



# Save The River River Watch

Your Membership Matters

## Save The River Successfully Advocates for Protection of Blind Bay Muskie Spawning Grounds

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

Save The River® Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper® led the successful advocacy against US Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) selection of their proposed site at Blind Bay in the Town of Orleans. Construction of an industrial CBP facility at this historic muskie breeding site would have been devastating to the environment. Save The River was at the forefront of the advocacy against this particular site, working with a coalition of many other concerned River community groups. Over 1100 signatures, emails and letters expressing opposition to the location of a CBP facility at Blind bay were sent to CBP. Letters of opposition to CBP can be seen [here](#).

Other participants against the Blind Bay site selection included:

Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT),  
Thousand Islands Park (TI Park),  
NYS DEC,  
Thousand Islands Association (TIA),  
Waterkeepers Alliance,  
TI Life Online Magazine,  
and several other smaller groups of concerned residents

Politicians encouraging CBP to find another site included:

US Senator Chuck Schumer,  
Jefferson County Legislator Phil Reed,  
NYS Assemblyman Walczyk,  
NYS Senator Ritchie,  
and the Town of Orleans passed a resolution against CBP locating their new facility at Blind Bay.



As of the second week of April, TILT has announced the signing of a purchase agreement to acquire the Blind Bay parcel from the owners. The combination of this environmentally sensitive tract with the adjacent TILT preserve will protect the 53 species making Blind Bay their home and nesting grounds.

Save The River executive director John Peach was quoted as saying "I think this coalition of River environmental advocates and TILT's acquisition of the environmentally sensitive property is a significant win for the River. Keeping this River site available for muskie spawning and the habitat usable for many other species is important to the environmental and economic health of the area. This is the type of community partnership that showcases the values of the 1000 islands community."

(continued on page 3)

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



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## Save The River's Mission • Vision • Values

### Mission

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.

### Vision

Save The River envisions a healthy Upper St. Lawrence River that provides safe drinking water, is home to a thriving range of indigenous species and supports sustainable economic activity.

### Values

The River is a commons to be nurtured and passed on undiminished for future generations to share.

Heidi Blackwell

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.



## Spring Raffle

Save The River is proud to offer this photograph by David Zapatka as our spring raffle item. This one-of-a-kind image of Sunken Rock Lighthouse with shooting star would be the perfect addition for your home or cottage!

### About the photographer:

David is a volunteer photographer for the United States Lighthouse Society's USA Stars & Lights. The project was started in 2013 shooting Southern New England lighthouses from a time seldom photographed—at night. It has now expanded to more than 175 lighthouses in 17 states, with plans to continue capturing as many as possible before too many more are divested by the government and turned off. The complete gallery can be seen at [www.starsandlighthouses.com](http://www.starsandlighthouses.com).



Tickets can be purchased online at [savetheriver.org](http://savetheriver.org).  
You can purchase one ticket for \$5 or five tickets for \$22.

(continued from front cover)

From TILT’s Press Release [“Agreement Reached to Protect Blind Bay; TILT to Conserve Critical River Habitat”](#)

*“This agreement ensures that lands critical to the health of the River, our local economy, and way of life are protected for current and future generations,” said Jake Tibbles, TILT’s Executive Director. “The proposed USCBP facility would significantly damage the Bay’s shallow ecosystem that provides critical habitat for over 50 fish species, including the St. Lawrence River muskellunge. We are grateful to all the members of our community and many others who have worked together to help protect this important piece of the River’s ecosystem.”*



## Save The River Staff Updates and Additions

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

Lauren Eggleston has been promoted from Program Manager to Assistant Director. Lauren has worked at Save The River since the fall of 2020 and has played a crucial role in expanding Save The River’s advocacy and education programs.



Ms. Eggleston has a Master’s of Science degree in Structural Geology and Tectonics from the University of Alberta – Edmonton. During her graduate studies she also worked as the Head Teaching Assistant for the Engineering Earth Science department. She previously worked at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center where she managed educational programs and a team of interns. She has also created various naturalist programs for grade school children and worked in coordination with Save The River and Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT).

As Assistant Director, Ms. Eggleston will continue her duties overseeing Save The River’s In the Schools and On the Water programs and volunteer programs while increasing her role in STR’s advocacy efforts.

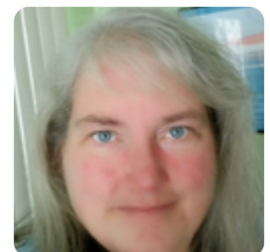
Lindsey Leve has been promoted from Outreach Coordinator to Outreach Manager. Lindsey previously worked as Save The River’s Outreach Coordinator from March 2014 – March 2016 before leaving to start her own marketing business, Wintergreen Digital Media. Lindsey came back as a full-time staff member in March 2021 after filling in for this position part time from January 2020 – March 2021. She has been a key player in bringing Save The River’s Trash Free River program to life. Since September 2020 over 200 volunteers have helped cleanup over 25 sites along the St. Lawrence River.



Chelsea Broughton joined Save The River in 2021 as an intern and has agreed to stay on as a full time staff member as Save The River’s Education Coordinator. 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 education organizations and worked as a Conservation Steward for the SCA. Chelsea brings years of experience, a strong education, and boundless enthusiasm for Save The River’s education programs to the position! With her degree from SUNY Canton in Pre-Law, Chelsea will also be a key player in our effort to ban the future use of polystyrene in floating docks.



Caryn Clements recently joined Save The River as Office Coordinator in January 2022. Caryn is excited to have made the permanent move to Wellesley Island in 2021 after having traveled here with her husband and children from Georgia every summer for the last 20 years. She grew up in New York State and enjoys exploring the North Country and Adirondacks through hiking, kayaking and camping. After a career in office administration in the real estate development and construction industries, Caryn is eager to combine her work experience with her commitment to environmental stewardship.



## Education Update, Spring 2022

By Lauren Eggleston

It's been a busy start to the year. As of April 30, we've reached 500 participants with our education programming! Cheers to Chelsea, who has been promoted from Education Intern to Education Coordinator.

In January and February we were still online; highlights included Chelsea giving her first talk at our Winter Conference, and Lauren co-hosting a teacher training session with Dr. Denise Mayer at the New York State Museum's Evolution and Ecology Workshop.

In the shoulder season of March, the whole Education Committee was busy preparing for the spring rush; we ran training sessions, refreshed curriculum, and began the process of updating our Junior Riverkeeper program to include stewardship. Lauren successfully applied for an extension of the DEC Grant for STR's work on the Grasse River, giving us an additional six months to present Freshwater Mussel programs and reach the grant goals.

April brought a welcome joy; teaching in the classroom! Chelsea was joined by Heather White, Renee Waterbury, Janet Burrows, and Laura Cerow at Calcium Primary.

They taught 140 second grade students about Haas the Great Blue Heron and our Blue Planet. At the end of the month, Lauren taught a seminar session for SUNY Potsdam's SOAR program (continuing education) about Polystyrene Pollution. What a delight to be back in person!



*Alexandria Bay Central School District's  
Living History Students*



*Students from Calcium's 2nd Grade enjoyed learning about Haas!*



### Looking forward:

Depauville, Waddington, and Potsdam libraries have booked mussel programming for the summer season.

On The Water is up and running! Calcium, Carthage, and Clayton have all booked field trips for May and June. In The Classroom will visit Indian River, and will do an outdoor classroom session for McGraw's Environmental Club. Lauren and Chelsea will travel to Nicandri Nature Center in Massena for programming in July.

STR is scheduled to run summer activities at the Zoo, Antique Boat Museum, Boy Scouts International Jamboree, Zenda Farm, and Minna Anthony Common Nature Center.

Overall this has been a great quarter, and we look forward to what the summer brings!

## Save The River Welcomes New Board Members

Save The River recently welcomed three new board members: Heidi Ebert, Isabella Colello & James McGarry.

Heidi Ebert is a former Save The River intern and currently works as an Account Executive for an Ed-Tech company. Heidi is a 4th generation River Rat, currently residing in Kansas with her husband, Derek. She grew up in Richmondville, New York, spending every summer with her grandparents at their family summer house in Cape Vincent. Growing up on the River, she learned very early on how important it is to take care of the River, and it became a passion to keep the River healthy for generations to come. During her summers spent at the River, she was a sailing instructor at TI Park, worked at Spicer Marine Basin, and interned at Save The River for 2 years. The River is a very special place for Heidi, and while she is no longer at a drivable distance of the River, she is always finding ways to keep her roots tied to the place she considers home.



Isabella (Izzy) Colello is a former Save The River intern and now works at ABC50 in Watertown as a Digital Media Journalist. Izzy 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. She studied in the Roy H. School of Communications at Ithaca College and minored in Environmental Studies. Izzy now resides in Sackets Harbor and enjoys sharing local stories that bring her to the river.



James (Jim) McGarry has been a long time volunteer for Save The River's Common Tern Monitoring program, and was recently awarded the Friend of the River Award for his work with this program. Jim grew up in Rochester, NY and first came to "The River" in 1957 when his family spent some vacation time at the Oak Point Inn. Since his retirement in 2009, he has been active in several environmental efforts and organizations, including Save The River. He served six years on the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council. Jim also served five years on the Tompkins County Water Resources Council. He has now spent twelve seasons managing two tern colonies on channel markers as part of Save The River's Tern Project.



## 2022 Save The River Merchandise

We are excited to share our latest t-shirt designs for this summer. Items are available for purchase at our office or online at [savetheriver.org/shop](http://savetheriver.org/shop). We will be open for retail sales daily 10am-4pm starting Memorial Day weekend. This design is available in unisex long-sleeve, unisex short-sleeve, womens v-neck, youth sizes and onesies.



## Trash Free River Shoreline Cleanups

As we enter Save The River’s 44th summer season, we are excited to expand our [Trash Free River program](#) along the St. Lawrence River. **We are hosting River Days on July 29th and 30th. This is an international effort to cover as much shoreline as possible with teams scattered across the River.** We are working jointly with the [Thousand Islands Association \(TIA\)](#) as they coordinate teams on the Canadian side. Save The River will be coordinating cleanups at various locations between Cape Vincent and Massena.



Following the shoreline cleanups, we will be hosting a **Volunteer Appreciation event at Northern Flow Vineyards/Deluke’s Garden Center on Saturday July 30th from 5pm-8pm.** This family friendly event will feature dinner, live music, local craft beverages and more!

In addition to our shoreline cleanups, Save The River has added **Household Hazardous Waste Collections** to help remove outdated and potentially dangerous products from homes and cottages. Collection days are currently held semi-annually by Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties.

<b>Summer 2022 Dates</b>	
<b>Trash Free River Cleanups</b>	<b>Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days</b>
July 29th	May 21st - Canton
July 30th	June 4th - Watertown
September 17th	September 10th - Clayton
*Additional Dates TBD	September 17th - Canton
	October 1st - Watertown

Save The River has been cleaning up shoreline and boat slips for several years on both sides of the upper St. Lawrence River in an ongoing effort to make the St. Lawrence River “swimmable, fishable, and drinkable now and for generations to come.” These cleanups are community-based and volunteer oriented focused on the shore and water 10 feet inland of the shoreline and out into the River.



The problems of trash in the water of the St. Lawrence River have been well documented and can be observed on a daily basis by islanders and boaters. Removing plastics and other man-made debris from the St. Lawrence River is a pressing concern, and with our *Trash Free River* cleanup we hope to start an annual tradition of shoreline and River bottom cleanups to remove a major source of pollution from The River.

Since September 2020, STR has hosted 9 successful *TFR* cleanups in the 1000 Islands and surrounding shorelines. In 2021, we held cleanup events from Cape Vincent to Alexandria Bay; 143 volunteers and 7 staff collected tires, large construction debris, lumber, and scrap metals. Our first clean up in 2022 brought in 750 lbs of trash. 20 volunteers and 6 staff members collected for two hours along 1.5 miles of shoreline.

Our cleanup efforts are made possible thanks to the Leonard C. & Mildred F. Ferguson Foundation and the [Northern New York Community 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!

## Riverkeeper Program

By: Lauren Eggleston

Save The River's Riverkeeper Volunteer Program emphasizes stewardship. These outings teach basics on assessing river health, identifying potential pollution problems, and offering positive changes. Volunteers are trained to assess and report pollution and wildlife die-offs, monitor river health, and engage with the community to promote a healthy river. Participants receive the Riverkeeper Handbook and a Save The River t-shirt.

The training includes familiarizing volunteers with invasive species in the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, and the Ottawa River. Participants learn what fish to watch out for, how to identify frequently encountered plants, the basics of iMap Invasives, and the principles of clean, drain, dry. If you'd like to become a Riverkeeper, host a program, or polish up your skills, join us on the river this summer! Dates are listed below, with more announced on our [Facebook page](#) as they are confirmed.



Riverkeeper programs are free of charge and open to everyone 16+. We encourage you to bring your own kayak, canoe, or paddleboard to the program.

June 14, Minna Anthony Common Nature Center  
 July 8, Minna Anthony Common Nature Center  
 August 11, Minna Anthony Common Nature Center  
 September 9, Minna Anthony Common Nature Center

\*Dates TBA:  
 Thousand Island Park  
 Clayton Yacht Club

## 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.](#)

## Summer Raffle

We are proud to offer this Evoke Future Beach<sup>®</sup> Trophy 126 Deluxe Kayak and Paddle as our summer 2022 raffle. Perfect for the avid angler, this kayak delivers a smooth, stable ride. From the multi-chine hull to the adjustable, cushioned seat back, this boat optimizes your open-water experience with an adjustable seat back and foot rest system. With two flush mount rod holders and a built-in tackle box, the Trophy DLX delivers on all levels!

Thank you to Rosco Terminal Tackle for donating the Evoke Future Beach<sup>®</sup> Trophy 126 Deluxe Kayak.

[Click here to purchase your tickets today!](#)



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*The annual donor report is updated as of May 15, 2022. If you have any questions about the status of your membership or contribution, please contact Bridget Wright, Development Director at [bridget@savetheriver.org](mailto:bridget@savetheriver.org) or by calling (315) 686-2010.*

## From the Riverkeeper

Winter and Spring 2022 have been incredibly busy and challenging for Save The River. After the completion of a very successful virtual 33rd Winter Environmental Conference, the River community was surprised and shocked to learn of US Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) ill-conceived plan to build an industrial style facility in Blind Bay. This is the site of one of the most historic remaining muskellunge spawning grounds in the 1000 Islands area. Since 1990, Thousand Islands Biological Station has been monitoring and studying Blind Bay because of its importance as a muskie and fish breeding grounds. To allow this pristine environmental treasure to be decimated by dredging and high intensity boat traffic would have been a real blow to the area's environment and fishing based economy.

After consultation with Board President Jeff Garnsey, a third generation fishing guide, Save The River (STR) dedicated a large part of its resources to advocate for CBP to look elsewhere for their facility needs. Working with other environmental organizations and many concerned individuals, we were able to garner overwhelming opposition for CBP's plans to build in Blind Bay. Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) came to the rescue of the muskie and 53 other species that breed and live in Blind Bay when they announced the acquisition of this important spawning area.

[This interview with Lawrence Gunther's Blue Fish Radio](#) featuring John Farrell, Jeff Garnsey, Jake Tibbles and me tells the story of the saving of the Blind Bay ecosystem.

While the Blind Bay advocacy project took a lot of our time and resources for the past few months, STR's outstanding staff continued to work many long hours to keep other projects moving forward. We announced the promotion of Lauren Eggleston to assistant director and Lindsey Leve to outreach manager. Many of you are familiar with Lauren and Lindsey's work on our education, research, Trash Free River and other programs.

STR was also fortunate to add three new Board members during the winter. Jim McGarry, Heidi Ebert and Isabella (Izzy) Colello all have long-standing relationships with STR. Jim was named 2022's Friend of the River for his many years of volunteering on the restoration and research of the common tern. Both Izzy and Heidi are former STR interns, and have continued their passionate involvement with STR by being active members of our committees. Caryn Clements joined STR as our office coordinator, bringing years of office management and a love of the River to our team. And we were very fortunate to have Chelsea Broughton join STR as education coordinator, strengthening our very deep commitment to educating the next generation of River stewards.



*John Peach, Riverkeeper & Executive Director*



Our first Trash Free River cleanups of 2022 took place on Earth Day at Fisher's Landing and Wilson's Bay. Twenty-three hardy volunteers joined STR staff for these early season cleanups.

More cleanups are planned for the season culminating in a two day River Days cleanup on July 29th and 30th. We will also be participating in International Coastal Cleanup Day on September 17th.

Lauren, Chelsea, and members of STR's education committee, including several Board members, have been very busy educating students at area schools. It is exciting to all of us that we are being allowed back In the Schools to teach and be with students who will be the future stewards of the River. Lauren reports that plans are being made for On the Water trips this spring after a two year hiatus in these very important educational tours due to Covid19.

Tern grids have been installed along with TILT's volunteers and staff on TILT's shoals, and the nav cell sites have been cleaned up and made ready for the return of these ubiquitous River birds. Shoal markers are being splashed by volunteers. Our supply of expensive shoal markers was replenished again by a very generous donation of markers by Thousand Islands Association (TIA). They have been supplying these markers since the program began many years ago. Expensive anchor chain and hardware are donated to STR by Reinman's and Garlocks to keep this shoal marking program visible and floating every spring.



I could go 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. STR's storefront will be opening by Memorial Day. We have new t-shirts and wonderful raffle items which make great gifts for River lovers.

Please stop by to see us this summer. Thank you for your many years of support.

I hope to see you soon on the River!

John



## 2022 Events Schedule

### [20<sup>th</sup> Annual Run for the River™ 5K](#) • July 22-25, 2022\* Virtual Event

Save The River is once again hosting a virtual 5K event to give our runners and walkers a way to keep their run/walk goals and remain part of a great event and important fundraiser. Our utmost concern is for the health and safety of our participants and community members, making a virtual run an ideal platform to engage in the fun at a safe distance.

### [River Days 2022](#) • *Trash Free River Cleanups* • July 29th & 30th, 2022

This year we are hosting a river-wide shoreline cleanup event. Teams will work in various locations between Cape Vincent and Massena. We are also working with the Thousand Islands Association to make this an international event as they coordinate teams on the Canadian side.

On Saturday July 30th we will also be hosting **Trash Free River Volunteer Appreciation Event** from 5pm - 8pm at Northern Flow Vineyards/DeLuke's Garden Center in Clayton.

### **Annual Membership Meeting** • Thursday, August 25, 3pm

**Save The River** • Clayton, NY

Save The River members are invited to attend the Annual Membership Meeting to vote for the election of Save The River Directors, receive a report on the organization's finances, and consider any other matters that may come before the meeting.