



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association Autumn 2012
Clean Water Habitat Restoration River Access Watershed Recreation

Interns lead the way!



Interns Jake Laughner and Julieanne Fontana working upstream in a shallow Hoosic River.

This summer and fall, HooRWA benefitted from studies and research undertaken by intern crews working along the Hoosic River. Teams of students and other volunteers initiated projects that included:

- a survey, led by a team from MCLA, in which interns are sampling the river for the bacteria *E. coli*. Initial findings by the interns have shown several areas of concern. The final report will provide action recommendations for dealing with these “hot spots.”
- a temperature study on the Hoosic, also led by MCLA interns, monitoring conditions above and below the stormwater chutes in North Adams. Funded through the Berkshire Environmental Endowment, the results from this study will support the goals of redesigning the chutes, allowing for more vegetation to support fish and other aquatic life.
- a 50-mile shoreline survey of the

Hoosic River from Cheshire Lake to the Johnsonville Dam in New York. The HooRWA team discovered several noteworthy trash dumps, failed erosion projects, unusual bank seepages and other issues which indicated that further exploration and possibly remediation is needed. Next we will expand the work to include the Green River in Williamstown and the Walloomsac in Bennington.

- The completion of over 100 stream continuity surveys, or studies of streams and rivers passing through road culverts, in Massachusetts. Examination of the culvert structure and streamflow provides information on obstacles to the movement up and downstream of fish and other aquatic life. When culverts are replaced, streamflow can be improved and wildlife wins!



It's a Greenway!



The southern segment of the Hoosic River Greenway in Hoosick Falls was resurfaced this summer. Gates have been installed and all users—except motorized uses of all kinds—are now welcome.

Volunteers will touch up the edges of the resurfaced treadway in October. They've already helped

HooRWA and the Village clean up several large dump sites on the northern section (see left), where work will begin in 2013. Thanks to the kids at Immaculate Conception, Julie Lynch, Father Tom Zelker, and all our hard-working volunteers!



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**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.

President's Post *by Lauren Stevens*

Sometimes people wonder why a watershed association should be leading in the creation and maintenance of trails and bike paths. For example, HoorWA, the Deerfield River Watershed Association, Massachusetts DCR and other non-profits have been the force behind the Mahican Mohawk Trail, an ambitious proposal to link the Hudson and Connecticut rivers. Volunteers recently blazed a new, nine-mile segment in the Hoosac highlands.

HoorWA initially intervened when the railroad proposed to sell off the route that became the Ashuwillticook Trail, creating time for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to acquire the land. And HoorWA remains active in the extensions of the Ashuwillticook north to North Adams and, from there, west to Williamstown—the later project about to begin a new stage with the help of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. We are also successfully partnering with the Village of Hoosick Falls to create a greenway and trail there.

Why? Perhaps the best way to meet the river is to boat on it, but not everyone owns a canoe or kayak and the Hoosic's water flow tends to be at its lowest in the summer, when most people think about boating. We recognize that for most people, walking beside the river or looking down upon it, say from our annual Hoosic River Ride, are more convenient ways of making its acquaintance.

As river people, we enjoy getting out on trails and believe that such excursions are as informative as they are healthy. Trails at higher elevations enable hikers to grasp how landforms and water come together to form tributaries and, ultimately, a river. Furthermore, most of the trails run along the river. We believe that the best way to look out for the Hoosic and its tributaries is to introduce people to them—especially when segments of the river are hidden or disguised in flood chutes or behind fences. As a watershed association, we support the river through what happens from the ridge tops to the river. *Lauren*

Profile: Jake Laughner, Volunteer

Perhaps more than anything, Jake Laughner enjoys being outside. As amateur birders and woodland plant enthusiasts, Jake and his wife Kim Seward regularly hike and canoe the Berkshires, as many of us do. Being able to live in and enjoy the Berkshires is the reason Jake moved to North Adams from Arlington, MA just over a year ago.

When HoorWA posted a call for volunteers, Jake saw an opportunity to combine his passion for the outdoors with the chance to give something back to a conservation organi-

zation. He had been training to conduct stream continuity surveys, an assessment of road culverts, for the Housatonic Valley Association and now could do the same activity closer to his home. Jake began volunteering regularly last spring and combined his time with Williams College intern Julieanne Fontana and Mount Greylock Regional High School volunteer Celeste Venolia so that they together could complete over 100 culvert surveys and complete a shoreline survey of the Hoosic from Cheshire to Johnson-

ville, NY.

If you are interested in volunteering for HoorWA like Jake, please contact us at office@hoorwa.org.





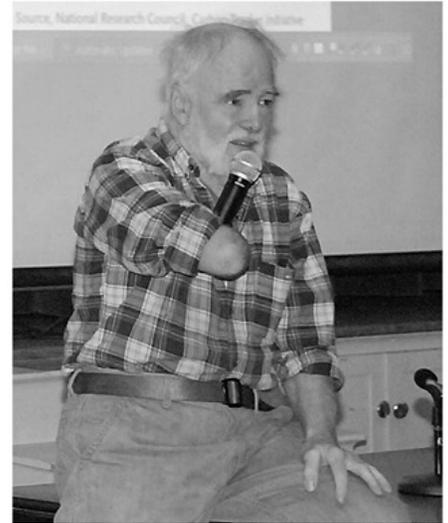
State of the River Conference

HoorWA held its annual State of the River Conference in Williamstown, focusing on the damage and recovery from Tropical Storm Irene. Over 35 people were in attendance to learn about climate change, sudden flooding and river restoration.

Aptly named *Irene + 1*, the conference included speakers Jerry Jenkins, a noted geographer, botanist, and author on climate change from White Creek, NY; and Jim MacBroom, a senior engineer from Milone and MacBroom whose firm was involved with storm restoration efforts throughout the northeast.

A panel discussion was also held, with HoorWA Monitoring Coordinator Kelly Nolan, Vermont State Representative Bill Botzow, Spruces Mobile Home Park resident Carol Zinga-

relli, and Carrie Bail of the First Congregational Church of Williamstown and the non-profit Higher Ground participating. Panelists spoke of damage to river ecosystems and natural and assisted recovery and restoration; and of residential flood damage and the community response.



Clockwise from above right: Jerry Jenkins; HoorWA Executive Director Steve McMahon; and Bill Botzow. Photos by Paul Guillotte

Hoosic River Ride once again a big success!

Thanks to the amazing efforts of our volunteer ride coordinators, Tom Ennis and Emily Brannan, along with our picnic coordinator Ellen Ennis, the August Hoosic River Ride went off very smoothly and over 200 riders—a record—enjoyed a great day.

This year's event will net over \$7,000 for HoorWA's education, research and advocacy efforts. It all starts with our financial supporters, including our title sponsors Saint Gobain Performance Plastics and Broadwell Carpentry.

We also thank the supportive staff at Southern Vermont College, 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!



Exec. Director Steve McMahon and Race Coordinator Emily Brannan receive a donation from staff at Saint Gobain Performance Plastics in Hoosick Falls.

Hoosic River Watershed Association

P.O. Box 667

Williamstown MA 01267

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Autumn 2012



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Please Support HoorWA



Like many other organizations, HoorWA has been affected by the slow economic recovery.

If you have not donated this year, please do so now to help us maintain our programs. Your support makes a difference and all gifts are welcome!

If you are a customer of Williamstown Savings Bank, check out their Community Dividend Program, which helps to support organizations in the communities it serves.

Please cast a vote for HoorWA at the Bank between before Election Day in November.

Thunder Brook Dam Removed

Led by a crew from the Cheshire Highway Department, and coordinated by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, the Thunder Brook Dam was removed in late August. Taking advantage of the dry weather, the Town of Cheshire highway crew moved in machinery, quickly took down the small dam, and restored the stream channel. The dam was no longer holding back a large amount of water, but it was acting as a significant deterrent to fish moving up and down Kitchen Brook and Thunder Brook. A culvert below the dam was also re-

placed. Thanks to the Town of Cheshire and to the Division of Ecological Resources for partnering to improve the habitat in our watershed! Look to our website in November or an email to our members about an afternoon celebration to be held along the new streambed (see below.)

