



LAND CONSERVANCY TRUST SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

October 5, 2017

Narragansett Town Hall
25 Fifth Avenue
Narragansett, RI 02882
(401) 789-1044

LAND CONSERVANCY TRUST

Chair

Thomas Rogers

Vice Chair

Terence Fleming

Secretary

Susan Bush

Members

Jason Colonies

Jerry Brunetto

Pati Sylvia

Brian Wagner

Town Council Members

Matthew M. Mannix

Jill Lawler

Town Staff Liaisons

Kinney Bungalow

Event Coordinator

Daisy MacLeod

Community Development

Mike DeLuca

Jill Sabo

At a Special Meeting of the Land Conservancy Trust of the Town of Narragansett held on Thursday, October 5, 2017 at 5:30 p.m., at Narragansett Town Hall

Present:

- Thomas Rogers, Chair
- Sue Bush, Secretary
- Jerry Brunetto
- Pati Sylvia

Also in Attendance: Jill Sabo, Community Development, Julie Sharpe, President Narrow River Land Trust (NRLT); Richard Grant, President Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA), Veronica Berounsky, Vice President NRPA.

Not in Attendance: Jill Lawler, Matt Mannix, Terry Fleming, Jason Colonies, Brian Wagner

For the record, this meeting did not constitute a quorum therefore no votes were taken; this meeting was for informational purposes only.

Purpose of Meeting – To receive input from the Narrow River Land Trust and the Narrow River Preservation Association regarding the Middlebridge Management Plan update.

A summary of conservation recommendations for the property provided by NRLT (Attachment A) and input from the NRPA (Attachment B), as discussed during the meeting.

Habitat Restoration

- Near Term
 - Restore the natural wetlands shown on page one of the attached.
 - Restrict localized mowing to allow natural succession of native vegetation
 - Remove non-native or invasive plants
 - Plant native vegetation on upland sites to increase diversity

Note: Julie to arrange meeting among NRLT, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Tom for advice on types of natural vegetation

- Periodic Monitoring

We discussed the importance of monitoring and documenting certain aspects of the site, and how it is Land Trust best practice to monitor all properties under Land Trust protection. Additional information and/or protocols will be needed to round out this recommendation.

Note: Julie to provide more details on what this monitoring may entail.

- Long Term
 - Develop a conservation management plan

Note: Julie to provide more details of what this plan would comprise to round out this recommendation

- Periodic monitoring of fresh and saltwater wetlands

Note: Julie to provide more details of what this would entail. How does this differ from “short term” monitoring recommendation?

Onsite Waste Water Management

Must consider limitations of the onsite wastewater treatment system. Consider use of low-water fixtures, composting toilets, portable toilets, aeration systems for showers, gray water recirculation system, and possibility of connecting to town sewer system.

Conservation

- Short Term
 - Continue PRPA and NRLT education and activities at Middlebridge
 - Consider dedicating the yellow building (#95) as a visitor center with education exhibits and expanded activities
 - Use landscaping with native plants as demonstration
 - Consider engaging a native plant grower to lease portion of the property for a native plant nursery and perhaps retail operations to sell native plants
- Long Term
 - Interconnect with existing and proposed trail networks

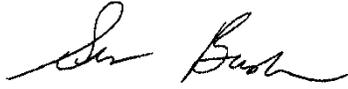
Note: Julie to arrange for a meeting among NRLT, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Tom to discuss this recommendation.

Sea Level Rise

Must consider sea level rise, which is already impacting the property, particularly with respect to investment in properties on site.

Veronica Berounsky & Richard Grant, NRPA, discussed current NRPA education programs and a summary of the improvements in water quality over the years. It is clear that the water quality has improved because of improvements in upland land use. These improvements are encouraged by the education activities sponsored by NRPA, NTLT and others.

Respectfully Submitted:



Susan Bush, Secretary

AGREED TO RECEIVE AND PLACE ON
FILE 10_19_17

ATTESTS



Susan Bush, Secretary

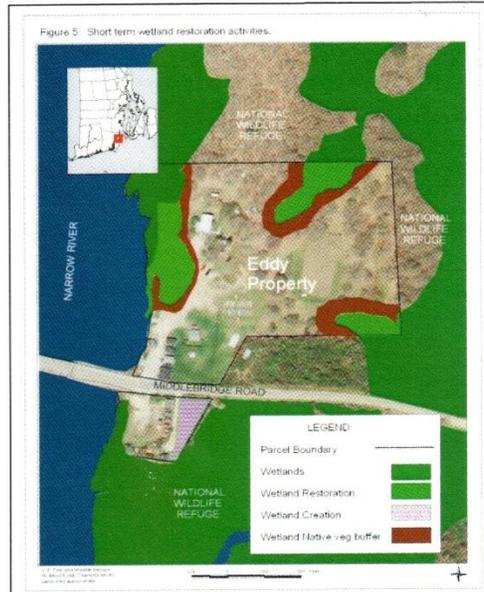
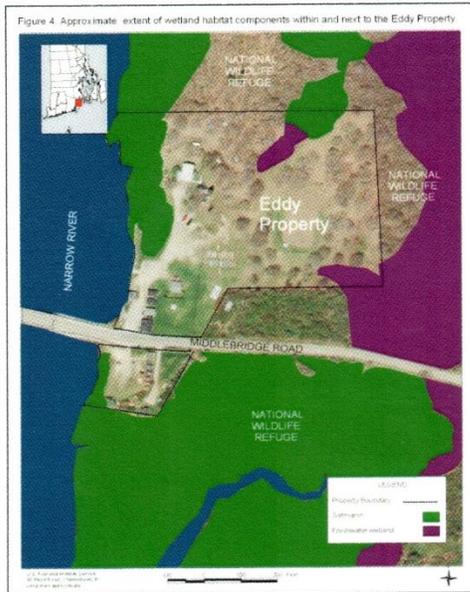
Attachment A: Conservation Recommendations for Middlebridge Submitted by NRLT

Conservation Recommendations For the Narragansett Middlebridge Property

Working in partnership with the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, the purpose of these recommendations is:

- To maintain the character of the site while enhancing conservation activities, educational opportunities and improved public access to the river and surrounding conservation properties;
- To conserve, protect, and where appropriate, restore key natural resources on the property including estuarine and freshwater wetlands and upland wildlife habitats;
- To facilitate public recreational uses of the site commensurate with the its natural capacity;
- To provide the public with opportunities to learn about, experience, and appreciate the uniqueness of the Narrow River;
- To facilitate the understanding of the river and to foster collaborative management between conservation organizations in management of the river and its watershed.

Habitat Restoration The parcel contains 2 acres of estuarine or freshwater wetlands, approximately 35% of which is in need of restoration (see figures below).



Created 10/4/2017

NRLT MP Recommendations for Middlebridge 10.17NRLT MP Recommendations for Middlebridge 10.17.docx
Narrow River Land Trust, Inc.

Page 1 of 4

Near Term Recommendations:

- Restrict mowing regimes to allow the natural succession of native vegetation;
- Stop disposal of debris in saltmarsh and wetland areas;
- Remove or treat nonnative or “invasive” plants;
- Plant native vegetation on upland sites adjacent to wetlands to increase diversity and productivity of the wetland;
- Use coir logs, bags of oyster shells or other such materials and methods to reduce erosion of the shoreline;
- Estimated cost for restoring wetlands and adjacent upland habitats is estimated at \$1,000.00. Creation of wetlands (.25 acres) would be estimated to cost \$10,000.00;
- Periodic monitoring for nonnative species and vegetative regrowth.

Long Term Recommendations

- Develop a detailed Conservation Management Plan for the property;
 - o Develop in concert with the abutting National Wildlife Refuge and other conservation partners such as the Narrow River Land Trust, Save the Bay, and The Nature Conservancy;
 - o Take sea level rise into account while planning for increased inundation and the need to provide for saltmarsh migration;
- Develop a long-term study of the fresh and saltwater wetlands on the property which includes a protocol for annual monitoring.

Sea Level Rise Accelerated sea level rise has already affected the property at Middlebridge as seen in a) salt marsh vegetation growing further inland, b) the die off of upland vegetation along the edge of the salt marsh and c) impounded water conditions in the marsh and along the interface with the upland. Today’s higher moon tides also known as “king tides” roughly indicate what will become a 1.0 - 1.5 foot rise in water levels; while the storm surge observed in Hurricane Sandy represents what may become normal water levels after a 2.5 - 3.0 foot sea level rise. Therefore, care should be taken to consider the future impacts of sea level rise while developing a Management Plan for any aspect of Middlebridge property especially while considering future investments in the property.

Sea Level Rise Map Here

Onsite Waste Water Management Due to the location of the property in a coastal flood zone, the presence of onsite residences, and the public, recreational use of the property, all care must be taken to assure the effective disposal of onsite waste water.

Onsite Waste Water Management Recommendations

- Implement water conservation measures for onsite water use such as low flow or composting toilets, no bathtubs, aerators in faucets and shower heads, etc.;
- Consider using porta potties on trailers for quick and easy removal in flood conditions;
- Consider developing a gray water disposal system;
- Investigate access to the sewer system.

Conservation Learning Activities and Interpretation The Narragansett Middlebridge property offers tremendous opportunities for the public to learn about, experience and appreciate the unique natural features of the Narrow River and its watershed.

Short Term

- Continue the Narrow River Land Trust and Narrow River Preservation Association Education and Activity workshops at Middlebridge;
- Consider dedicating the yellow house as a Visitors Center with educational exhibits and an expanded schedule of activities and interpretive walks;
- Use landscaping with native plants as demonstration areas for such themes as native plants for coastal areas, rain gardens, or pollinator habitats.
- Consider engaging a native plant grower to lease a portion of the property for a native plant nursery and perhaps retail sales.

Longer Term

As shown in the figure below, the Middlebridge property has the potential to become a main hub of a trail network serving the Narrow River and Pettaquamscutt Cove.

The creation of a trail network in cooperation with the Town of Narragansett, the Narrow River Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and the National Wildlife Refuge will not only facilitate interpretive walks, interpretive panels, and educational activities, but it will allow the public further access to the river and surrounding conservation properties.

While much of the trail system can be constructed with volunteers and be of a lower grade, some segments of the trail could be constructed for universal accessibility. Initial construction costs are estimated at \$5,000 - \$10,000, but efforts can be made to seek grants and donations. Interpretive panels are likely to cost \$1,500 a piece. While expensive, these panels are of very high quality. The trail system leading to the North from the Middlebridge property is well suited for the establishment of a viewing platform along the trail.

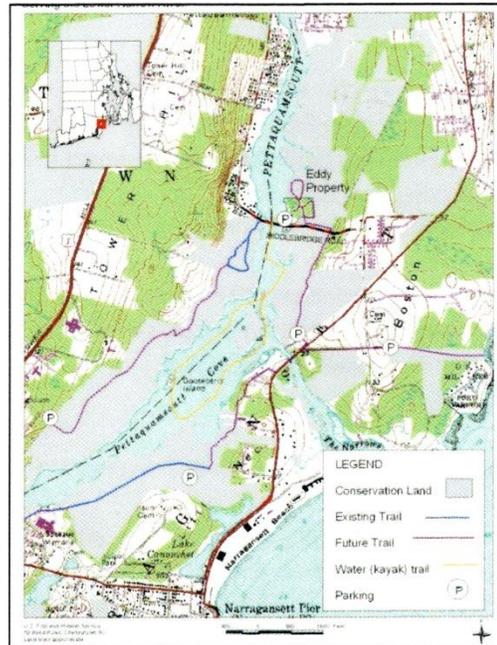
The National Wildlife Refuge is considering the development of trails, the Nature Conservancy has completed a trail at the Whale Rock area, and the Town of Narragansett has established a

Created 10/4/2017

NRLT MP Recommendations for Middlebridge 10.17NRLT MP Recommendations for Middlebridge 10.17.docx
Narrow River Land Trust, Inc.

Page 3 of 4

trail system at Canonchet Farm. These trails could be designed in addition and in coordination with two “water trails” established by the Narrow River Kayak business.



Respectfully submitted,

Julie Sharpe, President
Narrow River Land Trust
October 5, 2017

Created 10/4/2017

NRLT MP Recommendations for Middlebridge 10.17NRLT MP Recommendations for Middlebridge 10.17.docx
Narrow River Land Trust, Inc.

Page 4 of 4

**Attachment B – Narrow River Preservation Association/NRLT Joint Submittal
for Middlebridge Plan Update**



Date: October 5, 2017

To: Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, Narragansett, RI

From: Narrow River Preservation Association (contact: Veronica M. Berounsky, vmberounsky@uri.edu) and Narrow River Land Trust (contact: Julie Sharpe, juliesharpe55@gmail.com)

Re: Narrow River Education & Activity Center at Middlebridge Property - Future Plans

In 2013, the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) and Narrow River Land Trust (NRLT) in conjunction with the Town of Narragansett Park and Recreation Department launched the initial series of educational programs and family activities at the Town property at Middlebridge. It was very successful with many attentive participants and we have held similar events each year. We propose continuing these educational activities each summer into fall for the foreseeable future. NRPA and NRLT share common interests to preserve, protect, and restore the environment and the quality of life for all communities within the Narrow River Estuary and its watershed and providing informational and educational opportunities to the public is an ideal way to promote those interests. The Middlebridge property is a location with unique attributes: central in the watershed, easy access to shallow water, and with panoramic views. For these reasons, it serves well as an educational and activities center and a starting point for events that increase awareness of the cultural and natural history of Narrow River. We will also hold an activity at this location for "Gansett Days".

Our format worked well the past four years and we plan to continue it. Programs will take place once a month, June thru September, on a Saturday (except for the sunset kayak paddle and possible the Land Trust walk). Inclement weather date will be the next day (except perhaps for "Gansett Days"). Activities will be located near the water and just north of the marina and adjacent building. We will be onsite approximately an hour before and an hour after the activities for setup and clean up. Parking will be in the Marina/Narrow River Kayak Overflow lot and listed times will not be in conflict with other activities going on at the property. Questions and reservations will be handled through the NRPA website, www.narrowriver.org. Registration (including liability waivers already approved by the Parks and Recreation Department) will be onsite. Activities will be free, though donations will be accepted for kayak rentals at the July paddle. The events will be advertised on the Town of Narragansett website calendar of events, in the local newspapers, and on educational listserves.

For the future seasons of the Middlebridge Property we propose a slate of programs similar to those in the past:

What Lives in the River? (Saturday in June , 9 am – 11 am): An all ages introduction to common fish, shellfish, crabs and other inhabitants in the River. There will be hands-on seining with experts to catch river creatures and guided walks along the intertidal zone and salt marsh to observe the inhabitants. There will be river water tanks and microscopes to examine river creatures and guidebooks to help identify them. Experts will discuss the importance of estuaries as nurseries for fish & shellfish, the fascinating migration of river herring, and the role of river plants in the food web. Please wear footwear that can get wet.

Moon Rising Sunset Paddle (Friday in July, beginning at 5:00 PM): The Annual Pettaquamscutt Paddle, sponsored by Narrow River Kayaks, is an annual guided kayak paddle. After brief paddle and safety instruction and a presentation by NRPA board members, the guided sunset paddle takes paddlers into the John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge at Pettaquamscutt Cove and to the beach near the mouth of the inlet for a stretch before returning to Middlebridge with the incoming tide as the sun gently sets on the western horizon. Stay around for refreshments, conversation and a raffle drawing.

Art on the River (Saturday in August, 9-11 am): Local artists will give Instruction to adults in drawing and painting scenes of the Middlebridge area, while children will have their own guided artistic activities. Bring your easels or sketch pads or cameras to capture the beauty of this iconic site. Sketch your version of an expansive landscape view or crouch down and capture a still life view of oysters on the fringe of the salt marsh. In addition, “plein air” (open air) painters and other artists will be demonstrating their techniques. Or if you are more comfortable with electronic media, capture the sights with your camera, iphone or ipad and download photos real time to the NRPA Facebook page.

Land Trust Days (Saturday in September, 5-8 pm): Our contribution to a state-wide celebration of special green spaces just outside your door. Join us for an all ages guided walk starting at Middlebridge and walking across the bridge to South Kingstown and through the Garrison House Acres Narrow River Land Trust property. This year’s walk focused on insects. Rick Enser of the Narrow River Land Trust and David Gregg of the RI Natural History Survey. Learn about the insects that inhabit the shoreline and fields and how we track them. To learn how climate change may be reflected in the insect life we will set up moth traps and use other techniques to record insect diversity and discover trends. Please wear sturdy shoes and bring binoculars, hand lens, and insect protection.

Gansett Days (Saturday in September) - We will do another of our popular “What Lives in the River?” events from 9-11 and another Narragansett marsh walk from 10-12. Please wear footwear that can get wet.

Working since 1970 to preserve, protect, and restore the Narrow River and its watershed