

## OTTER NEWS

February 2023

Photo credit: Roger Beatty

News, events, and updates you Otter know from [OARS](#).



## OARS 3 RIVERS

A strong, effective, and sustainable organization

### Board Highlight



Photo Credit: Adam Nolde

### Roger Beatty

Roger has lived in Sudbury for over 20 years; shortly after his retirement, he joined the OARS Board of Directors in 2022.

He is an avid four-season kayaker and explorer of our river system, and the colder months don't hamper his explorations at all. Is kayaking in January really fun?? Read more below.

### Keep Warm & Paddle On



Photo Credits: Roger Beatty

Not all paddlers think of kayaking as exclusively a warm-weather sport; in fact, OARS members include a number of four-season paddlers. Board member Roger Beatty is one of them.

Roger says that a great part of the joy of kayaking our watershed is to pay close attention to the change of seasons: knowing the rivers in their winter dress is vital to understanding the whole cycle. The winter palette—grey woods, brown meadows, white ice, and blue sky—presents a vastly different look from our spring and summer seasons, but it has its own stark beauty. The spareness of color in January might give you the sense that the whole watershed is asleep, but it’s all just waiting to explode back into life as the sun climbs through February and March. It’s a rare privilege to witness up close all the stages in the process. Roger advises keeping an eye on the willows for the earliest signs of spring.

While he tends to avoid high winds and temperatures much below 30F, that still leaves him plenty of bright mid-winter days to get out and explore the watershed. Even in the dead of winter, he finds the rivers are alive with geese and swans, and even the occasional swimming beaver (they don’t hibernate) or otter playing on the ice. It’s rare to see another kayak, though! If you enjoy outdoor solitude and tuning in to the rhythm of the seasons, winter kayaking might be for you.

The logistics of winter kayaking are a little more complicated—sometimes shore ice blocks the launches, and occasionally even the fastest-flowing channels freeze up. Roger keeps an axe in the car to break through edge ice at the launches—a good technique, as long as you’re sure the ice won’t reform while you’re off exploring! Make sure you have an ice-free take-out point to make a safe exit. If you kayak alone or in remote areas, a wet suit or dry suit is an absolute must. Take a dry bag with a change of warm clothes; a thermos of hot coffee and a cell phone are good ideas too. You can do an internet search on “winter kayaking” to get lots of safety tips and tricks.

### [Tips for safe Winter Paddling](#)



## Would you like to support our rivers by helping to steer OARS?

We’re accepting expressions of interest in serving on the OARS Board of Directors! [Learn more here](#) and [contact us](#) if you want to be considered or just talk about what is involved. If you are passionate about making a difference locally, join our strong team of professionals and volunteers! We welcome a broad diversity of candidates.

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## HEALTHY RIVERS

supporting wildlife and our communities

### Science-based Advocacy

**How does OARS pay for our water quality monitoring?** The data are used by the EPA, Mass. DEP, municipalities, and others to make sure that regulation and investments in

reducing pollution will be effective. **You**, our members, support this through your membership and donations. **You**, our Citizen Scientists, support this with your labor at 6:30 am collecting water samples.



**We are very grateful to Rep. Kate Hogan** for championing \$30,000 for our 2022–23 season in the state budget, covering nearly half the cost. The National Park Service and local foundations kick in too. This is how we have 31 years of continuous data that tell the story of our rivers and the progress we are making.

**Thank you to each and everyone of you who has made this happen—we count on your continuing support!**

## Talbot Mills Dam Update



A beautiful and fascinating Story Map about the Talbot Mills dam and the history and future of the Merrimack River watershed has been added to the [Talbot Mills Dam Removal Project website](#)! An updated Frequently-Asked-Questions has been added too. View the story map, submit your questions for the next FAQ updates, and sign up for project news (links at the bottom of the web page) by visiting [merrimack.org/talbotmills](http://merrimack.org/talbotmills).

# CARING COMMUNITY

that appreciates and protects our rivers through OARS

Support the **vital work** to protect, improve, and preserve the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers and their tributaries and watersheds through OARS.

Give Today

Join or Renew

Volunteer

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## COMMUNITY UPDATES

### Upcoming Events



**Native American Archaeology of the Assabet River**  
February 23, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Maynard Public Library

Guest speaker Kimberly Connors, local archaeologist specializing in public education.

[Event Details](#)



**Concord Conservatory presents Music & Water, Concert and Lecture**  
March 3, 7:30 pm, West Concord Union Church

Guest speaker Alison Field-Juma, Executive Director of OARS.

[Event Details](#)



**Fairhaven History & Hike**  
Spring 2023, Virtual and live meet ups

This course meets three times; two for Zoom slide lectures, followed by an optional hike on June 3 (June 4 rain date).

[Event Details](#)

### Announcements

**SuAsCo Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council is hiring**  
River Ambassador positions:

- One part-time, year-round Lead River Ambassador
- One part-time, seasonal Assistant River Ambassador

[more info](#)

# OARS

FOR THE ASSABET SUDBURY & CONCORD RIVERS

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