

**You are never too old to go to the playground - LET IT BE THE *NARROW RIVER!!***

Because of generous donors like you, the Narrow River Land Trust and its partners have succeeded in preserving over 600 acres of open space in the Narrow River watershed - where we hope you enjoyed another year of swimming, boating and having fun!

Have you seen the pair of bald eagles fishing the Narrow River? This is a remarkable reflection of the improved quality of life in the watershed for all who are lucky enough to live here. Let's keep it that way!! But to move forward in our land protection program, we need your help.

The Narrow River Land Trust is an *all-volunteer, non-profit* organization dedicated to preserving the Narrow River watershed. *Our operating funds come strictly from private donors like you.*

We are currently negotiating to add another 45 acres to our holdings – but we cannot do it without your help. ***Please support the Narrow River Land Trust by completing the enclosed contribution form and returning it to us with your donation.***

If you have questions or suggestions, or wish to join the ranks of our hard-working Board of Directors, please contact us at 401 529-7821.

**WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**



***Bald eagle flying and perched on tree  
Pictures by Julie Sharpe***



# Narrow River Land Trust

## Officers

President: Julie Sharpe

Vice President: Dan Carter

Secretary: David Borkman

Board Members:

Sheldon Pratt

Ken McShane

Catalina Martinez

Rob Macmillan

Gingee Brewer

Linda Steere

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Narrow River Land Trust  
P.O. Box 65  
Saunderstown, RI 02874

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends of the Narrow River,

Four elements are required to purchase conservation land: 1) a willing seller, 2) a qualified land trust buyer, 3) adequate funding for the purchase, transaction costs and perpetual stewardship of the property, and 4) *luck and timing*. These factors must align for a successful acquisition.

In 2012, the NRLT pursued two major land purchases that included a willing seller and the qualified buyer (the NRLT). Factor 3, the funding required for the purchases, posed a substantial challenge to the Land Trust because the budgets for these acquisitions were more than \$1million. The good news is that the NRLT worked hard and secured funding to purchase both properties! The bad news, Factor 4 - luck and timing - was not on our side.

Although the NRLT was ultimately unable to acquire these properties, there is still much good news to tell. I believe it is important that you, our constituents, know that the response to our requests for funding was unequivocally positive as we wrote grant applications and met with our conservation partners, donors, and funders. In fact, in the case of the Eddy property (see the attached story), The Conservation Fund, a national conservation organization, recognized the importance of this property and was willing to loan \$1 million to the NRLT to secure its purchase.

I want to leave you with this message: Without your support, the NRLT could not have pursued these acquisitions, nor could continue to do so. We still have property to protect; please see the front page. Truly, it is only with your support that the NRLT is able to engage in its mission of land protection. Thank you for bringing us this far, and as we head into the New Year, I ask that you consider a donation so that we, together, can continue our work.

Best wishes to you during the holiday season,



Julie Sharpe  
President

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## NRLT Hosts Coastal Walk as Part of Statewide *Land Trust Days*

On the evening of August 16, the Narrow River Land Trust hosted a walk at its Garrison House Acres property on the shore of the Narrow River. Twenty eight land trust members and guests joined the one-mile walk which passed through deciduous woodlands, freshwater marshes, open fields and along the salt marsh fringing the Narrow River.

Garrison House Acres is a beautiful 26 acre coastal property nestled along the Narrow River in South Kingstown immediately southwest of Middlebridge. The land was donated by Mrs. Avery Brooke who grew up in the area, enjoyed the natural beauty of the property and wanted to ensure that the coastal fields and abutting woodlands remained in a natural state in perpetuity.

This property has been managed by the Narrow River Land Trust since 1990 and is of particular ecological interest because of its variety of habitats and because it abuts other conserved lands including the 554 acre John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge at Pettaquamscutt Cove (managed by US Fish & Wildlife) and other land conserved by the Audubon Society. Together these conservation properties form a contiguous band of wildlife habitat along Pettaquamscutt Cove and the lower Narrow River.

Board member Sheldon Pratt described the natural history of the property's multiple habitats and described the cultural history of land. Portions of the field

abutting the salt marsh have been used for either cultivation or grazing since the late 1600's in conjunction with the early settlement of the nearby Jireh Bull Garrison House built in 1657. Numerous birds were observed and a highlight of the walk was a sighting of flowering Saltmarsh Mallow whose delicate pink blossoms added splashes of color to the fringe of the salt marsh on the southern side of the property. Unfortunately, we were also joined by swarms of mosquitoes in some segments of the hike which quickened the pace! This Narrow River Land Trust event was part of a statewide "Land Trust Days" program sponsored by the RI Land Trust Council during August and September 2012. Land Trust Days featured a series of 30

walks, hikes and other events designed to highlight the special and scenic properties conserved by local RI land trusts.

The Narrow River Land Trust is part of this collaborative effort and presently conserves over 600 acres of scenic, agricultural and ecologically important land in the Narrow River watershed. These conserved lands help maintain the water quality of the Narrow River and contribute to the quality of life within the Narrow River watershed. The Narrow River Land Trust appreciates the support of its members, who make this conservation effort possible, and enjoy the opportunity to explore its properties with members. Please mark your calendar for future Narrow River Land Trust walks and other events during Land Trust Days in late summer of 2013.



***Narrow River Land Trust members and guests hike along edge of a field and salt marsh at Garrison House Acres, August 16, 2012***

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## Eddy Property Eludes the NRLT

The NRLT is pleased to “claim some fame” for having played a pivotal role in the September 2012 transfer of the “Gateway to Narrow River” property previously owned by Robert Eddy of Middlebridge, Inc. The 9.4 acre, mixed use parcel at the east end of Middle Bridge is currently home to Narrow River Kayaks, a small restaurant, a 35 slip marina, 6 rental cottages, and Mr. Eddy’s former home. The NRLT had obtained an appraisal of the property and was one of few parties negotiating purchase terms with Mr. Eddy when it became apparent that the NRLT could not meet his time constraints. So, in keeping with the our goal of preserving the Narrow River as a treasure of South County, the NRLT willingly offered its appraisal to the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust in support of its ultimate purchase of this landmark property. In the coming year, the NRLT will continue to pursue conservation options of the Eddy property and other properties in the Narrow River watershed. We look forward to reporting more good news to you next year.



*Members gather for Land Trust Days Hike Photo by Veronica Berounsky*

## Narrow River Land Trust wins RI DEM Trails Grant

The Narrow River Land Trust was recently awarded a Small Trails Grant by the RI Department of Environmental Management. The Trails Grant program is designed to maintain, restore and promote access to recreational trails in Rhode Island. The Narrow River Land Trust will use the \$1,527 grant to purchase signs in support of our stewardship efforts.

Specifically, the NRLT will use the funds to initiate a program of increased public awareness of selected properties conserved by the Narrow River Land Trust. The funds will be used for the purchase and installation of signs to identify NRLT properties and to guide the public to specific natural and historical site features via environmentally sensitive routes. Small signs will identify property boundaries and serve as trail markers. Other signs will advise of permitted and prohibited uses on the land, provide route and site information, acknowledge donors, and provide property history. In addition, the funds will be used to purchase hand tools to be used to maintain existing trails on NRLT lands. The NRLT presently conserves more than 600 acres of land in the Narrow River watershed. Look for new Narrow River Land Trust signs soon!

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## Wildlife Habitat at the Viall Property

Recently, several NRLT Board members met with Gary Casabona, State Biologist with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to discuss ways to create and improve early successional habitat on the Viall property which abuts Gilbert Stuart Road in North Kingstown.

As New England shifted from an agricultural to industrial economy in the late 1800's - early 1900's, the forest has recovered and grown such that almost 55% of Rhode Island land cover is now classified as "forest". As a result of the forest growth, other vegetation types have diminished. In a report published by URI in March 2010, less than 3.3% of the Rhode Island is classified as transient early successional forest thickets and shrublands, which supports plants such as highbush blueberry, dewberry, gooseberry, blackberry, and raspberry. In 1962, this figure was 5.3%. And as this type of habitat has decreased, so have the populations of animals that occupy transient early successional forest thickets and shrublands for all or part of their life cycle. These animals include the white-throated sparrow, chestnut-sided warbler, Northern Bobwhite and the New England cottontail rabbit.

Measures discussed with Mr. Casabona to improve the early successional habitat at the Viall property included cutting patches of trees currently interspersed between existing areas of good habitat. The intention is to provide connectivity between patches and to increase the area of usable habitat while minimizing disturbance.

The Viall property is especially attractive for this project because it is close to an area where the presence of New England cottontail rabbits was confirmed through DNA testing by URI. Unlike the common Eastern cottontails which you may see running across your yard, the New England cottontail population has decreased over the past few decades to the point that it is being considered for listing as an endangered species.

Mr. Casabona also recommended improving the habitat for pollinators in the hayfields on the Viall property by establishing a border of native wildflowers to provide pollen, nectar, and nesting sites for native bees.

The NRLT will continue to work with the NRCS to develop a management plan which serves to preserve the property in its natural state and to improve wildlife habitat.

### Narrow River Land Trust

The Land Trust succeeds with the participation and financial support of its members. The preservation of land is important to the health of the environment and the quality of life in our communities.

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>New</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Renewal</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>New Address</b>
Individual.....\$35	Sustaining.....\$250	
Family.....\$50	Patron.....\$500	
Contributing.....\$75	Benefactor.....\$1000	
Supporting.....\$100	Other.....	

I am interested in preserving my property. Please contact me.     I am interested in volunteering. Please contact me.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

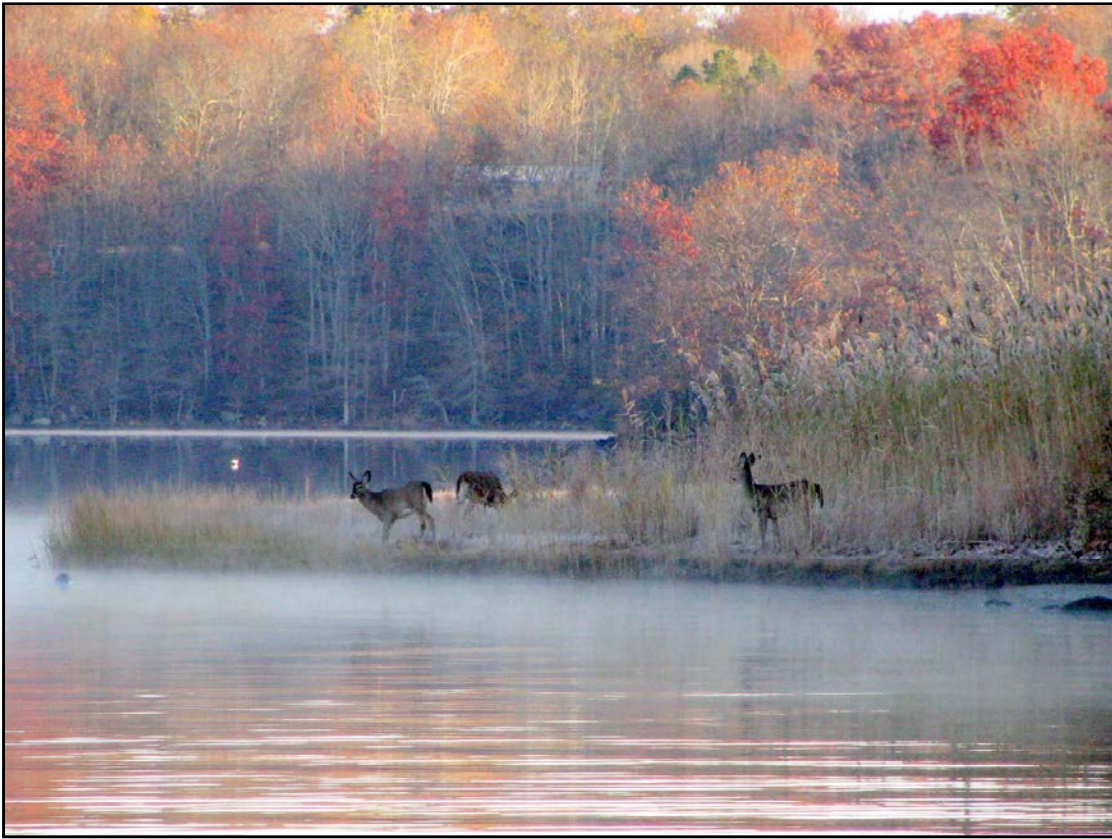
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Method:**     Check enclosed     Give online at [www.NarrowRiverLandTrust.org](http://www.NarrowRiverLandTrust.org)

**Please make checks payable to**    Narrow River Land Trust  
P.O. Box 65, Saunderstown, RI 02874    Tel: (401) 529-7821

**Thank you** for supporting the protection of the Narrow River Watershed. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.



*Photo by Sherri Flynn*

*“The Narrow River Land Trust protecting the river”*



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