

The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association

Winter 2009

Hoosic River Greenway Projects Move Ahead

Village Purchase Rail Parcels

On January 15, the Village of Hoosick Falls purchased a 26-acre, 2.5 mile-long abandoned railbed from Pan Am Railways, and the first leg of the Hoosic River Greenway became a reality. The old rail line follows the Hoosic River through the heart of the Village.

The project, which was spearheaded by HooRWA, was begun in May 2005. Since then, surveys and environmental assessments were conducted, negotiations with the Railway were pursued, presentations to adjoining landowners were made, and more than \$26,000 were raised to make the purchase possible. Now work on two grants for \$100,000 each – to the Village for additional land or easement acquisition; and to HooRWA to plan and develop the greenway tread, river access areas, wildlife viewing sites, signage, and other greenway amenities – can get underway as well.

Many hands participated in what has nonetheless been some pretty heavy lifting. Thanks go especially to



The picnic area at the southern entrance to the Greenway. Photo by Chris Law.

former HooRWA board members Michael Batcher and Stephanie Boyd; *Eastwick Press* publisher Alex Brooks, former deputy mayor Maggie Casey, Joyce Davis, Village trustee Ric DiDonato, Town of Hoosick Supervisor Marilyn Douglas, Parks & Trails NY Project Director Wally Elton, Charlie Filkins, Parks & Trails NY Director of Programs and Policy Fran Gotsik, Jason Janson, Ken Johnson, Paul Miller, Aelish Nealon, Town of Hoosick councilperson Kevin O'Malley, former HooRWA board member Mark Revet, and Mayor Laura Reynolds. Attorneys Bill Johnston and Ed Gorman provided their services to the committee pro bono.

Greenway Website Grant

In January, HooRWA received a Capacity Building Grant from the park and trail advocacy group Parks & Trails New York. HooRWA and members of the Greenway committee will use the small grant to create a website for the Hoosic River Greenway. In a project spearheaded by HooRWA, the core Greenway parcels were recently purchased from Pan Am Railways by the Village of Hoosick Falls. HooRWA was one of eight organizations awarded grants by PTNY. Sev-

enty five applications were submitted.

“Parks and trails have a key role to play in the economic health and recovery of New York State, and grassroots groups have a key role to play in the development and promotion of parks and trails,” said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York. The grant program was made possible by a gift from a generous private donor.

Parks & Trails New York is a statewide not-for-profit organization that has nurtured New York's park and trail movements for more than 20 years, helping hundreds of groups and municipalities build, maintain, and promote parks, greenways, and more than 1,200 miles of multi-use trails.



On the Army Corps flood chute section of the Greenway. Photo by Chris Law.



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- **New Watershed Map & Guide**



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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 John Case

This will be my last letter as president of HoorWA – Jim Niedbalski has already been elected as the new president for 2009. Reflecting on the year, I would say that the 2009 annual meeting on February 9th captured the best efforts of HoorWA for 2008.

Kelly Nolan, our monitoring coordinator, led with a comprehensive presentation on HoorWA's efforts to track water quality. Kelly assesses the river in all three states and reports our data to government agencies. His results are available on our website. He pointed out that monitoring isn't enough—we need to take the lead in remediating problems. For years the Hoosic has stubbornly remained "Slightly Impacted." Kelly noted that the modifier "Slightly" masks serious stresses to our river habitat.



Kelly was followed by Chris Law, a Williams student and HoorWA intern, and two of his canoe mates. They showed slides of their trip last May when they canoed the full navigable length of the Hoosic. Chris's vivid photographs illustrated what a lovely recreational asset it is, flowing primarily through broad pastoral landscapes. The sections you can see from the road don't do the river justice.

My hope is that the current projects we are pursuing—the Hoosic River Revival, the Mohawk Bikeway, the greenway in Hoosick Falls—will allow others to see the river as Chris did, even if they never launch a canoe. When they connect with our river, they will inevitably become advocates for its restoration and preservation.

John Case

South Branch Stream Team to Take to the Waters Again

In January, the William J. and Margery S. Barrett Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation awarded HoorWA \$1,408 to continue its South Branch Stream Team initiative for a second year. The project will allow our Team coordinator, Caroline Scully, to continue outreach to S. Branch residents, especially in the Town of Adams. Caroline is a long-time resident of Adams.

In 2008, Stream Team activities involved more than 120 volunteers in clean-ups, monitoring days, in-

vasive plant control outings, and stormwater assessments. Caroline hopes to recruit and train additional volunteers in 2009, and to undertake field projects with Team members and partner organizations, participate in river-related meetings such as those now under way with regard to the Thunder Brook dam removal project, and promote HoorWA's mission in S. Branch communities. One ambitious project on the horizon is an Adams Clean-up and Beautification Day, tenta-

tively scheduled for May 2009. Caroline hopes to organize the day on the basis of the town's stormwater drainage system.

To volunteer for Adams activities, contact Caroline through the HoorWA office.



Caroline Scully



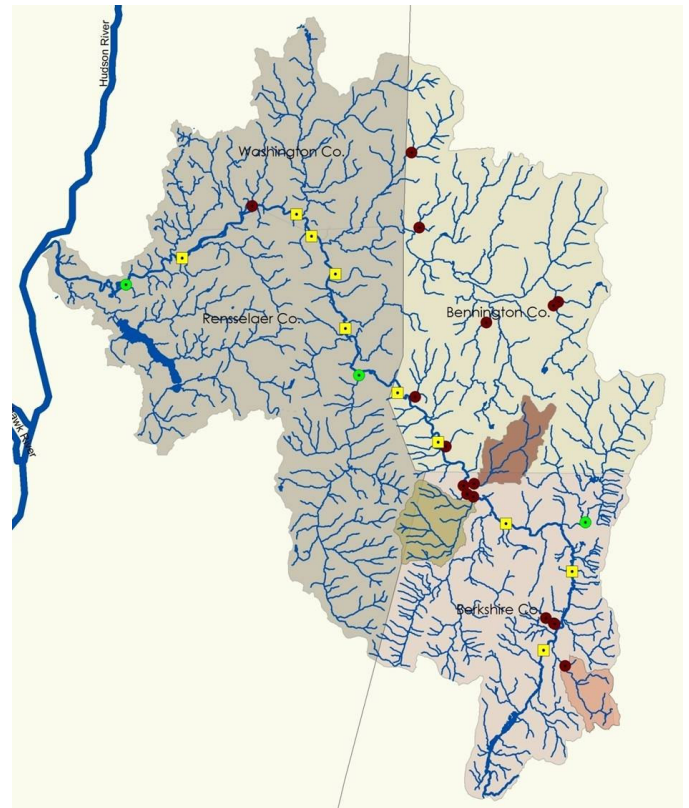
VT DEC Accepts HooRWA Monitoring Results

HooRWA monitoring coordinator Kelly Nolan was notified in late January that his data results for eight sampling sites in the Hoosic watershed and its subwatersheds in Vermont would be accepted by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, with no further quality review required. Kelly considers that a big step forward for HooRWA. We see it as acknowledgment of Kelly's skill and experience!

Vermont regularly assesses benthic macroinvertebrate (BMI) populations on most of the state's streams (usually on a once-every-several-years basis), but about 18% of Vermont's watercourses have never been sampled.

Kelly is now analyzing BMI populations from sites he sampled last autumn on Cold Spring Brook, Jewett Brook, Little White Creek, City Stream, and Stamford Stream in the Walloomsac watershed, and Tubbs Creek and Ladd Brook in the Hoosic watershed. These waters had never before been assessed by the State of Vermont.

(Want to learn more about just how skillful Kelly Nolan is? We share him with many other organizations, including Watershed Assessment Associates of Schenectady, NY, where Kelly is Senior Aquatic Taxonomist and Director of Environmental Services. You can learn more about Kelly and the world of stream assessment science by visiting the WAA website at www.rwaa.us/company.)



HooRWA's benthic macroinvertebrate sampling sites, 2006-2008

3x3 Campaign Needs Your Support

In January, HooRWA embarked on our three-state, three-year, or 3X3 Campaign: the three states— Vermont, Massachusetts

and New York through which the river flows; and three years—so we can adequately plan ahead to maximize our ef-

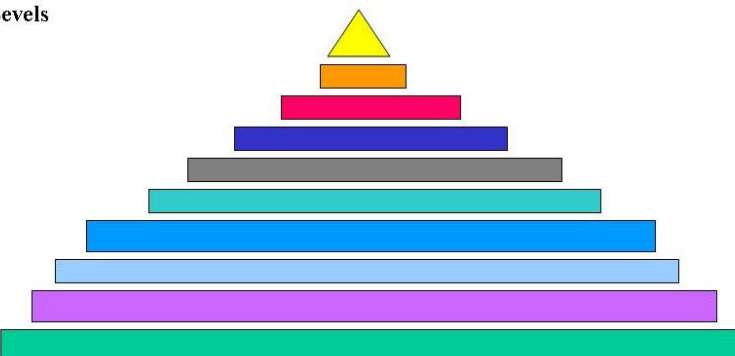
forts.

We realize the current economic climate will impact state support and private granting organizations. It is, therefore, our goal to raise \$200,000 from private citizens, from residents of and visitors to our watershed. We hope you will join us by pledging to give to our 3X3 Campaign, and help fund the research, advocacy and recreational initiatives HooRWA has been proud to undertake for more than twenty-five years.

THREE-YEAR GOAL: \$200,000

Pledge Levels

- \$12,000 (1)
- \$10,000 (3)
- \$5,000 (5)
- \$2,500 (7)
- \$1,000 (11)
- \$500 (30)
- \$250 (100)
- \$150 (150)
- \$100 (200)
- <\$100: \$22,000



(Where is your place on this giving pyramid?)



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New Reference Map and Recreation Guide to the Watershed

The Norcross Foundation helps non-profits purchase “useful tools,” to use the language of the grantor’s guidelines. We think our new watershed map and recreational guide, design and printing for which was supported by the Foundation, will be just that, for whomever seeks to explore and enjoy the Hoosic and its tributaries and the lands they drain.

The two-sided piece, designed by cartographer Patrick Dunlavy of Williamstown, MA, has a map of the watershed on the front, and floaters’, hikers’, and bicyclists’ guides on the reverse.

Want to plan a trip down the river in a canoe or kayak? The guide will tell you where to put in and take out, suggest good views or obstacles to be on the look-out for, and give mileages from access point to access point.

Are you a landlubber? The guide will help you hike to the new Glas-tenbury Mountain fire tower, make connections to the Taconic Crest Trail, and explore little known state forests and privately owned woodlands.

Road bikers will learn about flat routes along the river in Schaghticoke and Stillwater, a covered bridge tour in Bennington, VT, and the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail connecting Lanesboro and Adams, MA.

And some people will be satisfied to simply look upon it, for it is indeed a thing of beauty! (Thank you, Pat!)

Our new reference map and recreation guide replaces and significantly updates our first, 1994 version. The new map can be purchased for \$6.

Contact the HooRWA office for more information on securing your own useful tool.

