

Tides

MAGAZINE

Beyond the Horizon

Envisioning the Next 50 Years

NARRAGANSETT BAY

SAVE THE BAY®

50

Adapting to
a Pandemic

Sites at Stake
Around the Bay

Opportunities for
Outdoor Exploration

Narragansett Bay wasn't always like this...

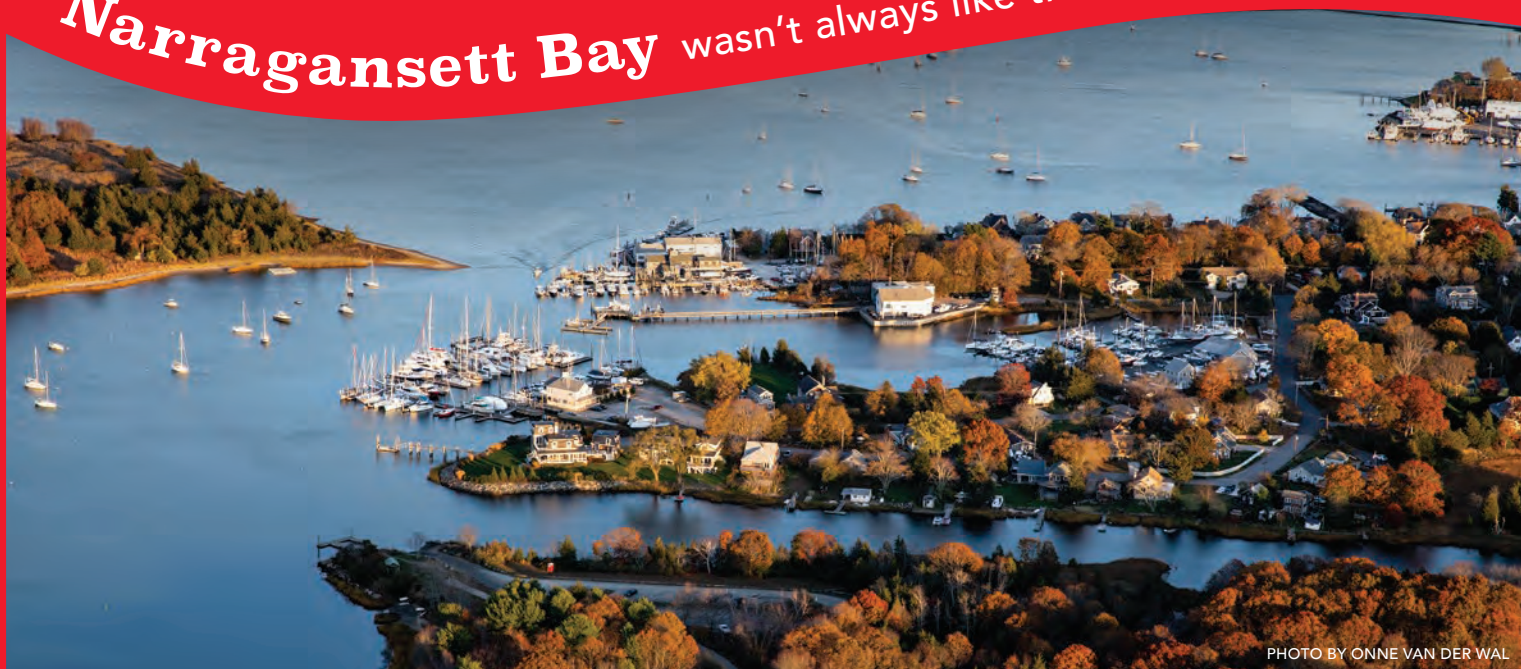


PHOTO BY ONNE VAN DER WAL

REMEMBER THE PAST. PROTECT THE FUTURE.

Save The Bay You Love.



Join today to support our ongoing efforts at www.savebay.org/join

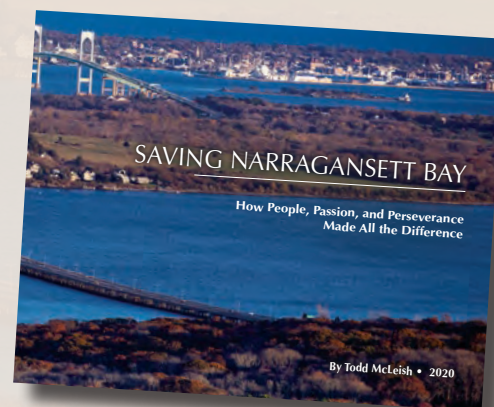
CELEBRATE SAVE THE BAY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY WITH...

SAVING NARRAGANSETT BAY

How People, Passion, and Perseverance Made All The Difference

Discover the never-before-told personal stories, critical victories, and powerful voices that have contributed to the remarkable cleanup of Narragansett Bay.

A 10-chapter history book, authored by Todd McLeish, and featuring the stunning photography of Onne van der Wal, Salvatore Mancini, Carmel Vitullo, and more!



On Sale Now!

WWW.SAVEBAY.ORG/SAVINGNB

This project was funded in part by the Heritage Harbor Foundation

A Commitment for the Future

Over the past three issues of *Tides*, we have taken a look back in time, taking stock of major milestones in the cleanup of the Bay since 1970. We have also explored our evolution as an organization since our founding 50 years ago.

In this issue, we turn our sights to the future. We live in a constantly changing world, a world in which the cumulative impact of human behavior and land use changes are threatening the progress made in cleaning up Narragansett Bay. Compounding this challenge is the subtle, but profound, influence of rapid climate change on the Narragansett Bay ecosystem. Against this backdrop is the reality of strained government resources.

Protecting what we love, this living resource we call Narragansett Bay, requires a sober commitment to three imperatives: respect the science, conserve natural places, and reduce pollution.

Our work, whether advocating at the State House or inspiring the next generation of Bay stewards, is guided by the best available science. We are committed to protecting the health of the Bay watershed and preserving open space and natural systems in coastal areas and uplands. And we are determined to reduce all forms of pollution that foul the Bay and threaten animal and marine life. This, it turns out, is a moving



target as warming temperatures exacerbate the harm caused by nitrogen loads and relatively new forms of pollution, such as plastics and household chemicals.

Our ability to affect positive change depends on you. The example you set in the choices you make in your daily lives matters. Your willingness to engage in environmental issues in the political process at the local, state, and federal level matters. And your support of our efforts, whether it be as a volunteer, an advocate, or a member and donor matters.

If the past is any guide, together we can make a real difference. Not just in protecting gains achieved, but in improving the health of the Bay for our kids and grandkids. Every positive step we take now will enhance the resilience of the Bay for years to come. Thank you for your passion and commitment to this cause.

With appreciation,

Jonathan Stone
Executive Director

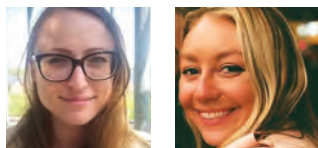
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Beavertail Lighthouse, Jamestown.
Photo by Aaron Field Simmons.

Adapting to a Pandemic



BY KATY DORCHIES, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING, AND MACKENSIE DUPONT CROWLEY, COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST



March 16, 2020 marked Save The Bay's first day of working from home. As COVID-19 prompted stay-at-home orders across the region, staff began navigating the unfamiliar challenges of protecting and improving Narragansett Bay while distanced from our facilities, one another, and our community. Already equipped with the digital tools needed to work remotely, we leapt into action with creative problem-solving, unbridled teamwork and community-mindedness. Below are the highlights from what may be Save The Bay's most inventive summer to date.

Giving Back

Save The Bay's **Taste of The Bay** fundraiser has always been a celebration of the flavors, sights and sounds of Narragansett Bay. Guests annually convene at our Providence Bay Center to enjoy samplings of local food and drink—all of which is donated by local restaurants, shellfishermen, bakeries, breweries and wineries. When the 2020 event could not continue as scheduled, we transformed it into a fundraiser to support our loyal partners in the struggling local food and beverage industries. In under three weeks, we sold enough tickets to raise \$4,200 for our partners!



ABOVE: A traditional Taste of The Bay event usually takes place in-person at our Bay Center. This year, we flipped the script and supported the food and drink industry whose goods we've enjoyed over the years. LEFT: This summer's Virtual Swim and Open invited swimmers like John Miniati, shown here, to complete a half-mile or two-mile swim remotely, at local beaches, ponds or pools.

The Swim Goes Virtual

For 43 years, Save The Bay's iconic Swim fundraiser has raised funds and awareness for our mission to protect and improve Narragansett Bay. Athletes and advocates alike accepted the challenge of a two-mile, cross-Bay swim from Newport to Jamestown. When it became

FIVE DECADES OF PROGRESS: 1970-TODAY

1970
Save The Bay is founded after Save Our Community defeats a proposal for an oil refinery on the shores of Tiverton.



1972
We champion and participate in the formation of the Coastal Resources Management Council.

1977
One hundred people take part in a cross-Bay swim from Jamestown to Newport to raise awareness of water quality issues in Narragansett Bay. The Save The Bay Swim is born.

1982
We win passage of an \$87 million Bay bond to fund the upgrade and repair of the Providence treatment facility.



Teams of close friends (above and right) gathered in small groups along the beaches of Narragansett Bay to complete their Virtual Swim challenges.



\$120,000 RAISED



#savethebayopen



Virtual Swim activities and times were submitted using apps and maps like the ones shown here.



Swim Ambassador Elizabeth Beisel completed her two-mile swim at Narragansett Town Beach.

clear that the 2020 Swim—which typically draws more than 500 swimmers, volunteers and kayakers—would not be feasible in-person, staff reimagined the event to be completed virtually.

We invited participants to complete a two-mile swim wherever they could, be it a pool, lake or the Bay. For the first time, participants also had the options of completing a half-mile swim or other activities, including running, kayaking, rowing and paddle boarding. Nearly 200 participants joined the event, sharing their remote training and events with us on social media, keeping our Swim community connected, and raising more than \$120,000!

Providing Personal Learning Experiences

Merely two weeks after transitioning to a work-from-home model, Save The Bay educators launched **Breakfast by The Bay**, a free livestream that aired weekday mornings on Facebook. During the broadcast, students, teachers and community members interacted with staff, asking questions and receiving responses in real time. *You can catch the second season of Breakfast by The Bay on YouTube Live on Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m.!*

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1987

Save The Bay launches Explore The Bay, a shipboard Bay education program for kids, which expands to include shoreline and classroom Bay education programs in 1993.

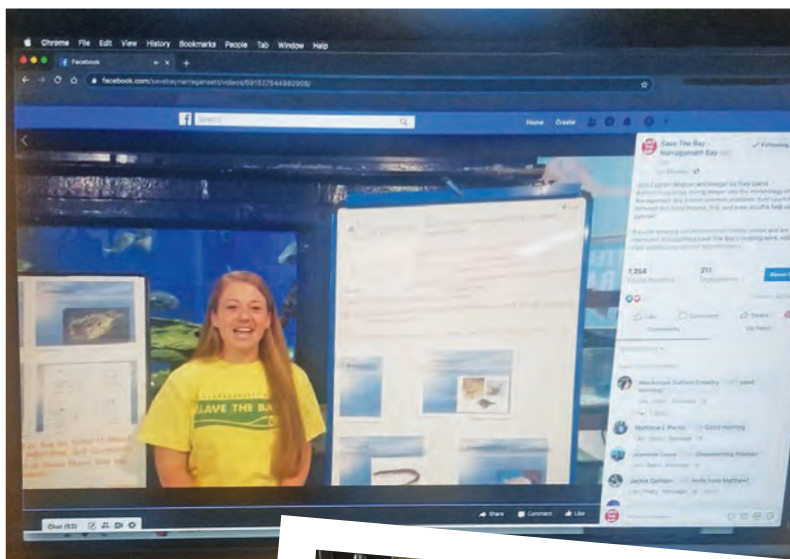
1988

Save The Bay fights for the preservation of the path at Black Point in Narragansett, R.I.

1989

Save The Bay mobilizes hundreds of volunteers to aid in the massive cleanup of the M/V *World Prodigy's* 420,000 gallon oil spill on Brenton Reef.

During our **Virtual Exploration Center & Aquarium Tours**, participants received a personalized experience from our one-of-a-kind facility using Zoom. We catered each tour to our guests' interests and, during the tour, staff answered questions, while providing up-close views of live animals. Meanwhile, our BayCampers who signed up to **Zoom Into Narragansett Bay** received similar instruction when they tuned in for themed games, crafts and more. On-screen, campers learned about habitats, adaptations, biodiversity, and "going green."



Bringing Hands-on Learning Home

Hands-on, experiential learning is at the heart of Save The Bay's educational philosophy. When our educators could no longer meet students and campers in-person, they developed resources that allowed students and families to continue engaging with and learning about Narragansett Bay.



Our educators created **The Narragansett Bay Naturalist Guide**, a 60-page book of activities, coloring pages and suggestions for watershed exploration. The guide can be completed

individually, as a family, or with friends, and can be purchased and downloaded from our website, contact-free.

Even more activities were provided through our **Shore To Your Door** camp kits for BayCampers in grades K-1. These kits were mailed directly to campers' homes and offered Narragansett Bay-themed fun in the form of crafts, worksheets and links to pre-recorded songs and stories! ■



TOP: Save The Bay educator Meghan Kelly leads a Breakfast by The Bay lesson on Facebook Live. LEFT: A sea star makes a live appearance during a Virtual Exploration Center and Aquarium tour. ABOVE: BayCamper Declan shows off a completed craft from a Shore To Your Door activity kit!

FIVE DECADES OF PROGRESS: 1970-TODAY

1992

Save The Bay launches the Baykeeper program, enhancing our defense of Narragansett Bay.



1996

We are a first responder and lead contact during the North Cape oil spill. We organize, train and mobilize 1,200 volunteers in the massive cleanup effort.

1998

In partnership with the Conservation Law Foundation, Save The Bay wins a public stakeholder process in the proposed container port development plan for Quonset Point.

Your Narragansett Bay Memories

“Oh, the stories I have of **working as a hostess at the Rocky Point Dinner Hall!** The view of Narragansett Bay was incredible. And our after-work hangout was obviously the parking lot, where we could look at the Bay some more!”
~ Kari M.



to return to the Bay on the same cruise we took over 20 years ago. Kids don't really change. Their enthusiasm and excitement was a fantastic way to start the school year.”
~ Melissa T.

“My uncle had **a home on the water on Harbor Island.** We used to dig clams on the beach, dive for littlenecks in the black muck out in deeper water. Then, in the evening, we would build a fire on the beach, steam the clams in seaweed, and eat the littlenecks on the half-shell raw!” ~ Karl M.



“One of my favorite childhood memories is of learning to water ski behind my uncle's speedboat when I was about 12 years old. It was in a cove off McCorrie Lane in Portsmouth. Most of my cousins were already expert waterskiers by then, so I worried I would look foolish trying it out for the first time. But with a little patience and encouragement from my uncle—who wasn't known for being patient and encouraging—I got up on the skis; I absolutely loved the experience of speeding across the water with the wind blowing through my long hair. [...] Those two days learning to water ski off Portsmouth are memories I still talk about to this day whenever I get together with my cousins. They're still my favorite memories of being on—and in—Narragansett Bay.”
~ Todd M.

“During my first years of teaching, we would **take our students out on a Save The Bay vessel to conduct water tests and trawl the Bay.** Our students would come alive when the net was pulled in and the creatures put in the troughs to explore. [Last year] we found out that an anonymous donor had provided funding for our classrooms



“Besides great open water, Narragansett Bay has many hidden places to explore in a kayak. (This is my “RPM time”—not “revolutions per minute” but “reflection, prayer, meditation” time.)” ~ Joy T.

TAKE ACTION!

Share YOUR favorite Bay memories and photos with us at savebay.org/your-stories-and-memories

1999
We coordinate our **first migratory fish restoration project** at Echo Lake in Barrington.



2005
Save The Bay celebrates its new home and education center at Fields Point, and opens its Newport-based Exploration Center and Aquarium the following year.

2009
We launch a salt marsh restoration project at Gooseneck Cove in Newport, where we tackled our first dam removal and installed culverts to improve tidal flow.

EDUCATION

Greeting the Natural World

THE HEART OF SAVE THE BAY'S EDUCATION PROGRAM GIVES US THE BEST ADVICE FOR THE TIMES: GET OUTSIDE, EXPLORE THE BAY



BY BRIDGET KUBIS PRESCOTT,
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Connor enjoys some fresh air while assisting his parents—Save The Bay's director of education, Bridget Prescott, and Coastkeeper, Dave Prescott—with water quality testing on Little Narragansett Bay.

Encouraging kids to get outside to explore Narragansett Bay and its watershed has been core to Save The Bay's education work for close to 40 years. In fact, it is the main reason we call our education program "Explore The Bay." Our educational philosophy has always revolved around hands-on and exploratory learning.

Our education team grew concerned when our students began and resumed virtual schooling, but we knew that exploring the natural world we live in, even in these uncertain times, was something we could all continue to do, and something we could continue to support and facilitate.

Whether you take a walk in your neighborhood, ride your bike with friends, read a good book in your yard, or enjoy beautiful Narragansett Bay, you will see the benefits. Time spent outside decreases stress levels, promotes focus and improves mental health. You can physically feel and see the change in yourself and in others.

Being cooped up inside during COVID-19 amplified my entire family's need for a connection to nature. We have always been an active family, but for the last eight months, we made outside time a daily practice and have noted the differences in both how we feel and in how we treat each other. Getting on or by the water is our solace. Some of our favorite walks along the water include Black Point in Narragansett, Napatree Point in Watch Hill, and Fields Point in Providence.

When school started back up, and looked different for everyone, Save The Bay's education team made it a priority to find ways of supporting all those seeking to discover life in and around Narragansett Bay. Keeping our core value of hands-on exploration front of mind, we developed resources to help students of all ages continue learning while reaping the benefits of being outdoors:

FIVE DECADES OF PROGRESS: 1970-TODAY

2009

Save The Bay launches the **Stop Hess LNG** campaign to save Mount Hope Bay from a massive Liquefied Natural Gas terminal on the Taunton River. The proposal is defeated in 2011.



2013

We open our South Coast Center in Westerly and launch our South County Coastkeeper program, expanding our presence in southern Rhode Island and initiating efforts to protect Little Narragansett Bay.

2014

Save The Bay accepts leadership of Rhode Island's annual International Coastal Cleanup efforts, organizing volunteer cleanups around the Bay.



TOP TO BOTTOM: Kaia and Connor Prescott set a crab trap in Little Narragansett Bay in hopes of catching wildlife for later observation; and the Narragansett Bay Naturalist Guide, available online.

Testing for Water Quality, A Family Outing

BY MACKENSIE DUPONT CROWLEY, COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

When Save The Bay determined that we would not be able to enlist the help of volunteers or interns due to COVID-19 this summer, Bridget Kubis Prescott, Save The Bay's director of education, and her husband, Dave Prescott, the South County Coastkeeper, saw an opportunity to get creative, get outside, and tackle some of our usually volunteer-led water quality testing efforts with the whole family.

Connor (age 11) and Kaia (age 9) joined their parents for biweekly water quality testing on the Pawcatuck River and in Little Narragansett Bay. The family tested for algal density, salinity, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and more, aiding in 13 years of ongoing water quality work in the region. As an added bonus, the family also set up and checked on crab traps, giving them the chance to observe wildlife while collecting data!

- Our **Narragansett Bay Naturalist Guide** offers safe, age-appropriate activities that help families stay connected to our Bay through outdoor exploration while living within COVID restrictions. We are also working closely with our teachers and other partners to see how we can continue to provide high quality Bay-based educational opportunities during the school year.
- No matter how old you are, you can tune into the second season of our **Breakfast by The Bay** series every Wednesday at 10 a.m. on YouTube, where our talented and dedicated team of educators will be bringing Narragansett Bay to life remotely.
- For those seeking to both spot wildlife and get on the water, don't forget that Save The Bay will be offering **Nature Cruises and Seal Tours** out of Westerly and Newport this October-December.



We know that if people experience and explore the beauty of our Bay and its watershed, they are more likely to treat it with the love and respect it deserves, ensuring this precious resource will be around to be enjoyed by future generations—whatever challenges come their way.

The Narragansett Bay Naturalist Guide is available for purchase and download at savebay.org/publications. More information about Save The Bay's Seal Tours and Nature Cruises, including up-to-date information about our COVID-19 policies and procedures, can be found at savebay.org/seals. ■

2015

We champion the passage of a statewide cesspool phase-out law in Rhode Island.

2017

Save The Bay produces "Bay-Friendly Living," a guide to lawn care and lifestyle tips that help reduce polluted runoff and improve water quality.



2019

We complete the original vision of our Bay Center headquarters with the opening of our public pier at Fields Point in Providence.

WHO SAVES THE BAY? STAFF PROFILE

Maureen Fogarty: Steering Save The Bay's Operations for 25 Years

With 25 years of Save The Bay experience, our director of operations, Maureen Fogarty, has seen it all. She shares her experience with us below, from the changes we've made to the culture that keeps us strong.



BY KATY DORCHIES,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
AND MARKETING



Walk us through your history with Save The Bay.

I joined Save The Bay in 1995, just prior to our 25th Anniversary Celebration. It's hard to believe it's been 25 years. The mission is what initially drew me to the organization, but the passion and commitment of the staff, board and our supporters are what have kept me excited and engaged all these years.

What do you do as director of operations?

Honestly, a little bit of everything, and it's one of the reasons I love my job. Every day, sometimes every hour, is different. I am, in some way, involved in all facets of the support functions of the organization:

human resources, development, finance, facilities, communications and administration.

What are some of the changes you've seen over the years?

We had a \$1 million budget and 17 staff when I started with Save The Bay at the old Hospital Trust Bank building. Now, we have the Bay Center, the Exploration Center and Aquarium, and the South Coast Center. We have 32 staff and our budget has nearly tripled. What hasn't changed is how we keep the mission front and center in all that we do.

What has been the most exciting time with Save The Bay?

We've celebrated so many milestones over the years, and each one builds toward the next. What is most exciting to me, though, is our organizational culture. The staff always strive to be exceptional stewards of the Bay and watershed, our donations, the community, our volunteers and students, and we always stay the course as a team.

Do you have a favorite Save The Bay project?

If I had to choose, I'd say the attenuator and pier at the Bay Center in Providence. It took nearly 12 years to achieve, from design to completion, and is a testament to one of our core values: public access to the Bay for all.

What do you wish people knew about Save The Bay?

That we are first and foremost a membership organization. Members are the lifeblood of Save The Bay, and we need that support to be an effective watchdog of the Bay.

What's your biggest concern for the future of Narragansett Bay?

Complacency. We're always asked—sometimes jokingly, sometimes not—"Isn't the Bay saved yet?" And the answer is, "NO, it's not!" We've made tremendous progress in cleaning up Narragansett Bay, but we need to be ever-vigilant in our efforts to keep that progress and advance it. ■

As director of operations, Maureen Fogarty, featured here with her grandchildren, understands better than most what makes Save The Bay so special, and what keeps us ticking.

Save The Bay Action Updates

Education

- Following the success of our Breakfast by The Bay series, Save The Bay was invited to partner with PBS to produce two episodes of the station's national Camp TV series. Our educators starred in the series' "My Favorite Color Day" and "My Favorite Season Day" episodes, where they presented lessons on ocean acidification and food webs. The episodes aired nationally and locally in August and September.
- As we learned that many of our school partners would either be starting the 2020-2021 school year remotely or not permitting in-person guests or field trips, Save The Bay's educators developed a course offering of virtual school programs. Our new virtual program brochure includes lessons on climate change, ocean acidification, and even a squid dissection, and the programs themselves allow us to continue our longstanding school partnerships.

Water Quality

- The Maidford River in Middletown is currently impaired by nutrients and bacteria, and is prone to flooding nearby neighborhoods. Advocacy Coordinator, Jed Thorp, and Riverkeeper, Kate McPherson, have been working to increase and improve buffers along the Maidford, communicating with property owners about how they can help restore the river's health through buffer plantings.
- Coastkeeper, David Prescott, and Baykeeper, Mike Jarbeau, continued monitoring water quality in the Upper Bay, Greenwich Bay and Little Narragansett Bay this summer. The efforts continued in partnership with Brown University and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and the data and observations highlighted a decrease in beach closures while noting fish kills and mussel die-offs and cyanobacteria outbreaks.

Restoration

- In June 2020, Save The Bay completed a report for the Massachusetts Department of Ecological Restoration that will help guide restoration of wetlands in an area that was, for decades, a commercial cranberry bog. The Millbrook Bog site in Freetown, Mass. impacts 190 acres of freshwater wetlands. Riverkeeper, Kate McPherson, led the team that developed monitoring protocol, conducted assessments of plant life and site conditions, and produced recommendations for restoration. *Read more about the Millbrook Bog effort on page 12.*
- Director of Habitat Restoration, Wenley Ferguson, and Coastkeeper, David Prescott, continue working on our adaptive management projects for salt marshes in Potters, Quonochontaug and Winnapaug ponds. Save The Bay is providing guidance on three other salt marsh migration and adaptation projects in South Dartmouth and Fairhaven Mass., in partnership with the Buzzards Bay Coalition, Massachusetts Audubon Society and Bristol County Mosquito Control Project.

Public Access

- Save The Bay has partnered with the South Providence Neighborhood Association and the Washington Park Improvement Association to advocate for an established Public Right-of-Way (ROW) at the end of Providence's Public Street. The City of Providence has submitted a request for the ROW establishment to the Coastal Resource Management Council.

Construction Update: the M/V Rosemary Quinn

As announced in our last issue, Save The Bay is welcoming a new vessel to our fleet! The M/V *Rosemary Quinn's* construction (photo of metal cuts at right) began this summer, and we look forward to launching the craft in Spring 2021, before putting it to work with our Summer 2021 programming.



RESTORATION

Teamwork in the Bog



BY KATE MCPHERSON,
RIVERKEEPER

On March 16, Save The Bay's offices closed to the public, staff and interns alike were asked to stay home, and the pandemic put the status of my field work in limbo.

Five months earlier, the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration contracted Save The Bay to complete a plant inventory on a retired cranberry bog along the banks of Mill Brook in Freetown, Massachusetts. MADER's Cranberry Bog Program has secured funding to restore the farm to a more natural freshwater wetland with goals of improving wildlife habitat and water quality. Farming for cranberries destroys natural wetlands; the boggy forests are cleared, filled with sand, and ditches and perimeter dykes are created to manipulate the water level for harvest. In order to know if a restoration is successful, it's helpful to have a record of what the site looked like before efforts began.

Riverkeeper Intern Shannon West and I had already spent several field days in

November 2019 identifying plants that had flowered in the late summer and fall, observing wildlife, and exploring the 127-acre farm and the 60 acres of swamp that had been intentionally flooded by the cranberry farming. We already had some information about the heartier plants at the bog, the ones that could stand up to a frost, but I needed to be onsite during the spring growing season to identify many other plants that are withered by autumn. With stay-at-home orders in place, I was pretty worried we wouldn't get to the site in time to finish the project.

On April 15, I learned that fieldwork restrictions had been lifted in response to Governor Baker's COVID-19 Guidance and Directives; by implementing some common-sense precautions, I could resume work at Mill Brook Bog. At this point, my biggest remaining challenge was to find a field assistant from our staff. Save The Bay suspended our volunteer program early in the pandemic, so I asked our Volunteer and Internship Manager, July Lewis, who was looking for tasks, if she was willing to give fieldwork a try.

It's worth noting that I get pretty excited about plants. I'm a freshwater wetland biologist, and had designed the project to tell us a lot of information about the plants growing on the abandoned cranberry bog. Were there any non-native and invasive plants? What kind of moisture conditions did they like to grow in? How unique were they? I was asking July to not only help with fieldwork but to also help organize the answers to these questions in the form of data for the final site assessment report. It must have been overwhelming, but she enthusiastically took on the role, while bringing her own expertise to the table.

It turns out that July is an outstanding observer of butterflies! She taught me



July Lewis humanely catches a butterfly for closer observation.



TOP: July and Kate take on the bog. ABOVE: Mill Brook Bog, Freetown, Mass.

the special kind of sight that one needs to catch a glimpse of these quick critters. I learned about the life cycles of the butterflies in our region, and what types of habitats they depend on. July identified 12 different species during site visits in April, May, and June. In fact, we determined that a particular type of violet growing at Mill Brook was critical for a particular butterfly called a Silver-Bordered Fritillary—a discovery I would not have made without our unique fieldwork partnership.

Once our fieldwork was complete, we enlisted the support of another colleague, Save The Bay's IT Manager Josh Cherwinski, who helped us find a quick way to organize our data and deliver the project to MADER on time—despite having lost a month due to stay-at-home orders and restrictions. Our plant observations will be used to measure the success of the wetland restoration, and our wildlife observations of butterflies, birds, amphibians, and reptiles will help inform the way that MADER restores this site to support the wildlife that depends on it. ■

Beyond the Horizon

AS SAVE THE BAY PREPARES FOR ITS SECOND 50 YEARS, WE HONE IN ON THE ISSUES THAT AWAIT US AND THE STRATEGIES WE'LL EMPLOY TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION



Pause for a minute and imagine the Narragansett Bay that will belong to your nieces and nephews, kids and grandkids. What will the shoreline look like? How safe will its waters be? Narragansett Bay will look very different in 50 years and, as climate scientists warn, the changes will tell a story of both loss and new beginnings:

The beaches you love today will be underwater, while new beaches will have emerged inland. The Bay will be warmer—too warm to support some of the fish and shellfish we are used to, but warm enough to support new species that moved north from today's more temperate mid-Atlantic waters. Many salt marshes, the nurseries of Bay life that line our shores, will have disappeared. But in some places, marshes may have migrated upland and inland, adapting to rising seas.

The 2017 *State of Narragansett Bay and Its Watershed Summary Report*, produced by the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program and its team of leading scientists, is instructive. In the report's concluding statement, the chairs of the program's Science Advisory and Executive committees state:

“The data are incontrovertible that climate change is here. Air and water temperatures are increasing; sea level is rising; storms are intensifying; extreme weather events are more frequent; winter and spring precipitation is increasing along with summer and fall droughts.”

The stark reality of what we are up against should serve as a call to action. The science is telling us, loud and clear, that we must address the current and anticipated impacts of climate change. While we must do our part to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change, we must also conserve natural places. We must tackle pollution. We must protect and expand public access to the shore for everyone. And, we must hold government accountable for enacting policies that support these goals.

As Save The Bay comes to the end of our 50th year and takes our first step into



BY TOPHER HAMBLETT,
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY

the next half-century, we set our sights on our vision for the future: a clean, healthy Bay that is accessible to everyone. This vision fuels our passion for our work, and inspires thousands of others to join our efforts to protect this spectacular, fragile, but resilient place—even in the face of the profound changes headed our way. Below are the steps we'll take to make this vision a reality:

Reduce Pollution

We are already seeing and feeling the impact of warming Bay waters. The algal blooms that contribute to fish kills and beach closures are fueled by an excess of



TOP, LEFT: Continued sea level rise will result in more severe storm surge and flooding, like that shown here in Westerly during the 2018 hurricane season. Photo by Harold Hanka. ABOVE: This year's warmer and drier summer resulted in numerous fish kills around the Bay, like the one shown here in Bullocks Cove.



LEFT: The low-lying uplands that border Sapowet Marsh in Tiverton will become the marshes of the future.

BELOW: The 2018 removal of the Shady Lea Mill dam at Carrs Pond in North Kingstown aided in the return of both riverbed vegetation and migratory river herring.

nitrogen and phosphorus. The blooms rob the Bay and inland waters of the oxygen animals and plants need to live, and warmer water temperatures exacerbate the problem by creating a more hospitable growing environment for the algae. While we cannot control the Bay's temperature with a thermostat, we can sound the alarm on what we can control: pollution.

In the cases of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution, that means doubling down on reducing their most common sources: stormwater runoff—which carries pet waste and lawn fertilizers—and wastewater treatment facilities. Despite making great progress in sewage treatment and management, the work of controlling pollution from septic systems and cesspools will remain a top priority.

In the case of microplastics—the tiny pieces of plastic resulting from the breakdown of single-use plastic items—it means stepping up public awareness campaigns and advocating for changes in packaging policies. And, when it comes to pollution from pharmaceuticals and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances—synthetic chemicals found in common household products, better known as PFAS—we must support investments in the research and monitoring necessary to understand their impacts on the Bay and be prepared to encourage policies that limit those impacts.

Improve Ecosystem Resilience...

By Allowing Marsh Migration Salt marshes are nurseries for the fish, shellfish and birds that inhabit Narragansett Bay and the coast. They



“Protection of natural lands next to salt marshes is one strategy that will allow some marshes to migrate landward as sea level rises.” ~ 2017 State of the Bay and Its Watershed

play a critical role in the ecological health of the region, and they are under siege. For millennia, salt marshes have been able to adapt to gradually rising seas by slowly capturing and accumulating sediment. But the accelerating pace of sea level rise means that tidal waters inundate marshes at greater depths for longer periods of time. The result? Salt marsh grasses are dying, and as the root systems decay, the marshes sink, taking with them both the habitat and the benefits—like minimizing storm surge and flooding—they offer.

Scientists predict the loss of a large percentage of salt marshes in the coming de-

cadecades, but marshes with protected migration corridors stand a chance of survival. When given the opportunity, marshes will migrate into abutting and low-lying coastal areas, shifting upland and inland naturally as seas rise. But they can't migrate if buildings, walls and roads stand in their way. Protecting these migration corridors is essential to saving as much marsh habitat as possible. Save The Bay is already partnering with local land trusts, advocacy

groups and municipalities to identify and secure lands for marsh migration in the Palmer River and lower Taunton River.

By Restoring Rivers Unobstructed tributaries strengthen natural ecosystems by allowing migratory fish to swim and spawn, and by preserving healthy wetlands and natural floodplains that promote a variety of plants and wildlife, while reducing the risk of catastrophic floods. Over the past 300 years, hundreds of dams were constructed in the rivers and streams of the Narragansett Bay watershed, primarily



to turn grist mill wheels and, later, provide energy to textile mills and factories. These dams altered freshwater ecosystems, degraded water quality, destroyed wetlands, and blocked the passage of fish swimming upriver to spawn. Today, many dams are in poor condition and at risk of breaching, as several did during Rhode Island's landmark 2010 floods. Removing dams from rivers and streams is one of the most significant—and challenging—tasks ahead.

By Conserving Forests and Wetlands We anticipate that development pressures—like real estate construction, energy installations, and changes in land use—will increase in the coming decades, posing a real threat to the watershed's forests. While found at a distance from Narragansett Bay's shorelines, these sites are an integral part of the Bay's ecosystem. Forests keep the rivers and streams that flow into the Bay clean, cool and hospitable for wildlife with their natural filtration and shade.

Protecting the upland, freshwater regions of the Narragansett Bay watershed will require Save The Bay to strengthen and build partnerships with local, statewide and regional organizations to promote land use policies that protect the Bay's forested lands.

Champion Sound Public Policy and Enforcement of Environmental Protections

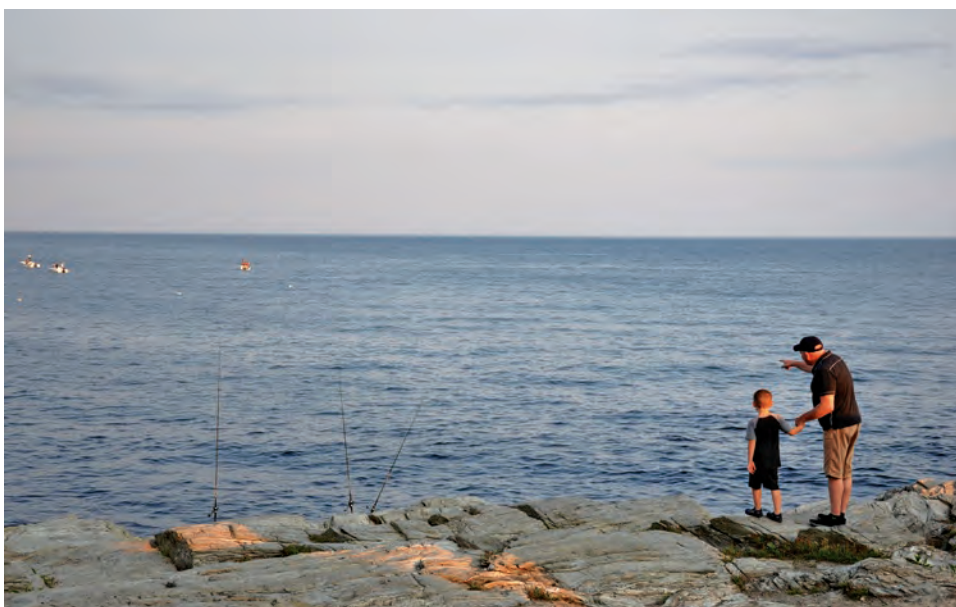
Local, state and federal governments play a crucial role in protecting the health of the Narragansett Bay ecosystem. Forward-looking policies, sound planning and substantial environmental investments will be essential to the health of the Bay in an era of rapid climate change. The enactment and enforcement of laws that protect clean

2017 State of the Bay and Its Watershed warns us that “Given the rate of development within the Narragansett Bay watershed and the multitude of landscape, climatic, and chemical stressors, it is increasingly important to protect natural lands.”

water, guide development, and ensure public access will be critical to protecting all that the Bay offers today. Save The Bay will work the halls of government and mobilize

rising sea levels. And it requires investments in research and monitoring to inform how resource managers set policies designed to protect water quality, marine life and Bay habitats.

As the people's voice for Narragansett Bay, Save The Bay and its supporters have led the charge to pull the Bay back from the brink and make it the spectacular place that it is today. It is now up to us to guard against complacency. While the next 50 years may prove every bit as challenging as the last, we are excited and determined to succeed by adapting to change, relying



communities to demand their elected officials to take action to protect the Bay and its watershed.

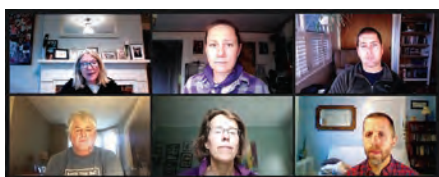
Save The Bay is committed to working with community partners representing diverse interests to achieve the common goals of improving the health and resilience of the Bay, and ensuring that all communities have access to the Bay. Achieving these goals requires vision and long-term planning for relocating infrastructure—buildings, roads, and utilities—away from the coast to allow natural systems to survive and thrive. It requires vigilance in protecting public access to and along the shore, which will become ever more precious as we lose inches, and eventually feet, of shoreline to

on the best available science, holding government accountable, and educating and inspiring the next generation of stewards. It's all-hands-on-deck, and we hope you'll climb aboard. ■

TOP: A warmer Bay is an invitation to new species. Already, the summertime influx of warm water currents from the Gulf Stream has begun carrying tropical fish, like the striped burrfish shown here, up the Atlantic coast, only to leave the creatures stranded in a mismatched climate when the waters cool for winter. ABOVE: The next generation is counting on us to leave them a swimmable, fishable, accessible Bay.

Sites at Stake

Highlights of the Watershed's Most Threatened Natural Locations



BY SAVE THE BAY'S
POLICY TEAM

From salt marshes to beaches, popular and familiar sites around Narragansett Bay face myriad challenges in the coming decades as pollution, climate change and rising sea levels threaten valuable habitats, public access sites, and more. *See map on page 18 for locations.*

1 LOCATION: The Ponds at Roger Williams Park, Providence, R.I. **THREAT:** Stormwater Pollution

About the Site: Roger Williams Park ponds, like so many throughout our region, are threatened by stormwater pollution. Nutrients run off lawns and paved areas and into the ponds with each and every rainstorm. In recent years, this pollution has contributed to toxic algal blooms called "cyanobacteria." Cyanobacteria is impacting not only urban ponds, but ponds throughout the state, from Almy Pond in Newport (see #6) to Slack Reservoir in Smithfield. Over the last decade, Providence's Stormwater Innovation Center and community partners have been making efforts to direct stormwater into rain gardens or infiltration areas at the park. These initiatives have resulted in a significant reduction of stormwater pollution, but there is more work to do.



A warning sign next to one of Roger Williams Park ponds cautions visitors of a cyanobacteria bloom.



A cedar tree in Broad Cove marsh has died off due to salt water, a sign that marshes are migrating inland.

2 LOCATION: Broad Cove, Dighton, Mass. **THREAT:** Habitat Loss

About the Site: Broad Cove is a salt marsh on the Taunton River in Dighton, Massachusetts. Like all of the salt marshes in Narragansett Bay and throughout the watershed, it is threatened by accelerated sea level rise, as drowning marsh plants are inundated by higher tides. We are working with the Town of Dighton to protect low-lying uplands so that the marshes can migrate as sea levels continue to rise, and so that the species that depend on the marsh habitat, like the threatened salt marsh sparrow, can survive for decades to come.

You Can Help

If you want to help protect sites like these, we invite you to sign up for **Action Alerts** from Save The Bay! Powered by VoterVoice, our Action Alerts notify you of breaking issues that are important to Narragansett Bay and connect you with an easy process for notifying your representatives.

When you receive an Action Alert in your inbox, it will include all the details about the latest issue, and VoterVoice will automatically match you with your elected officials, and help you easily send a pre-written or personalized message to them. The process takes seconds, but the impact can last years.

Sign up now, or view current Action Alerts, by visiting savebay.org/advocacy



3 LOCATION: Stillhouse Cove, Cranston, R.I. **THREAT:** Habitat Loss

About the Site: Every May and June, horseshoe crabs take advantage of high moon tides to travel up on the beach to lay their eggs. For hundreds of millions of years, horseshoe crabs have been repeating this cycle, but, as sea levels rise, much of their spawning habitat is threatened by erosion and shoreline structures, like bulkheads and walls. Stillhouse Cove in Cranston offers a perfect example of this, as erosion has left only slivers of beach, all of which are bordered by walls protecting roads and buildings. Save The Bay and the Edgewood Waterfront Preservation Association have been working to regrade the steep bank at this site, adding natural materials and native plants to stabilize the bank. Adaptation efforts like these can provide an alternative to hardening the shoreline and further threatening horseshoe crab spawning habitat.



Walls and roads collide with an eroding beach in Stillhouse Cove, depleting horseshoe crab spawning habitat.

4 LOCATION: Hundred Acre Cove, Barrington R.I.

THREAT: Habitat Loss

About the Site: Salt marshes in Hundred Acre Cove have been disappearing due to sea level rise. Fiddler crab burrows are making a bad problem worse by exacerbating erosion. As the marsh dies off, fiddler crabs are finding more areas to create their burrows in the marsh soil, furthering the deterioration of the marsh. Where healthy *Spartina* grasses once grew along the edge of Hundred Acre Cove, the banks are now bare. Chunks of salt marsh can sometimes be seen floating in the cove.

An explosion of fiddler crab burrows has accelerated salt marsh loss throughout Hundred Acre Cove where sea level rise has stressed the marsh plants.



High tides and storms contribute to the erosion at the southern end of Sea View Drive, and flooding throughout the nearby neighborhoods.

5 LOCATION: Sea View Drive Waterfront, Warwick, R.I.

THREAT: Flooding, Erosion

About the Site: Signs of sea level rise are evident in Warwick's Oakland Beach neighborhood. Erosion and flooding have been worsening along Brushneck Cove over the past decade. During coastal storms, waves erode the edge of Sea View Drive and, during moon tides, Bay waters flood the nearby, low-lying Strand Avenue. Save The Bay is working with the City of Warwick and the Oakland Beach Neighborhood Association to move these two vulnerable roads inland, enhance public access, and plant native coastal plants to slow erosion and treat polluted road runoff.

6 LOCATION: Almy Pond, Newport, R.I.

THREAT: Stormwater Pollution

About the Site: Almy Pond is a 50-acre inland pond located on the southern tip of Aquidneck Island, just north of Bailey's Beach and Ocean Avenue. The pond has some of the highest measured



Nestled among neighborhoods just north of Ocean Avenue in Newport, Almy Pond is prone to some of the most severe pollution in the State of Rhode Island.

levels of phosphorus of any pond in the state, with fertilization being a major contributor in this mostly residential watershed. These high levels of phosphorus—combined with increasing temperatures—lead to frequent algal blooms which trigger warnings to avoid contact with the water. Save The Bay is working with nearby residents to monitor the City of Newport's progress in capturing stormwater pollution at the storm drains, and also exploring options to reduce over-fertilization in the area.

7 LOCATION: Sandy Point Island, Westerly, R.I. and

Stonington, Conn.

THREAT: Sea Level Rise

About the Site: Sandy Point is a beautiful, one-mile-long, 35-acre island in the middle of Little Narragansett Bay. Since the landfall of the 1938 Hurricane, the island has been migrating northwest, moving nearly 300 feet over the past 30 years alone. The site is accessible only by boat, and is a refuge and breeding ground for horseshoe crabs, piping plovers, American oystercatchers, and least terns. This low-lying island provides an example of how an undeveloped shoreline naturally changes over time. Unfortunately, the fate of this island will be eventually sealed by rising seas and stronger coastal storms, but for the time being, it is an absolute ecological gem. ■



Sandy Point Island's beautiful landscape will eventually be lost to rising seas.

David Murray

PROVIDING A SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE



BY MACKENSIE DUPONT CROWLEY,
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

David Murray has been volunteering his time and expertise to Save The Bay since 2003, assisting with education programs and water quality monitoring efforts, as well as serving on the Program and Policy Committee.

When did you first become acquainted with Narragansett Bay?

I lived in Warwick for my first 13 years and spent time in Goddard Park and on the South County beaches. Even though I got my undergraduate degree at University of Rhode Island, I did not appreciate Narragansett Bay and how the watershed is connected until I returned for postdoctoral work at Brown in 1986.

How did you first become involved with Save The Bay?

In the summer of 2003, I started helping the education program's "Project Narragansett"—also known as the "Teach the Teachers" program—and led one session through 2015. I enjoyed it because the teachers from

Rhode Island schools show great enthusiasm when learning about opportunities to bring the Bay into their classrooms. I really credit Save The Bay's education staff for developing this program.

What else do you help Save The Bay with?

I assist with water quality monitoring efforts, specifically dissolved oxygen surveys and stormwater mitigation at Sabin Point. I am also a member of Save The Bay's Program and Policy Committee, where we discuss everything from issues related to water quality and habitat restoration to guidelines on fertilizer use. Science is the foundation of Save The Bay's advocacy work, and I provide a scientific perspective to the committee discussions.

What do you enjoy about volunteering with Save The Bay?

I love seeing students' excitement when learning about the Bay and marine life during the education programs. When it comes to water quality monitoring work, knowing that my contributions can result in changes that improve the enjoyment of the Bay for all of us and the water quality for marine life to thrive.

What are your concerns for the future of Narragansett Bay?

There have been major accomplishments in mitigating the environmental impacts of our activities around the Bay. The Bay and its marine life are pretty resilient, but I am concerned about the warming and rising sea levels that will likely alter the current species and habitats. We've already seen more frequent red tide blooms and, as the Bay continues to have warmer waters throughout the year, I am concerned about blooms of harmful species that we are not aware of at this time. My hope is that monitoring efforts will continue so we can keep track of and learn about the changes as they occur. ■



David Murray performs water quality testing in the Upper Bay with Save The Bay's Baykeeper.

WHO SAVES THE BAY? DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Jane Garnett and David Booth

A JAMESTOWN TRADITION, A LIFELONG LOVE FOR NARRAGANSETT BAY



BY KATY DORCHIES,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
AND MARKETING

Sustainability Fund donors Jane Garnett and David Booth share their love for Jamestown, their history with the Bay, and their perspective on why the next generation is key to Save The Bay's future success.

Nestled in Narragansett Bay waters between North Kingstown and Newport, Conanicut Island is home to some of Rhode Island's most stunning scenery, from the rocky vistas of Beavertail State Park to the sheltered waters of Mackerel Cove.

For Jane Garnett, a lifelong connection to the 9.5-square-mile island and the town of Jamestown represents an intergenerational tradition of enjoying summer on the Bay. When she married David Booth in 1982, he found, like so many have, that the beauty of the area was impossible to resist.

Over the past three decades, David and Jane have continued her family's tradition of summering in Jamestown, even as their permanent residence spanned the East Coast, from New York to their current home in Florida. And, as is the case with the best family traditions, they passed their love of the island down to their three children.

"Our kids grew up swimming every day, they took sailing lessons, and were always on the Bay in some way or another," remembers Jane. "When the kids were young, Save The Bay sponsored events for families and my kids and I loved attending them. We'd essentially walk along the shore with a naturalist who would have us turn over rocks to find crabs and other animals that live there. Then he'd tell us about what the animals were and why they were so important to the Bay. Those memories have lasted for years."

But not all of their Bay memories are quite so heartwarming. The decades they've spent along the Bay have been some of the most transformative in terms of Bay health, and the transformation did not go unnoticed.



David and Jane enjoy a family function on Great Cranberry Island, Maine.

*"You can't just 'win.'
You need to 'win' year
after year."*

"Back in the eighties, every storm would overflow Providence's sewer system," recalled David. "Often, nobody would be able to swim in the Bay for several days. Things have improved a lot since those days."

But Jane and David know all too well that progress is no excuse for complacency. Today, they see climate change and population pressures continue to threaten the usability of the Bay.

"No matter how many problems you solve, new ones will always pop up," explained David. "Just because sewage is no longer flooding the Bay, it doesn't stop overcrowding or development. You can't just 'win.' You need to 'win' year after year."

The need to keep saving the Bay was at the heart of Jane and David's decision to support Save The Bay's 50th Anniversary Sustainability Fund, a fund dedicated to ensuring organizational longevity and financial stability.

"When you have an organization that's working, you want to make sure it exists down the road. You want them to continue to do the work they set out to do," explained Jane. "And everyone in Rhode Island should be supporting Save The Bay. Without the Bay, Rhode Island would look very different."

Alongside their support, David and Jane offer an additional hope for Save The Bay's future: that the next generation has the opportunity to interact with the Bay and carries the tradition of protecting it.

"Once our generation moves on, we need others who are willing to offer support," said Jane.

"Years ago, our son was looking for spider crabs under rocks; now, he spends countless hours on the water, enjoying the Bay, when in Jamestown. An early connection helps the next generation understand the importance of taking care of Narragansett Bay." ■

DEVELOPMENT

Our 50th Anniversary Campaign

The Sustainability Fund

Over the past eight months, we have all borne witness to the challenges that come with unprecedented and surprising change. As the nation at large erupted into turmoil in the face of a public health crisis, an economic downturn, and a devolving political atmosphere, Save The Bay batted down the hatches and weathered the storm as we always have: with a clear focus on our mission, an enduring passion for our work, a supportive community, and a resourceful and creative mindset.

This past year, of course, is not the first period of change we've encountered as an organization. In our five decades, we've endured myriad challenges—from evolving environmental threats, to reductions in available government funding, and even facility repairs in the wake of storms and flooding. As an organization, we know better than most that unanticipated tribulations may always be hiding just over the horizon. And we know that our continued success relies on our ability to remain adaptable when confronted by them.

While we may not be able to predict every challenge that will emerge in the next five decades, we can recommit ourselves to our vision of a fully swimmable, fishable Narragansett Bay, and make every effort to prepare for future uncertainties.

With this in mind, when we charted our goals for our \$8-million 50th Anniversary Campaign, we established a Sustainability Fund.

The Sustainability Fund will allow Save The Bay to remain strong in the event of future “inclement weather.” It will support an increase in our endowment, providing recurring financial support for marine science education programs and core advocacy work, while reducing our dependence on annual giving. The Fund will further enable us to ensure the continued maintenance of Save The Bay's unique marine assets and facilities, including the M/Vs *Alletta Morris* and *Elizabeth Morris*, the Bay Center in Providence, and the Exploration Center and Aquarium in Newport.

Already, generous contributions to this Fund have allowed Save The Bay to retire the remaining mortgage on the Bay Center, eliminating the burdens of interest and principal payments from our financial future. As we extend our 50th Anniversary Campaign into 2021 to offset time lost to the ongoing pandemic, we look forward to reaching our goal of raising \$2.4 million for our Sustainability Fund. With your support, we will take the first step into our next half-century stronger, and more prepared, than ever before. ■

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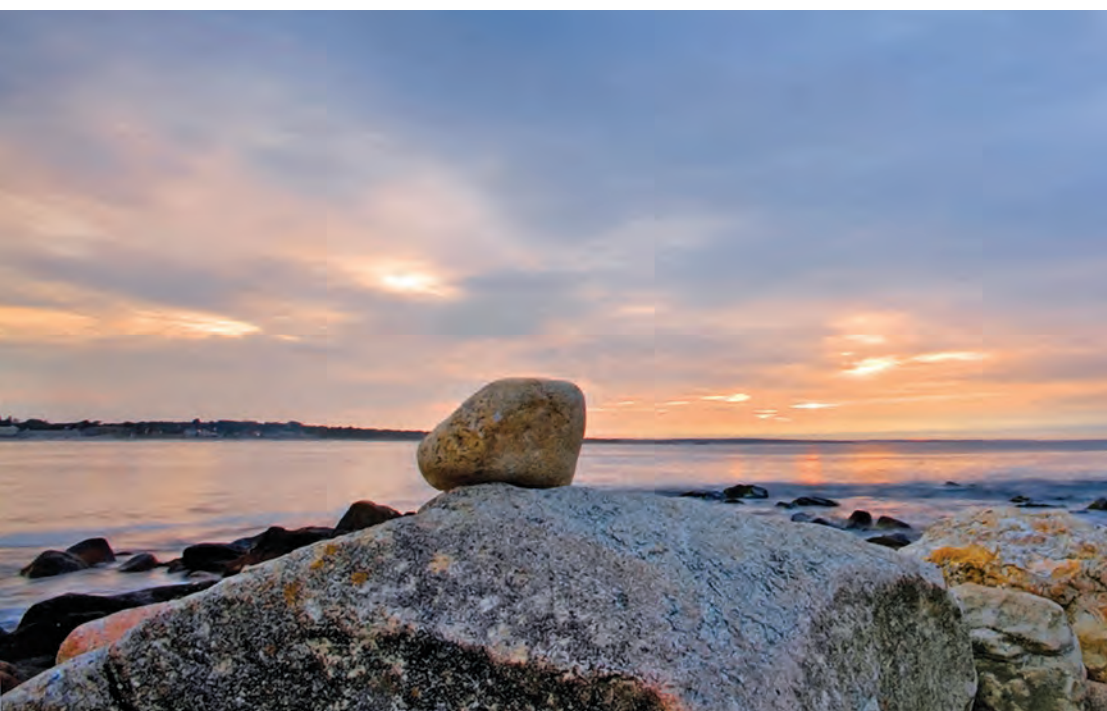
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Support for Save The Bay's 50th Anniversary Campaign will help us continue protecting and improving beautiful Narragansett Bay for decades to come.



50 WAYS WE'VE SAVED THE BAY:

Our First Salt Marsh Restoration Project



BY CINDY M. SABATO, APR,
SPECIAL PROJECTS CONSULTANT

Salt marshes are critical to the health of Narragansett Bay. The wetland areas support a diversity of wildlife, from shorebirds to fish. They support a cleaner Bay by filtering harmful nutrients from runoff, and help prevent erosion and protect vulnerable coastal areas from storm surge. Unfortunately, salt marshes are increasingly threatened by human activity and climate change, which is why Save The Bay has made salt marsh restoration and adaptation a key component of our work. These efforts began in 1997 at the Little Mussachuck Creek Salt Marsh, a brackish wetland in upper Narragansett Bay.

In 1997, the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, which owns and manages the marsh, came to Save The Bay with a problem; sand deposits had blocked an inlet through which tides ebbed and flowed into the marsh. Without salt water flowing into it, the salinity of water in the marsh decreased, and without ebb tides, water became “stuck” in the marsh, flooding out native plant and animal species. These conditions allowed an invasive species of reed, *Phragmites australis*, to effectively take over.

Save The Bay and the BLCT united to devise a plan for revitalizing the marsh and facilitating the return of rare wetland plants, including creeping spikerush and salt marsh bulrush. To accomplish this, tidal flow into the marsh had to be restored. After consulting marsh experts and biologists, a team from Save the Bay staff and BLCT decided to dig a new artery to join the marsh with an existing tidal channel. With help from government agencies, the team planned the physical restoration effort for two weekends in April 1998.

With all preparations in place, Save The Bay mobilized approximately 100 volunteers to help restore the marsh. The first weekend, committed volunteers of all ages donned rubber boots, wielded shovels and got deep into the muck to excavate the creek. The work involved digging and hauling hundreds of pounds of peat and *Phragmites*. By the end of the weekend, the hardworking team had successfully dug a 300-foot creek reconnecting the marsh with the Bay. Once the creek was finished, fish started swimming through the creek almost immediately. The next weekend, volunteers returned to transplant salt marsh plants into areas of the marsh where plant life had previously been flooded out by stagnant water.

Current Save The Bay Director of Habitat Restoration Wenley Ferguson coordinated the restoration efforts at Little Mussachuck Creek Salt Marsh. She recalls, “despite less than ideal conditions, dozens of volunteers worked in the muck completing the creek in record time. Involving the community in the restoration highlighted not only what some dedicated volunteers can accomplish, but also laid the groundwork for future restoration projects throughout the Bay.

Save The Bay continued monitoring the marsh in the years following the excavation. Shortly after the project's completion, creeping spikerush and salt marsh bulrush had returned. Stewards also spotted shorebirds in the marsh, along with fish swimming up and down the connector channel.



Issues

Marsh Restoration the Old Fashioned Way: *The Big Dig at Little Mussachuck Marsh*

Almost 90 people from around Rhode Island volunteered to help Save The Bay's first-ever, hands-on salt marsh restoration project at Little Mussachuck Marsh in Barrington. These hearty volunteers spent their weekends helping out with very heavy digging and planting native salt marsh species to improve the health and productivity of the marsh.

BARRINGTON, RI — In a true show of community-based restoration, the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Save The Bay joined forces in April to restore Little Mussachuck Marsh. Over two weekends, almost 90 volunteers dug a channel to improve salt water flow and protect the marsh's rare plants.

Little Mussachuck Marsh is one of the Bay's most northern salt marshes and designated a high priority for restoration in Save The Bay's recently released *Vital Signs* report. The marsh is separated from the Providence River by a barrier beach. A former natural

breachway used to connect the marsh to the Bay, but was closed off several years ago — restricting the flow of salt water into the marsh.

On the first weekend, volunteers dug a channel to allow water to flow into Little Mussachuck Marsh from the Providence River. Herring, mummichogs and other fish were spotted swimming in the newly created creek almost immediately after volunteers finished digging.

The following weekend, more volunteers transplanted the salt marsh plants dug from the new creek to areas formerly under water.

"The project's goal is to create a healthier salt marsh," said Citizen Monitoring Coordinator Wenley Ferguson. "Volunteers came from throughout Rhode Island to make this restoration possible. More community-based restoration projects are crucial to help protect Narragansett Bay for our future."

☎ For information about starting a salt marsh restoration project in your community, please call Wenley Ferguson at 401-272-3540. ■



Save The Bay's Spring 1998 Newsletter



While the Little Mussachuck Creek Salt Marsh project was small in scale relative to others Save The Bay has since coordinated, the project continues to serve as a reminder of what is possible with help from community members. More than 20 years later, we fondly remember the Little Mussachuck Creek project for ushering in an era of salt marsh restoration that continues today, at adaptation project sites like Quonochontaug Pond in Charlestown and Winnapaug Pond in Westerly. ■

ABOVE: Prior to restoration, stagnant water in the Little Mussachuck Creek salt marsh was flooding out native plant and animal species. OPPOSITE PAGE: In 1998, volunteers hand-dug the creek to improve marsh drainage and water flow.

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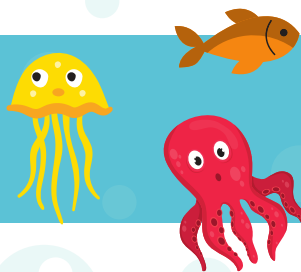
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