



# Summer 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)

## Summer Time is Kayak Regatta Time!!

**Our 15th Niantic River Appreciation Kayak Regatta will be Saturday, August 11 from 10am to 2pm**  
*Come enjoy a day on the Niantic River with friends!*

Short, fun Kayak Races for t-shirts and bragging' rights!

Floating Dock with Demo peddle kayaks & SUPs by **Three Belles Marina!**

Kayak Parade Behind the Goshen Fire Boat! (meet at Sandy Point at 10am)

Free Hot Dogs from **The Dock!**



Free Clam Chowder from **Flanders Fish!**

### This year a special Native American Blessing of the Niantic River and the Oswegatchie Hills by Jay Levy at 11:30am

Jay works for The Mohegan Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Archaeology Department. He also sits on many Native American advisory boards as a Cultural Advisor, integrating Indigenous ideology, tribal tradition, and cultural protocol into land preservation. In 2012, he helped coordinate an intertribal Mishoon (Canoe) journey from the Shinnecock reservation in New York to the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan Indian territories along the Thames River in Connecticut. In 2015, his family assisted in the project "Reclaiming the Waterways: Mission Mishoon—The Dugout Canoe of the Pequots". They used a traditional method of burning and hand scraping to construct the largest dugout canoe made in over 200 years and paddled it in the Mystic River. Jay also works for the Appalachian Mountain Club Southern New England Trails Office monitoring water sources at campsites.



### Inside this issue:

Kayak Regatta & Save the Date!	1
Note from President Fred Grimsey	2
Legal Update/ Pumpout Program	2
Grants Info—We Landed TWO!!	3
Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition Update	3
Membership Update/ Volunteer Opportunities	4
Membership/Donation Form	4



Members can win this "sit on top" kayak at the Kayak Regatta—make sure to stop at the membership table on land for free drawing tickets!



Looking forward to the Clam Chowder and Hot Dogs at 47 Oswegatchie Road!!

## Save the Date!!



🕒 **Annual Fundraiser at Flanders Fish—December 7 or 8 TBD**

"LIKE" our Facebook page or go out to our website at [SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org](http://SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org) to stay up-to-date

## President's Message:

STR-STH is pleased to announce that we have been awarded two grants written by our board member Suzanne Thompson (see page 3). Suzanne will be working with the high school teachers, students and others to complete the grants and will handle grant administration.

The DEEP has replaced our thirteen year old Pumpout boat with a 2 year old modern craft. The original Pumpout boat will be turned over to STR-STH to use as the water quality monitoring skiff. This is a DEEP vote of appreciation for our Pumpout Program.

We have also started the second year of the Unified Water Study with Save the Sound and Dr. Jamie Vaudrey of UConn will continue on as the lead for the program. We are very excited to be part of this bigger look at the quality of water in the LI Sound! Our information will be gathered and added to the other areas being monitored to help governments and organizations make informed decisions about things that impact the LI Sound.

Come to the STR-STH Kayak Regatta to hear our lawyer Roger Reynold of CFE as he gives his legal update live at 47 Oswegatchie Road at around noon.

Our organization has come a long way and with your continued support we will be able to work even harder to Save the River and the Hills.

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

## We've had a Visitor to the Niantic River this month!



A **Harbor Seal Pup** has found his or her way up to the North section of the Niantic River! These pics were taken by Jessica Gale across the river from Stanton Street in Waterford. If you see the seal please take pics **from a distance** and post them on our Facebook page! And yes, the Mystic Aquarium knows about our visitor. They said from the pic s/he looks healthy. We are Saving the River for others to enjoy too!!



## Legal Defense Fund – Help Us Save Oswegatchie Hills!

We continue our legal battles with the developer. The Judge has called meetings and conference calls with the lawyers for the Town of EL, the developer and our Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition lawyers for multiple discussions about appeals of both Sewer and Zoning decisions. We continue to be hopeful that the Judges will weigh the environmental issues on this case as much as the other considerations. **Please remember we are still engaged in the battle to Save the Hills when you renew your membership!**

## Pumpout Boat Program

We started our 15th season of the Pumpout Program Memorial Day Weekend. Spread the word—the Niantic River and the entire Long Island Sound is a No-Discharge Zone by order of the U.S. EPA. Our Pumpout Boat can be contacted by calling the cell number for the boat: **287-2774 (cell phone)**. Although fully funded by grants, tips for our workers are appreciated!!



*Bird's eye view of our old Pumpout Boat—the container in the middle holds "it all"!*

## STR-STH Lands Two Watershed Outreach Grants!

We have received two grants to engage the energies of high school students in public outreach campaigns to reduce nitrogen and pollution runoff in the Niantic River Watershed and Long Island Sound.

© Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut awarded us \$10,000 to carry out our Behavior Change campaign (see our March-April 2018 newsletter) with students at the 3 public high schools (Montville, East Lyme & Waterford) that serve the 4 towns in the Niantic River Watershed. We are one of 22 organizations that received funding in 2018 from CFECT's Environmental Grants, totaling \$677,500.

We launched the program with a June 2 cruise on Project Oceanology's "floating classroom". Students from all 3 high schools were on board to learn about water quality and its effects on the creatures of the LI Sound during the cruise from Groton to Niantic Bay. Once there, they met our Pumpout Boat crew and conducted water quality tests of Niantic River and Bay waters.

In September, Waterford High School will host a workshop on Niantic River Watershed pollution and prevention efforts. Students will prepare and conduct public education and outreach campaigns in their respective communities, encouraging residents to reduce their pollution runoff into the region's tributaries.

© Rivers Alliance of Connecticut selected our "Get Pumped" Campaign proposal to receive \$2195 from its Watershed Assistance Small Grants Program. In this campaign, East Lyme High School students will encourage East Lyme residents on septic systems to keep their systems maintained, inspected and pumped out on a regular basis. They'll also help promote STR-STH's Pumpout Boat and encourage anyone with pets to keep the poo out of our waters.

The Niantic River Watershed Committee is a partner with us on both of these public outreach programs. The next time you run into Suzanne Thompson, congratulate her for creating these Watershed Education opportunities and for landing the grants to fund the work!!



*Waterford teacher Mike O'Connor showing students creatures that live in the LI Sound*



*"Permission to come alongside, Sir!" Our Pumpout Crew rafts the pumpout boat with Project O's floating classroom.*



*Students testing Niantic Bay water while on Project Oceanology's floating classroom.*

## Save Oswegatchie Hills Update

Come visit our tent at **East Lyme Day on July 21st!** Representatives from STR-STH, The Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve and CT Fund for the Environment will be on hand to update you on the latest in our court cases and efforts to Save the Hills. See the growing list of organizations who have joined the Coalition at [www.ctenvironment.org/oswegatchie](http://www.ctenvironment.org/oswegatchie), and encourage your friends and neighbors to go out to the webpage and sign-up! Help us show the united front of citizens who seek to preserve and protect the Oswegatchie Hills and Niantic River. Or contact Suzanne Thompson, Save Oswegatchie Hills Outreach Coordinator, at [sthompson@ctenvironment.org](mailto:sthompson@ctenvironment.org), or at 860-434-5754.

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 and mail the form below, or call Eileen O’Pasek @ 860-439-1687

**Volunteer Opportunities:**

- ☺ Coalition Booth at East Lyme Day, July 21
- ☺ Help with our 15th Annual Kayak Regatta
- ☺ Volunteer for our Water Quality Study
- ☺ Help with the Education Program
- ☺ Administration - helping with mailings, etc.

Join us in anyway you feel comfortable and take action

**Membership News**

After 15 years we find it necessary to increase our basic membership donation to \$25 due to the rising cost of postage and other related mailing items. We thank you for your understanding, continued cooperation and support! We couldn’t be doing all the things STR-STH does without YOU!

Our 15th Kayak Regatta, a special Save the River-Save the Hills tradition, is coming up on **August 11th!** The Kayak Parade is a wonderful opportunity to experience the Oswegatchie Hills and Niantic River in all their beauty. It's a day to **renew membership and bring new members** into our dedicated grassroots organization. The day is filled with fun, free food and camaraderie on the Niantic River and at the beach at 47 Oswegatchie Road. Please invite a friend to kayak, enjoy the food, prizes and to stop by the membership table to learn about the Save the River-Save the Hills mission, fill out a free drawing ticket and buy a t-shirt. Let’s make this our **best year** for new members and renewals!

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+

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

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

**Name:**  
  
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**Corporate Match By:**  
  
**(please let us know if your employer will match!)**