



[www.SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org](http://www.SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org)

# Spring—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.



Fred, center, accepting the Aquarion Environmental Champion Award from Senator Richard Blumenthal with his son, Sean, at his side.

## Fred Wins Aquarion “Environmental Champion” Award!!!

“In 2003, Fred Grimsey’s concern for the health of the beautiful Niantic River in southeastern Connecticut and its surrounding communities hit the tipping point. More people than ever were enjoying swimming, fishing, clamming and all manner of water sports in the river and tidal estuary. But with all the boat traffic, the river was becoming a growing repository for raw sewage pumped overboard.

So Fred took it upon himself to do something about it. With his own money, he bought a boat and equipped it to pump out the waste tanks of pleasure craft using the river. Then he took what we politely call “pumpage” to an environmentally safe treatment plant on shore. And all at no cost to the boat owners.

Fred ran that pump-out service for two years out of his own pocket. It soon caught the eye of the state and now it’s fully funded by the Connecticut Department of

Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

Last year, Fred’s program alone kept 16,000 gallons of sewage out of the Niantic River and Long Island Sound. Even more important, his efforts inspired similar pump-out programs up and down the coastline.

When he wasn’t out on the river, Fred was busy founding and nurturing a new non-profit called Save the River – Save the Hills. And its successes have only grown – and grown and grown. He’s worked tirelessly to defend the remaining natural areas of the Niantic River watershed and preserve them in their unpolluting, scenic state – including 236 acres that are now unprotected along the river itself.

And Fred is still at it. In 2012 he launched an all-volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program... The program revealed bacteria levels in some parts of the river well above levels that would close beaches elsewhere in the state. With boaters no longer contributing to the problem in any major way, Fred is now tackling ways to reduce the amount of runoff that with every serious rainstorm sluices off roads, lawns and parking lots, polluting a waterway treasured by thousands.

Aquarion is proud to honor Fred Grimsey with its 2017 Environmental Champion Award in the Adult Category.”

**Fred was nominated for this award by Corey Geisman of Congressman Courtney’s Office—Congratulations Fred!!!**

[Article and photo borrowed from: [www.aquarion.com/CT/2017-award-winners](http://www.aquarion.com/CT/2017-award-winners)]



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**Congrats to Joan Walworth for winning the trip to Sanary sur Mer!! Thank you all for buying tickets to support STR-STH!**



**Looking forward to the Clam Chowder and Hot Dogs & listening to Geoff Kaufman at 47 Oswegatchie Road!!**



## Save the Dates!!

☺ **14th Annual Kayak Regatta—August 19th 10am-2pm**

☺ **Annual Fundraiser at Flanders Fish—Friday, December 8th**

“LIKE” our Facebook page or go out to our website at [SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org](http://SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org) and click the to stay up-to-date on what’s going on...

## President's Message:

We have started our Water Quality Collaboration with Save the Sound! I am borrowing the description from the Save the Sound blog to explain:

“In the wake of science marches around the country on Earth Day—all celebrating the supreme importance of science to our health, society, and policy-making—it only felt right to recognize an exciting science program right here at Save the Sound! We’re talking, of course, about the Unified Water Study.

As you probably know, there are bays and harbors in your cities, towns and villages that struggle with high nutrient concentrations, excessive algal blooms and low dissolved oxygen. These pollution problems hurt industries like fishing and shellfishing. And they are all preventable.

There is a need to gather uniform water quality data on our bays and harbors to support and stimulate local, state and federal actions to protect and restore them. That’s where the Unified Water Study comes in! In response to this need, the Long Island Sound Funders Collaboration has tasked Save the Sound with facilitating the design and deployment of a uniform water quality monitoring program for Sound embayments.

Save the Sound piloted the study last summer and spent the winter promoting it with the ultimate goal of coordinated monitoring happening in all 116 bays and harbors that circle Long Island Sound. The response has been very enthusiastic with 12 groups signed up to monitor more than 20 bays and harbors in 2017 and more preparing to join the effort in 2018.” Save the River-Save the Hills is among the first groups to participate. Dr. Jamie Vaudrey is managing the effort. Our first sampling trip on the Niantic River was Sunday, June 11th.

“The Unified Water Study measures dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll *a*, temperature, salinity, macrophytes, and water clarity. Monitoring groups must follow all study procedures in their entirety to qualify for participation and to ensure consistent, comparable data. In order to make real change, we need real scientific data. The results will be published in future Long Island Sound report cards” and STR-STH newsletters.

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

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

### Water-Sewer Focus:

Landmark’s Appeal of the Town of East Lyme’s Water-Sewer Commission’s decision to deny 118,000 gallons/day of sewer capacity was sent by the Judge to mediation. The result was very little movement from the developer from his original application so the mediation failed. Our attorney wasn’t even asked for input because the Town and the developer were so far apart in the numbers desired.

That means that our attorney, Jason Wescott will once again be working on briefs and attending hearings as he represents STR-STH and the Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve in our intervention in the Appeal on behalf of the Town. We know the Town understands the limited ability of this site to sustain development, much less the intense development proposed by Landmark. **We can’t believe this is still ongoing!! Please give generously to the Legal Defense fund to help us continue this part of the legal battle!!**

## 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 (phone)**. Tips for our workers are appreciated!!



## Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition Update – it's all about the water!

Our goal for the summer of 2017 is for more people to get wet as we seek to build awareness of the need to preserve the Oswegatchie Hills and to protect the Niantic River estuary. The past winter and spring outreach activities have been largely land-based, with library talks in colder weather, indoor displays and hikes of Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve.

This summer, we're launching a series of Water Wednesdays for kids and families, partnering with Children's Museum of Southeastern Connecticut, a Coalition member organization, and Niantic River Watershed Committee and Eastern Connecticut Conservation District to demonstrate how what people do with and on land directly affects the water quality in waterways and Long Island Sound.

The children will be hands-on with CMSECT's and STR-STH's Enviroscapes, where they can see how water, and everything in it, runs off of hillsides, roads and lawns into lakes, streams and rivers and into Long Island Sound. We'll also provide adults with handy tips to reduce their residential non-point source pollution runoff and the importance of properly maintained septic systems and transitions to sewer and wastewater treatment systems.

If you have or know young children in the region, encourage them to experience Water Wednesdays from 3-4:30pm at CMSECT. Save these dates and watch for more information at [www.childrensmuseumsect.org](http://www.childrensmuseumsect.org):

- ☺ July 12, Niantic River Watershed
- ☺ July 26, Oswegatchie Hills Wetlands
- ☺ August 9, Long Island Sound Beaches & Water Quality



*Children playing with EnviroScape. Photo credit to EnviroScape® by JT&A, Inc.*

You'll also see our Coalition Display at Celebrate East Lyme Day on Saturday, July 15 and Old Lyme Midsummer Festival on Saturday, July 29. **I'm looking for STR-STH members to hang out in the booth with me to answer questions and encourage people to sign on to our cause. Please contact me at the below number & join me at either event!**

We continue to encourage individuals and organizations to sign on to Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition. Here are the newest member organizations:

- ☺ Middlesex Land Trust (offices in deKoven House in Middletown)
- ☺ Groton Open Space Association
- ☺ Friends of Smith-Harris House in East Lyme

Plus over 300 individuals from across the state have signed on. See the growing list of organizations at [www.ctenvironment.org/oswegatchie](http://www.ctenvironment.org/oswegatchie), and encourage your friends and neighbors to help us show the united front of citizens who seek to preserve and protect the Oswegatchie Hills and Niantic River.

Please contact Suzanne Thompson, Save Oswegatchie Hills Outreach Coordinator, for more information, including displays and fact sheets. Contact her 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 Oswegatchie Hills.

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

## Volunteer Opportunities:

- ☺ Help with our 14th Annual Kayak Regatta!
- ☺ Volunteer for our Water Quality Study!
- ☺ Help with the Education Program — call Deb 444-9247 to borrow the Enviroscape
- ☺ Administration - helping with mailings, etc.

Join us in anyway you feel comfortable and take action to Save the River and the Hills!

## Membership News

We were very saddened to hear that our member and friend Elizabeth (Betty) Murphy passed away. Betty was a wonderful person who helped everyone she knew. Thank you to Regina and Joseph Hichery, Sandra and William Neff, Sonia Monteith/Gary Speanburg, and Ellen Tytla for donating to STR-STH in her memory.

On another note, the Kayak Regatta, a special Save the River-Save the Hills tradition, is coming up on **August 19th!** 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, games and camaraderie on the Niantic River and at the beach at 47 Oswegatchie Road where we have our free clam chowder, hot dogs, and membership table while we listen to Geoff Kaufman!! Please invite a friend to kayak, enjoy the music, food, prizes and to learn about the Save the River-Save the Hills mission. 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 \$20

\_\_\_ River Keeper \$50

\_\_\_ River Saver \$100

\_\_\_ River Protector \$250

\_\_\_ River Neptune \$500

\_\_\_ River Champion \$1000+

All members receive our quarterly newsletters.

Note: first \$20.00 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

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

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

Referred by: