



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association *Autumn 2014*
Clean Water Habitat Restoration River Access Watershed Recreation

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Report on Bacterial Source Tracking in the Hoosic River Watershed



Eagle Street, North Adams

HoorWA has worked with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts to track down sources of bacteria contamination in the Massachusetts segment of the Hoosic River. Co-directed by planner Lauren Gaherty and Professor Elena Traister, MCLA students determined that of the 109 sites in the watershed that were sampled in the summer and autumn of 2012, 16 sites had bacterial counts greater than the “hot spot” threshold of 500 colonies per 100 milliliters of sample; the worst of these to be

a farm on Walling Road in Adams—by far the single greatest source in the subwatershed—and four outflow pipes in the City of North Adams.

The Adams Board of Health and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Services have been working with the farm to improve practices and facilities, dramatically reducing the pollution. Further work needs to be done and additional testing to determine its effectiveness.

As North Adams does not own a sewer camera or seem

to be near affording to buy one, in spite of HoorWA’s offer of \$5,000 towards its purchase, BRPC found resources to hire Guntlow & Associates to televise the interior of the pipes to search for leaks.

They found that the source at Phoenix Dam site (near MoCA) was an easy fix, a matter of closing a relief valve. A problem near Noel Field appears to be natural, the result of beaver and geese activity.

Unfortunately the sources of contamination in pipes that discharge near City Hall and near Eagle Street require further time and money to track down. North Adams pipes are old and need significant upgrading, so that repair will likely be extensive and expensive.

Such repair will greatly improve the quality of water in the Hoosic River, reduce the amount of water that does not need treating being sent to the Hoosac Water Quality District Plant and complement efforts by Hoosic River Revival to improve the relationship between city residents and the river.

(continued next page)



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HoorWA is dedicated to the restoration, conservation and enjoyment of the Hoosic River and its watershed, through education, research, and advocacy.

So far this has been a good year for HoorWA. We're working to keep the watershed and its streams and river in the best possible condition. HoorWA funded a study of the Thunder Brook in Cheshire to assess the effects of removing the dam that was undertaken by the town and the Commonwealth's Division of Ecological Resources in 2012. Evaluation of the benthic macroinvertebrates, the insect populations living in the stream bed, have shown that their species and numbers have increased, offering a healthier ecosystem to the trout and other fish that live in the stream.

Our Williams College summer-intern, Matthew Tarduno, studied over fifty stream culvert crossings in the watershed. With some of this information he was able to make a plan of action for the town of Adams as to which culverts should be prioritized for re-

President's Post *by Tom Hyde*

placement to allow for upstream passage of fish and other wildlife to benefit the streams' ecosystems.

HoorWA has also been working with Bennington area conservationists to help create a Wallomsac Headwaters Park & Natural Area to help protect its waters and make them more accessible for area residents to enjoy.

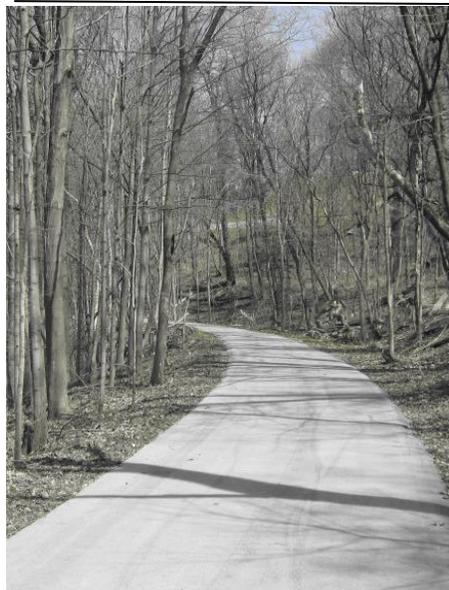
We also plan funding benthic macroinvertebrate studies of the Hoosic's mainstream this fall to assess the status of its ecosystem that we can compare to the many annual past studies we have funded.

We learned from Williams College professors Jay Thoman and Dave Richardson at our annual meeting that the PCB levels in the Hoosic are continuing to gradually decrease, but not yet to the levels that would allow river's fish to be eaten by those who catch them.

Bacterial Source Tracking (cont'd)

Findings of the "Bacteria Source Tracking and Mitigation" study, funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency through the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, provide an additional agenda items in North Adams and also the towns of Cheshire, Adams and Williamstown. The full report is available through the regional planning commission.

A Growing Greenway!



The northern segment of the Hoosic River Greenway in Hoosick Falls was resurfaced this summer.

From the parking area just off Church Street by the river, visitors can hike north along the river to the terminus at Sewer Plant Road. Visit Hoosick Falls New York and walk the Greenway this fall!



The Mohawk Trail - A Century later

In 1914, a “scenic highway”, the first in America, was constructed for automobile traffic linking the Massachusetts communities of Athol and Greenfield in the east, to North Adams and the Berkshires. Already linked by railroad via the Hoosac Tunnel, the Mohawk Trail meanders through deep forest and historic towns, passing world class art museums, and tourist destinations and liking scenic hikes and dra-



matic vistas.

Long before trains and cars, Native Americans used several trails that connected the Connecticut and Hudson rivers before the Colonial period. The trails, through Mahican territory, were used for hunting trips, trading and occasionally fighting. The title “Mohawk Trail” was probably promoted by North Adams businessman C.Q. Richmond in 1914.

HoorWA promotes the use of this road path and equally important, the recreation of the Mahican-Mohawk Trail, a 100 mile footpath linking the Hudson and Connecticut Rivers, following the course of the Hoosic and Deerfield Rivers. HoorWA continues to work with other watersheds and environmental groups towards that goal.



Along with the Williamstown Chamber of Commerce, HoorWA celebrates the anniversary of the Mohawk Scenic Byway by offering an introductory membership for new members.

Join HoorWA, between now and December 31st and pay only \$19.14 in dues for 2015. Go to hoorwa.org and donate!

Hoosic River Ride once again a great success!

Thanks to the amazing efforts of our volunteer ride committee, along with the efforts of Board members and volunteers, the 10th Annual Hoosic River Ride went off very smoothly and all of our riders enjoyed a great day.

This year’s event will support HoorWA’s education, research and advocacy efforts. It all starts with our financial supporters, including our title sponsors Donovan and O’Connor LLC, Saint Gobain Performance Plastics and Jack Miller Contractors.

We also thank the support received from the Williamstown Youth Center, Williams College Dining Services, our many volunteers and, of course, the many riders! We are looking forward to next year and hope you’ll join us!



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

In this issue:

- New surface on Hoosick River Greenway
- State of the River Conference October 18th 9 am—11 am in Williamstown

Autumn 2014



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Support HoorWA



This fall, there are three key ways you can support your Watershed Association.

First, if you haven't yet done so, please make a gift in support of our fall appeal.

Second, please send us your current email address. We are developing a program to send our newsletter to you by email. Those who wish a print version will still be mailed one! Send an email to office@hoorwa.org.

Third, visit our website. Over the winter we are updating the content and making the website more active. Tell us what you think!

HoorWA's State of the River Conference

Join us at 9 am on Saturday morning, October 18th, in the Fellowship Hall of the Congregational Church in Williamstown for our State of the River Conference.

Our main speaker will be Donald Campbell, Regional Director for the Vermont Land Trust, who will talk about a Bennington community-led project to permanently protect 140 acres of open space, part of which include the headwaters of the Walloomsac River.

In addition, there will be a report on what HoorWA accomplished this year.

We hope to see you there!

Stream Sensors Retrieved

In support of research underway at UMass by USDA Forester Keith Neslow, HoorWA participated in a study where temperature sensors were placed in streams in southern Vermont leading to the Hoosic, where it was determined that stream culvert replacement would support trout habitat. HoorWA Board members pulled over 15 sensors set in place last fall. Stay tuned for study results!

