



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association Autumn 2011
Celebrating 25 years of protecting the Hoosic River

A Great Volunteer: Dick Schlesinger *By Steve McMahon*



Dick Schlesinger Photo by Steve McMahon

What makes a good volunteer? A volunteer is someone who donates their time in support of a general cause or a specific organization because he or she believes in the work the organization accomplishes and also believes that their time and talents will be useful and valued. There are Board volunteers who provide leadership skills and volunteers who donate their time when needed on special projects or events. And of course there are our organization's members who volunteer to financially support our mission and programs. Without volunteers, non-profit organizations like HoorWA could not accomplish their missions – and HoorWA wouldn't have achieved 25 years of successful watershed protection.

Dick Schlesinger of Williamstown is a great volunteer. He has been involved with HoorWA in one form or another for over 10 years and it is

easy to say that HoorWA receives far more valuable time and unique talent from Dick than we can recognize.

Dick and his wife Marilyn returned to the family property in Williamstown after a long career in the US Forest Service. He had served the USFS in the Midwest working as an

analyst of forest statistical data and applying it to the management of our nation's forested landscapes. Dick began working with HoorWA as stream monitoring coordinator. He admits that he didn't know much about stream sampling techniques but he has always enjoyed learning. He developed his own techniques for working in the river and has built an impressive set of water temperature data, particularly on the river as it flows in Adams. Dick installed and monitored temperature data loggers that he placed in the Hoosic main stem and major tributaries. So that they wouldn't easily be moved, he designed an anchor using old railroad rail tie plates and camouflaged the anchors so they wouldn't attract the curious stream wader. Dick says he rarely lost a data logger, although he admits that he needed a metal detector to find one buried

beneath a gravel deposit when the current shifted.

His volunteer effort didn't end there. He gathered and analyzed the data into 30-day running averages for any segment of the temperature data. Through computer analysis, he could easily demonstrate where the South Branch of the Hoosic was usually warmer and where it was cooler for any given period.

HoorWA also benefits from Dick's pleasure in working with Geographic Information System (GIS) data. During this summer he regularly produced maps for our two interns identifying culvert crossings that were to be monitored this year. As the forms were completed by the interns, Dick reviewed and completed them using stream gage data he accesses on line. And if all of this were not enough, Dick also manages the HoorWA website, adding articles and updating information. All of Dick's river temperature data can be found on the HoorWA website.

So step up to the plate, all you river advocates, and follow the lead of a great volunteer!



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VOLUNTEER!**



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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 Post *by Lauren Stevens*

To those who suffered damage or whose lives were disrupted by the recent storms, we extend our sympathy and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

If it weren't for the Hoosic River, we would all be under water much of the time. When the snow melts or the rain falls, the river drains our watershed, although sometimes the amount of runoff exceeds the capacity of the river. Then we have flooding, as recently caused by Tropical Storm Irene and succeeding storms.

The low, broad areas adjacent to a river channel are called floodplains. Ideally, they provide a harmless place for the river to temporarily deposit the excess flows. It often happens, however, that human activities in proximity to the river and on its floodplains create a situation in which the natural system can no longer operate without harm.

As the climate continues to heat up, the energy of storms will increase, resulting in more conflict between human activities and river functions. Long term, then, it is even more important that we understand

how these natural systems work and how we can organize our lives to facilitate rather than hinder those functions.

HooRWA plays a significant role in that process through our ongoing stream assessments and efforts to remove dams and modify flood control structures to increase their effectiveness. We support studies of river temperature and flow regimes in addition to educational activities directed at all ages and sectors of the population. Our leadership in supporting trail building and bikeway development aims in part at reducing our reliance on the fossil fuels that contribute to climate change and intensified storms, but also encourages all of us to explore and enjoy the beauty of this great watershed.

We hope you will join in and help us assemble a list of river access points, trails and locations on the river and its banks that need cleaning up after the storm. HooRWA will work with the appropriate agencies and volunteers (maybe even you!) to do the job.

Lauren

The 2011 Hoosic River Ride *by Tom Ennis (2011 Bike Ride boss)*

This year's event was another in a long line of successful Hoosic River Rides. A total of 163 riders, including tandem passengers, finished one of four courses on a clear and fairly calm August day. Net income from the ride was just under \$6,000. Feedback from the riders was very positive. This ride is increasingly popular, especially with hard core riders who come from as far away as Boston, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York State to tackle the 50 or 75 mile loop.

Thanks to our terrific Board and staff who helped out on the day of the ride. The EMTs from rescue squads

around the region assisted at the aid stations: we want to acknowledge their valuable support. Special credit is due to Emily Brannan and Nancy Maier, who helped out all year planning, fund raising, and preparing for the ride; and to Ellen Ennis, who did a fantastic job pulling together everything food- and drink-related. Finally, special thanks to our financial supporters, including our title sponsor, Saint Gobain Performance Plastics of Hoosick Falls, and to Southern Vermont College for allowing us to use their campus. Looking forward to seeing you next year!



We saved the number 1 for former board member and bike ride boss Lisa Carey Moore, who visited from Syracuse.



Temperature Study on the Hoosic in North Adams *by Luke Davis*

In mid-August of this year, Mark Bushee and Luke Davis, both Environmental Studies majors at MCLA, took temperature readings of the Hoosic River in North Adams, Massachusetts. Three sites were evaluated. Two were located above the flood chutes on the South and North branches. A downstream site was located below the confluence of the two branches. The weather was sunny and the air temperature during the survey was about 82 degrees Fahrenheit.

Every half-hour we took a temperature reading from one of the two sites above the flood chutes, while simultaneously taking a read-

ing from the downstream site. Our thermometers were lowered into the water current, with 20 feet of string, at each site for 90 seconds. We then repeated the process with a second thermometer, in order to gauge any errors in the devices.

At the six readings from the downstream site, the temperature remained the same, at 19°C, from 12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. At 2:30 p.m., it rose to 19.5°C. Upstream, along the Front Street site, temperature increased roughly 0.5°C each reading, from 17.5°C to 19°C between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. A similar finding was made at the Hunter

Foundry Road site, with temperature increasing from 17°C to 19°C, between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. The data would suggest that, during this limited study, there was an increase of between 1 and 1.5 degrees Celsius or between 2 and 3.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

While not a large temperature difference, we feel it is significant enough to demonstrate that further research should be done on this stretch of the river over a longer period of time.

(Luke Davis was an intern for HooRWA during the summer and fall of this year.)

Hoosic River Revival Update *by Judy Grinnell, Chairman, HRR Steering Committee*

A storm like Irene provides an opportunity for us to make sure everyone understands the mission of the River Revival. First, as you know, the goal of the Revival is NOT to destroy the flood protection we now have. On the contrary, our goal is to

find a way to maintain flood control and also make the river in North Adams an attribute for recreation and economic development.

Our mission is to find out if we can develop a 21st century flood

control system which would ensure continued flood protection, enable residents and tourists to see and use the river, encourage social and recreational activity along and in

the river, provide a health ecosystem for wildlife, and create an economic engine that benefits our residents.

The good news is the River Revival is about to undertake a multifaceted assessment of the Hoosic in North Adams. This autumn we will hire one of the best engineering/design firms in the country to do an analysis of the river and the chutes.

We will release their report to the community in the spring of 2012. We will give you the opportunity then to share your thoughts— if you want a new, safer flood control system, and what you would like that flood protection and the adjacent landscape to look like.



Eclipse Mill dam during tropical storm Irene. Photo by Judy Grinnell.



Hoosic River Watershed Association

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- Also in this issue:**
- Volunteer profile
 - River Ride review
 - Temperature study
 - River Revival update

Autumn 2011



The Hoosic River Voice

River Shorts

Support HoorWA through the Community Dividend Program!

Through the generosity of the Williamstown Savings Bank, customers have the opportunity to cast a vote at the bank for the Hoosic River Watershed Association from October 1 – November 8. Ballots can be found at the bank, in your monthly statement, and online at www.williamstownavings.com during the voting period. Your one vote makes a big difference!

Help Us Clean Up

Tropical Storm Irene flooded many areas along the Hoosic and its tributaries, pulling trash and debris into river’s flow and depositing it as the waters receded. You can help us identify the clean up spots with an email to office@hoorwa.org letting

us know the community, the closest access street and the debris you spotted. Working with volunteers, next summer we will organize several river clean up days. It all begins with you!

Wildlife Watchers – Be Our Eyes on the River

Beginning with this issue, we want to encourage HoorWA supporters to send us an email of wildlife they spot along the river or observe in the watershed. Emails to office@hoorwa.org should include your first name and town where you live and a brief description of what you observed, where you saw it, and the date you saw the bird, beast or bug. From eagles to otters we look forward to building an observation calendar. Photos

are welcome!

Bike Ride: Two States, Twenty-five Miles, Sunday October 9

Meet at The Spoke in Williamstown, MA at 10 a.m. for 3-hour challenging ride. Bring water and energy bars. Sign up with Rico Dovey: ricobgoode@yahoo.com. See <http://ridewithgps.com/routes/453101> for more information.

Hoosic River Greenway Full Moon Walk, Wednesday October 12

Meet at the old waterworks plant off Carey Avenue at 6 p.m. Shuttle service will be provided. For more information, contact the HoorWA office.