



May 2010

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# 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.

[www.SavetheRiver-SavetheHills.org](http://www.SavetheRiver-SavetheHills.org)

## **“Past, Present and Future - the Oswegatchie Hills and the Niantic River” A STR-STH sponsored keepsake cookbook**

This year STR-STH is creating a keepsake book—containing pages of YOUR photos and recipes relating to the Niantic River and the Oswegatchie Hills! We would like to include some of your favorite family recipes with your personal notes to make this a treasured keepsake.

***See the enclosed flyer and share it with your family and friends!***

Please use the enclosed Recipe Sheets, follow the Recipe Notes info on the flyer and mail them in the pre-addressed envelope. Adding notes make your recipe UNIQUE! Please call Eileen O'Pasek 860-439-1687 with any questions. Thank you for your participation - we are so excited about this project!

## **Thank You East Lyme HS's Ecology Club for a perfectly timed Spring Clean-up!**

March 27th was a Saturday sandwiched between two incredibly rainy weekends, the latter being the flood of 2010. Many thanks to Laura Rotchford, AP Environmental Teacher at ELHS and the 30 students who took two hours out of their beautiful Saturday to clean-up the headwaters of the Niantic River at Latimer's Brook behind Tri-town. With that many students, we were able to clean-up over 20 bags of trash and various other items in record time! And thanks to the quick pick-up of the bags by the town of EL's Public Works, we saved all that trash from ending up in our Niantic River and, with all that flood water, down to the Long Island Sound!

## **Upcoming Events!**

- ☉ East Lyme Day—visit us at our booth!! July 17th, 3:00pm-9:00pm.
- ☉ “Joe Pye Day” - Native Plant Sale at Perennial Harmony, Rt 1, Waterford - July 25th 10am—4pm. Food, music and more!
- ☉ Our 7th Annual Kayak Regatta - August 21, 2010 !!!

## **We are now on Facebook! Search for Save the River-Save the Hills!**

And Visit our website [www.savetheriver-savethehills.org](http://www.savetheriver-savethehills.org) to stay “between Newsletter” up-to-date on our events...



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### **2010 Clean-up Day...**

ELHS Ecology Club Students spend their Saturday cleaning up Latimer's Brook behind Tri-town.



Behind Tri-town during the flood... the water is 1/2 way up the fence you see to the right in the top picture!

## A Note from the President and Founder of STR-STH:

Hello all,

I've been busy. The IRS has new requirements for income and disbursement reporting. I worked with a CPA in New London and we filed returns for years 2006 thru 2009. We got them in under the wire in order to avoid losing our nonprofit status. We are starting an Excel Spreadsheet system for our books to simplify future filings and make timely Treasurer's Reports easier.

The Niantic River Watershed Advisory Committee is a stepping stone to a legally established commission in the four towns as outlined in The Niantic River Watershed Plan. This month, I submitted a proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to fund the legal and consulting costs to do this in the four watershed towns. I also asked for funding for a long desired outreach and education program for the Pumpout program that we run in support of the Federal No Discharge Zone regulations in the River and on Long Island Sound. (Keep your fingers crossed that we get the funding!) Thanks are due to Judy Rondeau, the new Niantic River Watershed Coordinator, for her help with the Proposal.

Elsewhere in this letter is info on Eileen O'Pasek's latest brilliant brainstorm: The Keepsake Cookbook. This is a creative endeavor and I hope our membership will give it their enthusiastic support!

Yours for a clean river, Fred Grimsey

## Remember to send in your Recipes!

### Five Things You Can Do to Protect the River

Our actions play an important role in the health of the ecosystem we live in. To maintain the health as well as the beauty of these ecosystems, we must be conscious of the effects our actions have on the environment. Here are five simple things you can do to protect the Niantic River.

- 1) **Clean up After Your Pets:** Picking up after your dog can reduce the amount of nitrates and phosphates that could run off into a nearby body of water and eventually flow into the river.
- 2) **Buy Phosphate-Free Detergents and Fertilizer:** Decreasing the amount of phosphorous in the river makes algal blooms less likely to occur.
- 3) **Be Careful When Washing Your Car:** If you wash your car at home, be sure to wash it on the grass or gravel. This allows the soap to be filtered before flowing into the river. You can also get your car washed at a commercial car wash where dirty water is treated before returning to the river.
- 4) **Check Your Septic Tank:** Failing septic tanks cause untreated wastewater to flow into the river. Inspect your septic tank every three to five years and pump it if needed.
- 5) **Fix Leaking Cars:** Oil and anti-freeze that leaks from cars is carried into the river by rain. Make sure to fix these leaks as soon as possible, but in the mean time, put a tray underneath you car and dispose of the liquid at the nearest hazardous waste disposal site. See [ct.gov/dep](http://ct.gov/dep) for locations and hours.

Submitted by Sara Schwartz, ELHS graduate now attending American University in Washington D.C.



# STR-STH Program Updates...

## Legal Defense Fund – Help Us Save Oswegatchie Hills

We are still in waiting mode to see if Landmark (the developer) submits the next layer of paperwork required to keep the zoning appeals active. His latest argument states that his application was substantially different than the two that were denied previously. We fail to see very much difference—what he is proposing would destroy not only the Oswegatchie Hills, but the Niantic River as well. Meanwhile, our attorney will begin preparing our intervener response to the appeal—once again on environmental reasons. Please keep our Legal Fund in mind when you are renewing your membership this year! We will keep you posted on any news.

## Watershed Education Program

Come see what “**Joe Pye Day**” is all about!! **Sunday, July 25th at Perennial Harmony, Route 1 in Waterford from 10am-4pm.** Dr. Julian Barrett will be offering a workshop “Riparian Buffer Zone Planting” (Answering: just what should you be planting in your yard if you live on or near the Niantic River?) We are planning to have food, music & children’s activities along with our **Native Plant Sale—100% of the proceeds will benefit STR-STH!** Also, learn how to create a **Rain Garden** using **Rain Barrels** and decrease the amount of storm water that ends up in the Niantic River from your home’s rooftop. We are very happy to support the Sea Grant effort to educate Niantic River Watershed households on what they can do to help preserve our beautiful River. Stay tuned for more information in our Summer Newsletter—or check us out on Facebook where we will post more updates!

## Water Quality Testing Program

Fred has worked very hard preparing the Water Quality/River Safety skiff and it is in the water, ready to start the season! We have a river tour lined up for UConn and NRWAC scientists this week. And we will start sampling soon. We will be checking the water more closely this year after major rain events for harmful bacteria counts as well as our chemistry tests. We will keep you posted on our findings and let you know if the counts are high. (We will be posting findings periodically on Facebook and are looking into other ways to inform the public of high bacteria counts.) **If you would like to be involved, please contact Fred at 442-8349.**



## Pumpout Boat Program

We are gearing up for our 8th season of the Pumpout Program starting the Friday of Memorial Day Weekend—May 28! Fred has also prepared the Pumpout boat and it is also in the water ready to go. (You can see we need volunteers to help with these boats! Fred can only do so much!!!) Get the word out to your boating friends that the Pumpout boat can be reached on **860-287-2774 (phone) and VHF Channel 68.**

## River Safety Committee

Our newest committee is focused on keeping everyone safe on the River. We have been meeting with the local police and Harbor Management personnel to see how we can work together to prevent accidents. If you would like to volunteer to help with this committee, please contact Fred at 442-8349.

# www.SavetheRiver-SavetheHills.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

## Volunteer Opportunities:

- ☺ Join Our Board—we are looking for new ideas... come bring yours to STR-STH!
- ☺ Help us put our book together! call Eileen (below)
- ☺ Administration - helping with mailings, etc.
- ☺ River Safety Committee
- ☺ Grant Writing

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

## Membership News

As you know our members are the backbone of Save the River- Save the Hills. We are counting on your continued support and participation in our creation of a memorable book about the Niantic River and the Oswegatchie Hills. Please see the flyer enclosed for the exciting details. **The enclosed self addressed envelope can be used for both your book submittals and your membership dues.** If you are not a current member, please join us now. We look forward to hearing from you.

A staff of volunteers is needed for the creation and assembly of this book. If you would like to donate your time, please call Eileen at (860)-439-1687. Let’s have fun doing this together!

Sincerely, *Eileen O’Pasek*, Membership Chair

### Membership & Other Contributions:

- New  Renewal
- Basic Family \$20 (newsletters, calendar of events, STR-STH membership sticker)
- River Keeper \$50 (all above plus STR-STH lunch bag)
- River Saver \$100 (all above plus STR-STH green bag )
- River Neptune \$250 (all above plus hat or visor)
- River Neptune \$500 (all above plus 2 tickets to our Fall Gathering!)
- River Champion \$1000 (all the above and our eternal gratitude!!)

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)
- Water Safety  Legal Defense Fund  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:**

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

**Referred by:**