

# TIDES



**Pollution,  
Interrupted**  
Persistence of the  
BayKeeper pays off

FROM THE DIRECTOR

# How We're Saving Your Bay

A year ago, *Tides* focused on the simple question: "What is the Bay worth to you?" Our fall issue asked, "How do you save the Bay?" and highlighted the many ways individuals, families and business partners take action. In this issue, we explore examples of how our dedicated staff works tirelessly to save your Bay. I hope the thread here is clear: a community of people, coming together with shared values and a common devotion to beautiful Narragansett Bay, can make an extraordinary difference.

From one day to the next, it may not be apparent how much work, persistence and dedication it takes to make good things happen. Much of the time, our efforts are made quietly behind the scenes. Our goal in this issue of *Tides* is to share with you how Save The Bay's advocacy, restoration and education teams work on your behalf to achieve results through a very deliberate approach to environmental advocacy and education.

The case of Rhode Island Recycled Metals (RIRM) is a good example. Years ago we recognized that enforcement capacity at two key Rhode Island state agencies charged with environmental protection—the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC)—had been eroded by budget cuts, limited legal capacity, weak penalty provisions and conflicting agency goals. Not coincidentally, we observed rapid growth in the auto salvage



and scrap metal industries in Rhode Island at the same time. In 2009, oil slicks began to appear on the Providence River. Our investigation implicated RIRM. By concentrating our efforts since 2010 on a flagrant polluter, we have worked diligently to achieve three goals: stop pollution of the Bay by RIRM, encourage the scrap and auto salvage industries to fulfill their legal obligations to protect water quality, and shine a light on the enforcement capacity problem at DEM and CRMC (see the articles on pages 4 and 5).

At Save The Bay, our ability to field an expert staff, maintain on-the-water vigilance, and draw public attention to serious environmental problems depends on the generosity of you, our members, donors and partners. You should know that so often it is "quiet" work and perseverance that precedes major success. RIRM is a case in point. Thank you for helping us save the Bay.

Jonathan Stone  
Executive Director

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A scene from Rhode Island Recycled Metals' coastal site on Allens Avenue in Providence.

# Taste of the Bay

& Annual Meeting



Tickets at  
[savebay.org/taste](http://savebay.org/taste)

Join us for our 2015 Taste of The Bay as we celebrate the flavors, sights, and sounds of Narragansett Bay. Enjoy delicious food and drink from your favorite local restaurants, bakeries, breweries, and wineries, while taking in beautiful scenery and live music.

**Thursday, June 11**

Annual Meeting 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Taste of The Bay 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.



**Save The Bay Center**  
100 Save The Bay Drive  
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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.



## COVER STORY

# Pollution, Interrupted

**Persistence of the BayKeeper Pays Off** | BY JONATHAN STONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Good things don't happen by accident. In the case of Rhode Island Recycled Metals (RIRM), hard work and persistence by Save The Bay's BayKeeper finally paid off.

RIRM will no longer be crushing cars up against the shore of the Providence River at its 484 Allens Avenue scrapping site. The company will no longer be dragging piles of dirty, rusting scrap metal through the contaminated soils of its waterfront property. Contaminated mud produced by the company's operations every time it rains will no longer be flowing, unabated, into our beautiful Bay. RIRM can no longer accept old, decrepit ships and let them sink to the bottom of the Bay. Nor can they drag those rusting heaps up over the unprotected shore to be cut apart, spilling their foul contents into the Bay. They are no longer allowed to process metals on this site, nor on their other unimproved and unpermitted facility at 278 Allens Avenue. For now, at least, the dirtiest scrap operation on the Bay has been ordered, by Superior Court, to cease most of the operations that have been polluting Narragansett Bay for more than five years.

That's because the Rhode Island attorney general's office and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) are finally cracking down on the polluter. But the truth is, the attorney general's action against RIRM would not have happened had not Save The Bay's BayKeeper and advocacy

*PAGES 4-5: Scenes from Rhode Island Recycled Metals on Allens Avenue in Providence.*



team diligently pursued the case for more than five years. The BayKeeper, charged with monitoring water quality and scouting for pollution, played a critical role in prompting legal action.

Back in 2010, after observing oil spills on the Bay coming from RIRM scrapping operations, our BayKeeper first reported to RIDEM that RIRM was violating the Clean Water Act. RIDEM staff were unaware of the blatant violations of the law, including unpermitted car crushing and processing, lack of stormwater controls, modifications to the shoreline, in-water shipbreaking and expansion to another nearby Bay-front site without permits.

As RIDEM's lack of staff and resources delayed enforcement and allowed violations to continue for years, our BayKeeper, Tom Kutcher, and staff environmental attorney Kendra Beaver, who joined us in 2014, relentlessly pressed RIDEM to enforce the Clean Water Act. Their determined and time-consuming efforts have included frequent emails to RIDEM staff documenting violations with descriptions, photographs, and

videos from the water and land; written comments on permits; numerous file searches of RIDEM and Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) files to build the enforcement case; bringing RIDEM Enforcement staff to the shore side of the site by boat to observe violations firsthand; and petitioning RIDEM to conduct inspections of the sites at critical times.

Tom also kept the press informed about the egregious pollution problems at the RIRM site to help spur RIDEM to take action. Interviews and reporter visits to the site by water resulted in numerous feature articles from several news outlets, including two front-page articles in the *Providence Journal*.

During the brutal winter months this year, Tom was on the water, directing the US Coast Guard to an oil spill leaking from a RIRM vessel in the Providence River. His initiative resulted in legal action by the Coast Guard, bolstering the case being developed by RIDEM and the attorney general's office. In fact, the BayKeeper's work was highlighted in the findings of a recent House resolution calling upon the RIDEM to take action against this polluter. This case exemplifies the critical role our BayKeeper plays in our advocacy work.

The simple truth is that our BayKeeper program would not be possible without the generous support of our loyal members and donors, whose generosity is essential to our ability to serve as watchdog for your Bay.

## Rhode Island Deserves a Level Playing Field in Environmental Enforcement

HOW A DELAY IN ENFORCEMENT COSTS RHODE ISLANDERS

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

A healthy Narragansett Bay and fair business climate require timely and consistent enforcement of regulations that protect, restore and improve our coastal resources. Rhode Island's failure to provide its Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) with robust enforcement capacity is economically short-sighted and irresponsible. Enforcing environmental laws is critical if Rhode Island truly wants to encourage investment and create a level playing field in which clear and predictable regulations are consistently applied to all individuals and businesses.

The case of RI Recycled Metals (RIRM), which was allowed to operate its Allens Avenue scrapyards in blatant violation of the Clean Water Act and other environmental laws for more than four years, is a wake-up call on the consequences of lax or delayed enforcement. Consider this:

- Pollution from crushed automobiles, appliances and other sources was allowed to be dumped directly into the Providence River, a place cherished for recreational fishing and community boating programs. Despite inspections and many confirmed violations, RIRM continued to operate in violation of the law. The company ignored many warnings and letters ordering immediate action, as well as a Consent Agreement to take immediate steps to achieve compliance with the law. The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) failed to enforce the "Maintenance Certification" it issued.
- RIRM gained a competitive advantage over other scrap processors who played by the rules by investing in stormwater pollution controls and abiding by their permits. Years of failure by the state to hold RIRM accountable contributes to the image of Rhode Island as a place where it "pays to pollute."
- Taxpayers may wind up footing the bill for cleaning up this mess. The approximate cost to clean up and recap the site is \$200,000 to \$300,000, and to remove submerged and floating vessels at the site, another \$2 million to \$6 million. It is unclear whether or not RIRM has the assets to pay these costs. If not, the cost will likely fall to taxpayers. It would have been more cost-efficient to pay for staff at RIDEM to enforce the law in the first place.

Rhode Island should never be known as a state where it pays to pollute. RIDEM's enforcement capacity, which has been drastically cut over the past decade, must be restored. When RIDEM is sufficiently resourced, consistent enforcement of environmental laws creates a business-friendly culture, improves our environment and removes the competitive advantage of violation.

The good news is that action has finally been taken to stop RIRM's ongoing pollution of the Providence River. Attorney General Peter Kilmartin stepped in to assist a short-staffed RIDEM and commenced legal action against the company in the fall of 2014. At last, the case is proceeding as it should have many years ago.



A Superior Court injunction prohibits scrap from being processed on site, vessels dismantled without permission and additional vessels and junk vehicles brought to the site. The order also requires the installation and maintenance of hay bales and silt fence along the shoreline and prohibits further disturbance to the shoreline and requires that all waste be disposed of by early May 2015. The Superior Court has prohibited RIRM from removing any assets from both locations on Allens Avenue to ensure there are some funds available for cleanup. RIRM has stated that it will prepare a plan to properly close the site and faces another court hearing in May.

The bad news is that the Providence River and its shoreline have been contaminated. The site is a mess, with at least four corroding vessels in or under water, a damaged shoreline, and a disturbed "cap" that had been established to contain contaminated soils.



## EDUCATION

# Bringing the Outside In

AND CREATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF BAY STEWARDS

BY JENNIFER KELLY,  
AFTERSCHOOL  
PROGRAM MANAGER



ABOVE: Second-grade students explore Sachuest Point's rocky shore for Bay artifacts. TOP, RIGHT: Students meet live animals, like this hermit crab, in their classrooms.

*Jen has been here from the beginning. No, not the beginning of Save The Bay (that was 1970), but the beginning of our five-year partnership with Robertson Elementary School, in which Save The Bay provides marine science education to all K-6 students. The program is called Bay Partners. As the grant from the Defenders of Greenwich Bay nears its end, Jen reflects on the past five years.*

At a family night to introduce Save The Bay and our presence in their classrooms, even before our first day of programming, parents were very excited about the new partnership and the experiences their children would enjoy. Then-principal Lynn Dambruch and I explained that Save The Bay's education team would provide marine science education focused on Narragansett Bay as a local environmental resource. Students would participate in multiple, progressive programs with us that directly connect with K-12 science standards and what they are learning in their science classes. Each grade would receive up to three different classroom programs and one field experience per year. Field experiences might be at our Aquarium or Bay Center, a coastal site or onboard one of our education vessels.

"The vision for this program was to expose students to their local environment through multiple years of programming. Our hope was to give them a more lasting view of the Bay so they would go on to make good decisions and continue protecting it throughout their lives," said Jack Early, president of Defenders of Greenwich Bay, which provided the five-year grant that has made Bay Partners possible.

Students in many grades have been introduced to live animals—some from our shorelines and others from the depths of the Bay—studying the features that help them survive in Narragansett Bay. Others learned about Bay animals a little differently—through our models, where they explored their external and internal anatomies.

The study of animals has provided an ideal segway into food webs, watersheds, habitats and climate change, since all of these are important to the story of the animals' survival. And we try to keep it interesting. I felt very proud when Principal



Dambruch told me, "Students said that meaningful, hands-on activities made learning about science fun."

Field experiences have enhanced what the students learned in their classrooms. One student said her favorite was "going on the boat to look for seals—it was a fun adventure." Third graders became marine scientists, combing the beach and seining the water for artifacts all while discovering it's sometimes wet and dirty work. "This is so fun! I can change later at school," one student said after finding herself a bit above her boots in water, and then continued on exploring for shells, crabs, fish and shrimp.

*"Our hope was to give them a more lasting view of the Bay so they would go on to make good decisions and continue protecting it throughout their lives."  
~ Jack Early, President of Defenders of Greenwich Bay*

"The program has given great insight into what's happening to their local environment. It has changed their lives," said fifth-grade teacher Leo Gauthier. "Because of what they're learning in lower grades, they arrive to fifth and sixth grade with a strong

knowledge of the Bay and increased science vocabulary. The program has even helped generate better discussions in social studies."

"Without question, our teachers felt the programs complemented their classroom lessons and aligned with the state's science standards. On top of that, kids go home and share what they've learned about the Bay with their families. The PTO really values and embraces the program," said Principal Dambruch.

More than 480 students at Robertson Elementary have received classroom programming and field experiences in our Bay Partners program. "It has been an outstanding hands-on experience for them. They are always talking about it. When we are studying current events, they often make connections and bring up examples of what they've learned with Save The Bay," said fifth-grade teacher John Paolino.

One of the most rewarding things for me has been to witness the students' love and respect for the Bay grow over the years. One student this year told me that he had a very good idea about what a watershed is—and this was two years after he learned about it. He said, "Pollution drains to the Bay. When you first started teaching here, I thought the Bay was not too polluted. Now I think it needs a lot of attention and I will keep helping."

Every educator hopes to impact the life of a student. These students are Narragansett Bay's future stewards. It makes me so proud to see how much they have learned and how much it has influenced their lives.



ABOVE: Students touch and hold a sea star during class with Save The Bay. BELOW: Third-grade students explore the sandy beach at Fields Point, collecting algae and animals, and then identifying them.



## STAFF PROFILES

# Caring for Watershed Health

Meet Rachel Calabro, a member of Save The Bay's advocacy team since 2008. She advocates staunchly for the Narragansett Bay watershed, a 1,600-mile area of rivers, streams and ponds that flow from the Taunton and Blackstone River areas to the north and northeast downstream into the Bay. Without your support, we couldn't protect these habitats that are critical to the overall health of the Bay we love.



and supports rare plants and freshwater mussels. The Taunton River estuary has some of the healthiest salt marshes in Narragansett Bay, the region's largest run of river herring, and a globally rare species of shiner, a tiny fish that lives in headwater streams. Archaeologically speaking, the story of the colonists and the Wampanoag—the origins of our settlement of North America—is basically embedded in this watershed.

## Why does the Taunton River watershed in Massachusetts matter to Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island?

Sixty percent of our watershed is in Massachusetts. These small headwater streams are the foundations of the ecosystem, supporting a wide variety of insects and small fish at the base of the food chain. Unfortunately, our largest sewage treatment plants also happen to be located in these headwaters—in Worcester and Brockton—sending all their effluent into these tiny streams and doubling their size. And it all flows downstream into the Bay. That's why we're working hard in these two watersheds.

**What excites you most about your work?** I love dam removal projects because as soon as the habitat is available, fish are there to fill the niche. I love to see what happens that you didn't anticipate; to see how many other species start coming back. I love working with dedicated watershed groups and communities that really embrace these improvements and celebrate the history of the area.

**How do you feel about Save The Bay's goal to expand its educational programs and advocacy into the Taunton River watershed area?** We called it an undiscovered gem when we started the Wild and Scenic study. I'm really glad we're expanding our education programs into the area because it's an underserved area in terms of their understanding of the importance of their position within the watershed.

## What is the focus of your work at Save The Bay?

I focus on tributary rivers and river advocacy, water quality inputs from wastewater treatment plants and stormwater, the health of freshwater fisheries and their interaction with the saltwater fisheries and flooding. I work with many federal, state and local partners on salt marsh restoration, dam removals, fish ladders and recreation projects, plus grants and permit applications, and I work with the many watershed councils to protect local rivers and streams.

## The Taunton River is a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River. What does that mean?

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Program provides a layer of protection and recognition within the National Park Service for rivers that have been found to have "outstandingly remarkable values" that make the river system regionally significant. The Taunton River was designated Wild and Scenic by Congress in 2009, and I was fortunate enough to be part of the federal study team for the designation.

## What is "outstandingly remarkable" about the Taunton River watershed?

There are many superlatives I could use to describe the Taunton River; it's amazing. It is the longest undammed coastal river in our region, so it has a natural salt wedge and about five miles of brackish and freshwater tidal river. Because of the prevalence of dams in most watersheds, this ecosystem is very rare

# Inspiring Careers

**Hannah Rachin**, of Attleboro, Mass., always thought she wanted to be a veterinarian. Then, several summers as a Save The Bay camper changed her course. She fell in love with fish trawls, seeing marine animals in their natural habitat and even plankton. So much so, that Hannah attended our High School Summer Academy and our counselor-in-training program and returns to us this summer as a BayCamp counselor, eager to inspire young campers' love for marine science and the environment, just the way her own camp counselors did many years ago. Her veterinarian plans now behind her, she's heading off to college this fall, planning to major in Marine Biology.



# Get Rid of R.I.'s Cesspools, Once and For All

HELP US PASS CESSPOOL "POINT OF SALE" LEGISLATION TO RID RHODE ISLAND OF 25,000 REMAINING CESSPOOLS

BY TOPHER HAMBLETT, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY

What happens when you flush your toilet, use your shower or wash your dishes? In most of Rhode Island, sewage and wastewater from homes and businesses travel through pipes to a centralized wastewater treatment plant. There, pollutants—bacteria, metals and excess nitrogen and phosphorus—are removed from that wastewater before it's discharged into local rivers or Narragansett Bay. For many other Rhode Islanders, septic systems perform the same function, removing many pollutants and filtering the wastewater before sending it into the ground.



25,000 cesspools like this one continue to pollute Rhode Island's groundwater, drinking water and Narragansett Bay.

But, on an estimated 25,000 properties, sewage and wastewater is flushed into cesspools, which are nothing more than holes in the ground lined with rocks or bricks. They do not remove pollutants, nor do they treat wastewater in any way. In fact, cesspools offer a direct conduit for sewage to reach groundwater, drinking water and Narragansett Bay and have been linked to the closures of iconic Rhode Island swimming spots.

Cesspools are so hazardous that they haven't been allowed in new construction since the 1960s due to public health concerns. Current law also requires removal of any cesspools located within 200 feet of coastal or surface waters and drinking water supplies. However, the R.I. Department

of Environmental Management (RIDEM) estimates about 25,000 cesspools remain in Rhode Island.

That's where Save The Bay comes in. We've been advocating for the removal of the remaining cesspools once and for all. In February, Representative Teresa Tanzi (Narragansett) and Senator Susan Sosnowski (South Kingstown, Charlestown, Block Island) introduced legislation in the RI General Assembly that requires cesspools to be removed within one year of a property sale.

Their Cesspool "Point of Sale" bills are supported by Save The Bay, The Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Clean Water Action RI and the Rhode Island Builders Association. As of this writing, the one organization working actively in opposition of the bill is the RI Association of Realtors, which claims that the cost of removing cesspools places an undue burden on a home seller or homebuyer.

Fortunately, the bill provides a hardship waiver for people who can demonstrate need, and low-interest loans for cesspool replacement are available through the RI Clean Water Finance Agency and RI Housing Authority. Residents in municipalities that have RIDEM-approved Wastewater Management Plans—which is most communities in the state—qualify for these loans. RIDEM is working with the remaining towns to develop and adopt them.

Save The Bay applauds Representative Tanzi and Senator Sosnowski for their leadership in the effort to finally rid Rhode Island of cesspools, once and for all. Cesspools are a threat to the water quality and ecological health of aquifers, coastal ponds, rivers and the Bay. And they impact places used for swimming, fishing, shellfishing, kayaking and other recreational activities that Rhode Islanders and our visitors love. Representative Tanzi and Senator Sosnowski are championing sound public policy that is good for Narragansett Bay, the health of all Rhode Islanders, and for the economy.



Your guide to the legislation and steps you can take to help us win passage of the Cesspool Point of Sale bill:

## House Bill 5668

**Sponsors:** Representatives Teresa Tanzi, Art Handy, Lauren Carson, Michael Morin, Helio Melo

**Web:** <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText15/HouseText15/H5668.pdf>

## Senate Bill 0369

**Sponsors:** Senators Susan Sosnowski, William Conley, Gayle Goldin

**Web:** <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText15/SenateText15/S0369.pdf>

## TAKE ACTION

Save The Bay calls on all its members and supporters to contact their legislators and urge them to **Vote Yes** on House Bill 5669 and Senate Bill 369. For help identifying or contacting your Representative and Senator, visit the RI Secretary of State's "Find Your Legislator" page at <https://sos.ri.gov/vic/>

You can also contact these Save The Bay staff members for more detailed information:

**Topher Hamblett**, Director of Advocacy: [thamblett@savebay.org](mailto:thamblett@savebay.org) or 401-272-3540 x119

**Rachel Calabro**, Community Organizer: [rcalabro@savebay.org](mailto:rcalabro@savebay.org) or 401-272-3540 x107

## STORMWATER SOLUTIONS

# Tackling the Stormwater Pollution Problem

BY TOPHER HAMBLETT,  
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY

Oil. Grease. Gasoline. Litter. Pet and animal waste. Chemicals and fertilizers. You have probably used or seen these things on our streets, parking lots, lawns, gardens and farms. When it rains, these pollutants often wind up in Narragansett Bay, or in rivers, streams, ponds, lakes and drinking water reservoirs. At its worst, this stormwater pollution threatens drinking water supplies, shellfishing grounds and swimming beaches. For example, in 2013, sustained periods of rain caused public health officials to close Oakland Beach to swimming for 28 days before the 4th of July. Save The Bay, along with Warwick officials and state legislators, held a press conference at Oakland Beach to call public attention to the chronic pollution problem that was robbing Rhode Islanders of their summer fun and harming local businesses.

Addressing this stormwater pollution problem remains a major challenge for communities throughout the Narragansett Bay watershed and the south coast of Rhode Island. Much of the pollution is swept



into catch basins and stormwater pipes—infrastructure that is deteriorating with age and needs to be maintained, repaired and upgraded. Paved streets that run right to the shores of Narragansett Bay increase the volume and speed at which polluted stormwater is being flushed into the Bay.

It's time to start peeling back the pavement to let nature do its work by absorbing stormwater into the ground. From on-the-ground stormwater projects to classroom education to financing and watchdogging, Save The Bay has been hard at work on the stormwater front.

## Projects

With a wide range of partners, we implement projects to reduce or remove pavement and replace it with soil and plants that absorb stormwater. At schools in Westerly and Newport, our staff have planted rain gardens. At “end of road” locations in Bristol, Warren and Warwick, where paved streets used to run straight into the Bay, we have “softened” the shoreline with plantings that absorb stormwater and absorb flooding from high tides. In Providence, we worked with city departments to “de-pave” sections of Roger Williams Park to reduce stormwater intrusion into ponds that are off-limits to people because of dangerous cyanobacteria from polluted runoff.

## Financing

The cities and towns in the Narragansett Bay region are on the front lines in dealing with their stormwater problems. They

generate revenue by assessing fees to properties based on the amount of impervious surface cover—think driveways, rooftops and parking lots. Many stormwater enterprise funds provide fee-reduction incentives for property owners who reduce the amount of pavement on their land. In Rhode Island, the communities of Bristol, Middletown and West Warwick are exploring the feasibility of this approach. The City of Providence, along with Central Falls, Cranston, East Providence, Pawtucket and Warwick, are now evaluating a potential regional stormwater management program. Save The Bay serves on the steering committees of the Middletown and Providence Metro initiatives.

## Education and Awareness

On Aquidneck Island, we are launching a public education and awareness campaign about the effect of polluted stormwater on the water we drink, localized flooding and public beaches. At our Exploration Center and Aquarium at Easton's Beach, students and families learn about the hydrology of watersheds and how what happens upstream can have an effect on water quality downstream. Look no further than Baileys Brook and Easton's Beach, which used to be closed to swimming before a new treatment system was installed. Watershed-wide, our volunteer program is working with local community groups to raise awareness about stormwater pollution by affixing decals onto catch basins with the message: “Don't Dump. Drains to Bay.”

The stormwater challenge is huge in scope and requires awareness, political will and investment. We thank our supporters for helping us to do the all-important work of protecting and improving Narragansett Bay.



*LEFT: Pavement is removed at the end of Clark Rd. in Warren to make way for a softened shoreline that can absorb and filter stormwater. ABOVE: Easton's Beach is one of several Aquidneck Island water bodies frequently affected by polluted stormwater runoff. BELOW: South County CoastKeeper David Prescott tests water quality in Little Narragansett Bay.*

are responsible for cleaning catch basins and maintaining miles of underground pipes carrying stormwater to rivers and coastal water. With their budgets stretched and stressed, municipalities are now exploring new ways to finance stormwater projects that reduce pollution and flood risks. Save The Bay is assisting these efforts.

For many, stormwater enterprise funds may be the answer. Used in more than 2,000 locations nationwide, stormwater enterprise funds (sometimes called Stormwater Utility Districts)

## Big Troubles for Little Narragansett Bay

BY DAVID PRESCOTT,  
COASTKEEPER

As the South County CoastKeeper, I keep a close eye on the water quality of Little Narragansett Bay and the lower Pawcatuck River. While these waters are beautiful and look healthy, I've seen first-hand some troubling issues lurking beneath the surface.

Pollution from stormwater runoff is one of the most significant issues facing the health of Little Narragansett Bay and the lower Pawcatuck River. Pet and animal waste, as well as petroleum washed from the streets by rain, are compromising water quality. The downtown sections of Westerly, R.I. and Pawcatuck, Conn. are largely impervious and paved, creating a direct path for these pollutants to enter our waters. Fertilizers and pesticides from farms and lawns in the Pawcatuck watershed are also reaching the Bay.



Save The Bay and our partners at the University of Rhode Island's Watershed Watch Program have been monitoring the water quality of the lower Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay for the past seven years. Our data has been used by the states of Rhode Island and Connecticut, as well as by local communities and residents, to better understand the sources of these pollutants.

Studies by the two states affirm that polluted stormwater runoff is a growing problem. While all of these studies have identified opportunities to reduce polluted stormwater runoff at the local level, they will not mean much unless and until the communities of Westerly and Pawcatuck take action to manage stormwater.

The other troubling issue I've observed is an overabundance of seaweed, known as macroalgae. Macroalgae is naturally occurring in an estuary; but here, its growth is accelerated by the excess nutrients—nitrogen and phosphorus—from the watershed. These nutrients are normally flushed out with tides, stemming the growth of macroalgae. However, water circulation patterns have changed due to large coastal storms that have altered the Bay bottom and caused a buildup of seaweed in the shallow coves around the edges of the Bay. In dive surveys, I have observed gooey mats of macroalgae several feet thick just below the surface. It often accumulates on the shoreline, causing noxious fumes, and has an adverse effect on the ecosystem. What's more, the sediment under the

algae is highly organic, severely reducing the number and types of species that can live there.

Ultimately, communities need to know that it's safe to take a dip in these waters and to eat from them. Our goal of swimmable, fishable and shellfishable waters is within our reach. However, it requires that we, as a community and as individuals, take responsibility for our actions and understand how we can all be part of the solution.

This summer Save The Bay will release our first water quality report for the lower Pawcatuck River and Little Narragansett Bay. As part of that release, we will put forward a call to action to address these historic impairments to our local waters. Stay tuned!

# The Roads Less Traveled: Adapting to Coastal Changes

BY WENLEY FERGUSON,  
HABITAT RESTORATION  
DIRECTOR

Just south of Conimicut Point in Warwick lie a dozen or more roads that end right into the Bay. The exact location of those road ends is getting harder and harder to determine as sea levels rise. During moon or storm tides, the Bay floods the roads and leaves seaweed as evidence of the height of the tide. While rising sea level makes these roads increasingly vulnerable to erosion and coastal flooding, these roads also pose a danger because they carry pollution from untreated stormwater directly into Narragansett Bay.

The changes to this coastline are nothing new—this stretch of Warwick shoreline along Conimicut Point has been eroding for decades. In some areas, the shoreline has retreated 50 to 200 feet since 1939, according to the Coastal Resources Management Council's (CRMC) shoreline change maps. In fact, at high tide the water washes through the foundation of a home that used to sit on dry land, and there are no longer traces of a road that used to run along this shore. Past attempts to address the issues on this coast have mostly involved paving and repaving closer to the water's edge, trying to stop the relentless onslaught of the lapping waves. But Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy worsened the erosion at many of these roads, again causing asphalt to crumble and litter the water's edge.

During the summer of 2014, to reduce the erosive effects of storms, Save The Bay teamed up with the City of Warwick to remove the low lying pavement at the ends of five roads along the Bay. Where pavement was pulled back, our team of volunteers, engineers and contractors installed rock-lined swales to slow and filter pollutants from road runoff, making the project a two-for-one: combat storm erosion and reduce polluted runoff at the same time. But on top of that, public access to the shoreline was enhanced at some sites with the creation of clear, less sodden paths to the shore. Residents from the Riverview Neighborhood Association joined the effort by planting native grasses to enhance the habitat and aesthetic value of these former dead ends.

"This long stretch of quiet shore has suffered from an alternation of benign neglect and misguided paving projects for a long time," said George Shuster, a Save The Bay board member and Riverview resident who helped with the plantings. "I hope these projects, which have been site-specific and flexible depending on the present and changing needs of each street, can serve as models for the many more road-ends in Warwick and beyond."

*"We're fortunate to have expert attention from Wenley Ferguson at Save The Bay, in partnership with forward-thinking engineers from Warwick's public works department, working together on principled and thoughtful approaches to the city's changing coast." ~ George Shuster, Save The Bay board member, Riverview resident*

Throughout Narragansett Bay, dozens of similar roads end at the Bay, providing public access to the shore and to coastal homes. But rapidly rising sea level threatens to flood and worsen the erosion of these roads, too. Along the Kickemuit River, we partnered with the towns of Warren and Bristol on two similar projects to pull back eroding pavement and install swales to slow down and filter the rain runoff.

Sea level has risen more than ten inches since 1930 and is projected to rise at a faster pace over the next century, as much as three to five feet by 2100. As that happens, even more of our coastal infrastructure will become vulnerable to worsening flooding and erosion. These seven pavement removal projects, funded by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration grant and implemented in cooperative agreement with the CRMC, represent just one in a series of steps to adapt to quickly changing conditions. CRMC Policy Analyst Caitlin Chaffee, one of our key partners in this work, says, "They are a great on-the-ground example of how municipalities can start to address the effects of climate change on public infrastructure and how coastal communities can retreat and adapt rather than rebuild after coastal storms."



An end-of-road retrofit on Clark Rd. in Warren shows a filtration strip being installed where pavement has been removed.

## A Meeting of the Minds: Innovative Environmental Financing

BY TOPHER HAMBLETT, DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY

More and more, stormwater rises to the top of a list of contributing factors to localized flooding and water pollution. Measurably increased precipitation levels, as well as growing urbanization along coastal areas, prevents the natural slow filtering of water through the ground. As a result, a higher volume of polluted stormwater is making its way to ponds and streams, treatment facilities, and coastal



waters with greater velocity than ever before. As a result, stormwater management has moved to the top of the agenda for many cities and states, and elected officials are grappling with finding innovative ways to finance and implement stormwater improvements.

On April 13, Save The Bay and the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland teamed up to host a unique forum exploring opportunities to link public and private resources in support of watershed restoration and protection efforts across the Narragansett Bay region. More than 40 leaders from the federal, state, and local government, along with representatives of private engineering and financing firms, delved into a dynamic discussion about the opportunity Rhode Island has to unleash private capital for much-needed stormwater infrastructure projects.

Robust investment is needed to maintain, repair and upgrade traditional, aging stormwater management systems of catch basins and pipes, as well as to support green Infrastructure projects that

replace pavement and hard rooftops with soils and plants that help absorb water, prevent flooding and reduce pollution.

"We are here to discuss the conditions necessary for a public-private partnership to work" said Dan Nees of the Environmental Finance Center. "Strong, reliable enforcement of environmental regulations for clean water, along with a combination of local and state revenue streams, can attract private capital and lead to more efficient, less expensive projects that get environmental results."

General Treasurer Seth Magaziner welcomed attendees and expressed strong support for their efforts. "We do these things not because we can, but because we have to," he said. Magaziner and Governor Gina Raimondo have proposed a RI Infrastructure Bank, which, if approved by the General Assembly, would help create some of those conditions.

Rhode Island and Massachusetts-based engineering and investment firms affirmed the importance of reliable environmental regulations and local revenue streams, such as stormwater enterprise funds and state revolving loan funds. Representatives from Berlin, Md. discussed the importance of community outreach and demonstration projects in the success of their local efforts. And Lancaster, Penn. Mayor Rick Gray captivated participants with stories of a city that turned a major stormwater management challenge into an economic opportunity that helped revitalize his city.

"It is important that Save The Bay convene key players to develop initiatives that protect and improve Narragansett Bay. We need new and different ways of tackling age-old problems like stormwater pollution and flooding. The participation of leaders from the executive and legislative branches, state and federal agencies, cities and towns, municipal officials and private sector firms in this forum provided much-needed energy and focus," said Save The Bay Executive Director Jonathan Stone.

While great progress has been made in improving Narragansett Bay through investments in wastewater treatment plants, we are now on the frontier of stormwater management, which is essential to protect, restore and improve our rivers, ponds, lakes, drinking water reservoirs and Narragansett Bay. At Save The Bay, we are committed to move this initiative forward.

ABOVE: Lancaster, Penn. Mayor Rick Gray talks about his town's efforts to protect the Chesapeake Bay. RIGHT: More than 40 leaders from Rhode Island, Maryland and Massachusetts discuss innovative approaches to financing stormwater infrastructure.



## Internship Positions

- **Communications** interns assist with media relations marketing, writing, calendar listings and graphic design.
- **Education and Aquarist** interns take care of tanks and animals and teach visitors at the Exploration Center and Aquarium in Newport. (NOTE: While most internships are geared toward college students, this one is also open to high school students age 16+.)
- **Environmental Education** interns assist with our after-school programs and behind-the-scenes administrative work.
- **Events** interns assist in obtaining donations, organizing prizes and registration and prepping for fundraising events.
- **Habitat Restoration** interns do hands-on restoration and monitoring at coastal sites all over the state.
- **Non-Profit Development** interns perform grant and prospect research and data entry, and compile and send membership fulfillment packages.
- **South Coast Center** interns do everything from taking care of tanks and animals to education, fieldwork and outreach events in support of our advocacy on the South Coast.
- **Volunteer Management** interns respond to registrations, schedule orientations, process internship applications, post volunteer listings and lead volunteer events such as shoreline cleanups.

Interested in a Save The Bay internship? Visit [savebay.org/volunteer](http://savebay.org/volunteer) and select the internships tab for position descriptions and application process.

# We Save the Bay With the Help of Our Mighty Interns

BY JULY LEWIS, VOLUNTEER AND INTERN MANAGER

Have you ever visited Save The Bay's Exploration Center and Aquarium or our South Coast Center? Have you attended the Save The Bay Swim or participated in a beach clean-up? If you have, then you've seen the work of Save The Bay interns. Internships are a rapidly growing aspect of our robust volunteer program, and we couldn't be happier about that. Our talented and enthusiastic interns are an essential part of the Save The Bay team.



Intern Jennifer Graham (far left) with fellow Save The Bay interns (left to right) Alex Gifford, Eva Touhey, Troy Sipprelle and Meg McConville.

Save The Bay currently offers eight different types of internships, each with its own focus (see sidebar). The interns benefit by getting valuable experience that bridges the gap between the academic and professional worlds, often earning academic credit through their university. Save The Bay benefits by getting reliable, consistent support and high-quality work for a substantial number of hours per week. But the biggest beneficiary of the Save The Bay internship program is the Narragansett Bay community itself. We are simply able to reach more people, teach more students, restore more habitat and protect more shoreline because of the amazing work that interns do.

So the next time you receive your Save The Bay membership package or read about the latest salt marsh restoration—remember that the work of Save The Bay interns made it possible. And if you know of a student who wants to make a difference in the world, please send them our way!

### What Our Interns Have to Say

"My internship at the Exploration Center made me realize my love for marine biology, so I declared that as my second minor when I returned to school the next semester." ~ Jennifer Graham, environmental science major, Roger Williams University

### INTERNSHIP PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

68 interns in 2014

8,340 hours contributed in 2014

4,493 hours contributed in 2012

86% increase in hours contributed

"Working at the South Coast Center has really opened my eyes to what it takes to introduce scientific and environmental issues to the public. Every day, we're working to ensure that Rhode Islanders understand and take command of their marine resources." ~ RJ Turcotte, marine biology, University of Rhode Island



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Save The Bay interns RJ Turcotte, Wanda Angel, Julia Bancroft and Olivia Nary.

"One of my favorite days interning at the Exploration Center was when we had a class of kindergarteners visiting. When asked how they think we should treat the animals when we hold them, one little girl responded, 'With the deepest respect.' From that, I realized the importance of Save The Bay and that through our work, we can really get the message to younger generations how important a healthy environment is." ~ Olivia Nary, marine affairs major, University of Rhode Island



"I have become more knowledgeable in human resource management, successful volunteer management and collaboration between staff and volunteers. I am currently working on increasing outreach to the senior population of Rhode Island and Southern Massachusetts." ~ Wanda Angel, MSW student, Rhode Island College School of Social Work

"My internship at Save The Bay was my first insight into branding and brand management. I now work for the American Meteorological Society's Education program in Washington, D.C., and while I'm missing the ocean like crazy, I've been putting my MBA and Save The Bay skills to use in marketing here." ~ Anupa Asokan, Ocean MBA student, University of Rhode Island

"As a Volunteer Management intern, I've learned how to properly communicate with individuals, whether via e-mail or in person. I know how to respond to their questions and concerns and help them

become more knowledgeable about what Save The Bay values. Communication is key to success in any work environment." ~ Ana Barcelona, management major, Roger Williams University

"I gained a lot of hands-on experience that I couldn't have gotten anywhere else. I learned how to clean tanks, feed the animals, and talk to and educate the public about the interesting exhibits in the Exploration Center. And I gained a new appreciation for the educators, aquarists and the little critters that put up with being touched every day!" ~ Julia Bancroft, marine affairs, University of Rhode Island



## SAVE THE DATE



Annual Golf Outing  
**Monday, June 1, 2015**

Taste of the Bay & Annual Meeting  
**Thursday, June 11, 2015**

29th Annual Swim  
**Saturday, July 11, 2015**

Artists for the Bay Show & Sale  
**Thursday, December 3, 2015**  
(tentative)

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# Gail Ginnetty: The Legacy of a Lifetime

Gail Ginnetty's love of all things water first took root when she learned to sail and began racing during her elementary school days. In high school, she sailed regularly in East Greenwich, and Narragansett became a regular summer beach spot. Now retired from a distinguished career in banking and development, Ginnetty lives in Cranston with a view of the Bay and is on her third sailboat in partnership with other owners. She has plenty of vivid memories—like that time rough weather blew out the spinnaker and her sailboat capsized when she was just 12 or 13, and competing and winning races almost from the beginning—that have fed her love for Rhode Island's most important natural resource.

"Narragansett Bay has always meant wonderful opportunities to enjoy the water, and every year I create a new wonderful memory," Ginnetty said. As I matured into adulthood, I developed a growing appreciation for what the Bay means to the state. It truly is part of the body of Rhode Island, and from an economic standpoint, even if you live in Woonsocket with no view of the bay, it's extremely important to you."

So, Ginnetty's first gift to Save The Bay decades ago—in response to a request from someone who knew she cared about the Bay—was sort of "a natural." In the mid 1980s, she became a sporadic volunteer, and in 1998, began what turned into a 15-year tenure on the board, including eight years as Treasurer. Her knowledge of wealth management and nonprofit endowment planning gave Save The Bay an invaluable leader who would help strengthen the organization fiscally.

Like her involvement with Save The Bay, Ginnetty's small annual gifts progressed as she got to know the organization better and saw it had all the hallmarks of a good non-profit organization—"well-managed, broad outreach, strong relationships with government, private industry and other non-profits, adaptive strategies, and continuous improvement. Most importantly, I believe in its mission," she said. In 2004, Ginnetty made what may be her most important contribution to date. She became a founding member of Save The Bay's Seagrass Society, by notifying Save The Bay of her legacy gift plans.

The Seagrass Society honors individuals who remember Save The Bay in their estate plan—a legacy gift. Just as seagrass beds



*"My decision to make a legacy gift... is the culmination of all the time, resources and passion I've spent here, and I want to think I can continue that investment long after I'm gone."*

are a foundation for a healthy Bay, legacy gifts provide for the longer-term future of the organization and the Bay. They are planned during a donor's lifetime, and activated upon their passing, allowing donors to fulfill their philanthropic dreams through the legacy they leave behind. More and more people around the world are leaving legacies in increasingly diverse ways—including retirement accounts, life insurance policies, annuities, trusts, personal property or a percentage of one's estate.

Ginnetty says she's committed to legacy gifts in particular because they are accessible to everyone. "There is no minimum on a legacy gift. And they give people a chance to think about how they want to be remembered," she said. "People with limited discretionary income can leave a larger gift in their will than they might be able to give during their life. Annual donors can continue their gift into perpetuity. Donors at any level can take their giving to the next level, whatever that is."

"I've chosen to name Save The Bay a beneficiary of my individual retirement account. I have had the privilege of seeing Save The Bay move from its office in a very small old bank building to this beautiful location and the expansion of education programs that take marine science to schoolchildren all over the state. My decision to make a legacy gift—more than I could give today—is the culmination of all the time, resources and passion I've spent here, and I want to think I can continue that investment long after I'm gone," she said.

## The Lasting Value of an Endowment Gift

For an organization like Save The Bay, which gets 94 percent of its annual income from individual donors and foundations, a financially sound future is as important as the present. Donor gifts can be designated for immediate use or can be placed in an endowment for investment and future use. Long-time donor and supporter Gail Ginnetty (see story at left) has chosen not only to remember Save The Bay in her will with a legacy gift, but also to allocate that gift to the Save The Bay endowment fund.

Endowment gifts are an investment in the future of an organization. The donor's original gift is invested, remains in perpetuity and provides funds that support important work in the future. An endowment gift to Save The Bay is an investment in the future of Narragansett Bay and in the organization's advocacy, habitat restoration, education and stewardship toward protecting the Bay.

"Giving to an endowment is a thoughtful decision. When an organization has an endowment, that says the organization has passionate donors who believe the mission is so important that it will be needed in the future and the work so meaningful that it will continue

toward fulfillment of that mission into the future," said Ginnetty.

Now in its 45th year, Save The Bay has six endowments, a testament to our deep history of community support and our commitment to Bay stewardships for generations to come.



A board-designated endowment begun in 2007, as well as the memorial Julia Sands Chase Fund, are unrestricted funds, providing general operating support to Save The Bay. "Unrestricted funds give the organization resilience, a buffer when things don't go as planned and the greatest flexibility in managing organizational resources," Ginnetty said. For example, several years ago, Save The Bay lost a federal earmark of \$1 million per year—nearly a third of its annual

revenue. In 2012, Superstorm Sandy destroyed the beachfront Exploration Center and Aquarium in Newport.

Four donor-designated endowments support specific Save The Bay programs with revenue the organization may not otherwise have. The Alison Walsh Fund supports a yearly community environmental award. The Roosa Family Fund for Marine Education supports marine environmental education for schoolchildren. The Leeds Mitchell East Bay Marsh Restoration Fund supports marsh restoration in the East Bay. And the John H. Chafee Memorial Award supports Explore The Bay education programs.

Ginnetty has chosen to direct her legacy gift to Save The Bay's unrestricted endowment "because I want to see Save The Bay go on for a very long time. Narragansett Bay is a wonderful resource for our community. We will always need to take care of the Bay and its ever changing needs, and Save The Bay has proven to be the organization with the expertise, commitment and ability to do that."

For information on the Seagrass Society, contact Frank Maher at 401-272-3540 x126 or [fmaher@savebay.org](mailto:fmaher@savebay.org). Learn more online at [savebay.org/plannedgiving](http://savebay.org/plannedgiving)

## Connect with Save The Bay



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.

Like us on Facebook at: [facebook.com/savebaynarragansett](https://facebook.com/savebaynarragansett)

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

Follow us on Instagram at: [instagram.com/savethebayri](https://instagram.com/savethebayri)

Read our blog at: <http://tides-blog.blogspot.com>

## Summer Camps... The Bay is your campground!

[savebay.org/camps](http://savebay.org/camps)



**SAVE THE BAY.**  
NARRAGANSETT BAY



**Exploration Center & Aquarium**  
Touch tanks, story time, crafts  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m. • May - September

[savebay.org/aquarium](http://savebay.org/aquarium)

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# 39th Annual Save The Bay Swim July 11, 2015

1.7 nautical miles from the Naval War College to Jamestown



With 500 swimmers, 200 kayakers and 200 volunteers, the Swim is our biggest fundraiser of the year. It serves as critical support to our efforts to protect and restore Narragansett Bay.

## Get involved! Here's how:

To register as a swimmer, kayaker or to support a swimmer, visit [savebay.org/theswim](http://savebay.org/theswim)

To volunteer, visit [savebay.org/volunteer](http://savebay.org/volunteer) or email July Lewis at [volunteer@savebay.org](mailto:volunteer@savebay.org)



"An adventure 39 years in the making."



# Join Save The Bay Today



WITH A MEMBERSHIP TO SAVE THE BAY, **YOU** HELP PROTECT AND IMPROVE NARRAGANSETT BAY BY:

- Supporting marine science education programs for more than 17,000 students and teachers—the next generation of Bay stewards.
- Protecting and restoring more than 124,000 acres of wetlands.
- Ensuring the cleanup of 30,000+ pounds of trash from our coastline annually.
- Keeping our BayKeeper and CoastKeeper on the water and our shores, monitoring for water pollution, fish kills and other water quality impacts.
- Ensuring that we continue to watch over and comment on actions by the state agencies charged with enforcing laws and regulations affecting our water and coastline.

**MEMBER BENEFITS INCLUDE DISCOUNTS AT:** Rock Spot Climbing, The Kayak Centre of Rhode Island, Green River Silver, Island Outfitters, DiveOnIt Scuba Supply, Green Envy Eco-Boutique, Hemenway's Restaurant, several local nurseries and more.

**JOIN TODAY!** [savebay.org/membership](https://savebay.org/membership)