



SIGNS OF SPRING ARE ALL AROUND US

Dear Readers,

Spring has a way of announcing itself gently at first—through birdsong carried on longer days and the subtle emergence of life from winter soil. If you’ve spent even a few moments outdoors lately, you’ve likely noticed the chorus: cardinals, chickadees, tufted



URI Botanical Garden, Witch hazel,
Hamamelis virginiana

titmice, song sparrows, white-throated sparrows, and Carolina wrens all celebrating the season’s return. For those new to birding, technology offers a helping hand; a simple app like the free Cornell Lab “Merlin” can open your ears to just how vibrant our local soundscape truly is.

Closer to the ground, spring’s earliest plants are making their quiet but determined appearance. Skunk cabbage, often hidden beneath snow for weeks,

is among the first to emerge. Remarkably, this plant generates its own heat, melting the snow around it and earning its reputation—odor and all—as an early-season refuge for insects and, occasionally, opportunistic spiders. Nearby, witch hazel’s yellow-green flowers and the deer-resistant spicebush brighten our wetlands well before most leaves have unfurled.

These seasonal changes are on full display across the preserves we are fortunate to steward. From Garrison House Acres and Winter Preserve in South Kingstown to the Benson and Viall Preserves in North Kingstown, these landscapes offer a front-row seat to the resilience and beauty of our local ecosystems. We encourage you to visit, explore mindfully, and reconnect with the natural rhythms unfolding around us. Maps and directions are available on our website to help guide your visit.

As always, thank you for being part of our community and for sharing in the simple but profound joy of observing nature’s renewal.

Warm regards,
David White and Marcia Izzi
Co-Chairs
Narrow River Land Trust

KILL THIS PLANT: LESSER CELANDINE

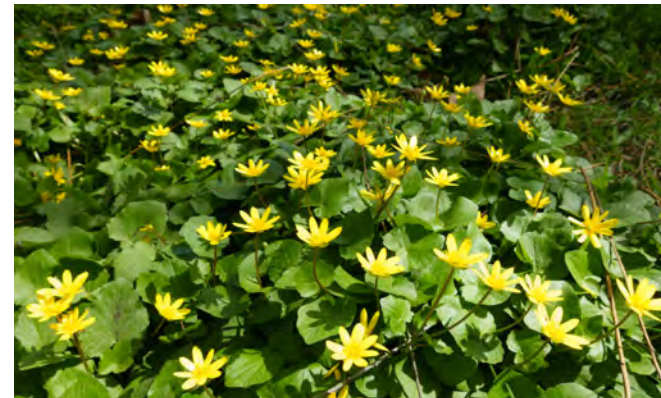
Spring is here, and before you know it, flowers will be gracing our woodlands. During the brief period between freezing cold and the dense cover of forest leaves, Rhode Island enjoys the appearance of native ephemerals, including bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, trout lily, wild trillium, wild ginger, and eastern spring beauties, to name a few.

But all is not well in the woodlands and wetlands. A highly invasive ephemeral known as lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*), also known as fig buttercup, makes its annual appearance as well. Lesser celandine is easily recognized: it has yellow flowers with eight petals and small, round, waxy leaves, and grows in dense mats low to the ground. It vaguely resembles marsh marigold, which has broader leaves and five to nine petals, and which does not grow in dense mats.

Lesser celandine was introduced in the US as an ornamental. It is a hardy perennial which spreads by tubers and bulbils, which are small bulbs which grow on the stems. Once introduced in an area, the plant can spread aggressively. Mats of lesser celandine crowd out native plants and in some cases may cover the entire forest floor or streambed.

Control is difficult. Mechanical control requires removal of all plant material, including the dense tubers and the numerous bulbils. The method is effective for small clumps but is nearly impossible for larger infestations. Removed vegetation should be bagged and solarized, then disposed of in a landfill. Covering the plants, even for years, is marginally effective.

Chemical control is therefore the preferred method for treating larger infestations. Research shows that a light mixture of glyphosate (Round-Up or Rodeo for applications near water), or a mixture of triclopyr and dicamba, mixed with a surfactant, is effective. The application should be made in early spring before the plants have reached 50% flowering.



Annual follow-up will most likely be needed. Be sure to follow all label precautions and take care to avoid application to non-target plants.

NRLT INVASIVE PHILOSOPHY

Non-native invasive plants have been spreading in Rhode Island for a couple hundred years, and let's face it, they have a pretty good head start. This is not a problem that we can expect to control in one or two seasons. NRLT is dedicated to improving the habitats we protect by systematic removal of the most aggressive and harmful species.

We prefer to use mechanical methods, and welcome biological methods when they become available. But sometimes these are not practical, which is why we may turn to the least harmful herbicides. We use chemicals according to their labels, time applications for optimum results, and use only the bare minimum required for control. We have a comprehensive policy covering invasive control of our properties and update it periodically as new methods are developed and recommended for use.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR PARTNERS

Founded in 1970, the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) is a non-profit environmental organization which has worked tirelessly to preserve and protect the Narrow River and its watershed. NRPA has a prestigious seat on the Rhode Island River Council representing the watershed, <https://ririvers.org/watershed-councils/>.



NRPA has taken part in the URI Watershed Watch

Program with River Watch since 1992. Samples from thirteen sites on the river are submitted regularly to the Watershed Watch Program. In addition, NRPA runs a number of educational programs throughout the year. They also maintain an extremely popular osprey camera at a nest located at Garrison House Acres Preserve in South Kingstown on property owned by the Narrow River Land Trust.

We encourage you to get to know and support NRPA. Visit their website at www.narrowriver.org. We are proud to be associated with this wonderful organization.

NARROW RIVER LAND TRUST

Workday 2026 Schedule

Held on the 3rd Saturday of each month

RSVP: office@narrowriverlandtrust.org

Saturday April 18, 2026, 9:00 A.M.

NRLT Property: Walmsley Woods / Lower Pond Overlook, North Kingstown

Project Lead: David White

Meetup Location: 41.505723, -71.455889, across the street from 408 Walmsley Lane. Park on the street, do not block private driveways.

Notes: Project focus will be on invasive vegetation removal & trash cleanup. Volunteers should bring work gloves and wear heavy, thorn-resistant clothing and can bring hand tools like pruners and loppers (we will have tools available, too). To limit exposure to ticks and mosquitos, volunteers wear long-sleeved, light-colored clothing with pants tucked into socks to limit exposure to ticks and use insect repellent.

Saturday May 16, 2026, 9:00 A.M.

NRLT Property: Garrison Acres Preserve, South Kingstown

Project Lead: Michael Woods

Meetup Location: 41.458207, -71.452210, trailhead is on Middlebridge Road on the west side of the Middle Bridge. Parking at the trailhead is limited, but ample parking is available across the bridge at Middlebridge Marina, 95 Middlebridge Road, Narragansett.

Notes: Project focus will be on site preparation for shed. Volunteers should bring work gloves and wear heavy, thorn-resistant clothing and can bring hand tools like pruners and loppers (we will have tools available, too). Certain power equipment may be used by NRLT volunteers, if experienced with a signed liability waiver. To limit exposure to ticks and mosquitos, volunteers wear long-sleeved, light-colored clothing with pants tucked into socks to limit exposure to ticks and use insect repellent.

Saturday June 20, 2026, 9:00 A.M.

NRLT Property: Middlebridge Properties including Training Lot, Reed, Watts in South Kingstown

Project Lead: Marcia Izzi

Meetup Location # 1: Training Lot, 41.46155,-71.45959, across from 316 Middlebridge Road

Meeting Location # 2: Reed, 41.472885,-71.45099, just past 991 Middlebridge Road

Meeting Location # 3: Watts, 41.47287,-71.45102, just pasted 1097 Middlebridge Road

Notes: Ample parking is available across the bridge at Middlebridge Marina, 95 Middlebridge Road on the Narragansett side of the river. It is a short walk to the Training Lot. Reed and Watts properties have some parking on the side of the road. Focus will be on trash pickup that floats on to the properties. This workday will

not be a heavy lift for volunteers. Trash pickers and trash bags will be provided. It is important to wear sun protection and insect repellent. Both will be available for your convenience.

Saturday, July 18, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

NRLT Property: Viall Preserve, North Kingstown

Project Lead: Michael Woods

Meetup Location: 41.536134, -71.438699, Snuff Mill Road, just before Route 138 overpass, at the metal farm gate. Parking is on the side of the street with limited in field parking for this event only.

Notes: Project focus will be on invasive plant species removal, specifically black swallowwort (*Cynanchum nigrum*) and pale swallowwort (*Cynanchum rossicum*). Volunteers should bring work gloves and wear heavy, thorn-resistant clothing and can bring hand tools like pruners and loppers (we will have tools available, too). To limit exposure to ticks and mosquitos, volunteers should wear long-sleeved, light-colored clothing with pants tucked into socks to limit exposure to ticks and use insect repellent.

Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

NRLT Property: Hammond Farm South, North Kingstown

Property Leads: Michael Woods and David White

Meetup location: Entrance to field parking is off of Route 1, past Walmsley Lane approximately across the highway from the Rose Shack. The field entrance will be marked with a colorful flag.

Notes: Project focus will be on invasive plant species removal, clearing stone walls and trash pickup. Volunteers should bring work gloves and wear heavy, thorn-resistant clothing and can bring hand tools like pruners and loppers (we will have tools available, too). To limit exposure to ticks and mosquitos, volunteers should wear long-sleeved, light-colored clothing with pants tucked into socks to limit exposure to ticks and use insect repellent.

Saturday, September 19, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

NRLT Property: Pierce Farm, North Kingstown

Property Lead: David Borkman

Meetup location: The Pierce Farm is down the hill from the white farmhouse at 459 Gilbert Stuart Road. Parking is roadside.

Notes: Project focus will be on invasive plant species removal and trash pickup. Volunteers should bring work gloves and wear heavy, thorn-resistant clothing and can bring hand tools like pruners and loppers (we will have tools available, too). To limit exposure to ticks and mosquitos, volunteers should wear long-sleeved, light-colored clothing with pants tucked into socks to limit exposure to ticks and use insect repellent.



BREAKING NEWS: we are the proud owners of a tractor!

With your help, we did it!

Thanks to our generous donors who contributed to our capital fund drive in 2025, more contributions from friends and neighbors during the 401 Gives fund drive, and a major contribution from a corporate supporter, the Narrow River Land Trust is now the proud owner of a gently used Kubota tractor!

The purchase of this equipment is a real milestone for the Narrow River Land Trust, not only for the investment, but for the support which got us here. Our members responded with \$15,772 in contributions during the capital campaign in 2025. In March, 401 Gives campaign raised over \$8,440 in just thirty-six hours, an amazing achievement since this is the first time we ever took part in the program.

We decided to buy a lightly used tractor, which came equipped with a brush mower, a front-end loader, and a variety of smaller implements.



This purchase will allow us to do extensive maintenance on our many properties and frees us from the need to hire third-party contractors for annual mowing projects. We are looking forward to many years of successful projects with our new equipment.

THANK YOU to everyone who made this possible!

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING ON MAY 14, 2026

Please join us for our Annual Meeting beginning at 5:00 P.M. on May 14, 2026, at the beautiful Mettatuxet Yacht Club in Narragansett. We will provide light hors d'oeuvres with refreshments, followed by a brief



business meeting, beginning at 6:00 P.M. Our keynote speaker is Sheida Soleimani. Ms. Soleimani is the founder of Congress of the Birds, a Providence-based organization which rehabilitates wild birds for release to the environment, and enhancement of the environment for birds through advocacy, education, and art. Congress of the Birds federally and state-licensed and is the only avian-specific rehabilitation facility in Rhode Island with an onsite release center. The clinic treats over 1,000 avian patients annually with the goal of returning them to their natural habitats. Ms. Soleimani is also a renowned artist and an Associate Professor of Studio Art at Brandeis University.

The Mettatuxet Yacht Club is located at 36 South River Drive, in Narragansett. There is ample parking at the club. The meeting is open to the public free of charge, though only NRLT members may vote during the brief business meeting. We hope you can join us.

What's Blooming?

While the Blizzard of '26 buried the Narrow River watershed under 38 inches of snow on February 23, 2026, one wetland plant was already hard at work beneath the winter blanket. Skunk cabbage, among our region's most common wetland plants, grows and flowers in mid winter—often as early as January or February.

Despite its ubiquity, skunk cabbage has remarkable adaptations and plays an important ecological role. Its most familiar trait is its pungent odor, caused by calcium oxalate crystals that deter herbivores and can irritate the mouth if ingested. This characteristic earned the plant its scientific name, *Symplocarpus foetidus*, meaning “bad-smelling,” as well as colorful common names such as swamp lantern and polecat weed.

Skunk cabbage is a long-lived plant (twenty years plus) and most of the plant's biomass is hidden underground in the root system. The plant takes energy stored in the extensive underground stem, or rhizome, shuttles that energy to the flowering spadix where intense cellular respiration generates heat that can elevate temperatures inside the protective hood to up to 20 degrees warmer than ambient air temperature. This warm, colorful, smelly, early season flower attracts pollinators such as carrion flies, gnats, and beetles which pollinate the plant and allow production of new skunk cabbage seeds. These seeds develop through the growing season and later drop to the ground to potentially germinate as new plants.

So, next time you are out walking in the Narrow River watershed during late winter or early spring, take a look around for thermogenic skunk cabbage emerging through the ice and snow. If you look carefully, you will be rewarded with a sight of its small yellow flowers hidden inside the emergent hood or spathe. It may not be the prettiest flower, but in our area, it is certainly one of the earliest. As the poet Mary Oliver wrote in her famous Skunk Cabbage poem, “What blazes the trail is not necessarily pretty.”



Skunk cabbage showing small yellow flowers on spherical spadix inside the red, mottled hood or spathe surrounding the flowers. Image taken 2/23/2026 in wetlands on the NRLT Viall Preserve.



Figure 1 *Amyntas agrestisi*, Cornell Cooperative Extension

JUMPING WORMS: WHY THEY ARE A PROBLEM AND WHAT TO DO

Jumping worms are an invasive type of earthworm now found across eastern North America. Unlike the earthworms most people are familiar with, these worms cause considerable damage to soil, gardens, and natural areas. Originally from Asia, they are also known as crazy worms or snake worms. They spread easily through compost, mulch, and potted plants. Once they arrive in an area, the worms multiply quickly and are difficult to control.

In Rhode Island, there are three primary species of invasive jumping worms: *Amyntas agrestis*, *Amyntas tokioensis*, and *Metaphire bigendorfi*. Of these, *Amyntas agrestis* is the most common.

Why Jumping Worms Are Bad News!

Jumping worms consume leaf litter and mulch at an alarming rate, often leaving soil bare. As a result, the soil becomes dry, compacted, and prone to erosion. These worms also damage plant roots and disrupt the beneficial fungi that healthy soil depends on harming native plants, insects, and wildlife. Compounding the problem, jumping worms reproduce without mating, and their eggs can survive freezing winters for years.

How Do You Identify Jumping Worms?

When disturbed, jumping worms thrash violently, move very quickly, and may even jump or writhe like a snake. This behavior is quite different from that of typical earthworms, which move slowly and calmly.

Physically, jumping worms are gray to brown in color and feel smooth and firm rather than slimy. A key identifying feature is a flat, pale gray or milky white band near the head, called a clitellum, which completely encircles the body. Mature worms are not visible until late spring or summer.

How Do Jumping Worms Overwinter?

Jumping worms do not survive the winter as adults. After the first hard frost, adult worms die, but not before laying tiny cocoons in the soil. These cocoons are about the size of peppercorns and can survive freezing temperatures. Once soil temperatures rise to around 50°F in the spring, the cocoons hatch and the cycle begins again. This invisible overwintering stage is a major reason jumping worms are so hard to eliminate.

What Should You Do?

To help prevent the spread of jumping worms, avoid moving soil, plants, compost, or mulch from areas where they are present. Clean tools, shoes, and equipment when moving between gardens or natural areas. Avoid sharing plants, and ask suppliers of mulch, compost, and topsoil how they manage jumping worms before purchasing.

Solarizing compost, mulch, and topsoil for at least 48 hours before use can help reduce the risk of spreading cocoons. If you find a small number of worms, placing them in sealed plastic bags and leaving them in the sun is an effective disposal method.

Michigan State University Extension, Invasive jumping worms: Background, identification and control, Ulric K. Chung, Brent Crain

Professor Josef Gorres, University of Vermont, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences URI Extension School Presentation Spread, Impact and Control of Jumping Worms



TAKE A HIKE!

NRLT has several locations where you can take a short hike, for a bit of exercise or to do some impromptu bird watching. Please be mindful of ticks!

Garrison House Acres Preserve: This property has a one-mile trail that starts just west of the Middle Bridge in South Kingstown. The trail runs through some woods, then out to a large field, then along the Narrow River. It can be a little wet in the corner by the Creature. There is parking across the bridge in the Narragansett town lot a short walk away.

Benson Preserve. The trail begins at a well-marked parking lot at the bottom of the hill on Snuff Mill Road in North Kingstown. The mile of trails on NRLT property joins up with the trails on the Nature Conservancy's King Preserve. There are spectacular views of Narrow River and a small waterfall.

Viall Preserve. The entrance to Viall Preserve is about 0.1 mile south of Boston Neck Road on Gilbert Stuart Road in North Kingstown. Park near the metal gate. There is a lap around the edge of the field which is a little less than a mile and a loop that runs through the forest that is about 2.5 miles.

Winter Preserve. Access this property on a trail that begins right across from 793 Middlebridge Road in South Kingstown. Look for a gap in the stone wall to enter the property. Park on nearby Riverside Road or at Treaty Rock Park on Middlebridge Road a short walk away from the entrance. The trail takes you up the hill to the location of an old graphite mine.

Please visit <https://www.narrowriverlandtrust.org/our-preserves/> for more information.

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THANK YOU!

Thank you to our longstanding contributors and new donors who make Narrow River Land Trust's (NRLT) a success every day. We depend on your generous donations for preserving our properties.

We welcome new members all year long, so if you have not yet renewed or wish to join, please do so today! Please spread the word about our vital work and invite your family and friends to join us as well. Visit the NRLT website to join (www.narrowriverlandtrust.org) or use the QR code.



FULFILLING OUR MISSION

There is one organization that stands out when it comes to protecting the Narrow River Watershed (NRW). The Narrow River Land Trust (NRLT) owns and preserves more property in the NRW than any other group or government entity. The total land area protected in the Narrow River Watershed is over 660 acres.

NRLT is committed to its mission of preserving the natural resources in the NRW by monitoring, maintaining, and improving its properties for the public and future generations.

Address Correction Requested

PO Box 65, Saundertown, RI 02874

Narrow River Land Trust

