

## Narrow River Land Trust Wins State Open Space

On November 2, 2011 in a ceremony held at the Rhode Island State House, the Narrow River Land Trust was presented with a State Open Space Grant award. The Honorable Lincoln D. Chafee, Governor and Janet Coit, Director of the Department of Environmental Protection presented 15 land trusts and towns with \$4.3 million in grants for open space acquisition. The Narrow River Land Trust received a \$400,000.00 award which is the maximum amount allowed under the program. The funds will be directed towards the acquisition of 207 acres of upland forest and wetland. The land trust is excited to have the opportunity to protect one of the last very large, undeveloped tracts of land in the watershed.

This award is a tremendous honor for the land trust as many applications were submitted and the competition was tight. It is a sign of the tide that is rising to lift the Narrow River Land Trust to new levels of excellence and presence in the community. Though it will take some time to secure all of the funding for the property, the Open Space grant will put us well on our way to success.

As we have come to learn in the land trust business, acquiring the property is just the beginning of a long relationship with the land. We invite you to join the land trust, as we explore this new property and develop a plan for how we will use and manage it. Join us as we

determine where new trails will be built or where new habitat areas for the eastern cottontail and woodcock will be created. Join us as we discuss what programs can be developed for families to discover where the wood frogs live, where the barred owl sits during the day and where upland streams flow into the river.



*NRLT accepting Open Space Grant Award (l to r):  
Sheldon Pratt,  
David Borkman, Julie Sharpe and Governor Lincoln Chafee*

# Narrow River Land Trust

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

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends of the Land Trust,

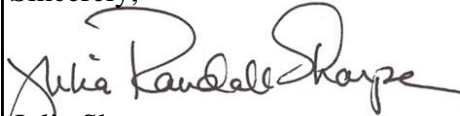
I'd like to thank all of you who have been out helping us work on the trails at the various NRLT properties this past year. It has been a great year for the land trust. Our accomplishments started with a new Strategic Plan and include new maps and signs, plus a whole new look in all our printed materials. Most importantly we've undertaken efforts on our properties to clear both new and old trails. We are most appreciative of our enthusiastic volunteers who have wielded sharpened clippers and long-handled loppers! Read our report on some of the recent trail work.

**Our big news this year is receiving the RI Open Space Grant for \$400,000.00!** The Narrow River Land Trust was awarded one of the largest grants given out by the state this year. It is a tremendous tribute to the NRLT because it demonstrates not only the merit of our proposed acquisition but also of our ongoing record of protecting land in the watershed. More on this project coming soon...

As we have come to learn in the land trust business, purchasing a property is just the beginning of a long relationship with the land. Taking care of it and turning it into something that supports both wildlife and recreational activities requires a lot of work. To do this, we need your help. We're an all-volunteer organization that manages to use limited resources to do a lot. Your support and participation are vital to our success and are genuinely appreciated. As we come to the end of the calendar year, please continue to give to the NRLT and thank you for helping us to protect the Narrow River.

Best wishes to you during the holiday season.

Sincerely,



Julie Sharpe  
President

P.S. Look for improvements to our website coming soon in the new year. And if you have a chance, I recommend a walk on the recently cleared trail at the Garrison House Acres. The trail head is just west of Middlebridge and offers great views of the river and the Pettaquamscutt Cove. Look for new signage next year at the properties to help locate boundaries, trails and trail heads.

## Trail Clearing and Invasive Plant Control on NRLT Properties

Even though Rhode Island is a densely populated state with a heavily urbanized central region, most of the land, approximately 400,000 acres or 56%, remains covered in forests. These forested lands provide ecological, recreational and economic benefits that are key components to the quality of life in Rhode Island. Unfortunately, these lands are under multiple threats. One of the main threats is from non-native invasive plants that once introduced to the region, can overtake and displace native plant species and alter the ecological functions of the forest.

The RI Forest Health Works Project (RI FHWP), funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, was initiated in the spring of 2010 as a collaborative project between the RI Department of Environmental Management and the RI Natural History Survey with the purpose to inventory and manage invasive species in RI forested lands. Included in the RI FHWP was funding to create a Student Conservation League which employed eight high school interns during the two summers of 2010 and 2011. The summer

youth crews, supervised by RI Natural History staff, worked all over the state on protected forest lands learning how to identify, inventory, and manage invasive species. For more information about the RI Forest Health Works Project please go to the RINHS website (<http://www.rinhs.org/what-we-do/fhwp/>).

Part of the work of the Student Conservation League also included the “Crew in your Community” program. Through the “Crew in your Community” program, RI land trusts were invited to submit proposals to the RI FHWP for a full day of work on



**Figure 1:** Site of 2011 RINHS Crew In your Community trail clearing and invasive species control at Narrow River Land Trust Garrison House Acres property off Middlebridge Road in South Kingstown, RI. (source: Google Maps).

## Trail Clearing and Invasive Plant Control on NRLT Properties - continued from previous page

one of their forested properties with the Student Conservation League. Land trusts had to provide volunteer hours to match the hours put in by the crew. The Narrow River Land Trust was selected to receive the “Crew in your Community” grant two years in a row for a full day of work with the youth crews in the summers of 2010 and 2011.

In August 2010 the RINHS crew inventoried and removed invasive plant species from NRLT’s 51 acre Graphite Mine property off Middlebridge Road on the western slope of the Narrow River in South Kingstown. Invasive Asian bittersweet, multiflora rose and Hercules club were identified on the site. Removal of these invasive plants was done by hand pulling and hand cutting with a limited application of herbicide to cut stems. The enthusiastic crew of nine teenagers worked tirelessly alongside our own Sheldon Pratt and David Borkman cutting and clearing invasive plants as well as native bull brier for eight hours in humid 90° August weather. This initial 2010 effort was followed up this past summer by several days of volunteer work headed up by Andrew Sayre. The combined efforts on this property have resulted in an improvement in both forest health at this site and better access to its natural and historic features – though much work remains to be done. Look for workdays to be scheduled in 2012.

In July of this year, the RINHS Student Conservation League’s ‘Crew in your Community’

assisted the NRLT in clearing a half-mile long trail at Garrison House Acres - a 26 acre NRLT property on the western bank of Pettaquamscutt Cove just south of Middlebridge in South Kingstown. The Garrison House Acres Preserve was donated by Avery Rogers Brooke in 1990, and derives its name from the nearby Jireh Bull Garrison House which was built in 1657. The property includes a diverse array of coastal habitats ranging from saltwater marsh, freshwater marsh, shrubby fields, upland deciduous forest and a small freshwater man-made pond. On a steamy, hot day in July 2011, the RINHS crew and a cadre of NRLT volunteers worked for an entire day clearing an access path through thick brier and brush. This trail relieves the nearby salt march of foot traffic and

allows pedestrian access to a managed shrub land field and other features on the southern side of the property.

Garrison House Acres is contiguous to properties belonging to both the Audubon Society of RI and the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge in the Pettaquamscutt Cove. The combined properties provide cover and forage for many species of wildlife including waves of migrant birds that recently passed through the preserve to feed during their autumn migration. The collaborative efforts of the RINHS Trail Crew and Narrow River Land Trust volunteers helped to maintain and manage both limited public access and the high wildlife value of this important coastal property.



**Figure 2:** Rhode Island Natural History Survey trails crew after a long, hot July 2011 day of trail clearing at the Narrow River Land Trust Garrison House Acres property along the Narrow River in South Kingstown.

# 2012 Workshops with Invasive Species

In 2012, the NRLT will collaborate with the Rhode Island Natural History Survey to bring you three workshops on the Management of Invasive Species—one in early spring, one in early summer, and one in...early fall. Each workshop will focus on what the appropriate management protocol for a particular invasive species is for that particular time of year.

A staff member of the RINHS will help us identify the target species and will explain to us how the physiology of each plant determines *when* and *how* the best ways of getting rid of them are. A landscape professional licensed in the use of herbicide applications will be on hand to explain and demonstrate the proper use of herbicides when they are recommended.

After the demonstrations, participants will be able to practice their new knowledge and skills on the land trust site.

This is a **Win – Win – Win Opportunity**. Win #1 - *You* get to visit a land trust property you may not be familiar with, or which may not be generally open to the public. Win #2 - *You* get to learn about invasive species management from the experts, and Win #3 - *You* provide an important service to the land trust by helping to clear away some of those unwanted invasive plants thereby making way for new, attractive walking trails and riverside views. **Win #4 (Bonus!!!)** – *You* get to return home, and take on the invasive plants in your own backyard with new confidence, determination, and well-honed skill.

## Narrow River Land Trust

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

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

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

Activities that interest me include: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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



Photo by Sherri Flynn

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



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