



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association Winter 2011

Briggsville Dam on North Branch in Clarksburg Is Removed



Demolition of Briggsville Dam begins. Photo by Joe Overlock.

The Briggsville Dam in Clarksburg was an obstacle to fish passage for more than a century. Long unused, a threat to flooding on local roads, and essentially non-reparable, it had become a liability for its owner, Cascade School Supplies. Now it is gone. The 15 foot tall, 145 foot long dam was first breached in November 2010. Removal was completed in December of last year. In months to come, nearby banks will be stabilized and planted and native in-stream and riparian habitat will be restored.

According to Tim Purinton, Acting Director of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration, removal of the dam will allow brook trout, slimy sculpin, longnose sucker (a state-

listed species) and other sensitive fish that need clear, cold, rushing water to access over 30 miles of stream (stretching north into the Green Mountains in Vermont) that were formerly unavailable to them. It will also help cool the river downstream, as the mill pond had been warming the stream for years and degrading native and naturalized trout habitat.

The project has been in the works for more than five years, and happened thanks to the efforts and support provided by many partners. They include USDA's Natural

Resources Conservation Service, which provided \$350,000 in funds; the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; the Town of Clarksburg; the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Wildlife Conservation Society, through its Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund with support provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; Trout Unlimited; Cascade School Supplies; Congressman Olver; and HooRWA.

(The Commonwealth of Massachusetts also announced in November 2010 that it would award \$1,700 to the Hoosuck Chapter of Trout Unlimited, to produce final plans for the removal of the Thunder Brook dam in Cheshire, in the South Branch watershed of the Hoosic River.)



The river flows freely again. Photo by Joe Overlock.



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**Hoosic River
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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.*

President's Corner by Jim Niedbalski

Hello!

If you haven't yet, I urge you to drive by and/or visit the North Branch of the Hoosic in Clarksburg, Mass., where the river now flows uninterrupted from Vermont into North Adams. The removal of the Briggsville Dam in the fall (please see page 1) has completely changed the character of the river there, and has connected the lower reaches of the North Branch with several miles of tributaries. This will help improve the cold-water fishery, as well as eliminating the need for costly repairs to the century-old dam. Thanks to all the public and private partners who helped make this happen.

Winter has settled in, and HoorWA has scheduled several excursions to help you enjoy our watershed (please see page 4).

Our work continues on a number of initiatives, including the Hoosic River Greenway in Hoosick Falls, N.Y. (please see page 3), as well as continuing to monitor the proposed biomass electric generation and wood pellet manufacturing facility

in Pownal, Vt.

We've scheduled our annual meeting for Monday, March 7 at 7 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in Williamstown. I urge all members to consider attending the meeting, at which you'll elect HoorWA directors for the coming year and hear updates on our various projects.

There will be much more in the spring newsletter about RiverFest, but it's not too early to mark it on your calendars – Saturday, May 28 at Cole Field in Williamstown. We always look forward to this annual signature fundraising event, and we're beginning planning now to make RiverFest the great family event it always has been.

Regarding our newsletters, please let us know (office@hoorwa.org) if you would be willing and/or prefer to receive an e-mail notifying you that the newsletter can be retrieved from our web site or e-mailed to you, rather than receiving a paper copy in the mail.

Thank you.

See you on the river!

HoorWA Seeks Executive Director

The Hoosic River Watershed Association seeks an Executive Director to help lead us in our initiatives as the steward for the watershed. The ideal candidate will be an energetic and dynamic leader who is comfortable representing HoorWA, whether it's speaking at public meetings or wading in the river to help school children identify river life. An ecology, environmental or science background is ideal but not required; the Executive Director must have a strong interest in river protection, advocacy and recreation. Other desired skills are grant writing, non-profit manage-

ment, web site development, and excellent communication skills to work with a variety of constituencies, including board members, state and federal officials, college professors, local school educators, scientists, HoorWA members, and the general public.

The Executive Director would be charged with developing partnerships with other similar non-profits, corporate sponsors, and state and federal agencies, and to assist with various HoorWA fundraising efforts.

The director will also assist in

planning and coordinating our two signature fundraising events – RiverFest in May and the Hoosic River Ride in August.

The position is half-time (20 hours/week) with no health insurance benefits. We offer a competitive salary, two weeks' paid vacation and a flexible work schedule.

Interested applicants should e-mail a resume and letter of interest to office@hoorwa.org, attention Jim Niedbalski. This is an ongoing application process and review of resumes will continue until the position is filled.



Join Us for Winter Adventures

Sunday, January 30. 10 am, Taconic Crest, Rt. 2, Petersburg Pass summit, MA/NY line
Ski or snowshoe trip (depending on conditions) north on the Taconic Crest Trail toward the Snow Hole. Meet at the Petersburg Pass parking area on Route 2. Be sure to dress warmly and pack a lunch. This trip will require intermediate skiing skills. Please let leader John Case know by Friday, Jan. 28, if you intend to join us. Phone 458-8023; e-mail jocase@adelphia.net.

Saturday February 12. 10 am to noon, Williamstown, MA
A cross country ski (or hike in the case of no snow) excursion in the lower Hopkins Forest to the Wire Bridge Farm. Meet at the Hopkins Forest Parking Lot off Northwest Hill Rd.. Best for back-country skis. Leader, Drew Jones.

Saturday, February 12. Adams, MA
 The Thunderbolt Ski Trail, in Adams, will host a second annual *downhill race*. This is a backcountry ski race on a demanding course built by the Civilian Conservation Corps 75 years ago. For information, go to www.thunderboltskirun.com/race.html.

Saturday, February 19. 3 pm to moonrise, Hoosick Falls, NY
 Weather permitting, *sledding event and bonfire, with possible full moon walk* on the Hoosic River Greenway. Build or decorate your own sled and bring it to the short hill on the Greenway near the old water works plant off Carey Avenue. Prizes will be given for most creative sled concept.

Sunday, February 20. Williamstown, MA.

Leisurely ski/snowshoe tour Mountain Meadow Reservation. Meet at the Vermont parking area on Benedict Road at 10 am. Bring water and energy for a two-hour outing. Directions: Take Route 7 to Sand Springs Rd. in Williams-town. Turn East on Sand Springs Rd., then north on White Oaks Rd. Cross into Vermont when the pavement ends. After 1/2 mile, take left fork on Benedict Rd. Parking lot is on the immediate left. Contact leader Rick Dovey by Friday February 18 if you plan to join us at 802 823-5545 or riccobgoode@yahoo.com.

Saturday March 12. 9–10:30 am. Hoosick Falls, NY
St. Patrick's Day breakfast on the Greenway, followed by a walk on the Greenway to the parade route.

Green eggs? Green pancakes? Join us on the Greenway at the old water works off Carey Avenue to see what's on the menu for parade day. Then walk up the Greenway to parade central.

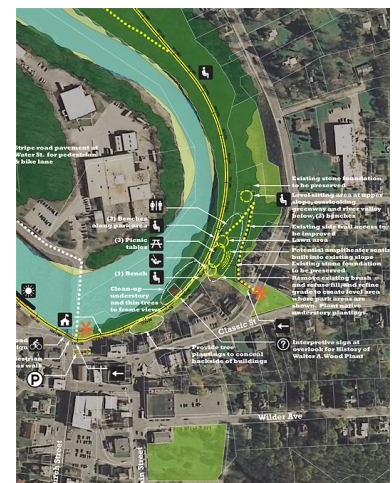
Saturday March 19, beginning at 9 am, *Ski Day* at Prospect Ski Area, Woodford, VT

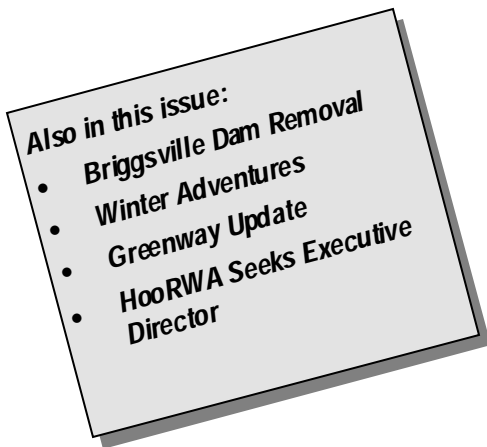
HooRWA members will be able to ski at Prospect Ski Area, off Rte. 9 east of Bennington, at a reduced rate. In addition, Prospect holds a Moonlight Dinner & Ski that day, so skiers might wish to stay for that. Prospect generally has the best snow in the area; trails are groomed for skating and tracked for parallel skiing. A range of trails provide enjoyable skiing for the family. Equipment rentals are available. HooRWA members will be eligible to enter a benefit raffle for a ski pass. More details later.

Public Review of Greenway Plans in March

In December 2010, our greenway design consultants submitted their final conceptual plans for the Hoosic River Greenway. They specify the locations of interpretive kiosks and their subject matter (such as woodland ecology or the history of the Walter A. Wood factory), benches, vehicular barriers, overlooks, screening plantings, and more. They illustrate how the trail might be configured in the downtown section to meet the requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose comments have been incorporated into the designs. (Part of the greenway will be located on a 1950s-era flood control structure.) The plans highlight river access sites for fishing and floating, recommend lighting installations, and point out potential secondary or side trails. They suggest the restoration of adjacent brownfield sites for neighborhood parks. And they break the Greenway into segments according to what sort of surfacing is recommended for them.

The plans will be on display at locations around the Village during the month of March 2011. Viewers will be encouraged to comment on them, and to volunteer for one or more of the many tasks that lie ahead.





Winter 2010



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Bike Ride Thanks

Just as we've already begun planning for Riverfest, we're also already at work putting together the 7th annual Hoosic River Ride (to be held on an August Saturday to be announced). We thanked our major sponsors in our last issue, but now that we've caught our bike ride breath, we'd also like to thank the many other businesses who made the ride possible. They are Adams Cooperative Bank, Bennington Subaru, Big Y Foods, Hoosick Federal Credit Union, McNally's Insurance, Overland Summers, Stewart's Shops, Tsubo Massage, and Williamstown Physical Therapy.

Others donated skills, services, or goods. Thank you to the Bennington, Petersburg, and Hoosick Falls rescue squads for aid station EMT support and transport; Williams College Dining Services and Zilkha Center for food and a tent; Wild Oats for aid

station items; Hot Harry's, Powers Market, Kris Savitsky, Sue Winter, and Corina Gitterman for food donations; Beck's Printing; and Caretaker Farm (and farmer Bridgett Spann).

The event wouldn't have happened without the help of some terrific volunteers. Thank you to Dan Louis, Tom Ennis, Sarah Brill, Nancy Maier, Craig Robertson, Kate Brill, Stephanie Boyd, John Case, Peter Hall, Highlander Bicycles, Lauren Stevens, Liz Rinehart, Ian from the Spoke, Judy Grinnell, David Pilachowski, Wendy Skavlem, Jim Niedbalski, Michael Batcher, and Shelly Stiles. You too can belong to this illustrious company by signing up to help on the 2011 ride. Contact the HooRWA office if you'd like to be part of this fun and worthy event. Or simply ride with us!

Ride Jerseys for Sale



Let's say you'd like to train for the 7th annual Hoosic River Ride. You need a jersey! And you can purchase the 2010 Hoosic River Ride jersey at The Spoke, on Route 2 in the Colonial Shopping Plaza in Williamstown, MA. Short and long-sleeved Women's and Men's sizes are available.