



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association

Autumn 2009

Briggsville Dam in Clarksburg Coming Down



Briggsville Dam

Photo courtesy Mass Riverways Program

When in 2006 Cascade Paper Co., the new owners of the former Strong-Hewat woolen mill in the Briggsville section of Clarksburg, discovered they had also acquired liability for the dam beside Rte. 8, they called Trout Unlimited. Good move. TU called Massachusetts Riverways (Department of Fish and Game) and HooRWA. As a result, with a lot of help from friends, the dam will come down late this fall or early this winter.

The dam no longer impounds water, as the area behind it is totally filled with cobbles. The removal will restore habitat in a cold water ecosystem on the North Branch of the Hoosic River. This trout fishery is stocked and also contains wild trout. The North Branch will be free flowing 10

miles from its headwaters at Alpenwald to the dam at Natural Bridge State Park.

Dam inspectors estimated that repairing the 145-foot-long, 15-foot-high, 100-year-old dam, used to divert water to cool the

building, would cost \$700,000, which would be borne by Cascade. Estimated cost for removing it is \$400,000, of which Cascade's share will be \$10,000. The rest of money is pledged by project partners TU, Riverways, American Rivers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Doris Duke Foundation through the Wildlife Conservation Society, and Gillette and National Grid through Massachusetts Corporations Wetlands Restoration Partnership.

The firm of Fuss & O'Neil has completed the final engineering design, as modified by Milone and MacBroom, particularly in relation to protecting an upstream bridge on Cross Road.

The engineers determined that there would be no threat to downstream structures or habitat from the project. Removal of the dam should alleviate flood threat to the former mill building and adjacent Rte. 8. Construction bids will be advertised in the fall.

Permitting is nearly completed, with the Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and the Environment granting a waiver from a full Environmental Impact Report. The state is monitoring biological life in the river before and after dam removal.

Boaters, Do Your Duty! Keep Zebra Mussels Out!

The state Department of Conservation and Recreation has issued regulations regarding the zebra mussel prevention program, which strives to keep the invasive, non-native mollusk from infesting Massachusetts waters. All boaters - motorized and self-propelled - in the Hoosic and Housatonic river watersheds are required to certify that their boat has not been in any body of water known to contain zebra mussels, or if it has, the boat has been decontaminated according to DCR guidelines. Visit www.mass.gov/dcr for more information.

Do you want The Hoosic River Voice electronically? We can email you when we place each issue on our website. Let us know at office@hoorwa.org.



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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

I hope you all had many opportunities to enjoy our watershed this summer, whether from a boat, on foot or from a vista. The Hoosic and its tributaries have returned to generally normal flows after a summer of several daily record flow levels. The Hoosic runs on, just as our work to promote the watershed continues.

As we enter the fall season we're busy applying for grants for a number of projects and initiatives that will help us protect, promote and advocate for our river.

We staged another successful Hoosic River Ride in August, with many bicyclists participating in the three-state ride that showcases the beauty of our watershed and helps us raise operational funds.

If you're a customer of Williamstown Savings Bank, I'd like to encourage you to consider voting for HooRWA in the bank's Community Dividend Program, which channels funds to local non-profits. Williamstown Savings Bank has been a longtime

supporter of Riverfest, and HooRWA truly appreciates its support, as we do from all of our members and donors.

State, federal and foundation grant programs come and go, and we always seek funding from appropriate programs to serve the watershed. Ultimately, though, an organization like ours depends on private support from members and donors. If your membership is due to expire, please consider renewing. If you can, also consider donating to our 3 X 3 campaign, our three-year, three-state effort to raise funds to help HooRWA become the leading community-based environmental advocate for the river's entire three-state watershed.

Meanwhile, I urge you to take a few moments to go to your favorite spot on the river or one of its tributaries and drink in a classic fall image – a palette of red, orange and yellow reflected in our Hoosic.

See you on the river!

Jim Niedbalski

Hoosic River Revival Coalition Has Vision for North Adams

Imagine a downtown North Adams, MA where both branches of the Hoosic River (now largely encased in concrete) are lovely to look at, suitable for water recreation, bordered by trails running through parkland, and where people come for business and socializing.

That is the vision that has motivated a coalition of citizens and public officials, including HooRWA, for more than a year. The coalition, which calls itself

Hoosic River Revival, is exploring the "softening" in various ways of the concrete flood chutes built by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the 1950s. Similar efforts have successfully reinvigorated downtown waterways in other cities around the nation.

The coalition has several grant requests outstanding. The next step will be taken this fall by a planning class at Williams College, under the direction of

Sarah Gardner. Students will look at a section south of Heritage State Park in North Adams, to try to design ways in which the river, enclosed in flood chutes and berms, could be made more hospitable to trout and more attractive to humans. The study will be completed in December.





5th Annual Hoosic River Ride

More than 130 riders showed up for the 5th annual Hoosic River Ride, held August 23, 2009, helping to raise several thousand dollars for HooRWA's research, education, and advocacy programs. Bikers could choose routes of 13, 33, and up to 70 miles in length, variously enjoying the covered bridges and Battle Monument in Bennington, the farmland along the Hoosic in Eagle Bridge, or for the most ambitious – Petersburg Pass on the MA/NY state line.

Thanks go to our sponsors The Bank of Bennington, Donovan & O'Connor, LLP, and Heliocentrix, and to our donors Adams Cooperative Bank, Ashley Swift & Sons, Carbone Auto Group, Greylock Federal Credit Union, Grinnell Smith LLP, Hoosick Federal Credit Union, McNally's Insurance, Jack Miller Contractors, Overland Summers, Mark A. Pulano, DMD, r.k Miles Inc., Rehm-Brandt's Design, Stewart's Shops, Tsubo Massage, and Williams-town Physical Therapy. Additional support was provided by Wild Oats Cooperative Market, Caretaker Farms, Cytosport, RoadID, and Mezze.

Bennington College generously hosted the event. Marc Freedman was our traveling photographer. The band ____ entertained at the post-ride picnic. The Pownal, Petersburg, Hoosick, Cambridge, and Bennington Rescue Squads, with coordination by Bill Hathaway, provided EMT coverage. Denise and Paul Hoag, Jim & Leslie Prendergast, and Jamie Snyder

hosted aid stations on their properties. We thank them and our many volunteers!



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Williamstown Climate Action Day October 24

Join HooRWA in a day of climate action on October 24, in conjunction with the annual Words Are Wonderful (WAW) celebration. WAW teams up with HooRWA, the Williamstown MA COOL Committee, and Williamstown First Congregational Church along with others globally to help use the power of words to work toward saving energy and addressing climate change.

Come make a climate passport with Storey Publishing, read a poem with Inkberry, write a letter, make a pledge, see a Zip Car, create a project from recycled textiles with local author/artist Crispina Ffrench, visit with Kidspace of Mass MoCA, ex-

perience energy efficiency and renewable energy technology, take part in a bike safety clinic, and participate in a tasting of fresh, local water. Enjoy music by Trophy Husbands and don't miss a visit from Senator Benjamin Downing.

For all ages! At the Williamstown Elementary School gym, 10 am to 1 pm.



Please Support HooRWA



Like many other organizations, HooRWA has been affected by the eco-

nomic downturn.

In order to maintain our activities, if you have not donated this year, would you please do so now? If you have donated, would you please consider an additional gift? Family (\$35), Kingfisher (\$50), Great Blue Heron (\$100), River Steward (\$500) and all gifts are very welcome!

HooRWA, because a healthy river is good for everyone.