



www.SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org

July 2021

Volume 15, Issue 3

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.

Our Kayak Regatta is ON!!

The 17th Niantic River Appreciation Kayak Regatta will be Saturday, August 14 from 10am to 2pm! (raindate Sunday Aug 15)

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)

Music by Bill Youell and Matt Wimberger—**"The LowTiders!"**

Free Clam Chowder from **Flanders Fish!**



Launch and meet us at Sandy Point to get behind the Goshen Fire Boat for a kayak parade up the Niantic River. The Fire Boat will lead us up to Grimsey Beach where we will hear music from "The LowTiders" under the tent at 47 Oswegatchie Road while eating our free Clam Chowder. Around noon, we'll hear an update on STR-STH's programs and a legal update on the ongoing battle to save the Hills. And we will hear from our local representatives—possibly a Senator or Congressman. 1:00pm Short Kayak Races and 1:45pm our drawing for a Kayak—free for a member, make sure your membership is up to date!

JOIN US FOR A FUN DAY ON THE WATER !

Upcoming Events:

☺ **Our 17th Annual Kayak Regatta - August 14, 10am-2pm**

☺ **Earthfest CT 2021! September 25, 10:30am-3:30pm McCook Park (Stop by our table!)**

☺ **STR-STH Annual Meeting—TBD**

☺ **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



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Kayak Regatta!

Saturday, August 14
(raindate: Sunday Aug 15)
(Pics by Debbie Beckwith)



Kayak Regatta 2019

The year a chicken showed up!
What will be there this year?!

Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition Legal Update



East Lyme Zoning Application Appeal Court Case

Our 2015 case against Landmark Development, LLC, was heard by Judge Marshall Berger, Connecticut Superior Court/Land Court in a virtual hearing on Wednesday, June 30.

In 2015, the East Lyme Zoning Commission gave conditional approval to the developer's proposed high density development. Friends of OHNP and Save the River - Save the Hills have been intervenors on environmental grounds throughout the ongoing legal disputes; Save the Sound became our legal counsel in 2015 and became an intervenor in its own rights.

In the June 30th hearing, Save the Sound attorney Chris Kelly presented our arguments that the zone change should be limited to 36 acres and should not be expanded to 123 acres. The additional land is environmentally sensitive land that should be conserved and the developer failed to submit required adequate information on coastal resources, wetlands and stormwater.

"Eight hundred and forty units, 1760 parking spaces, 36 acres of impervious surfaces are the absolutely wrong use for this high priority conservation land on the Niantic River," says Save the Sound Senior Legal Counsel Roger Reynolds. "The applicant will ultimately have to provide actual environmental information, and when they do we are confident the courts will agree with us."

We will keep you updated on the outcome of the hearing and any new developments in the case as soon as they are available.

#SmartSolar Update

The solar company has cleared the approximately 90 acres for the 45,000 panels they will be installing between Stony Brook and Oil Mill Brook. The pictures taken at the right are of the site. The bottom one was taken after the "tree harvest" in 2018, looks more like a clear cut and was done before the project was approved by the CT Siting Council. The pic above it was taken June 6th. We are still very worried about a large rain event, because as you can see in the picture, the basins are already holding water. In the event of a heavy, prolonged rain event, that warmed and algae-filled water will overflow into Stony Brook.

Our efforts are making a difference throughout the state. STR-STH VP Deb Moshier-Dunn has been asked by CT DEEP to participate in their "Sustainable, Transparent & Efficient Practices" (STEPS) for Solar Development. She spoke at the June 16 Zoom meeting held by DEEP, raising issues with the process of siting large, ground-mounted solar installations. See our #SmartSolar webpage on SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org for the written comments we submitted outlining some of the issues STR-STH has discovered during the CT Siting Council Petition for the Oil Mill Road site. In summary, we asked: 1) for town involvement in the CSC process (they currently have very little say), 2) that any "environmental project" created by the state to not cause other environmental issues (e.g., solar installations causing stormwater runoff issues), 3) that these solar projects to be monitored post-construction for issues, 4) that the surrounding area be considered for adverse impacts, not just the site the project is on. We will keep you posted as we go through the process!



Pictures taken by Joel Stocker



Pumpout Program—On the Niantic River & Bay keeping them clean!



The Crew: Nick Caruso and Aiden Grimsey onboard the Pumpout skiff.

Our pumpout began this year's operations in May. We are currently operating with a backup pumpout boat, due to a partial submersion of our primary boat last October. That boat was rendered an "at risk at port" boat and we had to "retire" it from the program.

The back-up boat, originally designed and built by Fred Grimsey, is a 20-year-old boat that needs multiple upgrades to comply with today's safety and operating standards. We have just submitted a grant application under the Clean Vessel Act for a new boat. If approved, the grant will cover 75% of the costs. Save the River-Save the Hills will be asking our supporters to assist with the additional 25%. It is very important to keep this program up and running. We need to keep the river and bay safe, clean and sustainable.

Our pumpout crew of Nick Caruso, Aiden Grimsey and Mike Marelli have done a stellar job of operating the boat. We would also like to thank the towns of East Lyme and Waterford for their continual support, along with the Niantic Bay Boathouse for storing and maintaining our boats. Thank them next time you see them!
(Submitted by Pumpout Program Administrator Jim Paganetti)

Watershed Education—Working with Niantic River Watershed Committee (NRWC) on their "Healthy Lawns-Healthy River" Campaign

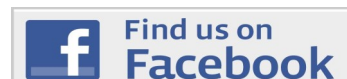
Judy Rondeau, the Niantic River Watershed Coordinator for NRWC was awarded a grant to educate homeowners in the Niantic River watershed that what they do for their lawns affects the river. STR-STH is supporting this project. The work was put on hold during Covid shutdown but volunteers have now canvassed neighborhoods close to the river and handed out yard signs and/or garbage can stickers as seen in the picture to the right. The hope is to change just one or two homeowner behaviors while maintaining their lawns. As everyone lives in a watershed, all of us would be helping the water quality of our rivers and streams if we all do the following:

- 1) Leave the grass clippings as a natural fertilizer on your lawn. Many lawnmowers have the ability to mulch the clippings as they mow, leaving a natural, easy fertilizer!
- 2) Apply no fertilizer or, if you choose to, apply less and only at the right time of year. Twice a year, around Memorial Day and Labor Day, is recommended. More than that is likely unnecessary. If you are not sure what you need, have your soil tested to see what it needs before you apply anything.

Finally, never apply fertilizer before a rainstorm or a large amount of it will likely run off into storm drains and directly into a stream or river causing algae blooms and other harmful impacts.



If you would like one of these stickers for your garbage bin, please contact Deb Moshier-Dunn at 860-444-9247.



Membership News

Dear Save the River-Save the Hills Members,

We would like to Thank You for your membership and donations through this past year. Fundraising was all but impossible and it was very upsetting not being together at our Events. We missed seeing your smiling faces! Today we are very excited about our upcoming Kayak Regatta and hope to see you there. Please continue your amazing support as it is the fuel that keeps us moving forward. If you haven't sent your 2021 Membership dues, please do so. Our members *truly* are the **Heart and Backbone** of Save the River-Save the Hills!

A very special Thank You to our Local Business Community for their continued support of Save the River-Save the Hills. Your generous donations are welcomed and appreciated. You help us continue our important work. We appreciate You!

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

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.

For more information visit our Facebook page or our website at:

www.SaveTheRiverSaveTheHills.org

Cut along here to send in with your check OR visit our website to donate through PayPal. Monthly donations are very welcome!

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 programs)

☐ 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:

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