



# 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—an Appeal

In these challenging times, STR-STH has been unable to distribute our Newsletters, host our Kayak Regatta or have our Annual Meeting—all of which traditionally have been our avenues to provide you information about the River and the Hills and our ongoing programs, as well as to procure your participation in the form of donations and membership dues. Our fundraising efforts have been severely hampered, as you may realize. With the mailing of this newsletter, we are initiating a Membership Drive to help us maintain and continue our important STR-STH Programs. Membership funds sustain and make those programs possible.

We have two new challenges to cover in our fundraising at this point. One is the #Smart Solar initiative and the other is our Pumpout Program. The #SmartSolar initiative was supposed to be over in March 2020. With all the changes to the CT Siting Council procedures due to the pandemic and then the hurricane, the Evidentiary Public Hearing lasted until August 25, increasing our attorney and engineering fees. (See page 3 for more on #SmartSolar.) Also, the Pumpout Program is currently short on funding because the usual commitment for 25% of the funding from the towns of Waterford and East Lyme to match the DEEP grant are in jeopardy. Our Pumpout Boat collects a great amount of sewage—up to 5,000 gallons of highly concentrated human waste a year—and ensures it will be treated. The health of the Niantic River depends on the Pumpout Program continuing this important work.

Please be as generous as you can be during this trying time and return the enclosed envelope with your check to support STR-STH programs or use the Paypal button on our Join/Donate page on the STR-STH website. Our members have always been the life blood of our organization. Help us keep the River clean and the Hills beautiful by helping to fund our Programs!

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



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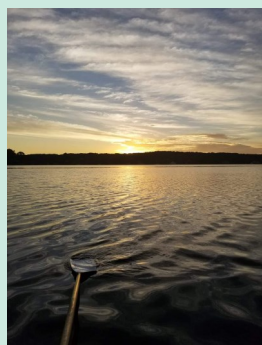


Our beautiful Pumpout Boat was donated to STR-STH by CT DEEP; we provide this service on the Niantic River and Bay as part of CT's No Discharge Area Program, pursuant to the Federal Clean Water Act.



Left: The Niantic River is saving David Robinson in 2020 with these seven Great Egrets showing how bountiful the river is! (He saw eleven that week!)

## Niantic River Appreciation Month 2020— “The River is Saving Us!”



This pandemic year we took a different approach to Niantic River Appreciation with our “2020—The River is Saving Us!” photo/video contest. Here are some of the beautiful shots posted to our Facebook page.

First Place Amy!



*“The river is saving us in 2020 by keeping family and friends at oar length. Rowing has helped us navigate rough waters with two oars of mindfulness and compassion—with Mindy Welch” - by Amy Joseph Sullivan*

Second Place Denise!



*“Wile E Coyote is helping the Niantic River Save Me by wishing me a “Good Morning” from Banning Cove in the Niantic River Watershed!” - by STR-STH Board Member David Robinson*



Denise Walstra's view of the Oswegatchie Hills as she paddled on the Niantic River.

**FEEL FREE TO  
CONTINUE SHARING  
YOUR PICS & VIDEOS  
on our Save the River-  
Save the Hills  
Facebook Page!**

## Thank You to Dec '19 Fundraiser Donors, Sponsors & Attendees!

*Please support the businesses who support us during this trying time...*

Dominion Foundation   Flanders Fish Market & Restaurant   Three Belles Outfitters   Niantic Bay Boathouse

Illiano's Restaurant East Lyme  
Niantic Acupuncture & Family Wellness  
GoFish Restaurant - Mystic  
The Shack Restaurant – East Lyme  
That Look Salon  
When Pigs Fly Restaurant  
Wild Birds Unlimited – East Lyme  
Steak Loft Restaurant - Mystic  
Past to Present Antiques  
Heidi'S VT Christmas Trees  
Sneekers Café  
Smith Acres - Niantic  
Jaxon Vibber-Fisher Island Sound Marine  
Pequot Golf Course  
Hammond Iles Wealth Advisors  
Artisan Framing and Gallery  
Garde Arts Center  
Eagle's Quest Tai Chi  
Dan Steward  
Brian Flaherty  
Mark Nickerson  
Marilyn Schutt  
Beautycounter

Otter Cove Restaurant  
Natural Food Store - Niantic  
Advanced Back and Neck Care Center  
Eastern CT Symphony Orchestra  
River Quest  
Children's Museum of SECT  
Margo's Beauty Center  
Grace - Niantic  
Niantic Cinema  
Arthur Murray Dance Studio  
Chef Olivia Formica  
Paul Formica  
Kelly Radding  
String Theory School of Music  
Anytime Fitness – EL & Salem  
Black Hawk Fishing  
Alcamo Family  
APC Driving School  
Boats Inc. – Niantic CT  
Cordette Grimsey  
Lynnea & Alex Mahlke  
Lisa and Rick Mooers  
Teri Smith

Dave Robinson  
Durien & Nancy Way  
Eileen & Ken O'Pasek  
Three Belles Marina  
Fred Grimsey  
Good Shop  
Kathryn & Ted Jablowski  
Denise Thompson  
Liz Caruso  
Nick Caruso  
Lynn Schlachter  
Mark Sperry  
Mike Dunn & Deb Moshier-Dunn  
Michaela Dunn  
Niantic Plumbing & Appl. Co.  
Pat Sea  
Patti Clancy Art  
Perennial Harmony  
Petie Reed & Rich Oliver  
RiverQuest  
Robert & PJ Brewer  
Suzanne Thompson  
Marilyn M. Lohrs  
Beth & Kenneth Shluger

Book Barn  
Café Sole  
Filomena's Restaurant  
Holly Cheeseman  
Kathleen McCarty  
Boathouse Blues Band  
WaterColor Salon  
Leyla Langlois  
Scott Leahy  
NV Bakery and Market  
Azalea Home & Gift  
Divine Wine Emporium  
KenTurcotte  
Jeanne & Steve Sigel  
Florence Griswold Museum  
Connecticut River Museum  
Yoga Sanctuary  
Beauty Counter  
Kathleen and Dennis Gilbride  
Andrea and Sam Kotsch  
Angela and John McLean  
Barbara, Paul, Nicole & Megan Daversa  
Dolores & Mark Fitzpatrick



## #SmartSolar Initiative Update

Many thanks to the #SmartSolar team of Don Danila - fisheries biologist and all-around Niantic River expert, Steve Trinkaus – Professional Engineer and Low Impact Development Expert, as well as attorney Emily Gianquinto and Deb Moshier-Dunn, VP of STR-STH, for working tirelessly (ok, we did get tired at some points!) on the long Evidentiary Public Hearing (March-August 2020). After we hand in our Final Brief, the decision for the solar project on Oil Mill Road in Waterford will be in the hands of the CT Siting Council (CSC). STR-STH thanks our team for educating the CSC on the environmental sensitivity of the proposed parcel and the potential effects of the project on the two trout-supporting streams on each side of the Site (Oil Mill Brook & Stony Brook). Hopefully, if this project is approved, it will have much stronger stormwater protections than what was proposed by the solar company. **It would be even better if the CSC decides to send the solar company back to the drawing board to create a project that will provide solar power while also protecting the tributaries to the river.** These projects should be held to the same standards as any other development in the town of Waterford would be, but they are not. WE SHOULD NOT BE TRADING ONE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE FOR ANOTHER! Stay tuned for word about the CSC's decision, and thank you for your continued membership and support which make it possible for us to weigh in with solid environmental information and legal expertise!

## Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition Update

The Town of East Lyme was recently notified that the developer who owns the remaining 236 acres of undeveloped Oswegatchie Hills has submitted proposed changes to the town's Affordable Housing regulations. This appears to be a blatant move to avoid providing detailed environmental information and development plans to the town's regulatory agencies for their review and final decisions. Obviously, STR-STH is against these proposed changes to the town's regulations. We are supportive of affordable housing in East Lyme. We have always been against ANY development in the Oswegatchie Hills. The best use of this fragile coastal forest is open space to protect the Niantic River Estuary, an impaired embayment. These are natural treasures, to be protected now and for future generations.

The East Lyme Zoning Commission has scheduled a public hearing for October 1; the hearing notice has not been posted as we go to print. Please make sure we have your email address for updates. Watch our Facebook page and our website ([www.savetheriversavethehills.org](http://www.savetheriversavethehills.org)) to learn more and hear how you can voice your opinion about these proposed changes.

STR-STH will submit a letter voicing our opinion to the hearing record. The other EL based members of the Coalition are looking at this as well. We will stand, once again, to Protect the River by Protecting the Hills!

## Pumpout Program

The Pumpout Program is in its 18th season!! Service is currently available on Saturdays and Sundays through Nov 1st. The PPE to keep boats, operators and boaters safe from CV-19 is a new program cost. PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY to our membership appeal so we can keep the programs like the Pumpout Program up and running!

Our Pumpout Boat can be contacted by calling the cell number for the boat: **860-287-2774 (text or call)**. Tips for the hard work the guys put in are always welcome!



*Above pic by David Robinson—Deer in Banning Cove with Great Blue Heron*



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

### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

- ☺ **Donate for our Programs**
- ☺ **Become a Committee Member**
- ☺ **Admin - help with mailings**

**Like Fred says, “Please Join Us!”**

***www.SaveTheRiverSaveTheHills.org***

**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 Oswegatchie Hills.**

**To donate or become a member clip and mail the form below, or call Eileen O’Pasek @ 860-439-1687.**

### **Membership Chair Update**

Dear Members and Friends,

Hello! I hope this newsletter finds you and yours all well. This has truly been a very trying time! Thank you to the members who have found our Donation Button on our website “Join/Donate” page. We are trying our best to give you the options you need to stay connected and updated on STR-STH and the issues we are working on. **Please add your email address below to start receiving our short news emails to stay up-to-date!**

I want to remind our members of Matching Programs like the one at Charter Oak Credit Union which is open now. If you are a member of Charter Oak, your donation can be matched up to \$500! (<https://charteroak.org/community-giving/matching-gifts-program/>). These Matching programs are a boost for Save the River-Save the Hills, as they can double the impact of your donation! If your Credit Union or Workplace has a matching program we would so appreciate having you enroll Save the River-Save the Hills. Thank you!

And remember: STR-STH cherishes our members—Stay safe out there!

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 (The Hills & #SmartSolar)

☐ 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:**

**Email:**

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

**Referred by:**

Save the River-Save the Hills, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax-deductible.

*This Newsletter is printed on Recycled Paper*