



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association Spring 2013
Clean Water Habitat Restoration River Access Watershed Recreation

HoorWA's 21st Annual Riverfest!



Fidel Moreno drumming at Riverfest 2012.

Join us at Williams College's Cole Field on Saturday, May 25th from 11a.m. to 4 p.m. for a fun-filled day for the entire family as we celebrate the Hoosic River with children's activities, music, great food and more!

Our morning bird walk, led by Leslie Reed-Evans of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, begins at 7:30 a.m. by Ephs Pond at Cole Field. Pam Weatherbee, noted Williamstown and Berkshire botanist, will lead a wildflower and invasive plant walk in the afternoon. Wildlife rehabilitator Tracy-Lynn Litchfield will visit. Local artists will share their works along the river. MoCA Jam will be our guest musicians.

Joining us at Riverfest again this year will be Fidel Moreno, a Native American culture educator and filmmaker with the organization Healing Winds. Fidel will lead Riverfest visitors in learning about Northeastern tribes and their special traditions.

Storytelling, arts and crafts, dance, drumming and participating in erecting a wigwam are all a part of his afternoon program.

River rafting, an annual favorite, will take place if water levels permit.

Your admission ticket also doubles as a raffle ticket for an Old Town kayak from Berkshire Outfitters, a

child's mountain bike from the Spoke, or gift certificates from Nature's Closet and the Gear Den. New in the raffle this year is a set of fly fishing gear, including a handmade rod and several flies, all crafted by a HoorWA member. Also look for the bucket-style raffle of locally donated goods and services values at more than \$2,000.

We are grateful this year to have lead sponsorship from Williamstown Savings Bank, with additional support from Alton and Westall Realty, the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies, The Advocate and the North Adams Transcript.

Advance discounted tickets are available at the Williamstown Savings Bank and at special HoorWA tables at Wild Oats and Nature's Closet on Saturday, May 18th. Tickets will also be available at the gate.

HoorWA to the Rescue

When HoorWA Board members Tom Hyde and Lauren Stevens canoed the Hoosic this spring to check on passage of canoes and rafts for upcoming events, they didn't expect to come upon an exposed section of the 30 inch interceptor sewer line connecting North Adams and Williamstown, MA. Storms, possibly including Tropical Storm Irene, had moved the Hoosic south, where it cut into the bank.

Lauren Stevens contacted Williamstown's Director of Public Works Tim Kaiser, who then contacted the Hoosac Water Quality District. Emergency measures have since stabilized the bank.

While HoorWA was pleased to have helped in the process, we wonder about the stability of the river bank along the sewer line in the face of climate change and more frequent storms.



The exposed interceptor sewer line.
Photo by Tom Hyde.



Board of Directors

Tom Hyde, President
Thom Gentle, Vice-president
John Case, Secretary
Harold Brotzman, Treasurer
Sarah Gardner
Judy Grinnell
Wendy Hopkins
Andy Kawczak
Karin Landry
Elayne Murphy
Jim Niedbalski
Matt Scholl
Lauren Stevens

Staff

Steve McMahon, Executive Director
Kelly Nolan, Monitoring Coordinator
Shelly Stiles, Program Director

**Hoosic River
Watershed Association**

P.O. Box 667
Williamstown, MA 01267
413 458-2742
office@hoorwa.org
www.hoorwa.org

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

Four decades ago I made the decision to move from the Charles River Watershed into the Hoosic River Watershed, and I have revealed in that decision ever since. I have been able to look out my back door and see the highest ridge in Massachusetts, and learned that the water running off of it ends up in our Hoosic River in which I have canoed and kayaked these 40 years while hiking, biking, and downhill and cross-country skiing on the lands in the watershed.

That one is able to enjoy these wonderful activities within walking distance of home is a fact every resident of the watershed should know. Its beauty is so good for your psyche and the multiple possible physical activities are of tremendous benefit for your health. Everyone should enjoy walking on trails, skiing the hills, biking the roads, walking alongside, paddling or fishing the river.

In the first couple of decades I

President's Post by Tom Hyde

spent in this watershed I was involved with thinking globally about the world's environmental issues. Only about two decades ago did I start acting locally by joining the HoorWA Board of Directors. Since then I have been impressed by the efforts of my fellow Board members and the HoorWA staff in their dedication to improving and protecting the river and its watershed. As the board's new president I certainly want to do all I can to help continue that process.

I also hope that HoorWA can help all of our fellow watershed dwellers learn how to take full advantage of the opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment and physical activity that it offers to everyone of any age. As more members of our communities realize how lucky they are to live in the Hoosic River watershed, I hope HoorWA will be able to find many more dedicated members who will help us protect and defend it.

Tom

Member Rafting Trip

The Board of Directors hosted a rafting trip for HoorWA members in late April. Raft captains Tom Hyde, Andy Kawczak and Drew Jones guided a flotilla of HoorWA's three inflatable rafts down the Hoosic from North Adams, Massachusetts to Pownal, Vermont. The group stopped along the river bank in Hopkins Forest to allow the eighteen passengers to stretch and enjoy a picnic lunch carried in to the picnic site by Board members. Good spring weather and a strong-flowing river provided for a great spring experience. One rafter said "I loved the raft trip and appreciate how informative

and friendly everyone was. I think it's a wonderful way to teach people the true 'lay of the land,' because the river unites us where state borders divide, and the roads don't begin to show what lies along this natural highway."

Additional raft rides will be provided as part of HoorWA's annual

Riverfest event, held this year on May 25th.



Rafters.



Temperature Study Results

In previous issues of the *Hoosic River Voice*, we wrote about a temperature study on the Hoosic led by MCLA interns Ericka Oleson and Brian Ellison, who monitored conditions above and below the stormwater chutes in North Adams. Using equipment from HoorWA and MCLA, including in-stream data loggers, the interns surveyed the river temperature at different locations on the North Branch, the South Branch, and below the confluence. In September, after four months, the loggers were removed. The analysis of the results revealed the following:

- Both branches of the Hoosic River met the Warm Water Fishery temperature standard during the 2012 monitoring season.
- Both branches had extended periods of time above Cold Water Fishery temperature standard during the summer months of 2012.
- Based on 2012 data, it is possible the storm water chutes are causing a slight increase in temperature.
- The least engineered testing site, located upstream of the Beaver Mill, had the coolest temperatures.

This study was funded by the Hoosic River Revival Coalition, through a grant from the Berkshire Environmental Education Fund.



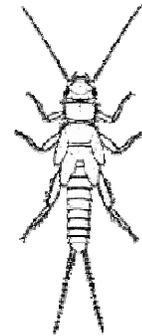
Data loggers, pictured above, were placed in the river and set to continuously record the water temperature every hour.

2012 Water Quality Monitoring Report

HoorWA monitoring coordinator Kelly Nolan has submitted his draft 2012 “watershed report card.” (Each year, Kelly collects samples of benthic macroinvertebrates, or stream insects, in September, then analyzes the samples over the winter months. He produces his findings for us each spring. Benthic macroinvertebrates are sensitive to a wide range of environmental stressors, and – in the right hands – are easy-to-handle indicators of overall water quality.)

Kelly collected samples at four sites in Massachusetts, one site in Vermont, and six sites in New York. Many of the sites have been monitored by the various states at various times going back to 1983, and by HoorWA since 2006. While Kelly found the overall water quality of the Hoosic River to be slightly impacted, he did discern some declines in water quality since 1986:

at two sites in Massachusetts – in Adams south of Phillips Hill Road and near Hodges Cross Road and downstream of the wastewater treatment plant; and one site in New York – off River Road in Valley Falls. Several locations downstream of the relatively new Pownal, Vermont wastewater treatment plant have improved in quality since 1986.



Stonefly nymphs are intolerant of water pollution.

Depositors at TD Bank Help HoorWA

If you are an account holder at TD Bank, or are about to become one, you could help HoorWA. For every existing TD account – checking, savings, money market, or certificate of deposit – held by a HoorWA member, TD Bank will donate \$10. If you open a new account with TD Bank, and identify yourself as a HoorWA member, HoorWA will receive a \$50 donation! There may also be a year-end contribution by TD Bank based upon participants’ annual average account balances. And, as a TD

Bank customer, you don’t have to donate anything beyond your annual HoorWA membership. So start saving and help HoorWA!



Hoosic River Watershed Association
P.O. Box 667
Williamstown MA 01267

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 62
Williamstown MA
01267

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Also in this issue:

- Riverfest 2013
- Member Raft Trip
- North Adams Temperature Study
- 2012 Monitoring Report

Spring 2013



The Hoosic River Voice

Earth Day on the Greenway

Thirteen folks gathered on the Hoosic River Greenway on Saturday morning April 20 to celebrate Earth Day with a natural history walk along the river path. Hoosick Falls natural-ist Kevin Hemeon (whose specialties are birds and butterflies), Father Tom Zelker from the village's Church of the Immaculate Conception (and a graduate of SUNY-ESF), and HoorWA staff hosted the gathering. Among the birds seen or heard were Carolina wren, northern rough-winged swallow, and turkey vulture. Among the plants observed were bloodroot in blossom, and lots of invasive species. One of them, garlic mustard, was investigated gastronomically as well as botanically, when a bowl of home-made garlic mustard pesto with crackers was passed around for the group's delectation.

The Hoosic River Ride – A New Venue!

This year, the 9th annual Hoosic River Ride will start and end at the Williamstown Youth Center in Williams-town, MA on Saturday, August 24th. All the routes are new this year, but still travel along the Hoosic River and its tributaries and include the best scenery in northern Berkshire, southern Vermont and eastern New York. Also new in 2013 is a

100 mile ride.

This is not a race but a recrea-tional ride that allows cyclists to enjoy the beauty of our region while riding on coun-try roads. From an 8-mile fam-ily ride to the Century Chal-lenge, there will be a dis-tance for eve-ryone. Aid sta-tions will be located on all the routes. Register at bikereg.com or check out our web-site at hoorwa.org for more details.

