



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association

Summer 2006

ARE WE HAVING FUN YET? It's HooRWA's 20th anniversary, and the answer is YES!



MA Audubon members rest while on a Hoosic River float. Some participants joined HooRWA early the next day to bird in N. Bennington, VT. Their sightings included green heron, Blackburnian and black and white warblers, swamp sparrows, and thirty other species. Photo by Heather Linscott.

author and teacher Tom Tying, has kicked off the HooRWA spring season since 2002.

On May 6, a few botanically inclined volunteers joined staff from the Vermont Chapter of The Nature Conservancy to pull and bag garlic mustard on lands they manage near the **Pownal, VT quarry**. An afternoon exploration of this unusually rich limestone landscape provided sightings of two state rare plants.

The next day, early risers joined leader Bonnie Dundas of Taconic Tri-state Audubon to go **birding along Paran Creek in North Bennington**. Bonnie later recorded the group's sightings on <http://www.ebird.org/vins/>, and recommends the site to all Vermont birders.

It was raining hard on May 14, but ecologist Kerry Woods of Bennington College was waiting when a small group met on Notch Rd. for a walk in **Mt.**

RAFT RIDES

The Hoosic was all over the hydrologic ball park during our April and May rafting season (the graph below shows highs and lows for May), but raft guides Ryan Mann and Rachel Louis, volunteer assistants, and loads of adventuresome children and adults joined us for the float from Ashton Avenue in North Adams, MA to Lauren's Launch in Williamstown, MA—two

times a day most Saturdays and Sundays. Kids from the Williamstown Youth Center and other programs for young people also enjoyed a ride down the river. (The outings wore and tore at our aging raft, which we hope to replace soon. See more on the next page.)

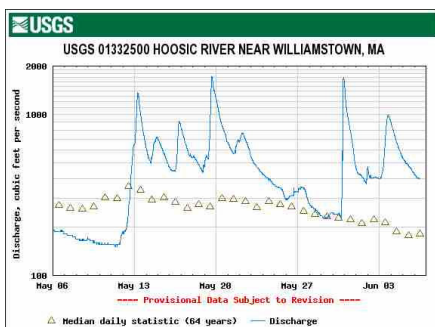
OUTINGS

The Hoosic River watershed covers 720 square miles. After participating in our spring outings, several folks have a good many more of them, and the organisms that inhabit them, under their belts.

Nearly sixty people, mostly children, attend a **herpetological hunt** in Hopkins Forest on the Williams College campus on April 9. The hunt, led again by

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- Adams Good Neighbor Grant
- Wood Turtles





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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.

Stephanie's Corner



GOT WET?

The United States Geological Survey website (<http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/index.html>) confirms what we've all suspected: there has been a lot of rain this year! In early June, flow near Williamstown, MA was almost twice the 65-year mean. Flow near Eagle Bridge, NY was more than two times the 93-year average.

There are lots of other fun facts and interesting activities and quizzes on this site. For example: How many inches of rain would have to fall on your yard to fill a bath tub? I learned that Massachusetts is ranked 9th in the country in percentage of the state covered with water, 5.6%, followed closely by Vermont and New York, at 3.5%. (This year it feels like a lot more!) And surveys that show that only 11% of Americans think we won't have any major water is-

sues in the next 10 years, while 67% believe that water will be too polluted or we won't have enough. What do you think?

If you are looking for something fun to do when the rain stops, join us for 2nd Annual Hoosic River Ride, on August 26th. We will lead you on a magnificent bike ride (31 miles or 64 miles) through the scenic Hoosic River watershed in three states. We thank all our sponsors for their support for this terrific event—Bronze Sponsors Adams Cooperative Bank, Arcadian Shop, Grinnell Dubendorf and Smith, Helioncentrix, Inc., and r.k. Miles; Silver Spnsors Berkshire Gas and Carbone Auto Group, and our Title Sponsor, Barr & Barr, Inc. Builders. Check out our website for more details on the Ride. And stay dry!

Stephanie Boyd, President

...A Busy Spring for HoorWA and Friends cont'd. from front page

Tom State Forest, White Creek, NY. Their reward? Centuries-old white oaks, some fourteen species of ferns, a wild leek glade glowing in green, and more.

On May 21, while **birding from boats in Buskirk, NY**, with leader Michael Batcher, canoeists were impressed with the backwater heron rookery downstream of the Buskirk bridge, and with the clouds of painted trillium growing on a wooded, rocky bank along the

river.

RIVERFEST

On May 27 Riverfest returned, better than ever after a year's hiatus. It began with the traditional bird walk led by Leslie Reed-Evans. Environmental works by artists Charles Bonenti, Bill Botzow, Paul Garnish, Ann Kremers, Len Poliandro, Bill Senseney, and Robert Stone found places riverside and along the nature trail. High Spirits Singers, Nobody's Business, Papa Bodharn 'Ran, Ananda and

Tom Plunkett, Bernice Lewis, and Kalfya Brown entertained with music throughout the afternoon. A canoe parade, geocaching with Dave Backus, fly fishing lessons by Foster Hetherington, and live raptors from the Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences made the day a memorable one. HoorWA thanks everyone who supported Riverfest, especially those who purchased a raffle ticket to win an Ernie LeClaire-crafted cedar strip canoe. Canoe raffle proceeds will go



HOORWA SUMMER PROGRAMS (clip and save!)

June 19, Monday evening, Wild Edibles Walk with Russ Cohen, 6-8 pm., Mike and Becky Darling's Farm, 370 Palmer Drive, Pownal VT. (Head west on VT 346 off Route 7 and follow the signs to the farm). Cohen, expert forager and author of "Wild Plants I Have Known and Eaten," will lead a walk along the Hoosic River to learn about several species of wild edibles, including, if weather conditions are favorable, several species of wild edible mushrooms. **AFTER THE WALK, FILL UP ON DARLING'S STRAWBERRIES!** *Admission free, donations welcome.*

July 11, 18, and 25: Tuesday morning River Rambles. Lower Linear Park, Williamstown, MA, and other locations to be announced. 9–10:30 am. Join us for three very different, consistently leisurely on-site explorations of a variety of watershed themes. See our website for more information as dates approach, at www.hoorwa.org. *Admission free, donations welcome.*

July 15, Saturday morning, July 15, Catherine Osgood Foster Natural Area at Pownal Bog, 9:30 am. This unique wetland with its quaking peat mat is fed by calcium-rich groundwater. The wetland and its unusual array of plants will be interpreted for us by a Nature Conservancy Vermont naturalist. Group size will be limited to ten people. **DRESS FOR WET FEET.** Contact HoorWA to pre-register by July 13. *Admission free, donations welcome.*

July 22nd, Saturday, Hoosic River Voyage, with Jerry Jenkins. Put-in at the base of the Hoosic Gorge, take out at the Hudson. Time and meeting site to be announced. This is a special event **FOR MEMBERS ONLY** and is limited to twelve pre-registered participants. **THIS WILL FILL UP QUICKLY.** Contact HoorWA for details.

August 9th, Wednesday evening, Historic Hoosick Falls Tour, 5:30-7:30 pm. Join leaders Charlie Filkins and Phil Leonard of the Louis Miller Museum and Hoosick Township Historical Society. They'll lead us on a walk along the present-day Hoosic to relive the river's role as a power source during the height of the industrial era. Meet at Wood Memorial Park, Hoosick Falls. **STAY FOR THE BAND CONCERT BEGINNING AT 7:30!** *Admission free, donations welcome.*

August 26th, Saturday, HOOSIC RIVER RIDE. This bike ride, inaugurated in 2005, was acclaimed by the riders as an exceptionally spectacular route through MA, VT, and NY. See details and links to register at www.hoorwa.org.

September, date to be announced, Benthic Macroinvertebrate Workshops for people interested in helping with HoorWA's water quality monitoring program. **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** Contact HoorWA for details.

September 16th, Taconic Crest Hike, Pownal to Petersburg. An 8-mile hike along the Taconic Crest, with a chance of seeing migrating raptors overhead and views of the Hoosic Valley. Meet at trailhead, Petersburg Pass parking area on Rt. 2. Co-sponsored by the Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy. Time to be announced. *Admission free, donations welcome.*



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In this issue:
Fun we had - raft rides, out-
ings, Riverfest, and more!
Fun we're going to have—
wild edibles walks, history
talks, HOOSIC RIVER RIDE!

SUMMER 2006



The Hoosic River Voice

Good Watershed Neighbor Project, Adams

HooRWA was notified in May of receipt of a \$13,600 grant from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust for a many-pronged initiative to help residents of the Hoosic South Branch subwatershed in the town of Adams, MA. The project will educate the public about reducing and cleansing run-off in public and private spaces; establish Stream Teams to identify water quality problems in the community; showcase the South Branch's values as a scenic, cultural, and recreational resource with river walks, bicycle tours, and other events; and continue to work with the US Army Corps of Engineers to improve habitat quality in the flood control structures they constructed there dec-

ades ago. HooRWA will work with the Town of Adams, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Massachusetts Riverways program, and other local and state organizations and agencies on the initiative. Watch our website for announcements of Stream Team training days, storm drain stenciling outings, workshops on building rain gardens, and more.

This initiative, like many other HooRWA programs, is supported by M.E.T. The **Massachusetts Environmental Trust** distributes funds from the sale of environmental license plates. *Massachusetts residents: Buying environmental license plates helps HooRWA and similar organizations statewide. More information at <http://www.mass.gov/rmv/express/plates.htm>*



Tell Us of Wood Turtles

Students from Williams College Center for Environmental Studies, Berkshire Community College, and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts are surveying wood turtles in the Hoosic watershed in Massachusetts. These animals require healthy, intact upland floodplain habitats, and are indicator species for such environments.

If you see a turtle in the 5"-8" range, with a brownish, chiseled shell with black and yellow rays, and bright orange sides of the legs and neck, **DON'T DISTURB**, but please report the sighting (with a photograph if possible, and time, date and location) to Drew Jones, Williams College Hopkins Forest, at ajones@williams.edu. Thanks!