

Friends of the Saugatucket

2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan



Friends of the Saugatucket

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Executive Message

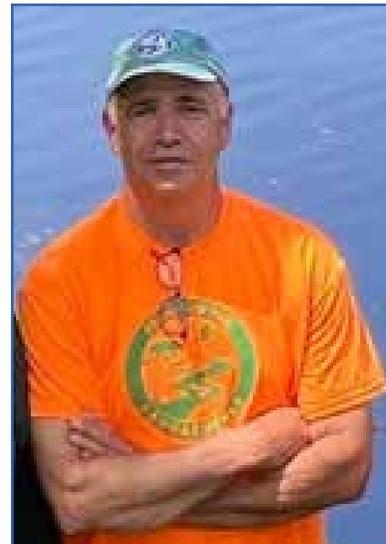
Late in 2020, a thought came to me that the Saugatucket River Watershed needed a group of like-minded individuals to monitor our river's water quality and improve access to the river. In early 2021, several individuals came together to help organize those efforts as well as establish a non-profit corporation with tax exempt status. That group, now known as Friends of the Saugatucket, received its 501(c)(3) designation from the Internal Revenue Service in January 2022.

In our first year, we were able to accomplish so much more than my original expectations. We collected monthly water samples from two locations and provided them to Watershed Watch at URI for testing. A water sampling blitz, taking water samples from 12 locations in the watershed, was also completed and the results were published on our newly created web site. Other activities included: a river herring lift over a failing fish ladder, several river and riverbank cleanup events; a collaborative initiative with our partners to affix warning markers on all storm drains flowing into the river; supporting information booths at each River Fire event and Oktoberfest and participating in Saugatucket Park improvement planning.

Our first year far exceeded all expectations. We hope to continue these efforts and more in the coming years. With the support of numerous volunteers and the financial generosity of individuals, local businesses and private grants, a few of our goals include: improving the river's water quality, improving fishing and boating access to the river, enhancing community awareness of the benefits of the river and preparing and delivering environmental education materials in local schools.

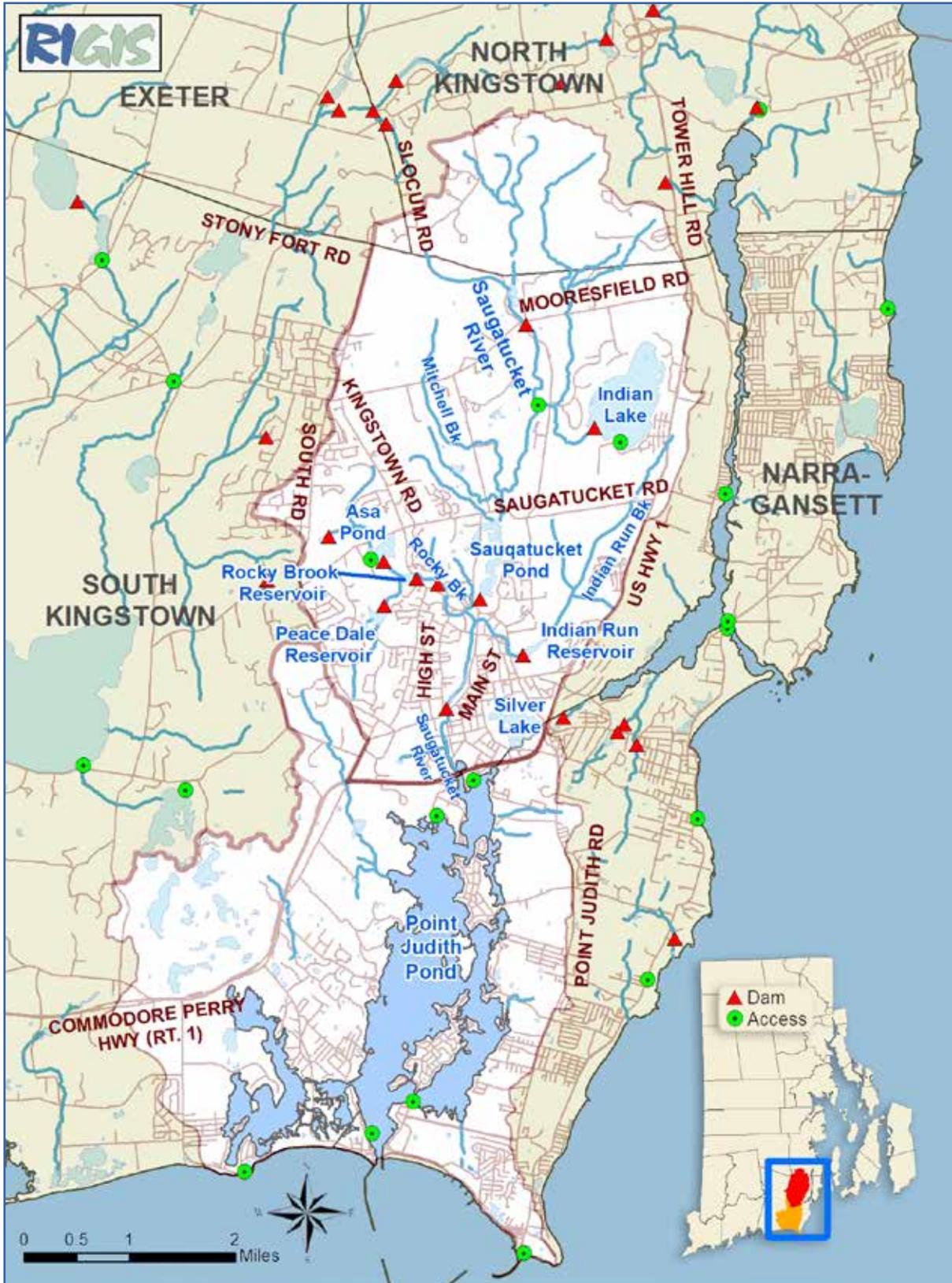
Respectfully,

Bill McCusker





The Saugatucket River Watershed





The Saugatucket River: A Brief History

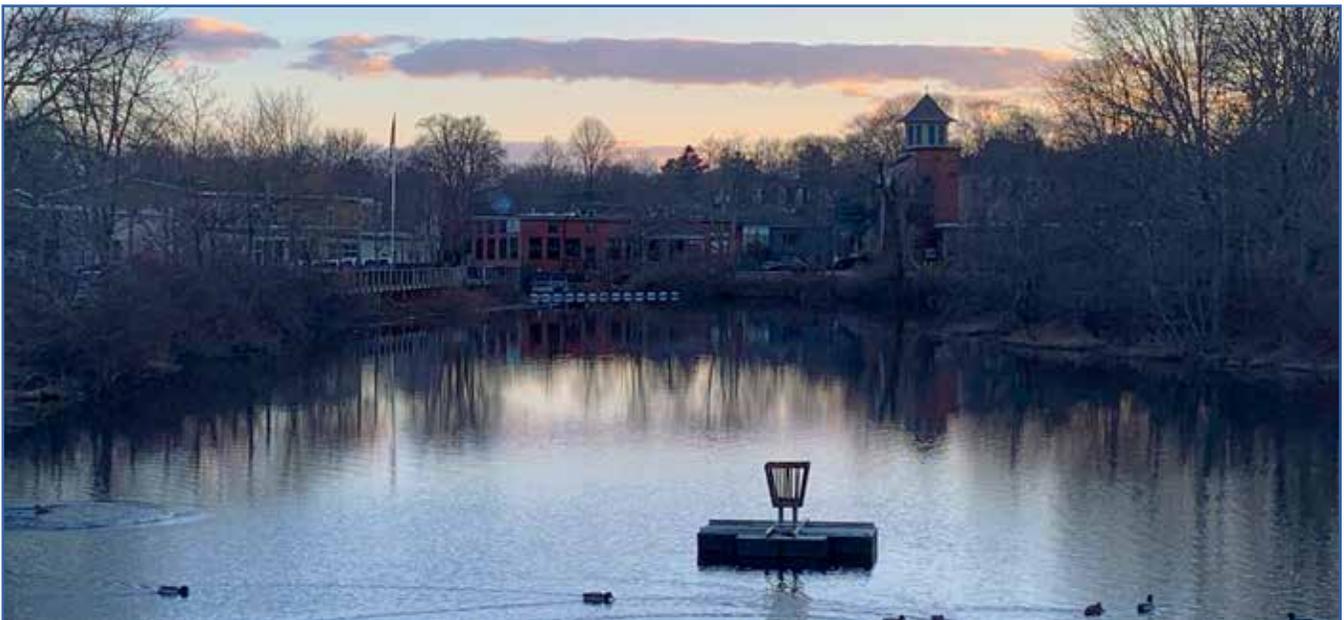
The Saugatucket River has its headwaters in North Kingstown, RI and flows south through South Kingstown into Point Judith Pond, then ultimately into Block Island Sound. Its watershed (the area of land from which water drains to the river) north of Point Judith Pond encompasses 11,018 acres of mixed woodland and suburban and urban development. Once the river reaches Point Judith Pond—which is actually the estuary where fresh water from the river mixes with saltwater from Block Island Sound—the watershed includes an additional 9,338 acres.

The Saugatucket River and its watershed are deep with human history. The river is within the homelands of the Narragansett nation; Saugatucket is a Narragansett word that means at the outlet of the tidal river. For thousands of years, the Saugatucket and other rivers and surrounding lands have been important to Narragansett life and culture and continue to be today. Within the past several hundred years, the river was used by colonial people as a power source. Ten dams still obstruct the river and its tributaries—relics of 18th and 19th century use powering textile and other mills.

The community surrounding the Saugatucket River is a vital part of the watershed, and the river should be accessible for the enjoyment of everyone. Unfortunately, while this beautiful river does support plant and animal life, it has water quality and litter issues which need to be addressed.

For many years, the Saugatucket River and its watershed have been without an advocacy group. **Friends of the Saugatucket** formed in 2021 not only to advocate for the health of the river, but also to help the surrounding community connect with this wonderful resource that runs straight through the heart of the villages of Peace Dale and Wakefield. Our organization values the river and watershed as natural resources and strives to improve their health. We work with other organizations and state and local government toward shared goals and operate in a transparent and respectful manner at all times.

Please contact us if you would like more information about what we do and how you can help.





Friends of the Saugatucket

Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote and enhance the natural and cultural features of the Saugatucket River and its watershed for the benefit of the river and its surrounding lands and community.

Vision

We envision the Saugatucket River as a cherished resource for the community and a vibrant habitat for plants and wildlife.

We acknowledge that the Saugatucket River and its watershed are the traditional homelands of the Narragansett nation. We agree with this philosophy of Indigenous Peoples: “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”

Strategic Direction

The overall strategic direction of Friends of the Saugatucket (FOS) is to monitor and (where possible) improve water quality throughout the watershed, reduce the presence of litter, increase public awareness and engagement with the river, advocate for the river and watershed at the state and local level, and work with partners in the public and private sector on projects that advance our common goals. The community is a vital component of the river and watershed, and we will seek to maximize the diversity of community members’ inclusion in achieving our goals. These goals are explored in more detail in the following pages.

Officers and Directors	
Title	Name
President	William McCusker
Vice President	Dennis Migneault
Secretary	Elise Torello
Treasurer	Jerry Wolstencroft
Director	David Flanders



Goal 1: Water Quality

We will monitor and where possible improve water quality in the Saugatucket River and its tributaries.

- Collect monthly water samples from multiple locations and submit to the University of Rhode Island Watershed Watch (URI WW) for testing to gauge the health of the watershed
- Collect semi-annual river blitz water samples from 10+ locations in the watershed and submit to the URI WW
- Collect and test additional samples as necessary to localize sources of high bacteria levels
- Interpret water sample test data and identify focus areas and strategies for water quality improvement
- Improve water quality by working with partners on storm water management best practices as opportunities arise
- Increase awareness of what needs to be done to protect and improve water quality in the watershed
- Remove litter from the river twice per year (spring/fall)

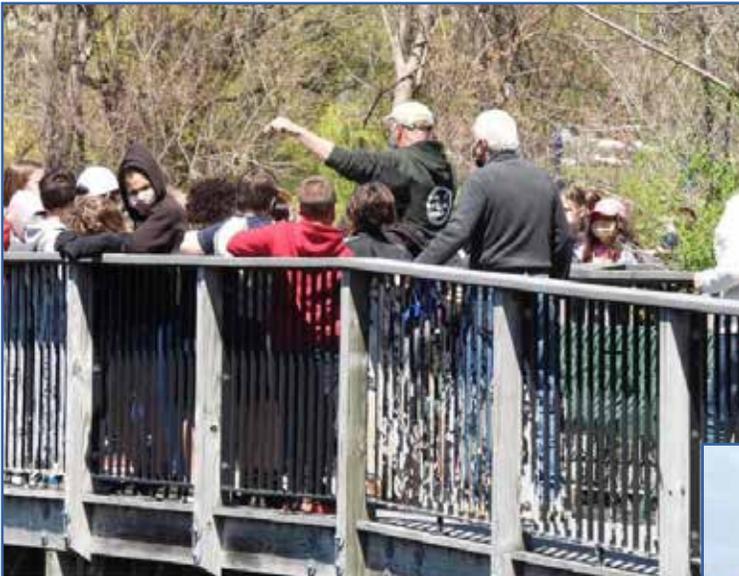




Goal 2: Community Outreach

We will increase public awareness and engagement with the river and work with partners in the public and private sector on projects that advance our common goals.

- Engage partners, volunteers, donors, businesses, and private organizations and establish relationships to advance programs and policies that support our mission
- Raise awareness of the river and watershed and advance our objectives through press releases, social media, web site, email, brochures, newsletters, presentations, attire, and participation in partner's programs
- Increase public engagement with and stewardship of the river, and visibility of FOS, by organizing or participating in local events such as river/watershed cleanups, paddles, River Fire, river herring lift and Octoberfest
- Develop and conduct elementary, middle, and secondary school environmental awareness programs
- Develop and manage high school and college intern programs that advance FOS's mission
- Train and coordinate volunteers to support FOS's mission and gratefully acknowledge their efforts





Goal 3: Advocacy

We will advocate for the river and watershed at the state and local level.

- Advance mission-based initiatives with local and state government officials
- Present data and analyses to appropriate local and state government officials and agencies upon identification of significant degradation or improvement in water quality indicators
- Advocate for protections that support and enhance federal, state, and local laws affecting watershed health such as the Clean Water Act, state bottle bill, and local Plastic Reduction Ordinance
- Undertake projects that restore and protect native habitat and wildlife population



2022-H 7378

An Act Relating to Health & Safety --
Beverage Container Deposit Recycling Act of 2022

CAPITOL
TV



2022-H 7063, 7064, 7065

Acts Relating to Health & Safety/Food & Drugs

CAPITOL
TV





Goal 4: Fundraising and Membership

We will recruit individuals and businesses to become members, plus do additional fundraising, to support FOS's initiatives.

- Develop strong inter-personal relations with the local business community
- Secure funds from a diversity of sources that support both restricted and unrestricted work to ensure a dependable revenue stream from individuals, foundations, corporations, planned gifts, grants, and fee-for-service work
- Engage members, groups, local businesses and private contributors in sponsored events
- Double the membership and volunteer base
- Triple the first year numbers of individual donors, corporate donors and private donations
- Submit two proposals annually for private grant funding
- Submit two proposals or collaborate with partner organizations on two proposals annually for state funding
- Foster an open, collaborative, diverse, and supportive culture for board members, officers, volunteers, financial supporters and state and local government officials.





Implementation and Summary



The Board will reach out to the members of the community to develop a vibrant sense of support from community members, organizations, business members, and town officials. The Board will establish fundraising goals from various types of donors, as well as a list of projected expenditures to accomplish activity goals. The Board will maintain a calendar of events and activities to engage the community and provide a sense of vitality in our watershed. The Board will conduct activities to support and improve the condition of the river. Relevant information and accomplishments will be shared with the community on social media platforms to provide a sense of unity of purpose for the Friends of The Saugatucket. The FOS will organize events at which like-minded people will meet to celebrate our efforts as we progress through the year.



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*Please visit our website and
become a volunteer or member today!*

