

# TIDES

## Perseverance Saves The Bay

**PAUL BETTENCOURT BRINGS THE HERRING HOME**

# Artists for The Bay Show & Sale

Local artists & jewelers are featured at the Save The Bay Center's Providence Journal Charitable Foundation Gallery.



Opening reception tickets - \$30

50% of the proceeds benefit Save The Bay. All sales are tax free. Opening reception will feature local food, wine, beer and live music.

**Exhibit Runs December 3, 2015 - January 30, 2016**

**OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2015, 6 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.**

**CLOSING RECEPTION: SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 2016, 1 P.M. – 3 P.M.**

Call for Artist Submission Dates: Monday, October 19 to Thursday, November 2.  
Submissions to Leanne Danielsen - [ldanielsen@savebay.org](mailto:ldanielsen@savebay.org)

For more information visit [savebay.org/art](http://savebay.org/art)

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Taking the Long View

As 2015 comes to a close, we ask you to take stock of what's been a remarkable year of progress. In 2004, the RI General Assembly mandated a 50 percent reduction in nitrogen loads to Narragansett Bay from RI wastewater plants. This year, the Narragansett Bay Commission and the University of Rhode Island each announced that nitrogen load reductions have exceeded that mandate and that beach closures associated with harmful bacteria have declined significantly. Save The Bay played a pivotal role in championing the original legislation and urging voters to support the public funding of the wastewater plant upgrades that made this progress possible.

This year we celebrate the passing of two other landmark bills: a law that, once and for all, will eliminate the 25,000 remaining cesspools in the state, and a statute that expands setbacks around freshwater wetlands, protecting essential habitat and helping preserve the critical role wetlands play in filtering water and reducing flooding. These are the culmination of many years of determined advocacy and long-term commitment by Save The Bay and our supporters.

And, in a key enforcement case, the RI Attorney General and the Department of Environmental Management took action to clean up a notorious scrap yard on the Providence waterfront that flaunted rules and blatantly polluted the Bay for more than five years—the result of relentless pressure by Save The Bay upon our enforcement agencies.



These victories share a common thread: years of dedicated effort to achieve real results. From our beginnings in 1970, Save The Bay has consistently taken the long view when pressing for change. We know that seemingly insurmountable environmental challenges can be overcome, but only if we are willing to commit the resources over many years to push for change. The long view is so important in an era when political winds shift suddenly, elected officials come and go, and state and federal environmental agencies are increasingly starved for resources.

In this issue of *Tides*, we celebrate successes that played out after years of effort and pay homage to individuals who understand the importance of persistence and commitment in order to prevail. You—our members, donors, volunteers and partners—expect nothing less.

Jonathan Stone  
Executive Director

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Paul Bettencourt and Wenley Ferguson  
by the fish ladder at Hunt's Mill Dam.

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**Mission:** Save The Bay works to protect and improve Narragansett Bay and its watershed through advocacy, education and restoration efforts. We envision a fully swimmable, fishable, healthy Narragansett Bay, accessible to everyone and globally recognized as an environmental treasure.



STB HISTORY

# The Battle That Started It All



BY TOPHER HAMBLETT, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY & KENDRA BEAVER, STAFF ATTORNEY

As Save The Bay approaches our golden anniversary in 2020, we can't help but celebrate some of the heroes that made us who we are today. One of those heroes is Louise Durfee, the fifth President of Save The Bay.

Louise has a remarkable record of achievement that has led to dramatic improvements in Narragansett Bay. She has served as director of the R.I. Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Tiverton Town Council president and council member, and chairperson of the Governor's Sewage Task Force that examined the failure of the Fields Point Wastewater Treatment Plant in the 1970s. She negotiated the creation of the Narragansett Bay Commission and was one of the first female partners of a major law firm in Rhode Island.

Louise was a Tiverton Town Council member in 1970, when a small but powerful grassroots organization called Save Our Community formed in response to a proposal by Northeast Petroleum to build and operate an oil refinery in Tiverton, on the site of an oil tank farm. That organization became Save The Bay, and she was a key member. Sitting in her home, where the opposition to the refinery first met, Louise shared her reflections on Save The Bay's first battle, the battle that began it all.



Louise Durfee, fifth president of Save The Bay.

"I would say that 90-95% of the people in town were in favor of the refinery when it was introduced. The proposers came in and invited the community and all the boards and commissions to free dinner and drinks. People flocked to the Stonebridge Inn. They showed this little video of the the refinery, and how this would lower our taxes.

"It was here, in this dining room, where only about seven or eight people were saying, 'What do we do with this?' We formed a corporation; it was called Save Our Community. We got Jim Edwards, a litigator who threw himself into this, and he did nothing else for three or four months. There were zoning hearings. Jim treated it as a court case. There was no regulatory body in place. No CRMC, no DEM, no Clean Water Act. The social media, the web sites, these did not exist at that time. What we had was newsprint. The coverage by the newspapers was extraordinary.

"Every week, the local paper would have these huge headlines and it would champion the opposers [of the oil refinery]. Gradually, the townspeople began to say, 'This may not be so good.' And at the same time, the tank farm at the [proposed refinery] site had spills week after week, and after every single spill we'd call out the press and say, 'This is what we can expect here!'

"We lined the first row of these public hearings with quahoggers, even though Mt. Hope Bay [which abuts northern

Tiverton] was closed off to them. It was so amusing. The two lawyers representing Northeast Petroleum would call Jim Edwards and say, 'Would you mind walking in with us? We're so fearful of those quahoggers, we think we're going to get beat up!'

"We established an office in the north end of town, with John Scanlon as our executive director. He was there a good part of the day. People came in and out, and there would be gossip and this and that. He was funny, I mean hilarious. He was a great guy. He became a focal point.

"A guy named John Canulla was going all over the country, looking at refineries, getting reports and feeding them to the press. He was the first president of Save Our Community/Save The Bay.

"When it came to a vote before the Tiverton Town Council, their [Northeast Petroleum] proposal went down 4-3."

Louise Durfee embodies the spirit of Save The Bay—determined, passionate, persistent, untiring. That was the spirit of the group that founded us back in 1970, and it's been our spirit for all our 46 years. "It has been an amazing organization. It really has," Louise said. "The staying power and the role it has taken on...is just extraordinary.

It takes a long period of changing culture, and a new generation comes along. Same kind of movement, different technology today, but same work."

Louise also reminds us of the urgency of Save The Bay's mission. "I think the Bay and its resources will always be a challenge. You have stormwater issues. I think we're just in our infancy on stormwater. I see that as a major issue. It's complex. We're literally just beginning to deal with it. Mount Hope Bay, which I look at every day, still needs a tremendous amount of work. I think you've been on the right track on all the issues over the years. The education is important. The advocacy is important. There is still a great deal to be done.

"Save The Bay needs to continue its advocacy to make sure DEM and CRMC have the funds to do their jobs. If the regulators themselves are loathe to speak up for greater resources for fear of consequences, Save The Bay and others must carry the load. A weak DEM and CRMC do not serve the public. Enforcement of environmental laws, fairly applied, is a great educator for all of us and ensures that the State's magnificent resources are preserved for all."

Thanks to the strong foundation built by Louise and our founders, we look forward to the next 50 years of advocacy for Narragansett Bay. ■

EDUCATION

# Making Waves



BY BRIDGET KUBIS PRESCOTT, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Today's students are tomorrow's future. Save The Bay understood this more than 30 years ago when our education program, lovingly referred to as Explore The Bay, was first envisioned.

program that directly connects to their classroom curriculum, as well as state and national science standards. Our education vessels, technology, lab equipment, and Exploration Center and Aquarium give

the second largest city on Narragansett Bay, and the Taunton River is the largest freshwater input into our Bay. The fact is: the people of Massachusetts, even those who live miles and miles away from a waterfront view, will have either a positive or a negative impact on the health of Narragansett Bay. That's why Save The Bay's education team continues to renew and refresh its vision for Explore The Bay.

Today, we are making a deliberate effort to take our education programs to the students and teachers of Fall River and the Taunton River watershed over the coming years. Already, we've seen a lot of enthusiasm from Fall River education leaders and teachers about adding Save The Bay's education program as a companion piece to their classroom curriculum. This past spring, we hosted students from The Resiliency High School who explored Narragansett Bay with us aboard our education vessel M/V Elizabeth Morris. Our trial of public seal tours in Fall River last spring were so successful that we are offering two full months of Fall River seal tours in March and April 2016.



ABOVE: Save The Bay Education Specialist Gráinne Conley and a student from the Providence After School Alliance seine for Bay creatures at Colt State Park. BELOW: Students learn the role of plankton as the building blocks of the Bay ecosystem in our plankton lab.

We knew that in order for Narragansett Bay to improve long-term, we needed to engage the youngest constituents in all that Narragansett Bay has to offer. Those youngsters from years ago are now making the decisions that impact the Bay today, just as the students of today will go on to make decisions that will impact our Bay and its watershed into the future. We want those decisions to be informed by and based on real-world knowledge and experiences. The creators of our education program dared to ask (and answer): What better way to impart that knowledge and provide those experiences than by giving students the chance to directly interact and connect with it...especially during the school day?

Narragansett Bay is Rhode Island's greatest natural resource, and Save The Bay's educators use it as our classroom and natural laboratory every single day in partnership with local schools. We work closely with teachers to create a

students authentic experiences through hands-on learning—core to the practice of environmental education and inherent in our education philosophy at Save The Bay.

More than 15,000 students and hundreds of teachers work with us each year. There simply is no comparison between a student's response to passive, old-school lecturing and the response we see from students in nature, challenged to use scientific instruments and the power of observation to unlock meaningful answers to questions about the world around them. Just as a talented classroom teacher energizes students with engaging, interactive activities, our education staff uses the natural classroom of our Bay and its watershed to guide students to new learning destinations. These types of experiences are essential in shaping the things we care about as adults.

Although Narragansett Bay lies in Rhode Island, 60 percent of its watershed is in Massachusetts. Fall River, Mass. is



We hope this enthusiasm and excitement continues to thrive as we introduce more local students and families to the wonders of Narragansett Bay. After all, today's youngsters will determine the health of our Bay and surrounding waters for generations to come. ■

# Not Your Typical Classroom

BY BRIDGET KUBIS PRESCOTT with contributions by Debra Hazian of the Providence Public Schools Communications Office



Dressed in layers and armed with water bottles, sunscreen and bug spray, 20 Providence fourth-grade teachers head out on Narragansett Bay aboard the *MV Elizabeth Morris*. They're joined by Save The Bay educators, as well as Brown University scientists Dave Murray and Joe Orchardo, who provide a full-day, hands-on lesson on water quality. Tomorrow, the Providence teachers will head to Prudence Island for an in-depth look at the salt marsh and its functions and features. And on two additional days, they'll develop lesson plans for their students based on their experiences.

"In all my years in Providence, this was the best professional development I've ever been involved in," said Bridget Richardson, a fourth-grade teacher at Young/Woods Elementary School. "It is difficult to put into words exactly how much I learned during this experience. The instruction we received has given me the confidence to teach my students more about where we live and all of the amazing things going on around us."

It's all part of a Save The Bay program called Project Narragansett Teacher Academy, and this is the three-year Providence Schools edition. For the last two years, fourth-grade teachers from Providence Public Schools have been coming to Save The Bay's Bay Center in Providence for four days of hands-on professional development focused on Narragansett Bay. In August, the third group of teachers joined us for our final year of the three-year program, which is funded by a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's B-Wet Program.

Working in close collaboration with Donna Casanova, the school district's science coordinator, Save The Bay educators have developed a high quality, interdisciplinary curriculum consistent with the Providence Schools' curriculum, Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards, which call for the use of outdoor classrooms and hands-on experiential learning in life science.

In addition to the four-day Teacher Academy, Project Narragansett includes field experiences and transportation for the teachers' students' hands-on exposure

to Narragansett Bay. During field experiences that take place on land and aboard Save The Bay's education vessels, students learn about life in the Narragansett Bay watershed, explore the rocky shore, and enjoy a shipboard "trawl" where critters are grabbed using a large net near the bottom of the Bay. They also learn about the zones of the Bay and water quality and view specimens gathered during the day under a microscope.



The interdisciplinary content isn't just for science, but also spans the spectrum of fourth-grade subjects such as math, history and language arts. In late March, students and teachers return to Save The Bay for a "show and tell" with their families, excited to show them their extended classroom on the Bay. From science exhibits to art, poetry, history and more, students make presentations and showcase what they have learned.

Save The Bay Education Director Bridget Kubis Prescott says that, because Save The Bay and Providence Public Schools share the same community, the partnership has been particularly special to her education team. "We want students to understand their connection to the Bay. Many don't realize that they live within minutes from the Bay and, in some cases, right down the street."

The experiences have been eye-opening for teachers as well, according to Casanova. "You can see their confidence, interest and vocabulary grow. By the end of the week, they have all these ideas for lessons," she said.

"I am excited to have been part of this experience. My knowledge of environmental science has been enhanced and

deepened. I have been challenged both academically and in the field and can relay this fabulous information to our students. My students will be inspired to be scientists and advocates of their environment," said Chris Mendonca of Vartan Gregorian Elementary School.

With the final year of the grant at hand, Casanova has applied for additional funds to continue the Teacher Academy at Save The Bay, and has been encouraging Providence teachers to apply for this unique professional development program as well. She recognizes that Save The Bay's education staff are leaders in the field of experiential education, the product of a committed organizational focus on developing a professional education staff and strong programs in environmental and experiential education.

"Created 11 years ago, Project Narragansett is a model for other programs," says Casanova, "by partnering research organizations with schools to offer educational programs for both teachers and students and opening their facility to families."

"In addition to educating students," says Gráinne Conley, Save The Bay's school and group program manager, "hopefully we are creating future stewards for the Bay." ■



Project Narragansett teachers learn from Save The Bay Restoration Ecologist Robbie Hudson about the life cycle of shellfish and how the bivalves aid in water filtration.



Teachers from Carl G. Lauro Elementary School in Providence doing watershed activities they can take back to their classrooms.

# Exploration Center and Aquarium



Touch tanks, story time, crafts  
Friday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
and all public school vacations  
Labor Day to Memorial Day



175 Memorial Blvd. Newport, RI  
[savebay.org/aquarium](http://savebay.org/aquarium)

## RESTORATION

# What's in the FLUPSY?

A NEW TOOL FOR AQUACULTURE EDUCATION



BY ROBBIE HUDSON,  
RESTORATION ECOLOGIST

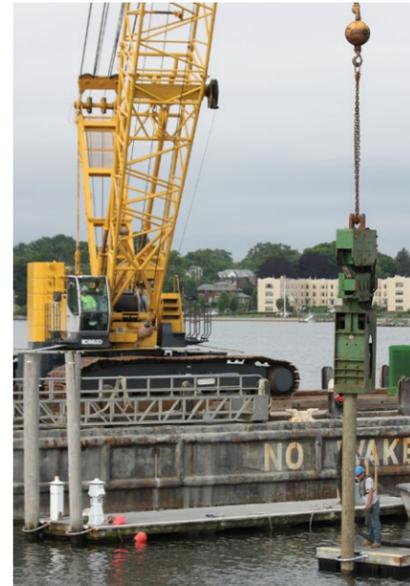
In 1970, Save The Bay was created with a vision for protecting Narragansett Bay. In 1986, we launched our education program, recognizing that future generations would be critical to achieving that original vision, and with the goal of providing the best hands-on marine science instruction available. In the mid-90s, our vision expanded to include restoration of the Bay habitats.

Once the shellfish reach a predetermined size (depending upon the species), they can be deployed at restoration sites in Bay and coastal waters. Bivalve shellfish, such as ribbed mussels and oysters, are great at filtering water and removing unwanted nutrients out of the water column. They strengthen the shoreline by preventing erosion, an increasingly challenging issue due to increasing storm intensity and sea level rise from climate change. And, they can function as brood stock that will contribute to further generations of their species.

The FLUPSY allows Save The Bay and our partner schools and organizations to study the possibility of increasing shellfish populations in Narragansett Bay, while adding new, exciting content to our K-12 marine science education program. Aquaculture education programs introduce students to ecology, shellfish biology, the shellfish industry and role of aquaculture in Bay management. With an upweller system, they can explore such activities as water quality monitoring, shellfish life cycles, habitat restoration and animal husbandry.

Our middle- and high-school Bay-Campers have experienced the upweller while learning about shellfish biology, the importance of water quality to marine life and how to test for various

Today, Save The Bay has a new tool that speaks to all three rungs of our organization: habitat restoration, water quality improvement and the building of stewards of Narragansett Bay. We have installed and now operate a Floating Upweller System (FLUPSY) at the Bay Center dock to grow shellfish. FLUPSY is a controlled nursery system that force-feeds infant shellfish (seed) by constantly moving water past them as they sit in a holding tank. The shellfish grow quickly and enjoy a higher survival rate than in the wild because they are continuously eating and growing while protected from such predators as crabs, lobsters and fish. The system makes it possible to grow out hundreds of thousands of shellfish at a time.



scientific parameters. College interns have been assisting in weekly data collection, and maintenance of the equipment. The education and experience these students acquire from this program is helping create our future scientists.

Shellfish have and will always be an important part of Southeastern New England culture and can play a crucial role in keeping Rhode Island waters healthy. Utilizing our knowledge and resources, Save The Bay will continue to find ways to preserve our waters while educating students of all ages about what we can do to protect and restore Narragansett Bay. ■

*CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:  
Installation of the wave attenuator  
at Fields Point to support FLUPSY  
operation; Ribbed mussel by Joan  
Muller (NOAA Photo Library) via  
Wikimedia Commons; and Interns  
Trevor Nelson, from Roger Williams  
University, and Meagan Wrenn,  
from Providence College, clean the  
upweller silos.*

## COVER STORY

# For the Love of Fish

PAUL BETTENCOURT BRINGS THE HERRING HOME



BY CINDY SABATO,  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Belying its name, the Ten Mile River is actually 22 miles of waterway snaking from Savage Pond in Plainville, Mass. south through the Attleboros and Seekonk before entering Rhode Island, where it meanders through Pawtucket and East Providence, over the Omega Dam and into the Seekonk River and Narragansett Bay. It once supported a robust fish run of river herring and American shad, anadromous fish that live as adults in salt water and return each spring to spawn in the fresh water where they were born. But dams built along the Ten Mile River during the Industrial Revolution—not to mention the calamitous pollution of the time—brought an end to what may have been one of the most prolific fish runs in Rhode Island history. That is, until lifelong career fisherman, Paul Bettencourt, got an idea. A great idea.

Great ideas often take perseverance, determination, a long view and a hero. And Paul's idea was no exception. On the morning I talked to this story's hero, the gritty, 75-years-young angler had already been up to Turner Reservoir on the Ten Mile, pulled on his hip boots, walked out on the wall and caught a few fish. I'd learn later that all three of his daughters had caught a striped bass by the time they were four years old and that he's taught all but the youngest two of seven grandchildren how to fish. Wearing precisely the mischievous

wide grin, silver beard and well-worn Greek fisherman's cap one would expect of a beloved grandfather and sportsman, Paul told me the story of how, from the mid-1960s through 2015, he relentlessly pursued his idea to restore the connection between the Bay and the Ten Mile River for herring, shad and the many fishermen who enjoy these waters. And how a meeting with Save The Bay sparked a determined, community-wide effort to make his idea a reality.

## The Idea

"What happened was... my brother Joe [Bettencourt] and I had just started fishing over on the Barrington River when he got a call that his son had hurt himself, so we rushed back to his house and had to dump all our [bait] herring in the Ten Mile behind his house. That put a lightbulb in my head. There were no fish up on the Ten Mile River. I said to Joe, 'Hey, why don't we get some herring and stock this place?'" Paul said.

A self-proclaimed "fisherman and environmentalist," Paul long ago understood the importance of the herring to the ecosystem and to the survival of recreational fishing in and around Narragansett Bay.

"The river is a nursery for the herring, which are part of the food chain. Everything that swims out there feeds on herring; even the smallest fish will feed on them when they're young," he said. "Until the last ten

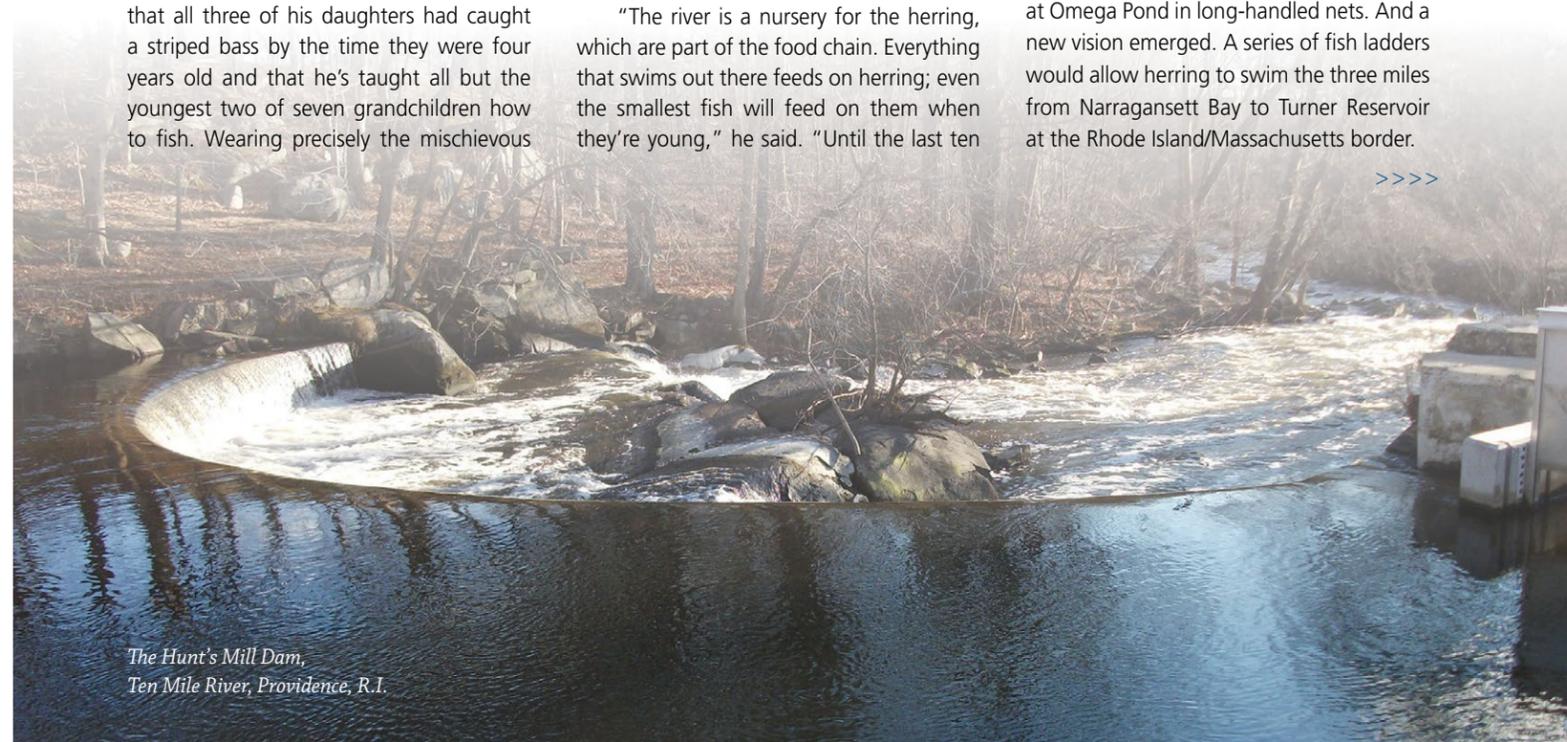
years or so, people didn't care about the herring, just the big fish. But the big fish wouldn't be here if the herring weren't."

His idea to "get some herring and stock this place," however, wasn't particularly legal. "We'd go out at night, so the game wardens wouldn't come after us, scoop up 100 to 150 herring from other places, put them in 20-gallon galvanized buckets with water and ice, and then fly home to get them back in the river before they died," Paul said. "Me and my brother started it, and others saw us and joined in, and over the years, it was all the recreational fisherman in the Rhode Island who kept the herring in the river," Paul said.

## Perseverance

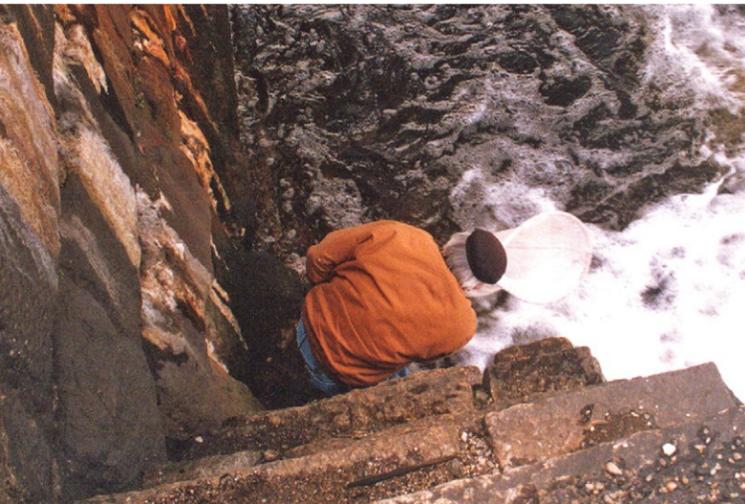
Over time, stocking turned to scooping as the herring that Paul and his friends initially relocated to these waters began to return to spawn. Trouble was, they couldn't get up over the dam into the Ten Mile River. So for the next several decades, the determined fisherman and legions of others took on the labor-intensive work of hoisting thousands of returning herring over the ten-foot dam at Omega Pond in long-handled nets. And a new vision emerged. A series of fish ladders would allow herring to swim the three miles from Narragansett Bay to Turner Reservoir at the Rhode Island/Massachusetts border.

>>>>



*The Hunt's Mill Dam,  
Ten Mile River, Providence, R.I.*

"I went to different companies about it. I went to DEM and talked to different directors. I talked to state representatives. But there was no funding. No one was going to put any money up for it. Nobody was interested enough in the herring to put money toward it," he said. So each spring when the herring returned to spawn, the scooping continued, in the dark of night, for many more years.



Things took a turn in the mid-1990s when Paul met Wenley Ferguson, Save The Bay's director of habitat restoration. He might call her the second hero of this story.

"When I first met Wenley—and remember, I'd met many different groups and people before, but it did no good—there was an excitement about her," he said. Gesturing with his hands, he added, "You can hear her voice go from 'down here' to way up in the high pitch, you know? It was a pleasure! She's a cuckoo clock, because you'd have to be cuckoo to care about what we were doing."

"When I first met Paul, I remember four-wheeling along the banks of the Seekonk River, and Paul literally telling the story of the area, how he gathered herring as a kid and sold them to markets on the East Side of Providence," Wenley said. He showed her areas that were at one time herring runs that have been filled in along this industrial waterfront, some, he said, to make a junkyard, others by neglect. "Paul was clearly a do-er. He had seen his childhood fishing spots destroyed, yet never gave up, and was able to mobilize and energize a bunch of fishermen to move herring over the dam by hand. That is no easy task," she said.

Their meeting just happened to occur at a time when Save The Bay was starting a new initiative to assess habitat restoration needs in the watershed. "We'd always had a vision to restore the Bay's water quality, and now we were expanding that vision to include restoring the Bay's habitats. The time was right for bringing

fish back; improvements in wastewater treatment in the upper Bay and the Ten Mile River had led to water quality that could now support the return of the anadromous population," she said.

### Determination

Sometimes it's not just what you know, but who you know, and Wenley knew people at other agencies and organizations who were interested in fish restoration. She knew, for example, that the City of East Providence owned the upper two dams, and that city manager, Paul Lemont, was a fisherman. "When I pitched the idea and said the word 'shad,' I could see the excitement in his eyes," she said.

The city quickly embraced the vision and became a partner. Dick Quinn, an engineer with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, had already completed a conceptual design for three fish ladders that became a blueprint for the project. Before long, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Save The Bay and the City of East Providence each secured matching funds that would allow the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a feasibility study.

More than a decade after the completion of the feasibility study and countless hours of work by DEM and the Army Corps of Engineers on the engineering and design of the ladders, three fish passages

would be built at the first three dams on the river: Omega Pond Dam, Hunts Mill Dam and Turner Reservoir Dam. The ladders would provide for upstream migration of adult blueback herring, alewife and American Shad to historic spawning areas. Each stair-like ladder would be four feet wide with a floor slope of one vertical rise to eight horizontal runs so that the herring and shad could literally swim through the ladder to reach their spawning grounds. The project would open up some three river miles and 340 acres of spawning habitat that could support more than 200,000 herring.

By this point, Paul was feeling good. "I thought 'this is really gonna happen,'" he said.

"This was Paul's vision. My role was to learn his vision, share it with others, pull together partners, secure some early funding, and



*CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM, LEFT: Herring scooped into a net; Paul Bettencourt, in 1998, showing Wenley Ferguson how he and other fishermen scooped herring over the Omega Pond Dam; the operational fish ladder at Hunt's Mill Pond; and the Omega Pond Fish Ladder Ribbon Cutting, June 19, 2015.*

push the process in the early stages. Then, other organizations and leaders stepped up," Wenley said. And, thanks to the Ten Mile River Watershed Council formed by Keith Gonsalves in the mid 2000s, more community support was built for the river restoration and even more people shared Paul's vision.

### An Idea is Realized

As the complexity and expense of the project grew—there were easements to be secured, an overhead power line to circumnavigate, a railroad bridge in the way, a gas line to be moved, and more—so did the list of partners and funders. Among them were the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with state and local partners including the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association and the Ten Mile River Watershed Council.

While the project progressed, the annual spring "human fish ladder" event that Paul began in the 1960s—by this time being done

legally under the auspices of DEM and coordinated by the Ten Mile River Watershed Council—became the community-wide "Scoop The Herring" celebration that served to reconnect people to the river in their backyards.

Spring 2015 was the first season in more than a half-century that Paul didn't throw herring over the Omega Pond Dam. He didn't have to. On a warm day in April, Paul and Wenley both received calls from Keith Gonsalves, his ecstatic voice proclaiming, "the herring are using the ladder!" The ladders allowed for the first unassisted spawning run of herring on the Ten Mile River in more than a century. On June 19, 2015, during a ceremonial ribbon cutting, federal, state and local leaders and community partners celebrated the \$9.5 million project. "It was a great example of a community-based project conceived by a local fisherman that has led to a partnership of community organizations and government agencies," Wenley said.

"There was nothing more pleasing to my eyes than to look down at that fish ladder and see the herring swimming by. They climbed up the whole ladder and kept going. I went up to Hunts Mill to see how many were there, too. I counted there and jotted down when I saw them and how many, and other people were doing the same thing. And boy it was a pleasure to see," Paul said.

### The Long View

For Paul and for Save The Bay, the opening of the fish run was a vision realized. "Bringing a forage fish back to an historic habitat is bringing life and vitality back to the river. The return of these migratory fish enhances the freshwater and saltwater fish populations, which improves recreational and commercial fishing, brings back osprey and great blue herons that feed on these fish and increases the biodiversity of the river," Wenley said.

Opening up the fish passage is only part of the story. True habitat restoration will take work on many fronts. The upper Turner Reservoir and Central Ponds often experience blooms of toxic blue-green algae and the flow in the Ten Mile River is dominated by wastewater effluent and impacted by polluted runoff. Save The Bay is steadfast in our commitment to continued river restoration. Our work is inspired by the determination of local environmental stewards like Paul Bettencourt, who support us as volunteers, donors, visionaries and voices for the Bay. ■



ADVOCACY

# Perseverance Wins for Narragansett Bay

BY TOPHER HAMBLETT, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY



Staying power. Determination. Patience. Impatience. That's what it takes to protect and improve Narragansett Bay. As we reflect on nearly 50 years of advocacy, and prepare for the next 50 years, it is important to remember that some of the most important victories for Narragansett Bay have been achieved by taking the long view, and by persevering through the most difficult battles. Here are a few of the more memorable ones:

### Quonset Mega-Port

In 2000, Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Almond announced that the state would develop a global "load center" port at Quonset Point. The plan called for filling in 500 acres of Narragansett Bay by extending Quonset-Davisville, blasting a trench across the Bay to accommodate the world's largest container vessels and disturbing highly-valued shellfishing grounds. Save The Bay called "time out!" Working in coalition with North Kingstown residents, fishermen, shell fishermen, the Conservation Law Foundation, Sierra Club-RI and countless other allies, we convinced Governor Almond to carry out a stakeholder process that involved countless public meetings, hearings, and events over the next nearly five years to examine alternatives to the load center port. We mobilized citizens and members, engaged legislators who questioned the viability and wisdom of the "megaport" and were a constant presence in the media. We also overcame accusations of being "anti-job" and "NIMBY" (not in my backyard) by political leaders and the media outlets. In the end, the voice of the people who love Narragansett Bay prevailed.

### The Habitat Trust Fund

The Rhode Island General Assembly passage in 2004 of the Rhode Island Habitat Restoration Trust Fund was the result of eight years of relentless advocacy by Save The Bay. The fund, passed by the leadership of Senate President Teresa Paiva-Weed (Newport) and House Environment Committee Chairman Jan Malik (Warren), generates \$250,000 for projects through a five-cent-per-barrel fee on petroleum imported to Rhode Island ports, and has leveraged millions of dollars

in federal, local and private funds for restoration efforts. Through sheer determination, we overcame strong opposition by the petroleum industry and by some legislative leaders who aimed to 'punish' Save The Bay for supporting a Separation of Powers amendment to the RI Constitution, which, in the end, barred legislators from sitting on, and making appointments to, quasi-public boards and commissions.

### The Dredge Wars

Historically, the dredged material from marinas and yacht clubs was dumped in the most convenient locations, often nearby salt marshes. As a result, marshes in places like Allins Cove (Barrington) were choked with dredge material, their ecological functions as nurseries badly impaired. At other times, proposals were made to dump dredged spoils in other ecologically valuable places, such as the waters off Prudence Island that serve as lobster habitat. After a decade of fighting the "dredge wars," Save The Bay and the RI Marine Trades Association rolled up our sleeves and advocated for new state policy that now makes in-Bay dumping a last resort and the beneficial use of dredge material for landscaping and capping of contaminated sites the preferred option.

### Saving Mount Hope Bay from Thermal and Sewage Pollution and an LNG Terminal

When Weaver's Cove Energy LLC announced in 2011 that it was suspending its pursuit of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Mount Hope Bay, the company cited "unfavorable economic conditions" as its reason. But that's just part of the story. The company had been aggressively pursuing the project for more than seven years, first on the shores of Fall River, Mass. and then smack in the middle of Mount Hope Bay itself. In fact, Weaver's Cove was the third LNG proposal for Narragansett Bay that Save The Bay successfully defeated since the early 1970s. And it wasn't the only time the ecological health of Mount Hope Bay was at stake. By the 1990s, the Brayton Point power plant in Somerset, Mass. had been using one billion gallons of Bay water per day to cool its generators, destroying

the young winter flounder populations it drew into its intake pipe, and upsetting the ecosystem when it then 'returned' water to Mount Hope Bay at up to 95 degrees.

Joining with and mobilizing citizen groups, municipal governments, marine trades organizations, fishermen, lobstermen, chambers of commerce and many individuals, Save The Bay has repeatedly and staunchly defended Mount Hope Bay through grassroots, media, legislative and legal advocacy. The community dug its heels in and won again the LNG proposal. A new EPA permit required major changes in the power plant's cooling operations. And the City



Cooling towers at Brayton Point

of Fall River, Mass. embarked on a project to dramatically reduce raw sewage overflows to Mount Hope Bay, which had caused the closure of shellfish beds in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island waters. For nearly 50 years, we have worked to prevent the over-industrialization of Narragansett Bay, preserving the delicate balance of uses that makes Narragansett Bay so unique and championing

its restoration. Today, Mount Hope Bay has turned the corner from decades of pollution, the Brayton Point power plant is operating with a new cooling system, and shellfish beds are open far more frequently than ever before. ■



2005 Walker Farm salt marsh restoration, funded in part by the Habitat Restoration Fund.

## The 39th Annual Bay Swim at a Glance

**421 SWIMMERS**  
**\$320,000 RAISED**

**20 STATES**  **2 COUNTRIES**

**119 FIRST TIME SWIMMERS**  **190 KAYAKERS**

**127 SWIMMERS RAISED MORE THAN \$600 EACH** 

**AGE RANGE 15 TO 75** **1,000 VOLUNTEERS**

**SAVE THE BAY. SWIM FOR NARRAGANSETT BAY**



# Inspiring the Next Generation

Meet Kati Maginel, a member of Save The Bay's incredible education team since 2008. The only female boat captain on staff and an education specialist, Kati considers this her "dream job." And we consider Kati a key figure in our own dream of building the next generation of Bay stewards. Her work here wouldn't be possible without the generosity of our supporters.

## What is the focus of environmental learning at Save The Bay?

At the surface, we teach marine science and environmental stewardship, but our work starts way before that. Learning is like a pyramid, with a safe and supportive learning environment at the bottom and engagement at the top. A lot of our students don't feel safe right away when they come to our classrooms—there are animals



in the tanks, they've never been on a boat or worn a life jacket. We have to build trust and confidence first, meet them where they are and work toward higher learning and engagement. I feel really good when we get to that place! We hope that through the rest of their experience, they develop a sense of stewardship, that they belong to the Bay and the Bay belongs to them.

## What are some of the new experiences we give our students?

Putting on a life jacket can be a really big deal for a child. Touching dirt. Feeling the water. Using a microscope. Some of the bigger, scarier firsts are stepping on a boat, going swimming, snorkeling, holding animals. An interesting challenge is that of perception. Kids will see something like seaweed in the water and they'll say, "I'm not swimming in that," so we work on the understanding that if there is life in the water, the water is clean and healthy. And that's a difficult thing for them to grapple with, because they think if it doesn't look like bath water, it's dirty.

## Why is the education program at Save The Bay so important?

Students' experiences with us—environmental learning, hands-on, and outdoor learning—is so novel for most kids. It's not a developed aspect of our public school programming, and it is sadly absent in mainstream culture, so most students just don't get this type of education elsewhere.

## What's the best part of your work at Save The Bay?

Without a doubt, being part of our Explore team, which is our education department. Every person has reasons for being there that are heartfelt; we rely on each other as a team, and there is a lot of very elemental giving for each other that goes on. We are who we are, and I am who I am, because of that. Of course, working with the broader Save The Bay "family" is a privilege, but because of the intensity of our work in education, we develop a sense of community that you don't find very often at the workplace.

## What might surprise our readers about the experiences we give our students?

When adults are around while we're teaching, they listen and overhear and find that much of the time they don't know the basics we teach about the Bay. They're often compelled to interrupt our teaching to learn, and I love that.

Also, the number of kids we serve—15,000 per year—and the reach and scope of our programs. With everything from in-school and after-school programs, to boat-based programs and field studies, weekend tours, private marine science programs, camps, and

moving our boats all over the state, we could be starting at seven in the morning and wrapping things up late at night, pretty much year-round.

## What other things add that extra spark to your work?

Three big things: (1) I really enjoy being a female captain. A lot of kids notice that, and it's fun to watch them adapt their thinking about what they can do when they grow up; (2) Working with kids presents challenges that are always new, always something you've never dealt with before. You have to be creative; and (3) In our work, conditions affect our teaching. We're on the water and a storm kicks up, so we need to completely change our plans. Or the whole program we've planned doesn't suit the type of learners we have that day, so we have to shift gears to Plan B, C or D. To me, that's challenging and entertaining in a good way. ■

# The Value of Bay Education: Priceless



BY SHEILA MARTIN,  
MAJOR GIFTS OFFICER

As retired teachers living in Jamestown, Tot and Mary Wright understand the value of education. One of many reasons they support Save The Bay is because of our commitment to building future generations of people who will understand the value of our Bay and care for it with the same commitment as current and past generations. For more than three decades, the Wrights have supported Save The Bay as one of their favorite non-profit organizations, financially as a couple, and Tot, as a Trustee and member of our Education Committee.

"My feeling is, for the long run, the most valuable contribution of Save The Bay is its education of children to become the next generation of Bay stewards," said Tot. "The work that Save The Bay does with our schools is very important. Children don't only learn from textbooks; they gain knowledge through hands-on experiences in Save The Bay classes."

Mary agrees, "Save The Bay makes education a priority. Educating children about this great resource is priceless. Save The Bay teaches about the environment and conservation hands-on. In addition, it puts some of the responsibility of the future of the Bay into their hands."

Through our Explore The Bay program, we've been connecting students and teachers to Narragansett Bay for more than 30 years. Our Bay Center has an accessible

rocky shore coastline, two laboratory classrooms and a dock that houses three U.S. Coast Guard-certified education vessels. It is the ideal location for combining a boat program with a coastal program in a laboratory-like environment. Last year, Explore The Bay served more than 15,000 students in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

"Watershed education is also very important. People need to understand the totality of the situation. What happens upstream affects our Bay. The Bay serves as a recreational, commercial and environmental resource for Rhode Island," Tot said. "I am delighted that our contributions go to an organization that has done the most to improve its health."

Mary points out that Narragansett Bay makes Rhode Island an unusual and special place to live and visit, and that because of the work of Save The Bay, the water is available for so many activities, such as swimming, fishing, boating and more.

"Can you imagine what would happen to Rhode Island's tourist economy if the polluters were still allowed to 'dump' in the Bay? How wonderful that Save The Bay is working to protect its waters. The Bay is 'ours' for a very short period of time. We need to care for it for future generations," she said.

On why they continue to support Save The Bay in their annual giving after all these years, Tot says, "Narragansett Bay is the greatest natural resource that Rhode Island has. Save The Bay embodies a wonderful group of dedicated individuals who together improve its overall health." ■



## Why We Give

"We support Save The Bay's mission because we feel that the health and sustenance of Narragansett Bay is arguably the most important factor in the State of Rhode Island's long term success... economically, environmentally and as a quality place to live. And we support Save The Bay as an organization because of its strong leadership, committed and energetic staff, visionary approach and overall excellence in how it does its work today and for the last 45 years."

— Joan and Rich Abrams,  
Bristol, RI

"We started supporting Save The Bay for the straightforward reason many do: we have chosen a community on Narragansett Bay as a family home and like to think of our kids—and generations to come—enjoying all aspects of the Bay in the way we have over time. We have continued our support because, simply, STB gets things done. The organization is amongst the most responsible stewards of our contributions of any we work with and we can see near-term, tangible results of our involvement. That is gratifying."

— Geoff & Martha Tuff,  
Wellesley MA & Jamestown RI

To learn more about giving to our education, restoration or advocacy programs, contact Sheila Martin at 401-272-3540 x126 or smartin@savebay.org.

# Talking Trash: The International Coastal Cleanup



BY JULY LEWIS,  
VOLUNTEER AND INTERN MANAGER

Everyone loves a shoreline cleanup. What could be a more simple, satisfying way to make a difference? Save The Bay holds cleanups around the state from Earth Day to Thanksgiving. But the International Coastal Cleanup, managed by Save The Bay in Rhode Island, takes shoreline cleanups to a whole new level.

Not only is this part of a massive global effort, with over 560,000 volunteers in 91 countries picking up 16 million pounds of trash, but this cleanup is also special because we record what we find and publish it in an annual report on marine debris.

## Understanding Marine Debris: Where Does It Come From?

**1. Shoreline Activity.** International Coastal Cleanup data shows that the primary source of such individual litter items as food wrappers, beverage cans, plastic bags and straws, is shoreline activity. The number one item collected is cigarette butts. In Rhode Island in 2014, 41,803 butts were picked up, amounting to 33 percent of all items collected. While much of this is littered directly on the beach, items thrown into the street many miles away are washed into storm drains, which empty into our waterways.

**2. Boating and Fishing.** Ropes, fishing nets and lobster pots can be lost in storms or accidentally cut loose by a propeller. They may also be intentionally and illegally disposed of in the ocean. And while this type of debris makes up a small percentage of items found on the ICC, it often makes up a big portion of the weight and volume of trash collected. These items can also be among the most hazardous and are a major cause of entanglement for birds, turtles, whales and other larger marine life. International Coastal Cleanup volunteers actually record entangled animals that they find, and the culprit is nearly always fishing line.

**3. Dumping.** Tires, mattresses, auto parts and construction debris are all signs of dumping by irresponsible individuals who want to avoid the inconvenience or cost of proper disposal. We find these items on isolated shoreline areas where people



*ABOVE: Cleanups can be a family affair, like this one at Narragansett Town Beach. LEFT: Employee volunteers from National Grid, signature sponsor of the International Coastal Cleanup, pick up marine debris at Fields Point.*

can sneak up and dump without being seen. Again, these items are fewer in number but tend to weigh a lot!

**4. Tiny Trash.** A growing problem with shoreline debris is that there is so much trash entering the water that

## 2015 UNUSUAL FINDS

- Defibrillator pads
- Unopened bag of medical marijuana
- Traffic cone
- Flonase
- Sword box (the box that a sword came in)
- Glowsticks
- Live eel in a bag
- Test tube
- \$25
- Christmas lights



*LEFT: Citizens Bank volunteers clean up debris at Scarborough Beach in Narragansett. BELOW: Volunteer Beach Captains Lauren Ford and Jackie Metzger at Bold Point in East Providence.*

it is literally becoming part of the beach. A new feature of the ICC data sheet is recording unidentifiable bits of plastic, foam or glass less than 2.5 cm in diameter. Last year in Rhode Island, volunteers picked up 32,301 tiny bits.

## Communicating the Problem

At the end of the day, Save The Bay's mission is to protect and improve Narragansett Bay. And that means changing the behavior of people who litter, dump and cut loose items that pollute our waters and endanger humans and marine life. Because of the special nature of the International Coastal Cleanup—a truly global effort that occurs right in our backyard—we can really highlight the issue, generate media coverage, and get people thinking about the issue. Save The Bay is tallying our statewide results and will publish a report in a few months. International Coastal Cleanup is an opportunity for parents to talk to their kids about littering, and for communities to band together and take stewardship of their beaches. Spreading the word helps us to reinforce the ethic that it is never okay to litter, ever.

## Do Something About It

Raising awareness is certainly a key to litter reduction, and sometimes communities need to take action on a policy level. All over the world, policy makers rely on data from the International Coastal Cleanup to craft and support their proposals—for

bans on plastic bags and smoking at beaches, litter ordinances, redesign of products to reduce entanglements, and more.

Marine debris is a global issue, one that unites us all. In Rhode Island, South Africa, Hong Kong—we all want clean shorelines. Join Save The Bay in making that vision a reality. ■



**Why do we record what we find?** It's a good question, because cleanups definitely go faster if we're not collecting data. But the numbers are so powerful that it doesn't make sense not to. The data help us understand the problem, communicate the problem, and empower communities to do something about it.



## TAKE ACTION

In order to offer more cleanups, we need more leaders! Sign up for shoreline cleanup leader training on Saturday, March 19, 10 a.m.-noon at 100 Save The Bay Drive in Providence. Assist Save The Bay with our 2016 cleanups or plan your own in your neighborhood. Contact July Lewis at [jlewis@savebay.org](mailto:jlewis@savebay.org) for more information or to sign up.

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# SAVE THE DATE

**Westerly Seal Tour Season**

October 10 - December 31, 2015

**Newport Seal Tour Season**

November 14, 2015 - April 24, 2016

**Fall River Seal Tour Season**

March 5 - April 10, 2016

**Art Show & Sale Opening Reception**

Thursday, December 3, 2015

**Art Show & Sale Closing Reception**

Saturday, January 30, 2016

**Taste of the Bay & Annual Meeting**

Thursday, June 9, 2016

**40th Annual Swim**

Saturday, August 13, 2016

## Connect with Us



Save The Bay is on social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Blogger. Follow along, share your stories and pictures, plan a visit and spread the word about the importance of a healthy Narragansett Bay.

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Follow us on Twitter at: [twitter.com/savethebayri](https://twitter.com/savethebayri)

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BE PART OF A MOVEMENT, A TRADITION, A COMMUNITY DEDICATED TO PROTECTING AND IMPROVING NARRAGANSETT BAY. TOGETHER, WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE:

- Serve as the VOICE of the Bay.
- Advocate for clean water and a healthy environment.
- Inspire the next generation of Bay stewards.
- Restore rivers and coastal wetlands.
- Lead the fight to protect Rhode Island's most valuable natural resource.

As a Save The Bay member, you enjoy: member rates on exciting public programming, invitations to special events, monthly member newsletter, bi-annual *Tides* magazine, discounts at local merchants, and more.

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