



# The Hoosic River Voice

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

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## Catching Fish for Science

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At HoorWA's annual State of the River Conference, Williams College chemistry professors David Richardson and Jay Thoman, and students from Williams College, reported on the results of their studies of PCB levels in crayfish taken from various sites in the river and feeder streams. Their report was entitled "Hoosic River in good health despite remaining PCBs" and was yet another encouraging statement on the health of our river. In a *Woods and Waters* article by Gene Chague and appearing in the *Berkshire Eagle* on July 6, 2014, Mr. Chague wrote on the next research steps to be undertaken. "This year, professors Richardson and Thoman, along with some Williams College students, will soon be starting a research project focused on making significant measurements of PCB levels in fish, principally trout, in the Hoosic River. They are hoping to build a contact group of local fishermen/women who could help by donating their trout catch and maybe training students to catch additional trout for samples. Richardson and Thoman are in the planning stages, and are imagining the construction of a network of folks who would contribute to creating an exten-

This would be a great training experience for the students and would help them write the next chapter in the natural history of the Hoosic as it recovers from PCB contamination. Interested volunteer anglers can contact professor Richardson at [David.P.Richardson@williams.edu](mailto:David.P.Richardson@williams.edu)".

Printed with permission from a *Woods and Waters* article by Gene Chague, published in *Berkshire Eagle*, July 6, 2014



Lou Baker 2012

**Donate your catch to science!**

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## HoorWA receives \$4,000 grant!

Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Maeve Vallely Bartlett recently announced \$94,000 in grants for river and wetland restoration projects across the state. HoorWA has been awarded

\$4,000 from those funds to continue a study on the Thunder Brook in Cheshire. The grant will come from the Department of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration (DER). The study will allow Watershed Assessment Associates (WAA) of Schenectady to assess the population of benthic macro-invertebrates in the Thunder Brook. Benthic macro-invertebrates are 'river bugs' that fish and other aquatic life feed on. In a healthy stream, the numbers and types of these critters should be high.



Stone fly nymph

This study, supporting sampling done in 2013, will determine if the stream habitat has returned to a natural state following the removal in 2012 of a dam the replacement of an undersized culvert.



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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.*

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer in the Hoosic River's watershed. There are so many different activities that its beautiful environment enables one to do, whether that be to take a short walk to town for a cup of coffee, or climbing Mt. Greylock (to its 3491 foot summit). One can also take advantage of the occasional summer storm that raises the Hoosic's water flow from 100 to 1000 CFS that makes a kayak or canoe paddle great fun. However one sometimes feels guilty when a pair of mallards fly in front of you trying to have you chase them and draw you away from their ducklings hiding among the shoreline's vegetation. After they do this for a hundred yards or so, they then make a 180 degree turn in the sky above you and head back to care for their offspring.

**President's Post** by Tom Hyde

This summer has also been a great biking season as well with all the wonderful views one can get on rides through the hills and valleys that feed water into the Hoosic. I am hoping this year that there will be another couple of hundred bicyclists enjoying the rides of the 2014 Hoosic River Bike Ride on August 16<sup>th</sup>, starting and finishing at the Williamstown Youth Center. Fellow bikers may register for the rides (7, 30, 50, 75, or a 100 mile route) on the bikereg.com website with a discount if registering before August 1st.

We are lucky to be a part of the Hoosic River's gorgeous ecosystem and are able to take advantage of its beauty every season.

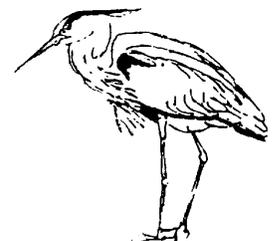


**The Hoosic River Trail**

If you have biked the Ashuwillticook, rafted or kayaked the Hoosic, walked along storm water chutes in Adams or North Adams, or fished from the banks from Cheshire Lake to the Hudson River, you have experienced the Hoosic River Trail. HoorWA's board of directors are promoting the beauty and recreational activities of this great river and educating visitors on its features.

Using a small kiosk designed by

John Case, we plan to install kiosks as time and materials and permission allow at places where folks enjoy the river. As the Ashuwillticook expands north and west eventually into Vermont, more people will be able to get closer to this great water resource. In the kiosk are maps of the Hoosic Watershed and information on HoorWA and its mission.





### **Williams Alumni for the Environment**

During the Williams College Alumni weekend in June, over 70 Alums signed up for river clean up projects on the Hoosic and Green Rivers. Actual turnout was lower than expected but great connections were made and further work on trails in the area has been undertaken! Thanks to the Alumni office!

### **Where Roads Cross Streams**

When roads wash out due to rain-swollen streams trying to fit through pipes that are too small to hold all that water, it is important for towns to replace those culverts with stream crossings that will accommodate the increasingly high flows of water that we are seeing these days.

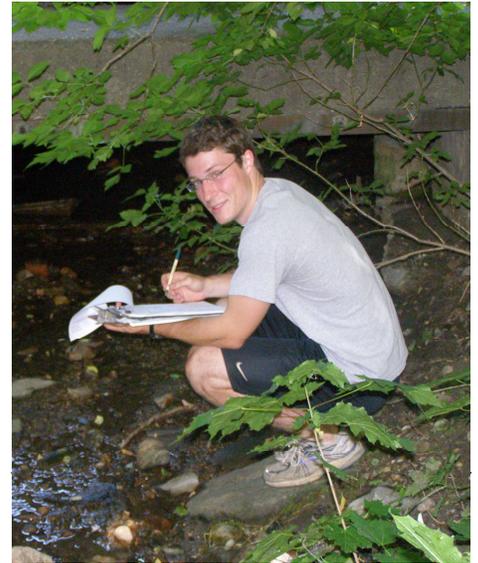
The Massachusetts River and Stream Crossing Standards call for new stream crossings to be 20 percent wider than the naturally flowing stream. Think small bridge, rather than pipe. This standard has several advantages. With a pipe that is too small, water is forced into a narrow passage increasing its velocity and often scouring out a pool at the downstream end of the pipe. This scouring can create a huge pool, sometimes lowering the streambed so far that fish could no longer jump up into the pipe itself. Sometimes this scouring can decrease the stability of the crossing itself. A crossing that spans the stream and banks prevents scouring, and fish and aquatic wildlife can move freely up and downstream to complete their natural life cycle.

An open-bottomed crossing, such as a small bridge or three-sided concrete "box" provides a natural stream bottom, so any animal moving up or down stream would not notice a change, other than a shadow, while going under the road.

While this kind of crossing may cost more to build initially, studies done by the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (part of the Department of Fish and Game) show that the initial expense may be money well invested compared with the expense of replacing under-sized crossings multiple times during the expected life span of a crossing.

Volunteers from organizations including Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT), Housatonic Valley Association, and Hoosic River Watershed Association, have been surveying the places where rivers and streams cross under the roads in Berkshire County, collecting data on the size and integrity of each crossing. All this data is then entered into a database maintained by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst where everyone can see the results. This database has a map viewer as well. Each crossing is given a rating from full passage to severe barrier.

This data has also been shared with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and cities and towns. In partnership with the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance, Bay State Roads, and others, a series of workshops was held last year to help engineers, highway superintendents, and conservation com-

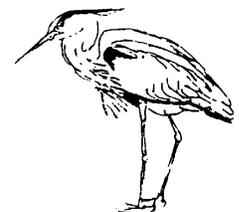


Williams College junior Matt Tarduno is working for HooRWA this summer, conducting stream crossing assessments. Partnering with HooRWA board members and Executive Director Steve McMahon, Matt has helped survey 50 culverts!

missions understand the benefits of improved stream crossings.

As our old, under-sized crossings are replaced with crossings that meet the River and Stream Crossing Standards; fish populations will thrive being able to move freely up and downstream to complete their lifecycles; there will be less road kill as terrestrial wildlife will move safely beneath the road; and we humans should see safer roads as fewer and fewer culverts washing out during torrential downpours.

Written by Elia Phillips Del Molino  
Program Manger, Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) Used with permission.

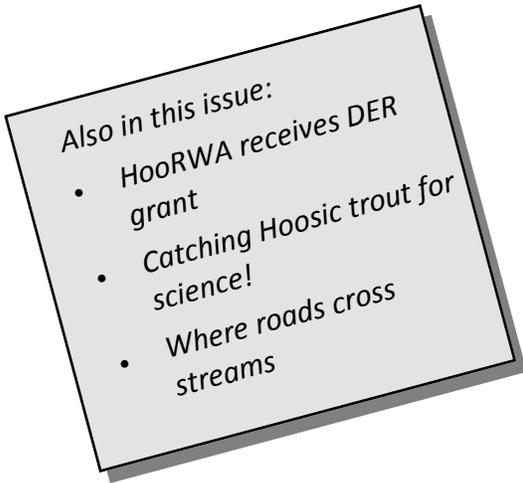


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Summer 2014



***The Hoosic River Voice***

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**Join us on the Hoosic Ride for the River!**

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***Registration for HooRWA's 10th Annual Ride for the River is open!***

Mark your calendar for Saturday August 16<sup>th</sup> and tune up your bike in preparation for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Ride for the River, which begins and ends at the Williamstown Youth Center on School Street.

It's never a race but an enjoyable and at times challenging countryside ride through the Hoosic watershed. From short loop rides to a 3-state 100-mile route, this day has a bike trip for every rider. Bring the family and enjoy the 7-mile loop that takes riders through Williamstown. The 30-mile Green River ride adds some back-country roads and the quiet residential streets of scenic

North Bennington.

The Hoosic Fifty offers a beautiful ride through the countryside of Vermont and New York, almost all of it along quiet country roads. Experienced, hard-core riders will want to do either the Hoosic Highland Tour or the Tri-state Challenge. These 75 and 100 mile routes asks participants to climb over Petersburg Pass on the New York/Massachusetts state line.

Riders will enjoy well-marked routes and thorough cue sheets; several well-stocked aid stations and roving tech support on each route (all riders should come fully prepared). A post-ride picnic is included in your entry fee.

Visit BikeReg.com at <http://www.BikeReg.com/> to register or [www.hoorwa.org](http://www.hoorwa.org) to get more ride details. Register by August 1 and save \$10 off your entry fee!

We recognize and deeply thank our title sponsor: Donovan and O'Connor LLC and our major sponsors Saint-Gobain and Jack Miller Contractors and welcome Nature's Closet who will partner with Smart Wool to provide a pair of socks to all riders.



**nature's closet**