



Save The River! River Watch

Fall 2019

Save The River Calls for Early Closure of Shipping Season

By John Peach

As River Watch heads to press in the later weeks of November, water levels on the River remain more than a foot higher than average. The Great Lakes are still at or near historic highs, where they have been for this entire annual cycle. Recent articles stemming from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) reports point toward another high water year in 2020. Knowing that long range weather forecasts are limited in their ability to predict the amount of precipitation that the next seven-plus months will bring, we are concerned about the spectre of another year of high water and its effects on River-based businesses, homes, and the recreational boating season.



Photo by Tom Bruyere

In 2018, the St. Lawrence Seaway remained open until December 31

Save The River continues to advocate for the environmental and recreational boating benefits of Plan 2014. However, the extreme high water levels caused by the above average and often record precipitation of last year in the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River, and Ottawa River Basins have made it imperative that all concerned River residents engage in Plan 2014's adaptive management review process. The International Joint Commission's (IJC) Great Lakes Adaptive Management Process committee (GLAM) is hosting a questionnaire for all riparians and interested parties to collect data on property damages and areas of concern.

Go to ijc.org/en/glam/watershed/questionnaire/high-water-levels-2019 to submit your answers to the questionnaire.

If you have not already done so, this is an excellent opportunity to send IJC and the International Lake Ontario St. Lawrence River Board (ILOSRLB) your questions, comments, and suggestions for changes to Plan 2014.

(continued on page 2)

Protecting the St. Lawrence River through advocacy, education and research.



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Save The River is a nonprofit, environmental organization whose mission is to restore, preserve and protect the ecological integrity of the Upper St. Lawrence River now and for generations to come.



Our conference room was filled to capacity during our May 29 round table with Congresswoman Stefanik, local business owners, and elected officials

(continued from front cover)

Actions taken by Save The River on water levels

One of our first moves early this spring was to reach out to the Seaway Management to request a “no wake” notice to shippers be put in effect. The Seaway cooperated, and ships have operated that way for most of the season.

As it became apparent this spring to all of us on the River that we were looking at another year of very high water, Save The River formed a Plan 2014 working group comprised of staff, board members, local business people, and elected officials. In May we were contacted by Congresswoman Elise Stefanik about coming to Clayton to participate in a round table discussion about high water levels. Our May 29 visit with Congresswoman Stefanik, along with local representatives of the ILOSLRB and members of our Plan 2014 working group, began with a boat tour to view the preparations being made along Clayton’s shoreline and the environmental effects in Grindstone Island’s Flynn’s Bay and was followed by a vigorous exchange about water levels in Save The River’s conference room.

Soon after that meeting, we invited the six newly appointed IJC commissioners to come to Clayton for a similar tour and exchange of information. On June 28 we were joined by U.S. Chair Jane Corwin, Canadian Chair Pierre Béland, and Commissioner Lance Yohe. The most meaningful part of their visit was getting out on Save The River board chair Jeff Garnsey’s classic ‘62 Chris-Craft to see the effects of the high water in one of the most historically significant breeding grounds of muskie and northern pike. Jeff’s talk about the changes he has observed in Flynn’s Bay over his lifetime, supplemented by information from River-based ILOSLRB members Tom Brown, Rob Campany, and Tony David, was extremely informative for the commissioners and their staff.

Following closely on the heels of these first two meetings, we were visited by three members of the Government Accounting Office (GAO) who were conducting a review of Plan 2014, as requested by Senators Schumer and Gillibrand. We have not yet seen the results of their findings, which will be issued as a report.

As spring transitioned to summer, and it became probable that the high water levels could surpass the levels seen in 2017, Save The River began to

explore actions that could be taken to reduce the water levels. In researching prior high water seasons, the concept of “patterning” shipping (an on-again, off-again scheduling of ships moving through the Seaway) became one method that could facilitate a reduction of water levels. Even if patterning only decreased water levels by a few inches, this would still bring immediate relief to many riparians. Formal letters requesting a program of patterning were sent to both the American and Canadian Seaway Administrators on July 22 and October 1. Both requests were rejected by the Seaway, with one primary reason being the cost to shipping. Save The River rejected their claim that closing the Seaway would cost \$50 million per day based on the ILOSLRB’s email stating it cost \$130,000 to \$200,000 per day (the equivalent of \$354,000 in today’s dollars) when patterning was implemented in 1993.

Contact us if you would like to view the chain of correspondence between Save The River and the Seaway Administrators.

In addition to advocating for action from the shipping industry, the Seaway, IJC, and ILOSLRB, Save The River has remained active and engaged in work with various coalition partners such as The Nature Conservancy, Audubon New York, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, and other groups to educate riparians about the importance of resilient shorelines. We addressed the summer gathering of the Thousand Islands Association, supported Governor Cuomo’s Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Commission, and urged Save The River members to correspond with elected officials about their concerns on water levels.



In late June we hosted the newly appointed Canadian and U.S. Chairs of the IJC for a tour of the River, followed by a round table discussion

As the winter snows begin to approach, the best remaining opportunity to lower the water levels is to call for an early closure to this year’s shipping season. The period prior to ice formation at the dam is a time when maximum outflows could be achieved if ships were not operating. Save The River made the call to close the Seaway to shipping effective December 1 in an October 21 letter to the Seaway Administrators.

We encourage you to write emails to Seaway administrators, International Joint Commissioners Corwin and Béland, Governor Cuomo, and your state, provincial, and federal Representatives and Senators urging them to support the early closure of the shipping season. Their email addresses (sometimes via office staff representatives) are listed here:

- Craig Middlebrook, Deputy Administrator of SLSDC: craig.middlebrook@dot.gov
- Terence Bowles, President and CEO of SLSMC: tbowles@seaway.ca
- IJC Commissioner, U.S. Chair Jane Corwin: lawsonc@washington.ijc.org
- IJC Commissioner, Canadian Chair Pierre Béland: mageauc@ottawa.ijc.org
- Governor Andrew Cuomo: correspondence.office@exec.ny.gov
- Congresswoman Elise Stefanik: Marek.Laco@mail.house.gov
- Senator Charles Schumer: senator@schumer.senate.gov
- Senator Kirsten Gillibrand: Susan_Merrell@gillibrand.senate.gov
- New York Senator Patty Ritchie: ritchie@nysenate.gov
- New York Assemblyman Mark Walczyk: walczykm@nyassembly.gov

If you would like to be added to our email list to keep up with Save The River and what we are doing about next year’s water levels, please contact us at info@savetheriver.org to update your information.

Meet Your New Save The River Board Members

My “homebase” on the River is on the U.S. mainland between Blind Bay and Mason’s Point.

I’ve spent 50 years on the River.

The issues I’m most passionate about in my role as a Save The River board director are leaving this body of water improved and empowering others to carry on in this vein.

My favorite River activities are swimming, kayaking or floating while daydreaming.

My favorite time of day on the River is early evening, just before or during sunset hours.

My favorite time of year on the River is ANYTIME!

My favorite River memory is having my not-walking-yet babes smiling back at me untethered, suspended in the River. Priceless moments securing their and my love of this waterway.

To me, the River is a triumph of nature to be treasured and preserved by our use.

The River makes me incredibly alive and grounded.

Janet Burrows



Merritt Jones



My “homebase” on the River is Wellesley Island.

I’ve spent 33 years on the River.

The issue I’m most passionate about in my role as a Save The River board director is the sustainability of the St. Lawrence in keeping it as beautiful as it is today for all future generations.

My favorite River activity is spending weekends on the water with my family and introducing new friends to the 1000 Islands.

My favorite time of day on the River is early mornings and evenings for cocktail cruises.

My favorite time of year on the River is late summer/early fall, when the weather is still warm during the day but has a little fall chill at night.

My favorite River memory is... looking forward to the start of summer and seeing all my “River” friends. Picking up right where we left off from the previous summer. I still look forward to this every year.

To me, the River is my favorite place on Earth.

The River makes me happy and thankful to have a place that means so much to me and the rest of my family.

My “homebase” on the River is Little Steamboat Island near Alexandria Bay.

I’ve spent all 45 of my years on the River and have been a land owner since 2014.

The issues I’m most passionate about in my role as a Save The River board director are balancing ecology with usability of the River and the impact of invasive species on our environment.

My favorite River activities are watching satellites at night, fishing with my daughters, and reading in the morning sun .

My favorite time of day on the River is... all of it, but I especially love 30 minutes before sunrise, morning sun, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM as the sun floats into the close trees, that time right after dusk when north or south winds settle, and from 10:00 to 11:00 PM when the satellites are flying and the Milky Way comes out.

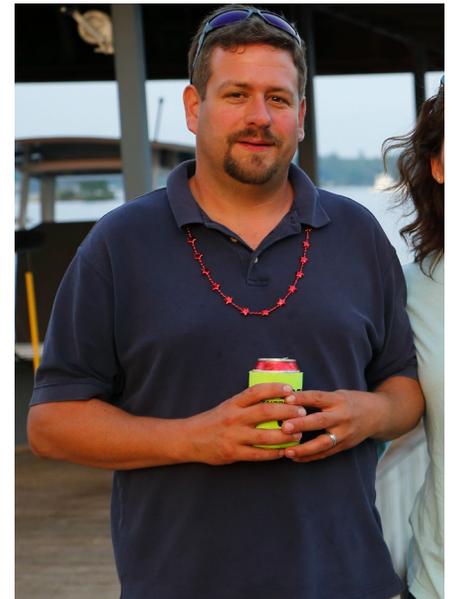
My favorite time of year on the River is the off-season in April and October, but I also love the week *before* Pirates Week, Memorial Day, and July after the smallmouth eggs have hatched.

My favorite River memories are catching (and releasing) over 50 fish as a 10-year old camping on Wellesley Island, the first time my daughters saw a “big ship” as babies, snorkeling with Gabby, roughing it in high water this year with Rosie. There are many...

To me, the River is home.

The River makes me stay centered on what is important, remember why I work, care about our environment, and focus on what I pass on to my kids.

Rob Rockell



Lisa Schenker



My “homebase” on the River is Halfway Island and St. Margarette’s Island, both in Chippewa Bay.

I’ve spent 60 years on the River.

The issues I’m most passionate about in my role as a Save The River board director are related to education, and particularly how to involve others in learning about, appreciating, and protecting the amazing and unique ecosystem of the St. Lawrence.

My favorite River activity is swimming.

My favorite time of day on the River is...impossible to say! Those crisp, bright mornings, spectacular evening sunsets, and quiet, starry nights are all magical.

My favorite time of year on the River is summertime.

My favorite River memory is... There are so many wonderful memories it’s impossible to choose just one. I cherish all the time I’ve spent with our large, extended family doing every kind of fun, summer activity.

To me, the River is beautiful, dynamic, and deserving of our love,

respect, and protection.

The River makes me feel at home.

Save The River's 2019 Common Tern Monitoring Season

By Ally Jones, Save The River Summer 2019 Intern

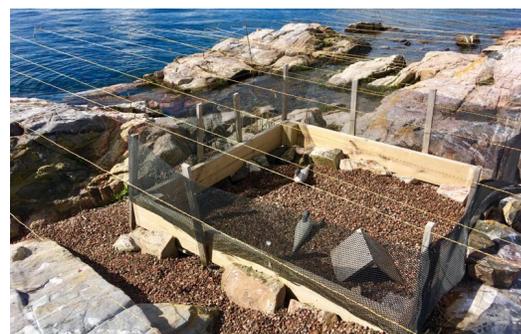


Common tern adult lands at nesting site; photo by Jim McGarry

You have surely heard the dinosaur-like squawk of a common tern or witnessed adults diving into the water to hunt fish along the St. Lawrence River. Common terns may be the most abundant tern in New York State, however, they are listed as a threatened species due to dramatic population declines throughout the last fifty years. 2019 is the 20th year that Save The River has worked with partner organizations to monitor and restore common tern nesting in the Upper St. Lawrence River. During this field season, some nesting sites experienced setbacks with high water and predation while other sites were extremely productive and fledged hundreds of common tern chicks.

Since 1999, Save The River has partnered with Dr. Lee Harper and his team from Riveredge Environmental Inc., the Thousand Islands Land Trust, and the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Authority to monitor and improve nesting sites for common terns along the St. Lawrence River. Over the last five decades, common tern populations have dramatically declined; from 20,000 nesting pairs to less than 1,100 nesting pairs (Riveredge Environmental Inc, 2017). This can be attributed to a variety of influences including: competition with other water birds including ring-billed gulls, human disturbance, loss of nesting sites, predation, and nest flooding. The Common Tern Program was established in 1990 to improve common tern nesting sites and attract common terns to natural shoals, constructed platforms, and navigational cells.

Save The River monitors six common tern nesting sites in the Upper St. Lawrence River: two natural shoals and four seaway navigation cells. Each April, habitat improvements begin when staff, volunteers, and partner organizations make repairs, remove vegetation, and set up gull exclusion grids on each nesting site. The exclusion grids are made of wire and rebar along the length of the shoal in a grid pattern, or are erected from the top of a navigation cell tower to the base. These exclusion zones prevent gulls from competing for nesting sites. Ring-billed gulls arrive to nesting sites earlier than common terns while they return from wintering grounds in Central and South America.



A natural shoal is prepared for the season with a gull exclusion grid, new gravel, chick shelters, exclosure fencing, and common tern decoys

Habitat improvements also include adding gravel, an important resource that reduces the proliferation of vegetation and is a favorite substrate for common terns to nest on. Common terns prefer to lay their eggs in small gravel depressions. Once weedy vegetation is removed and gravel is spread, common tern chick shelters are added to the site. These small wooden structures provide tern chicks a place to hide from predators, and protect chicks from extreme hot and cold temperatures. New common tern hatchlings are vulnerable to the elements. In addition, fences are erected around the perimeter of navigation cells and repaired when needed. Fencing protects common terns from predators like mink and prevent tern chicks from falling or jumping off the navigation cell. Once this work has been completed, we eagerly await the arrival of the common terns.



Newly hatched common tern chick

Monitoring the six nesting sites begins in mid-May as common terns begin to nest and produce an average clutch of 1-3 eggs. Every 7-10 days, Save The River volunteers and staff visit the nesting sites to make observations and record the total number of nests, eggs, and chicks. We limit our time at each site to minimize disturbance to the nesting shorebirds. By mid-June, healthy chicks have grown large enough to be banded and researchers attach a small stainless steel band to the chick's lower right leg. Each band has a unique serial number that can be used to track a bird's migration and give researchers an accurate estimate of productivity. Researchers, with the aid of avid birders and



Ally Jones, Patricia Shulenburg, and Molly Russell checking on common tern chicks at a navigational cell nesting site

other citizen scientists, have discovered common terns wintering as far south as Columbia, Brazil, and Argentina. Common terns hatched from the St. Lawrence River have also been found nesting throughout Lake Champlain, Lake Superior, and Cape Cod. This information shows that habitat restoration and population recovery efforts within the St. Lawrence River can positively impact tern populations worldwide.

Common terns did not nest on our largest shoal this season likely due to a nearby nesting pair of osprey. Although osprey are not a predator of common terns they perceive them as a threat. However we did observe mallard ducks, common mergansers, and Canada geese utilizing this habitat. The smaller natural shoal faced a different kind of obstacle due to high water levels which swallowed valuable nesting surface area. The few common terns that nested in the season were brave, but large waves on windy days flooded and washed away their nests. Sites farther downstream near Massena, NY that are monitored by Dr. Lee Harper and Riveredge Environmental Inc. also experienced reduced common tern productivity due to cold water splashing nests from high water levels.

These shoals were not the only sites to experience obstacles to common tern productivity. Two of our Clayton area navigation cells started out the season with record numbers of nests (compared to historic data reaching back to 1990.) Unfortunately, these sites also experienced significant predation. We found adult common tern wings scattered around sites, a sign of owl predation; holes pecked into eggs, which can indicate predation by gulls, blackbirds, and crows; and eggs that went missing entirely, which could indicate predation from herons, crows, and gulls. While the exclusion grids are meant to dissuade predators, it is difficult to deter every bird. These attacks led to widespread nest abandonment at both Clayton area navigation cell nesting sites.

Weather played an important factor in common tern nesting and productivity this season. In May, we experienced cool, wet weather which caused many birds to start nesting later in the season. Cold temperatures and rainfall throughout May and June negatively impacted chick survival. Common tern chicks lack fully developed feathers upon hatching to keep them warm and insulated. Alternatively, hot and dry weather can also impact common tern survival. July and August experienced stretches of hot and dry weather. Watching common terns closely, you may notice adults dragging their bellies in the water to wet their feathers and keep their chicks cool in the nests. These hot and cold weather extremes likely made it difficult for tern chicks to survive after hatching.

Thankfully, two navigational cell nesting sites near Chippewa Bay were incredibly productive. Jim McGarry, a long-time Save The River volunteer who is integral to our common tern program, recorded over 285 nests on the two navigation cells he monitors. In June, 233 common tern chicks were banded between the two sites. We are hopeful these chicks will be found wintering in Central and South America. Perhaps next year, they will return to the St. Lawrence River to start the cycle anew.

This program would not be possible without the dedicated partners and volunteers who contribute their knowledge, time, and equipment to the common tern monitoring program. Save The River would like to acknowledge Dr. Lee Harper and Riveredge Environmental Inc., Audubon New York, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, the New York Power Authority, the Thousand Islands Land Trust, the Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust, and our dedicated volunteers Jim McGarry, Bill and Judy Munro, Lyn Pohl, Katrin Schubert, Kate Breheny, Jeff Olstrom, and Wendy Peacock Wulfken for your dedication to the common tern restoration program.



Volunteers Bill Munro, Jeff Olstrom, and Wendy Peacock Wulfken transport gravel and manage habitat before the arrival of common terns

The Dan Tack Annual Muskie Catch and Release Tournament



Dan Tack (r) fishing with a fourth-generation of the Garnsey family, Josh Garnsey, onboard *Muskie* in summer 2018

In November Save The River announced the creation of The Dan Tack Annual Muskie Catch and Release Tournament named in honor of Dan Tack, a long time seasonal 1000 Islands resident and supporter of many North Country nonprofits. The St. Lawrence River-based tournament will run for the entire muskellunge season (the third Saturday of June through December 15). Muskies are the apex predators in the St. Lawrence River, and the 1000 Islands were once world renowned for its muskie fishery. The angler with the winning entry will receive a trophy and have his or her name placed on the custom-designed tournament plaque to be housed at Save The River's Clayton storefront. Additionally, Save The River announced changes to their long running Muskie Catch and Release Program with the goal of giving more anglers the opportunity to be rewarded for successfully catching and releasing a muskie.

To enter the Dan Tack Annual Muskie Catch and Release Tournament, anglers must successfully catch and release a muskie on the St. Lawrence River and submit record of the event by completing

Save The River's Muskellunge Release Affidavit along with a photograph of their catch (a photograph is required for entry into The Dan Tack Tournament but is not required for the general Muskellunge Release Award). Every angler who catches, measures, photographs, and successfully releases a muskie will be eligible to enter the tournament. The winner of the tournament will be the person who catches and releases the largest fish of the season. Participants will have 30 days after the December 15 close of the season to report their catch.

In an effort to reward more anglers, Save The River has made the following change to the long-running Muskellunge Release Award program: all anglers who catch and release a muskie of any size (previously limited to legal size catches only) are eligible to receive a limited edition 16" x 20" print by renowned St. Lawrence River artist, Michael Ringer. The print, titled *Sovereign*, is available exclusively through Save The River's Muskellunge Release Award program and cannot be purchased. To receive a Muskellunge Release Award, anglers must complete and submit the Muskellunge Release Affidavit.

Dan Tack began fishing for muskie onboard his own 1960 Chris-Craft Sea Skiff. Dan fished with three generations of Garnsey family fishing guides: starting in the early 1970s with Jeff's grandfather, Roly Garnsey, on his series of boats named *Muskie*, then with Jeff's father Joe on both his boats, *Muskie* and *Fin and Feather*, until Joe's death, and finally onboard Jeff's current *Muskie* for the past decade. "As early as the 1980s, Dan also realized that our indigenous population of muskies was too valuable to catch only once," said Jeff Garnsey. "We owe him a huge debt in helping to revitalize the population of this top of the food chain apex predator and reestablish the popularity of muskie fishing."



Dan Tack at the helm of *Muskie*

"Dan Tack was one of the most generous and supportive 1000 Islanders I had the pleasure to know," said John Peach, executive director of Save The River. "Naming this tournament, which will help us record the catch and release of muskies on the St. Lawrence, in his honor is a small recognition of all that Dan did for so many organizations in the North Country."

A Celebration for Future Generations

On Thursday, September 12th, friends and family gathered at the Pavilion at Wellesley Island State Park to celebrate the establishment of the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund. Attendees reminisced about Ken Deedy and his passion for the Thousand Islands region, and came together as a community in support of this exciting endeavor.

In honor of Ken, the Thousand Islands Land Trust, Save The River and Minna Anthony Common Nature Center have established the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund. As a true endowment, this fund, inspired through his vision, will be used to hire a high school or college student for a summer long internship. Each year, the selected student will have a once-in-a-life opportunity to work for all three organizations, immersing them into the fields of land conservation and stewardship, environmental education, and environmental advocacy.



Staff, board members, and volunteers from Thousand Islands Land Trust, Save The River, and Minna Anthony Common Nature Center celebrate the establishment of the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund. Front row (l to r): Spencer Busler, Brandon Hollis, Bridget Wright, Kendall Hathaway, John Peach, Matthew Elliott, Andy Kane, Jake Tibbles, Gaby Padewska, Kate Breheny; second row (l to r): Terra Bach, Margaret Hummel, Patricia Shulenburg, Anna Kellner, Darlene Sourwine, Lauren Eggleston and Max Koch

“The Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship is an environmentally focused program like no other. We believe it will have a positive impact on our region and future environmental stewards of this place we all so deeply love” commented Terra Bach, TILT’s Director of Development and Communications.

Before his passing, Ken made the initial gift to establish the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund and thanks to the generosity of many supporters and a \$50,000 grant made by the Northern New York Community Foundation (NNYCF) nearly \$158,500 has now been raised.

Ken was a great friend to many and a life-time supporter of environmental stewardship and education in the Thousand Islands region. It was his vision to create a position that would serve three environmental organizations in the Thousand Islands region. From the earliest days of the Thousand Islands Land Trust and Save The River’s activities, Ken thought that sharing resources would provide useful staffing help to the organizations as well as offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a young person interested in a career in environmental science.

“Ken Deedy was certainly smiling down on our celebration, watching his vision for these environmental organizations that he cared so much about come together for such a special common cause. We look forward to a bright future with Thousand Islands Land Trust and Save The River to help inspire the next generation of nature lover,” commented Matthew Elliott, Board President, Friends of the Nature Center, Inc.

“This new fund will create a collaboration of resources that will encourage, across the generations, an ongoing belief in the importance of thoughtful stewardship,” remarked Rande Richardson, Executive Director of the NNYCF.

You can support Ken Deedy’s legacy: when you [make a donation](#) to Save The River, note that you would like the money to be allocated to the “Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund.”



Exclusive 2020 Raffle for Save The River Members

Save The River members have the chance to win a set of four inflatable lifejackets (two Bass Pro Shops A/M 24 and two Bass Pro Shops Inflatable PFD Deluxe by Mustang Survival), generously donated by Bass Pro Shops of Utica, NY. These modern PFDs are a lightweight and comfortable way to remain safe while boating all year round. This four pack raffle prize has a value of over \$500! A winner will be drawn on Monday, November 2, 2020. **How do I enter the raffle?**

Current Save The River members and River Partners: When you renew your general membership between November 1, 2019 and November 1, 2020, increase your annual giving amount by at least \$50 and you will be entered into the raffle. In gratitude of current River Partners' ongoing support of Save The River, when you renew your River Partner membership you will receive one complimentary entry into the raffle.

New Save The River members and River Partners: When you become a new member between November 1, 2019 and November 1, 2020, start your new membership giving amount at \$50 or above and you will be entered into the raffle. In gratitude of an individual or family becoming a new River Partner, you will receive one complimentary entry into the raffle.

What if I would like to purchase additional chances in the raffle? After receiving your first chance in the raffle, you can purchase additional chances at \$50/ piece.

Calling All Photographers!

Submit your entries for our annual calendar photo contest until February 29, 2020. Send by email to info@savetheriver.org or by postal mail to 409 Riverside Drive Clayton, NY 13624. Entries should include contact information. Digital images must be high resolution and greater than 300 dpi. (Hint: The file size will be approximately 3 MB or larger). Photographers submitting photos grant Save The River a non-exclusive right to use the image(s) for any purpose in perpetuity. Ownership of the image will remain the property of the photographer. **Entries chosen as one of the 14 featured images (cover and 13 months) will receive a complimentary 2020-2021 calendar.**

Beach Watch Results In its 20th season, the Beach Watch program monitored seven popular swimming locations by testing water samples for levels of E.Coli. Throughout the summer all sites consistently passed, except on August 19 when the Wilson Bay at 3' depth failed with a level of 613.1 E. Coli bacteria colonies. Save The River notified Jefferson County Department of Health, Jefferson County Soil and Water, and the Town of Cape Vincent. The volunteer who samples Wilson Bay was able to return on August 22 to resample at both the 3' and 6' depths and the second samples both passed. This program would not be possible without the support of passionate volunteers who make a nine-week commitment to take weekly samples - thank you Beach Watch volunteers!

Sample Location	Jul 1	Jul 8	Jul 15	Jul 22	Jul 29	Aug 5	Aug 12	Aug 19	Aug 26	Log Avg
Frink Park, Clayton	1.0	<1.0	4.1	<1.0	1.0	<1.0	<1.0	<1.0	<1.0	1.3
Potters Beach, Grindstone Island	NS	NS	2.0	1.0	20.1	<1.0	5.2	26.2	6.3	8.8
Lake of the Isles, Wellesley Island	1.0	<1.0	3.0	<1.0	1.0	<1.0	<1.0	3.1	1.0	1.5
Round Island	NS	1.0	3.0	NS	1.0	1.0	<1.0	NS	2.0	1.5
The Swimming Cove at T.I. Park	NS	NS	14.8	6.2	8.5	7.5	21.6	23.8	<1.0	11.9
Scenic View, Alexandria Bay	13.4	6.3	186.0	14.6	7.3	14.6	2.0	2.0	10.8	28.6
Wilson Bay (3 feet), Cape Vincent	NS	<1.0	7.4	5.2	9.8	2.0	<1.0	11.0	1.0	4.8
Wilson Bay (6 feet), Cape Vincent	NS	2.0	3.1	9.6	10.9	2.0	1.0	5.1	<1.0	4.3

Results are expressed in numbers of bacteria colonies found in a 100 milliliter (ml) sample of swimming water. NYS Department of Health has set a swimming water quality limit of 235 colonies of E.Coli bacteria per 100 ml of water NS indicates no sample was taken.



Patricia Shulenburg leads young anglers on International Coastal Cleanup Day



High school intern Kaitlyn Radley hosted a kid's craft at Punkin' Chunkin'



Volunteers & staff keep runners hydrated at the finish line of Run for the River



Janet Burrows was honored as the 2019 Volunteer of the Year - she's dynamite!



Monica Behan, member of the Sustainability Committee, on our tour of the Jefferson Co. Transfer Station



Hands on learning as part of an On the Water field trip to the Thousand Islands Biological Station on Governor's Island



Curious minds onboard Clayton Island Tours during an On the Water field trip



Interns in action - Ally Jones represents Save The River at 1000 Islands Family Day at the Antique Boat Museum



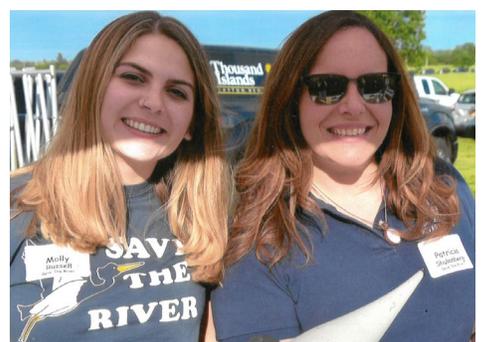
Volunteers on the Labatt shoreline clean up remove broken dock chairs, fishing line, and aluminum cans from the River



Run the River finishers celebrate with a cool swim from Clayton's Thousand Islands Regional Dock



Working with our partners at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center for educational programs



Intern Molly Russell and Patricia Shulenburg represent Save The River at the Zenda Community Picnic

31ST ANNUAL WINTER ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE

Saturday, February 1, 2020

1000 Islands Harbor Hotel

Clayton, New York

Save The River® / Upper St. Lawrence RIVERKEEPER®

Preparations are well underway for our 31st Annual Winter Environment Conference, to be held on Saturday, February 1, 2020 at the 1000 Islands Harbor Hotel in Clayton, NY. Save the date and stay tuned, registration forms will be mailed in early December; the registration fee of \$50 includes morning coffee and pastries, lunch, & cash bar cocktail reception with light hors d'oeuvres.

We have reserved a limited number of rooms at the 1000 Islands Harbor Hotel at a special rate of \$119 per night. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at (315) 686-1100; relay to the staff that you're attending Save The River's conference. Don't delay: this discounted room rate is only guaranteed through Saturday, January 18.

Here is a preview of our line-up of conference speakers:

- **Andrew Reeves**, author of *Overrun: Dispatches from the Asian Carp Crisis*, a Toronto-based environmental journalist and the editor-in-chief of *Alternatives Journal*, Canada's oldest environmental publication, will discuss the politics, history, agriculture, fish biology and several other disciplinary perspectives in the story of invasive Asian carp.
- **Dr. John Farrell**, professor in the Department of Environmental & Forest Biology at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and the Director of the Thousand Islands Biological Station on Governor's Island, will provide an update on current studies of the muskie population in the St. Lawrence River.
- **Drew Gronewold** is an Associate Professor at the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability will discuss historical, current and future Great Lakes water levels, including the hydrologic conditions that contribute to water level variability.
- **Rob Hoehn** is CEO of IdeaScale, a software platform for crowdsourcing ideas from employees, customers, and citizens. In addition to running a startup, he speaks regularly on climate change and how it affects local communities.
- **Dr. Nina Schoch**, Executive Director and Chief Scientific Officer at the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation and has studied loons in New York's Adirondack Park since 1998, will discuss their research & conservation programs, as well as loon behavior and natural history.
- **Patricia Shulenburg**, Save The River's Program Manager, will give an update on our various educational programs that annually reach 1,500+ students in the North Country.
- **Watersheds Canada** will discuss long-term sustainable shorelines, and tools for homeowners and land manager professionals hoping to manage their properties for flooding and erosion, minimize their impacts to the watershed, and use nature based shoreline features in response to fluctuating water levels.

Livestream Available: For those who are unable to make the trip to Clayton, we will be hosting a professional live stream of the conference. In order to support this exciting offering, there is a suggested registration fee of \$25 if you plan to tune into the live stream. The hyperlink to the live stream will be shared the week of the conference.

From the Riverkeeper

By John Peach



Welcome from the River. As water levels continue to be the most passionately discussed topic at River gatherings and in restaurants and shops along the River, the fall migration is almost complete. Flocks of American brant passed in late October, and the bluebill and goldeneye ducks are almost here. Muskie season is in full swing, and reports of good catches are coming in daily.

As always, Save The River had a busy summer. We completed our 11th year of *In the Schools* and *On the Water* programs with the help of many teachers and volunteers. Over 1,500 students and 100 educators participated in the programs, generously funded for many years by the Fresh Sound Foundation. There were eleven *On the Water* trips completed in 2019 and planning is already underway for next year's programs.

Thanks to Bass Pro Shops of Utica for donating new lifejackets

Our DEC-funded three-year research program on native mussels, in conjunction with Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and the New York State

Museum, has begun on the lower Grasse River. Divers have been relocating native unionid mussels ahead of dredging at the superfund site.

This year our common tern restoration project, partnered with Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) and Dr. Lee Harper, had mixed results in the 1000 Islands region. Some sites were very active, while others were washed out by high water or suffered significant predation.

Save The River's Bass Catch & Release (C&R) program focused on attending five bass tournaments on both sides of the River where staff and interns were generally welcomed by tournament directors. An end of season memo of recommendations for next year's tournaments will be prepared by staff this winter. We were awarded a \$10,000 grant from St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario - Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO-PRISM) to help fund our work on Bass C&R and invasive species. This summer the 1000 Islands and the St. Lawrence River were named the #1 bass fishing area in the United States by Bassmaster Magazine, and there were definitely more bass fishing boats out on the River. Thank you to Bass Pro Shops of Utica, NY who donated a Fishfinder for a C&R raffle, which was enthusiastically received at the U.S. tournaments.

Our Muskie C&R program is being reinvigorated this fall by the introduction of the Dan Tack Annual Muskie Catch and Release Tournament which should encourage increased reporting of all muskies caught and released. Anglers releasing a muskie will be eligible for a Michael Ringer muskie print and entry in the annual contest to win the trophy for the largest released muskie. The plaque for the tournament will be housed at Save The River.



The Dan Tack Annual Muskie Catch and Release Tournament Plaque was fabricated from a piece of black walnut that Dan milled with Jeff Garnsey

The 17th Annual Run for the River was another highly successful event with nearly 500 runners participating. Early this fall the downtown road construction project began in Clayton but rest assured that Save The River's Run for the River will continue, perhaps with necessary modifications to the route; save the date for next year's Run: Saturday, July 25, 2020.

Many thanks to Bass Pro Shops of Utica, NY for their continued support of Save The River. This year they donated a Lifetime® Horizon Standup Paddleboard and Paddle for our summer raffle and ticket sales earned us nearly \$3,700.



Board President Jeff Garnsey advocated for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding in Washington D.C. in October

In October our Board President, Jeff Garnsey, travelled to Washington, D.C. to represent Save The River at a meeting organized by Citizens Campaign for the Environment. Jeff was able to speak with several members of Congress on the importance of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River environment to businesses.

Board member Robin Lucas spoke on behalf of Save The River at several island and property association meetings this summer to familiarize residents with our ongoing work.



This styrofoam to-go food container floated in next to our boat this summer

Our Sustainability Committee's *Replace Single-Use Plastics* program was bolstered by a return appearance of Dr. Sherri Mason at the Clayton Opera House in June to speak on "The Perils of Plastics." This exciting and educational evening was made possible by the generosity of several Save The River sponsors who were mentioned in our Spring River Watch. Since the start of this program, Save The River has sold and donated over 1,500 reusable grocery totes which were purchased from the proceeds of a generous grant by Community Bank, N.A. Now that New York State legislation banning single-use plastic bags has been passed, partly due to the efforts of Save The River, our members, and our partner All in the Same Boat, our next step is to push NYS to ban styrofoam and plastic take home food containers. These containers get into the River and quickly break down into microplastics.

Legislation to stop the progress of Asian carp is moving forward slowly in Congress. It now appears that funding for the Preliminary Engineering and Design (PED) phase is close to being approved. The next and much bigger step will be the approval of the construction of the Brandon Road Lock project where the barriers to stop the carp will be built into the structure. This \$778M project will need to be funded in the next Water Resources Development Act bill (WRDA), which will require bipartisan support. Save The River will be reaching out to you several times for your help in advocating for the inclusion of this important project in WRDA.

This summer our annual Beach Watch water quality monitoring program monitored seven sites, with "The Swimming Cove" at Thousand Islands Park being a newly added test site. All of the sites regularly passed NYS criteria, with the exception of one fail midsummer; that site was retested two days later and passed!

This was a challenging summer for our shoal marking volunteers due to high water. However, with a

lot of extra effort and team work on the part of the participants, the project was a success. We definitely need some new, younger volunteers to replace older veterans such as myself. *Those markers seem to have grown heavier as I age.* Thank you to the Thousand Islands Association for their many, many years of financial support of this valuable River program!

Labatt USA and one of their regional distributors, Eagle Beverage Company, sponsored a summer long program of awarding Save The River proceeds from every case of Labatt Blue and Labatt Blue Light beer sold in the North Country. **This two-month long sales program resulted in a \$10,000 donation to Save The River!** As part of the program, several of Labatt's and Eagle's sales representatives joined us for a shoreline cleanup at Wellesley Island State Park. It was an incredibly windy but successful afternoon made possible by the donation of boats and time from Jeff Staples of On the River Construction (OTR), TILT, and board member Robin Lucas. Thank you to all for helping Save The River!



Another great day spent on the River for the Labatt USA shoreline clean up. This year we had such a big group that we needed three workboats; special thank you to Jeff Staples of On The River Construction and Robin Lucas for volunteering their time and boats on a busy July afternoon and to TILT for the use of their workboat

Diversions of our precious freshwater from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River remain a concern as this high water period of the Great Lakes water cycle persists. Wisconsin courts ruled in favor of the state's Department of Natural Resources granting a permit to Foxconn (located outside the Great Lakes watershed) to withdraw millions of gallons per day from the Lakes. This agreement breaks the Great Lakes Compact, and will be subject to further legal challenges by environmental groups.

Late fall is a key membership renewal period for Save The River. During 2019, we added 120 new members. The powerful support of our extraordinary members, many of whom have been dedicated to Save The River for decades, makes it possible for Save The River to have big goals for 2020 and beyond including the research-driven DEC grant, adding an internship position with our partners at TILT and MACNC, and working with our River communities to eliminate single-use plastics. These projects, combined with our advocacy, make it possible for us to continue our mission to restore, preserve and protect the River now and for generations to come. **Your membership makes our work possible.**

As we head into winter, Save The River is planning on a busy season of advocacy, education and research projects. We hope to see many of you at our 31st Annual Winter Environmental Conference on February 1. And we wish you a very happy holiday season as you join with family and friends. Please feel free to contact any of us with your questions or comments.

Thank you for your support,

John Peacher

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Yes! I want to support Save The River

I want to be a member:

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Advocate	_____	\$100
Guardian	_____	\$250
Steward	_____	\$500
River Partner	_____	\$1,000
River Patron	_____	\$2,500
River Defender	_____	\$5,000+
Other	_____	_____

Give monthly and receive a set of two etched rocks glasses, exclusively available to **River Guide** members
\$20 monthly minimum contribution



As a River Guide, your membership is an on-going, monthly payment of an amount of your choosing (minimum of \$20) charged to your credit card.

Become a "River Guide"

- Your gift is a dependable source of support for Save The River throughout the year & is a convenient way to plan your donations in your personal budget
- Your gift will appear each month on your credit card
- You will not receive phone or direct mail solicitations from us
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- You can change your gift at any time by contacting us

_____ **Sounds great, sign me up!**

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Return this form to Save The River 409 Riverside Drive Clayton, NY 13624

Contributions can also be made online at donate.savetheriver.org

Fall RW19