



# Save The River

## River Watch

Your Membership Matters

### Save Blind Bay

By John Peach, Executive Director and Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper®

36 acres of undeveloped land at Blind Bay in the Town of Orleans are now owned by Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT). Blind Bay is an environmental treasure and home to more than 53 species of fish, birds, reptiles and other wildlife. This bay is also a historic spawning area for muskellunge, the apex predator of the Upper St. Lawrence River.

TILT's just completed purchase of 20 acres of land from Three Mile Bay Associates is contiguous to a 16-acre parcel TILT purchased in 2016. The combined 36 acres of undeveloped shoreline will protect the many species that make Blind Bay their home. **However, there is a threat to Blind Bay.** US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) identified Blind Bay as a site to build their future facility serving this section of the River, and may move to take possession of Blind Bay by eminent domain.



Photo by Chris Murray

Save The River (STR) and TILT support CBP's mission to protect our borders. An industrial-style facility, housing up to 75 officers with the required boats, boat launch, trucks, dog kennels, parking and industrial-style lighting, does not belong in this pristine area. The massive dredging of the bay would destroy the spawning habitat for muskie, pike, bass and many other aquatic species found in Blind Bay.

Members of STR, TILT, Thousand Islands Park, Thousand Islands Association and other organizations opposing CBP in Blind Bay have sent emails and letters in opposition to the development of the facility. The Town of Alexandria, working with Jefferson County Legislator Phil Reed, has offered CBP an alternative facility site at the old Bonnie Castle Recreation Center located at the intersection of I-81 and Rt. 12. Bipartisan support urging CBP to locate at a site other than the environmentally sensitive Blind Bay has come from Senator Schumer, Congress-

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



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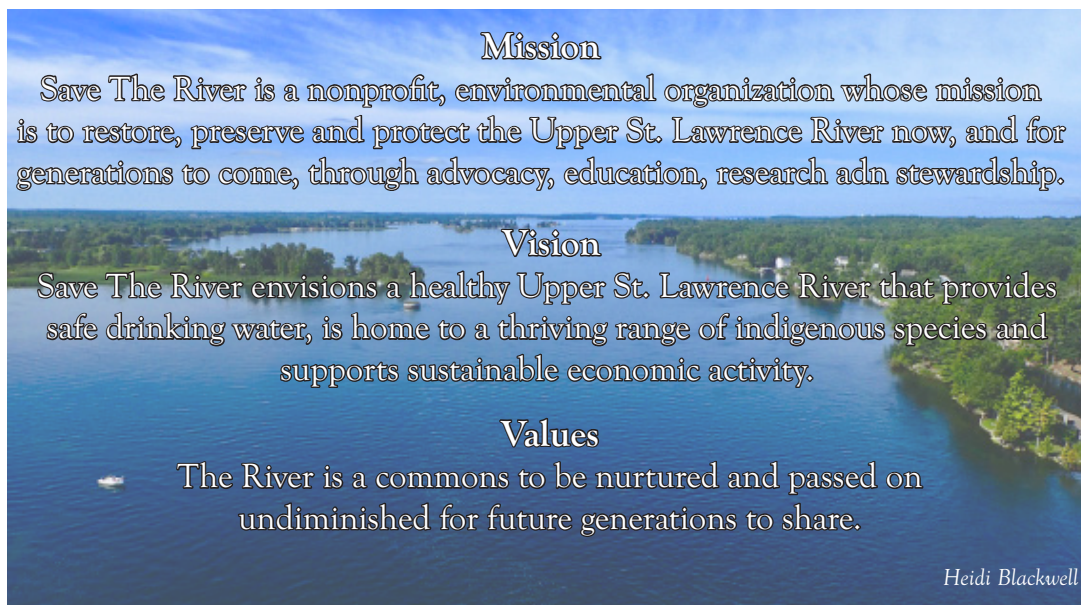
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Save The River / Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper is proud to be a member of the international Waterkeeper Alliance, the largest & fastest growing nonprofit solely focused on clean water.

Waterkeeper preserves & protects water by connecting local organizations worldwide. Our goal is swimmable, drinkable & fishable water everywhere. Today, Waterkeeper Alliance is made up of over 300 Waterkeeper Organizations & Affiliates protecting rivers, lakes & coastal waterways on six continents.



## Winter/Spring Raffle

Our Winter/Spring Raffle is “A Repast on The River,” featuring a one-of-a-kind charcuterie board created by local artisan Doug Drumm, known for his unique artwork and furniture, including Save The River’s Great Blue Heron screen door. Along with the board, we are including a set of Save The River rocks glasses, our Navy Thousand Islands blanket, a \$50 gift card to the River Rat Cheese store and a \$100 gift card for Save The River merchandise.



Tickets can be purchased online at [savetheriver.org/product-category/raffle/](http://savetheriver.org/product-category/raffle/) or in person at the 2023 Winter Environmental Conference on January 28, 2023. You can purchase one ticket for \$5 or five tickets for \$20.

(continued from front cover)

woman Claudia Tenney, and State and Local elected officials. When Congresswoman Tenney took a tour of the area, she posed the question: “Why here?”

STR believes that saving Blind Bay is imperative to preserving the River’s environment, culture and economy. STR and TILT built [saveblindbay.com](http://saveblindbay.com) as an information hub; members and residents can go to the website to get the latest updates, articles, media releases, and letters to the editor about saving Blind Bay. We urge you to continue to monitor [saveblindbay.com](http://saveblindbay.com), where you can add your voice to the call to help protect this environmental treasure.



Photo by: Terra Bach



## Save The River Staff Updates

Save The River recently promoted one staff member and welcomed another new member to our team.

Chelsea Broughton joined Save The River in 2021 as an education intern coordinator and has agreed to stay on as a full time staff member as Save The River’s Outreach Coordinator. She was born and raised in western New York but came north to receive a degree in Pre-Law at SUNY Canton. In 2017, Chelsea began working at New York State Parks as an Environmental Educator, where her passion for conservation took off. Since then, she has been involved with multiple environmental education organizations and worked as a Conservation Steward for the Student Conservation Association. Chelsea enjoys spending her free time volunteering as a cheerleading coach, being outdoors, and reading.



Robin Hall was hired in October 2022 as STR’s Education Coordinator. She will oversee the *In The Schools* and *On The Water* programs and volunteer programs. Robin recently moved to the area from her hometown in Florida where she graduated from the University of West Florida with her Bachelor’s Degree in Environmental Studies. After an internship in 2020 as an environmental educator in the Thousand Islands, Robin fell in love with the area and decided to move back! Through National Park Service, New York State Parks and environmental activist groups, she found a passion for environmental education. In her spare time, Robin enjoys any activities that involve the outdoors and loves a good book.



## Education Update, Fall 2022

By Lauren Eggleston, Robin Hall, and Chelsea Broughton

Education has been wildly busy over the past year. Our geographic reach is expanding, we've strengthened and developed partnerships, and our time in the classroom and out on the water is increasing. Participation numbers have grown, we hired a full-time educator, and we have plans in progress for new programming in the coming year. It's been a great year.

We're pleased to welcome Robin Hall as our new Education Coordinator. Robin brings teaching experience from the National Park Service, AmeriCorps, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. We're excited to have her on the crew, and look forward to seeing where she and the committee take the education program in the next year. For any education inquiries, email her at [education@savetheriver.org](mailto:education@savetheriver.org).

Surfacing after two years of strict pandemic regulations, the Education Committee set a goal to reach 1500 students. To our delight and surprise, we reached our goal in July. After a busy summer and fall, we reached over 2500 people through our education programs!

In 2022, our team (staff and education committee members) covered a large swath of Upstate New York, and even made it to the State Capitol via Zoom! STR was at outreach and education events in Watertown, Sackets Harbor, Lyme, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Fineview, Alexandria Bay, Indian River, Calcium, Ogdensburg, Waddington, Canton, Potsdam, Massena, and Albany. Covering this much ground would not have been possible without our partners who hosted us and helped us plan remote events. Special thanks to Thousand Islands Land Trust, Thousand Island Association, New York State Museum, and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Environment Division.

We will be presenting and tabling at WEC in January, where we'll be rolling out new programs and fresh curriculum. Don't miss it!



## Save The River Board Updates

Meet Save The River's NEW executive committee!

President: Rick Gregware

Rick began his 53 year marine mechanic career with H. Chalk and son in 1969, including the aftermath of the 1976 Nepco oil spill. In 1978, Rick established Northern Marine which has grown over the years into a full service marina in Spicer Bay. Presently, he manages the day to day operations. He's been involved with Save the River since its early days, becoming a board member in 1981. Rick has been active in his support as a contributing member of many committees, including Plan 2014, Water Levels, Navigation and Shoal Marking. He and his wife Janet live on Bartlett Point in Clayton and have a summer residence on Grindstone Island. They have 3 children and 3 grandchildren.



Vice President: Heather McNally

Heather is a former Save The River intern and the third generation of her family to serve as a board member. She spends as much time at the River as she can, with her family on Wellesley Island. She believes that a critical part of being a "River Rat" is protecting the River for future generations and teaching them about how much the River does for us. When not at the River, Heather lives in New York City, where she is a Managing Director, Head of Operations and Human Capital, at Brinley Partners.



Secretary: Heather White

Heather spent as much time on the River as possible growing up and the tradition continues with her children and grandson (6th generation) on T I Park. She has her (not quite two year old) grandson naming birds and trees. She is a firm believer in building knowledge and empathy for the living things we share this beautiful place with. She is a graduate of Buffalo State College and holds a Masters in Education from Potsdam University. She taught for 34 years and continues to work part-time as a curriculum coach for Watertown Central School District.

She is a founding member of - Stage Notes Inc, Women of Grace Widows Fund, and The Malawi Early Literacy Team. She has traveled to Africa 13 times with her passion for literacy for all. She is a past Board Member of Minna Anthony Common Nature Center. She is on the Board for Rock Ridges Nature Trail. Heather volunteered for Save the River for years and has been on the Education Committee since 2006. She is passionate about Nature Education as a way to build the future stewards of the St. Lawrence River.



Treasurer: Jack Butts

Jack spends the summers on Sunnyside Island with his wife Dominique and son Theo. He spent his early childhood on Butts Island near Ivy Lea, where he learned to love the River. Jack is active in various other organizations on both sides of the River. Jack is the President and CEO of Rome Specialty Company, Inc. (ROSCO). ROSCO is the oldest and largest manufacturer of terminal fishing tackle in the USA and currently in its 4th generation of family leadership. Part of his company's stated mission is to "advocate for the preservation of fisheries and endorse the use of sustainable fishing practices worldwide."



## Save The River Board Updates

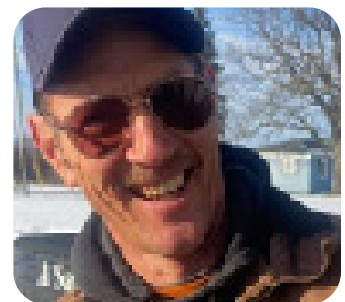
Member-at-Large: Isabella Colello

Isabella has spent every summer of her life on the St. Lawrence River. She grew up spending time on Grenadier Island with her family, catching frogs, learning bird species and becoming an advocate for the natural world around her. She took this passion with her to college where she studied in the Roy H. Park School of Communications at Ithaca College and minored in Environmental Studies. After her sophomore year, she came home to the River and was an intern at Save The River. Since then, she graduated college and moved to Watertown with her dog. She now works at ABC50 in Watertown where she shares local stories, her favorite being those that bring her to the River.



Past President: Jeff Garnsey

Jeff Garnsey is a 7th generation resident of Clayton and a 3rd generation fishing guide. He grew up on Grindstone Island where he started working as a deckhand for his grandfather when he was 10 years old. He recently retired from the Navy as a Master Chief Petty Officer with 26 years in the Submarine Service and moved back to Clayton. Since returning he has become Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Thousand Islands Museum and Secretary of the Clayton Chamber of Commerce. He is the Director of the Muskie Hall of Fame and does volunteer work for the Antique Boat Museum. He owns Garnsey's Classic Island Cruises and operates four boats: Muskie, Fin & Feather, Goat Locker, and Phoenix, which provide fishing, wine and cheese cruises, and educational tours of the river.



## Shoal Marking Update



Thank you to [On the River Construction](#) and all of our many volunteers that help us maintain shoal markers on the River.

Special thanks to the Thousand Islands Association for providing the markers to make this possible in US locations.

[Click here to learn more about our shoal marking program and view our online map of marker locations.](#)

## Fishing Line Recycling Stations Update

The Fishing Line Recycling Station program has expanded this year and now includes stations from Cape Vincent to Hammond.

Special thanks to the Thousand Islands Association for providing the stations to make this possible in US locations.

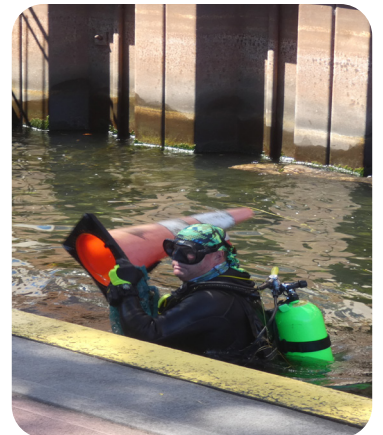


## Trash Free River Shoreline Cleanups

What a great year for our Trash Free River initiative! In 2022, Save The River’s crew of 215 volunteers hauled 4,900 lbs of debris from the shorelines.

Our cleanups are community based and volunteer powered; we focus on the riparian zone (about 10 feet into the water and 10 feet up on shore).

Thank you to our many volunteers that participated this year, and to our sponsors that help make these events possible: Leonard C. and Mildred F. Ferguson Foundation, Labatt’s, National Grid, International Coastal Cleanup #TeamSeas, and Fresh Sound Foundation.



### Interested in being a business sponsor?

We are always looking for ways to work with new people! Our cleanups are a great way to volunteer with your team, get out on the river and promote your business. We are also looking for volunteers with boats, trucks and dump trailers to help make this event a success. Email us at [outreach@savetheriver.org](mailto:outreach@savetheriver.org) to learn more!

## Eel Protection Study

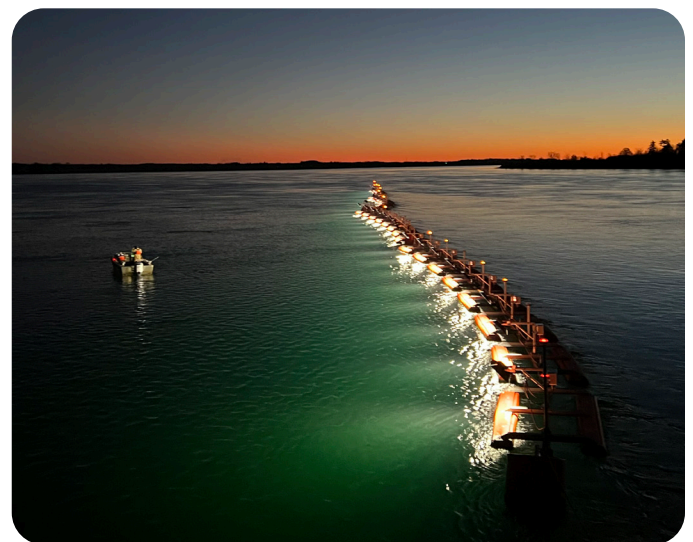
Our staff recently traveled to the Iroquois Water Control Dam in Lisbon, NY to learn more about the Eel Protection Study. American eel are listed as an endangered species by the Province of Ontario and are a species of concern in New York State.

American eel spawn in the Sargasso Sea, an area of the Atlantic Ocean. In their first phase of life, they swim from the Sargasso to the North American shore. They continue inland along rivers, growing and gradually making their way upstream to bodies of water like Lake Ontario, where they spend most of their adult life. Eel can live up to 40 years! Once they are ready to reproduce, adult eel navigate back to the ocean and the Sargasso Sea.

To complete their spawning migration from Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to the Atlantic Ocean, eel must pass through two hydroelectric power stations: the Moses-Saunders Power Dam at Mas-sena/Cornwall and the Beauharnois Generating Station in Quebec. Navigating these dams is treacherous for the fish; their bodies are up to 4 feet long as adults, and the turbines pose a deadly threat. Approximately 40% of eel that attempt to make it through the two power dams are killed. The Eel Protection Study is a five month study that investigates the use of light to guide adult eel. 400 tagged eel have been released as part of the study; the behavioral response of the eel is observed through acoustic tags and acoustic receivers. The goal of this study is to determine a means to guide, collect, and transport the eel around the two hydroelectric power stations during migration.

There are many project participants in the study: Ontario Power Generation (OPG); Hydro Quebec; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; New York Power Authority (NYPA); Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans; Quebec Ministry of Forest, Fish and Wildlife, and Parks; Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; Carleton University; and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (Canada) and is managed by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI).

For more information about this study, contact Paul Jacobson at [pjacobson@epri.com](mailto:pjacobson@epri.com).





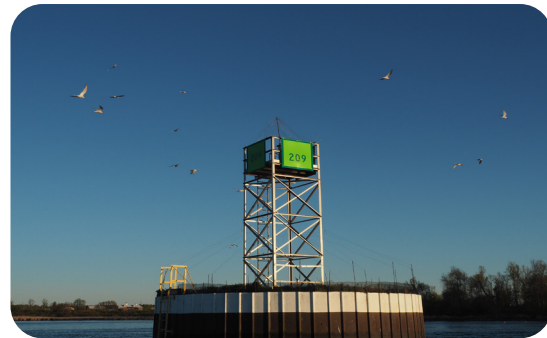
## Save The River’s *New* Adopt-a-Tern Program

Since 2012, Save The River has been actively monitoring the Common Tern population in the St. Lawrence River ecosystem. Common Terns are small, gull-like waterbirds that are the most widespread tern in North America. They are a vital member to the Great Lakes Watershed Basin. However, their populations have declined dramatically due to loss of nesting habitats. The Common Tern is currently listed as ‘threatened’ in New York State.

Adopt-a-Tern is a new program initiative to fund these essential conservation efforts. Sponsors are able to select and receive an adoption kit. There are currently three adoption levels: nest, egg/chick, and adult banded tern. Adoption kits come with an e-card, updates at the beginning and end of the breeding season, an official adoption certificate, a Common Tern fact sheet, coloring pages, a STR sticker, and more! To adopt your own Common Tern, contact us at [outreach@savetheriver.org](mailto:outreach@savetheriver.org) or at (315) 686-2010.



During the 2022 season, the Common Tern population had its ups and downs. The first recorded egg was on May 6th. This was an unusual egg laying year; it was early and there were three distinct broods. We were unable to band the later hatches due to fear of the older birds jumping in the water and drowning. For the season, we counted 1,031 eggs and banded 305 chicks. Our most productive colony was on a navigation cell in Chippewa that produced 420 eggs! Unfortunately, two colonies in Clayton area were hit by predators; one by a Great Horned Owl and the other by a mink resulting in 0 fledglings.



## River Celebration Non-Gala

*Presented by the Cerow Agency, Audie and Laura Cerow*

Save The River’s Non-Gala Celebration is part of a longtime tradition with origins tied to the illumination ceremonies made popular on the St. Lawrence River during the Gilded Age. This celebration is an opportunity to honor those traditions and the spirit of the River that runs through us all connecting family, friends, and neighbors alike. We invite you to enjoy an evening at home, wherever that may be, and reflect on the natural beauty of the St. Lawrence River. To donate, visit <https://connect.clickandpledge.com/w/Form/257bc555-d075-4704-933c-668046184fa0?prv=151422>.



## Save The River's Merchandise

The winter chill is in the air and we have the best thing for that - sweatshirts! STR is now fully stocked with our traditional Navy and Charcoal Hoodies. New for this fall is a crewneck sweatshirt in a soft "Blue Jean" shade of blue that sports our logo on the front. Unisex sizes range from Small - 2XL.



Show your support of Save The River's and Thousand Islands Land Trust's efforts to protect the fragile ecosystem of Blind Bay from the ill-conceived development of a CBP facility. **Purchase a sweatshirt today!** Sizes range from Small - 2XL and can be ordered online for \$50 at [savetheriver.org/product/save-blind-bay-sweatshirt](https://savetheriver.org/product/save-blind-bay-sweatshirt).



We are also restocked on our Navy Baseball hats (now fully adjustable) and have added a Chrome Grey option too!



In honor of our 45th Anniversary in 2023, we will be "throwing back" to our original Save The River Tees. Perfect for those Group Family photos (be sure to share them with us), we will be offering them in all sizes - Unisex Crewneck Ringer, Ladies V-neck, Unisex Long-sleeve, Youth, Toddler and Infant Onesies. And just in time for the Holiday gift buying season, sales on these Tees will begin on Cyber Monday (November 28th)!



## Estate Planning

The announcement of a recent bequest to Save The River is an excellent reminder to all of us to consider including Save The River in our wills and estate planning. We all know the importance of Save The River's mission to restore, preserve and protect the Upper St. Lawrence River now and for generations to come through advocacy, education, research and stewardship.

Save The River Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper was the recent and grateful recipient of a significant bequest from the Linda P. Quinby estate. Ms. Quinby, a longtime summer resident of the 1000 Islands, was deeply committed to supporting Save The River's mission.

John Peach, Save The River's executive director, praised Ms. Quinby's thoughtful generosity and estate planning. He said "this very significant gift to Save The River will allow us to move forward with the hiring of a full-time education coordinator to continue to strengthen Save The River's In the Schools and On the Water education programs. Already this year, we have educated almost 2000 students through the hard work of our staff and excellent education committee volunteers." Peach went on to say that "a significant amount of Ms. Quinby's bequest will be added to Save The River's Legacy Fund, which is used to endow the future of our critically important mission."

Save The River is thankful for these bequests as we know there will always be a need for Save The River to watch, protect, and preserve the River. Through planned giving and designating Save The River as a beneficiary, you can guarantee that Save The River will continue to be there for our children and grandchildren as the River's guardian.

The Save The River staff is available to talk with you about the future plans of Save The River and how to include Save The River in your will or estate. We can be reached at 315-686-2010 or by emailing [bridget@savetheriver.org](mailto:bridget@savetheriver.org).

We hope you will join several current and past Board and staff members in including Save The River in your estate planning.



## Night Light - The Value of Darkness

By Lauren Eggleston

Natural Resources. Those two words immediately conjure up thoughts of oil, natural gas, metals, and stone. Next might come animals and plants; by extension soil, water, and air. Resources we harvest from nature to use. Sunlight is a natural resource; equally important is its counterpart, darkness.

Unfortunately, darkness is not a resource we often think about. Generally (unless you're also in the insomnia club), we sleep through the dark hours, recharging for the next day. But more and more frequently, darkness is disappearing due to light pollution. We lose spectacular views of the stars to skyglow from cities and industrial areas.

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In our quest to conquer the night, we erase it. We use light for industry, illuminating working spaces for safety. We use light for year-round decoration, highlighting structures for aesthetics. On the River, light pollution infringes on the night as boathouses, homes, and marinas install new lights. Unintentionally, we create navigational hazards for evening boaters as the artificial light glares on the surface of the water. Without consideration, we interrupt nature's natural rhythm; we don't yet understand the full repercussions of eliminating the night.

Efforts are being made. Dark Skies legislation sits in committee in New York's Senate. Local governments request that proposed buildings are dark sky compliant going forward, limiting glare and trespass of light. Residents work with building managers to shield and redirect lights already installed. Advocates raise their voices for animals impacted by artificial light. This dilemma cannot be solved by one person, or at one level – it is something we must all be involved in. Darkness is a natural resource, and we are squandering it.

Curious to learn more? Visit [www.darksky.org/](http://www.darksky.org/)



*Photo from International  
Dark Sky Association*

## Save The River's 34th Winter Environmental Conference



**34th Annual Winter Environmental Conference**

Save The River  
Upper St. Lawrence **RIVERKEEPER**<sup>®</sup>

**Saturday, January 28, 2023**  
**1000 Islands Harbor Hotel**  
**Clayton, New York**

[savetheriver.org](http://savetheriver.org) / (315) 686-2010 / [info@savetheriver.org](mailto:info@savetheriver.org)

Save The River is excited to bring back its annual Winter Environmental Conference live and in person after hosting it virtually for two years due to the COVID pandemic. This year's conference will include presentations on many issues facing the River, including updates on Save The River's and TILT's program to Save Blind Bay, water levels, Save The River's outstanding educational programs, common tern restoration and research, shipboard firefighting on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and an ecosystem health report for the Upper St. Lawrence River shared through science, art and stories. More details to come - Save The Date!

## From the Riverkeeper

The October spectacle of fall on the River lived up to everyone's expectations. The leaves were beautiful, and the weather was welcoming and warm.

There has been a lot of activity at municipal docks and waterfronts with construction crews rebuilding old timber docks and repairing washed out bulkheads. While these repairs are absolutely essential to our local economies, Save The River (STR) hopes that officials and residents along the shore will consider natural and resilient shorelines as alternatives to hardened structures where applicable.



The **Save Blind Bay** project is gathering steam along the River. The partnership of STR, TILT, TI Park, TIA, and many other organizations is continuing to grow stronger as we garner bipartisan political support.



STR welcomes Rick Gregware as our new Board President. Rick has been on STR's Board for many years, and is very familiar with all of our issues. He brings a thorough understanding of water levels, and is a great help to staff on those issues. Heather McNally has been elected Board Vice-President, and Heather White is our Board Secretary. Jack Butts has agreed to stay on in the Treasurer position. Isabella (Izzy) Colello has become STR's Member At Large, and Jeff

Garnsey is immediate Past President. STR continues its tradition of excellent, involved Board leadership.

In October, STR welcomed Robin Hall onboard as our full-time Education Coordinator. Robin brings a well-rounded background in education to the position, and will be working closely with Lauren and the Education Committee to continue to create the next generation of River stewards. Chelsea Broughton, whom many of you know from her time as STR's Education Intern and Coordinator, has moved into our Outreach Coordinator position. That position opened up when Lindsey Leve left for a new and very exciting opportunity in industry. We wish Lindsey well as she moves forward in her career!

The education report is filled with exciting news about the number of students and educators that our programs reached during this year. Considering the slow and confusing start to the spring season caused by Covid, it is incredible the number of students that STR's education team were able to help educate.

*Trash Free River* continues to grow with over 200 volunteers involved in this summer's cleanups. Continued support from the Leonard C. and Mildred F. Ferguson Foundation, combined with donations and grants from Labatts and National Grid, help to support this growing effort to have swimmable, fishable and drinkable water in the Upper St. Lawrence River. Tons of construction debris, tires, plastic and glass were removed from the River and shore line during our nine cleanups in 2022. One large area of old construction debris is still awaiting removal as of this writing.

Restoration and research of Common Terns this season had mixed results. STR Board member Jim McGarry's sites produced over 400 chicks. But the upriver nav cells and TILT shoals suffered severe predation or were non-productive. Planning is underway this winter to rejuvenate one of Jim's nav cells in the early spring. This will be a joint effort with Jim, Dr. Lee Harper, and STR staff and volunteers. Please plan to attend this January's 34th annual Winter Environmental Conference and hear Lee and Jim's presentation on Common Terns.

Shoal markers have been pulled from the river by our volunteers and members of our Shoal Marking Committee. Thanks to Thousand Islands Association for their long-term support of the shoal marking program. Their donation of these markers keeps this program viable. Reinmans and Garlocks donate the chain needed to anchor the markers. We are always looking for new volunteers to help splash and retrieve the markers in spring and

fall. If you are interested in joining our team, please reach out to [outreach@savetheriver.org](mailto:outreach@savetheriver.org).

Wellesley Island Customs lighting - Our team of Matt Elliot, Izzy Collelo, Heather White, Lauren Eggleston and I have been in frequent communications with Wellesley Island residents and the Alexandria Bay Assistant Port Director about the excessive lighting emanating from the new WI Customs facility. Some adjustments have been made, and CBP is in communication with residents to continue making adjustments. It is critical that a balance is found. Light provides visibility and safety for the officers at the Port, but excessive lighting has a deleterious effect on residents, causes navigation hazards in and around the International Rift, and has known negative effects on birds, fish and other wildlife.

I could continue on for pages about all the exciting projects and progress being made at STR. Instead, I encourage you to take some time to flip through the pages of River Watch and learn from the articles written by staff and others.

Please stop by to see us if you are on the River.  
Thank you for your continued support.



*John Peach*



*John Peach, Riverkeeper  
& Executive Director*