



# The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association

Summer 2011

## Profile: Kelly Nolan, HoorWA's Monitoring Coordinator

By Steve McMahon

Kelly Nolan loves kicking about in streams and rivers, looking for



Kelly Nolan, our Mr. Critters

bugs and critters that might make some of us a little bit squeamish. But this is what an aquatic biologist does and Kelly enjoys this career, split between the outdoors and a laboratory microscope, more than anything he has ever done. Kelly works for HoorWA part-time, taking samples from selected points along the main stem of the Hoosic, identifying the types and numbers of benthic macroinvertebrates he finds in the many samples collected in the summer months and reports on his findings to both HoorWA and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Benthic macroinvertebrates include crustaceans such as crayfish, mollusks such as clams and snails, aquatic worms and the immature forms of aquatic insects such as caddisfly and mayfly nymphs. The numbers, types and diversity of these small insects, crustaceans and mollusks, both food for larger stream dwellers such as fish and birds and predators to even smaller insects, inform us that the river is supporting life and is healthy, or is being stressed and not doing well. HoorWA monitors the river annually; the state every five years. Monitoring annually lets us know if our river is experiencing change while the state monitors the health of the Hoosic against rivers in other watersheds.

I observed Kelly at work recently, both here in the Hoosic River Watershed, and in his laboratory in Schenectady. With the excitement of a young student, he described in detail the fly nymphs and worms in the sandy sample and what they meant to the brook's overall water health. Kelly described this sample from Broad Brook in Williamstown as indicative of a very healthy, well oxygenated tributary to the Hoosic and gave it an "A" rating. The mainstem of

the Hoosic, flowing more slowly and running deeply, and representing the impacts of its tributaries, is less oxygenated, more acidic, and warmer. Kelly said he would give the river a grade of "B" to "C".

While Kelly is a very good field biologist, identifying many insects I could barely see, he said the real work is done in his laboratory. With so many different varieties of midges, flies, worms and bugs, water samples are taken back to his firm at the Watershed Assessment Associates and carefully analyzed by Kelly and his staff.

Anyone can enjoy a summer trip to the stream or brook near them, when the water is warmer and moving more slowly. Gently turn over a rock or observe what you see in a pail of water removed from a stream. Guaranteed you'll see something moving!



Kelly in a watershed brook



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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

It's been my great pleasure to work with our new Executive Director, Steve McMahon, over the last two months. I hope all of our members will get to know Steve. He is usually in the HoorWA office, in the First Congregational Church, Williamstown, Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. If a group you belong to is looking for a speaker on the Hoosic watershed, Steve has PowerPoint, will travel.

After too long a period of not having someone to head up our activities, we rejoice in Steve's talents and enthusiasm: HoorWA! With the opportunities that he presents, however, goes the responsibility of raising enough money to maintain our fine staff. If you haven't sent in your membership this year, please do so. If you have, thank you and please consider increasing your donation to the tri-

state area's own environmental organization. We are a watershed association, dedicated to the Hoosic River, its tributaries and the 720-square miles of its basin.

Other ways you can help include leaving your cans and bottles at B-Fair's Redemption Center, 1000 Massachusetts Ave., North Adams. Ask that the deposits go to HoorWA. Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10-3; Saturday, 9-2.

May I also remind customers of the Williamstown Savings Bank of its Community Dividend program. While many worthwhile organizations are listed and you only get to vote for one, I ask you to consider choosing the Hoosic River Watershed Association. This program continues to be a significant source of income for us, without costing you a penny. Voting will run from October 1 through November 2 this year.

Gratefully, Lauren

**Riverfest 2011**

HoorWA's 20<sup>th</sup> annual Riverfest on Memorial Day weekend this year was a great success on all accounts. Music by T-Bone Daddy, Mocha Jam and a drum circle lead by Otha Day kept feet tapping while attendees looked at exhibits on river critters, live animals from the Berkshire Museum and a birds of prey demonstration from the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. Children enjoyed face painting and pony rides, and everyone enjoyed a

stroll along the river to view art on display. The Hoosic was running high this year which allowed for the very popular raft rides to take place. Our thanks to our title sponsor, the Williamstown Savings Bank, along with major sponsors including the MA Cultural Council, the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies and Alton and Westfall Real Estate. Next spring's event promises to be even better!



"Man Waiting" by Matthew Perry



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## HooRWA Welcomes Interns

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Chad Lorenz, a Williams College junior from Yarmouth, Maine and Luke Davis, a MCLA senior from Billerica, Massachusetts, have teamed up this summer to conduct culvert surveys within the Hoosic River watershed in Berkshire County. The interns are monitoring the condition of roadway culverts and the brooks and streams running through them.

Over time, as culverts are assessed for replacement when roadways are improved, this data will assist town and city highway crews and the Commonwealth's

DOT to size the culvert to the flow of the stream and support the movement of fish, mammals and other organisms up and downstream. Both interns are majoring in environmental studies and plan to survey over half of the 200 culvert crossings in the Massachusetts portion of the watershed.



Summer interns Chad and Luke

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## Hoosic River Revival Update

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As part of developing a Request for Proposals for the new design of the flood chutes and the river's corridor in North Adams, the Hoosic River Revival steering committee is busy reading the Statements of Qualifications submitted by firms from across the country. Since this is a multifaceted, complex project requiring an experienced, competent, exemplary engineering/design firm or firms, we are first pre-qualifying potential applicants.

We are also providing guided historical walks along the Hoosic River on Thursday evenings at 5 pm on August 25 and September 29. The walks will start from City Hall and use the Hoosic River History Walking Brochure. Copies

can be downloaded from our website at [www.HoosicRiverRevival.org](http://www.HoosicRiverRevival.org), or picked up at Gallery 51 on Main Street in N. Adams, at the N. Adams Public Library, at the North Adams Museum of History and Science in the Heritage State Park, and at Tunnel City Coffee House in Williamstown.

For further information or questions, please contact Judy Grinnell, Chairman, at 413.212.2996 or via email at [HoosicRiverRevival@gmail.com](mailto:HoosicRiverRevival@gmail.com).



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## Upcoming Outings

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Sunday August 21

John Case will lead a **canoe/kayak trip** from the Eagle Bridge River Access to the Johnsonville Dam, about seven miles on Class 1 flat water. Gather at the Williams Inn in Williamstown at 10 a.m. or at the Eagle Bridge Access at 10:30 a.m. (on the north side of Route 67 just west of the village of Eagle Bridge). This trip will involve a car shuttle to the Johnsonville Dam, so some paddlers should be prepared to drive to the dam. Pack a lunch, PDFs, and warm clothing. Please let John know by August 17 if you plan to paddle at 413-458-8023 or [jocase@adelphia.net](mailto:jocase@adelphia.net).

Saturday September 17

Hike the Hoosac Range along BNRC's new trail to see **hawks at migration**. Meet at 9 a.m. at the BNRC trail head on Rte 2 in North Adams. Bring water, lunch, and binoculars. This is a demanding hike to Spruce Hill requiring good footwear.

# Hoosic River Watershed Association

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Summer 2011



## *The Hoosic River Voice*

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### **7th Annual Hoosic River Ride: Pre-register and Save!**

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Put Saturday August 20 on your calendar and tune up your bike in preparation for the annual Hoosic River Ride, which once again begins and ends at Southern Vermont College in Bennington.

Got kids? Your family might enjoy the 8-mile Monument Loop, a route that takes in the Bennington Monument and the Henry Covered Bridge over the Walloomsac River.

The 28-mile Two State Tour adds some back-country roads and the quiet residential streets of scenic North Bennington. Be



ready for some climbing at the beginning, but relax and enjoy the views the rest of the way.

The Hoosic Fifty offers a beautiful ride thru Vermont and New York countryside, almost all of it along quiet, country roads.

Hard core riders will want to do Lisa's 3-State Watershed Challenge. (It's named to honor the Ride's founder and guiding spirit, Lisa Carey Moore, now a Syracuse resident.) This figure eight route (with only 1/5 a mile overlap) challenges the riders with a 4-mile climb to Peters-

burg Pass starting at mile 48! You'll ascend 4,474 ft, with a few more feet of descent.

You'll enjoy well-marked routes and thorough cue sheets; several well-stocked aid stations; EMT support at all aid stations and at the registration area; and roving tech support on each route (although all riders should come fully prepared.) The post-ride picnic starts at 11:30 and runs until 3:00 p.m.

Visit Bike Reg at <http://www.BikeReg.com/events/register.asp?eventid=12569> to register or to get more ride details.