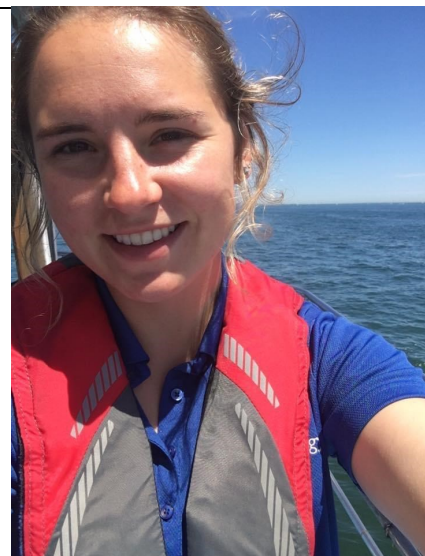
STR-STH's New Pumpout Boat Administrator, Jim Paganetti, is excited to work with the STR-STH team to continue the great work being done on the Niantic River. Since moving to the area as a young lad in 1972, Jim immediately recognized the Niantic River Estuary, with its surrounding Oswegatchie Hills, as an incredibly special place. Beginning as a volunteer in the water quality testing program, Jim is happy to continue helping the many programs preserving the Niantic River estuary.

Taking over the responsibilities from Fred Grimsey is a tall task, but Jim is passionate about the need to keep the River safe and clean for recreational boating, kayaking, fishing and swimming for years to come! It's a very important job, last year alone, nearly 15,000 gallons of waste was collected, and with more boaters on the water each year, the Pumpout Program is a critical service to keep the river clean. Jim's 40-year professional career in the energy sector included working new project developments that involved many levels of environmental compliance. Now semi-retired, Jim still operates in a consulting capacity and wishes to continue with helping the environment.

Meet our New Board Members!

"I became a board member for STR-STH and Waterford Land Trust because I want to be an active part of the growing community that helps to protect our beautiful land and natural resources." – Lillian Glynos

Jim is a former Rotarian and strives to follow the motto 'Service Above Self'.



Lillian Glynos

Lillian grew up in Waterford, fishing the Niantic River for snapper blues, looking for bald eagles at Point Comfort, and hiking Oswegatchie Hills to all of the "secret" little beaches along the River. She graduated from Waterford High School in 2011, with focuses on Marine Science, Automotive and Art and graduated from Unity College in Maine with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology and a minor in Outdoor Adventure Education.

Lillian has been active in the area including being a seasonal for DEEP's Atlantic Sturgeon and American Shad project, Marine Science Educator at Project Oceanology, Educator at New England Science and Sailing, Hatchery Maintainer at Mystic Oysters, Contracted Biologist at Millstone's Environmental Lab, and Field Technician at Ocean Surveys in Old Saybrook, as well as being a Vessel Operator for the STR-STH pump out boat! She is currently working for CT DEEP Inland Fisheries as a Full-Time Resources Technician, where she gets to survey all different bodies of freshwater in CT for specific fish populations and stock fish such as trout, walleye, channel catfish and Kokanee for many different communities to enjoy.



STR-STH Pumpout workers on the skiff on the Niantic River

Pumpout Program—Our New Boat Flooded!

We will start our 21th season of our **FREE** Pumpout Service on the Friday of Memorial Day Weekend with our old pumpout skiff. Our new boat took on water at the dock (space donated by the Town of Waterford—thank you!) and now is out of commission. The Pumpout Skiff will be available Friday through Monday on Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, Friday through Sunday during summer months, then Saturdays & Sundays September 11 until Nov 1st, all weather permitting. Spread the word—the Niantic River and the entire Long Island Sound is a No-Discharge Zone by order of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Our Pumpout Boat Captain can be contacted by calling the cell number for the boat: **860-287-2774 (text or call)**. We are glad to report that the State of CT DEEP, the towns of East Lyme and Waterford and the Waterford-East Lyme Shellfish Commission (WELSCO) are funding the pumpout program. We are able to pay our deck hands through the grant, but tips are always appreciated for their hard work. **CHECK THE STR-STH WEBSITE FOR LATEST UPDATES.**



Find us on
Facebook

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 for the preservation of the Oswegatchie Hills.

To donate or become a member, clip and mail the form below, or go to our website and press the PayPal DONATE button!

Springtime Reminder:

YOU can make a difference by applying lawn fertilizer ONLY if needed and only WHAT'S NEEDED, WHERE IT'S NEEDED—never on hard surfaces or before a forecasted big rain event. The runoff from your lawn goes directly to a waterbody or to a storm drain which will find its way to a waterbody where it can cause algae blooms and result in fish kills and shellfishing being shut down for days.

Membership News

Dear members this has been a challenging year for all of us. I hope at this time you are all well and smiling. Our inability to have our Kayak Regatta and Winter Fundraiser this past year has been a strain on our finances which support our Programs. Once again we are asking you to help us by sending your Membership dues and adding STR-STH to your Amazon Smile purchases. We want to thank all our wonderful members who supported us with our Food Drive, The Dine Out at Flanders, and to the winners of the Membership “Thank You”---- Congratulations!!

Always remember, **Our Members are the Backbone and Heart of Save the River-Save the Hills!**

(For Amazon-Smile instructions please go to the Save the River-Save the Hills website. We thank you for your support!!!)

Sincerely, *Eileen O'Pasek*, Membership and Fundraising Chair

Membership & Other Contributions:

☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ Basic Family \$25

☐ River Keeper \$50

☐ River Saver \$100

☐ River Protector \$250

☐ River Neptune \$500

☐ River Champion \$1000+

Matching Member _____ Company _____

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 program)

☐ Legal Defense Fund

**Please make checks payable to:
Save the River-Save the Hills, Inc.
P.O. Box 505
Waterford, CT 06385**

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

(email will be used for Action Alerts for STR-STH issues)

Referred by: