



www.SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org

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:

Work continues on the Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition. See page 3 for details.

We are exploring a new project with Ledge Light Health District. It is in formative stages and must be reviewed by both the STR-STH and Ledge Light Boards and a formal budget and scope of work approved.

The project's goal is to estimate the incidence of waterborne illnesses contracted by folks engaged in water contact sports such as swimming, water skiing, tubing, etc., on the Niantic River. Data will be gathered from a series of questionnaires designed by Ledge Light Sanitarians and the collection and collation of the data will be done by STR-STH volunteers.

The results of this study is meant to inform disease prevention measures for river users. Anecdotal reports of illnesses contracted from river water contact will hopefully be sorted out and health decisions made on a more rational basis.

The success of this operation will obviously be dependent on the volunteers that we get to work on the program. If you wish to participate, please contact me at the following address: Fred Grimsey 35 Oswegatchie Road, Waterford, CT 06385, email me at cfgrimsey@scbglobal.net or call me at 860-442-8349. It will be imperative to get a number of individuals to help in this project. I hope you will join us!

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



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DEEP Notice—new Water Skiing Requirements:

There is a new law—Connecticut Public Act No.15-25, effective Oct 1, 2015—with new requirements for “towing any person by vessel”. One requirement is that the person driving the boat be at least 16 years old and other requirements include holding a “**Safe Water Skiing Endorsement**”. Please go out to the website www.ct.gov/deep/waterskiingendorsement to make sure you are safely towing and aware of the new requirements for water skiing!

Save the Dates!!

☺ **Kayak Regatta 2016—Saturday, August 20th 10-2pm**

☺ **New event at Artisan Framing & Gallery in Niantic! Oct 21st & 22nd**

“LIKE” our Facebook page or go out to our website at SavetheRiverSavetheHills.org and click the  to stay “between Newsletters” up-to-date on what’s going on...



We'll soon be out there enjoying the Niantic River and the view of the Oswegatchie Hills!



Fred on our Water Quality skiff—testing the waters for your safety!

STR-STH Program Updates...

Legal Defense Fund – Help Us Save Oswegatchie Hills!

Water-Sewer Focus:

Landmark's appeal of the Town of EL's Water-Sewer Commission's decision to deny 118,000 gallons/day of sewer capacity is still ongoing. The Town decided to allow 14,000 gal/day which is enough for roughly 104 units (vs. the 840 that Landmark proposed). Our attorney, Jason Wescott, has responded side by side with the Town of EL's attorneys, submitting a brief that explains why the Hills should be looked at differently than other parcels because of its environmental significance and why the new evidence should not be given weight in the matter. The developer's attorney has deposed Town of EL staff and Judge Cohn has allowed this additional evidence to be added to the record. He also allowed the town to add additional evidence in reply. We remain vigilant as the Judge reviews the new evidence. We are hopeful that the Judge will side with the Town. That will prevent the developer from inflating the price with an unreasonable amount of units and keep the cost of buying/swapping the parcel to a fair market value. **Please give generously to the Legal Defense fund to help us continue this part of the legal battle!**

Water Quality Testing Program

As Fred mentioned in his President's message, we are creating a project where we will be using our water quality testing with a new project. In previous years, we have found very high bacterial counts in the water after a substantial (1-2 inch) rainfall. We do not recommend water contact sports (swimming, tubing & skiing where you head can go under water or water sprays on your face) on the Niantic River for a few days after a 1-2 inch rainfall. This time will allow the tidal flows to clear the River out. We are still working with the Towns of Waterford and East Lyme on coming up with a notification system for when the bacterial counts in the River are high enough that they would shut down a public lake or beach.

Watershed Education Program

Our Enviroscape will be borrowed again by the Town of East Lyme for their annual 3rd Grade outdoor classroom in May. They think it is a wonderful tool for teaching children about what a Watershed is and how what we do every day affects the quality of the water in our Coastal Watershed. If you would like to be involved in an education project or have an idea of a **Boy or Girl Scout Troop, school or summer camp** that might want to use it, please call Deb at 860-444-9247. The curriculum comes with it and it is so easy, even young children can play with it and get an understanding of how all water on land eventually gets to a River and Ocean.



Children learning by using the Enviroscape

Pumpout Boat Program

We start our 14th season of the Pumpout Program Memorial Day Weekend. Remember—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)**. Spread the word!



Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition—Update

Our efforts to increase awareness and broaden the support for preserving the remaining 236 acres of undeveloped Oswegatchie Hills are moving forward. Three key state conservation organizations have signed onto our coalition, raising the visibility of our efforts with their membership: Connecticut Forest and Park Association, Connecticut Land Conservation Council and Rivers Alliance of Connecticut.

Locally, East Lyme Land Trust, East Lyme Historical Society, East Lyme Garden Club and the East Lyme Harbor Management/Shellfish Commission have joined our cause, and we look forward to adding more civic and community organizations, individuals and businesses in coming weeks and months.

The three founding organizations, Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its bi-state program Save the Sound, the Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve and STR-STH are planning a reception and information meeting for leaders of state and local organizations on Thursday, June 9 at the East Lyme Library. We're also pleased that our posters from this event will be on display through the rest of June at the East Lyme Community Center, in the lobby in front of the library. Plan to stop by anytime from June 10 through June 30 to see maps and photos of the existing Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve, why protection of the adjoining parcel is so crucial, as well as the endangered lands and water quality protection programs of our three founding organizations, including STR-STH's pump-out boat on the Niantic River. Please encourage your friends and neighbors to come see the display and to join the coalition, too!

See the Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition section of CFE's website for the current listing of organizations and businesses that have joined us at www.ctenvironment.org/oswegatchie.

Please contact Suzanne Thompson, Save Oswegatchie Hills Outreach Coordinator, for more information, including displays and fact sheets. Contact her at sthompson@ctenvironment.org, or at 860-434-5754.

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By completing the form below, you express your support for protecting this last parcel of the Oswegatchie Hills from development and will receive critical updates as a member of the Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition.

Name(s) _____

Email _____

Address _____

Town _____ Zip code _____ Phone _____

If joining as an organization:

Organization name: _____ Your title _____

If an elected official, your position: _____

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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 13th Annual Kayak Regatta!!
- ☺ 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

Save the River-Save the Hills and each of its members are considered *Founding Members* of the newly formed **Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition**. The Coalition increases credibility, strength and legal expertise in our mission to save Oswegatchie Hills, The Niantic River Estuary and Long Island Sound. Please **renew your annual membership to Save the River-Save the Hills** as we move forward with our Legal Defense (currently the 2016 Water-Sewer court appeals) and all our important programs.

You can also reaffirm your support of our mission by signing your name to the Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition form on the opposite side of this membership form and send it in.

I want to include a special thank you to all our members who have generously renewed and to the many who also signed the Coalition form. **Please remember, there is strength and power in numbers!**

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: