



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association Spring 2011

20th Annual Riverfest

Kick off the summer and help celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Riverfest! Join us for our annual Festival on Saturday, May 28th from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. held at Cole Field on the Williams College campus, where there will be rafting, raptor demonstrations, pony rides, river critters, kids crafts, river art, a variety of “green” exhibitors, food, raffle prizes and more. The festival will be followed by a picnic concert performance by T-Bone Daddy from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Cole Field. The weekend will also be full of outdoor guided excursions, so get outside and enjoy a sunrise bird watch, group bike ride, geocaching, morning yoga on Stone Hill at the Clark Art Campus, canoe rendezvous, and “think like a fish” fly fishing demonstration. See www.hoorwa.org for more details.

Raffle and entry tickets for the festival and concert can be purchased for \$5 in advance or \$7 at the gate. Children ten and under attend free of charge. The weekend excursions are also free of charge.

Riverfest is supported by Williamstown Savings Bank, our title sponsor; major sponsors Alton & Westall and the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies; and other area businesses.

Raffle tickets can be purchased at the bank’s office on Route 2 in Williamstown and at other sponsor locations.

A draft schedule can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

River Walking Brochure and Website

The Hoosic River Revival Coalition has published a self-guided historical walking brochure of the Hoosic River, now available on their newly designed website, www.HoosicRiverRevival.org.

The goal of the Coalition in publishing the brochure, *Hoosic River History: A Walking Tour* through North Adams, is to remind residents of the historical significance of the river. Some of the areas highlighted in the brochure are: Mass MoCA (former Sprague Electric Co.), The Porches Inn (former mill workers’ homes), the Vietnam Veterans’ River Park on River Street, the Eclipse Mill (former Hoosac Cotton Company), the N. Adams Public Library (former home of Sanford Blackinton), and Western Gateway State Park with its Hoosac Tunnel Museum, and North Adams Museum of History and Science.

By raising awareness of the river’s history, the Coalition also hopes to create support for the redesign of the 60 year-old high and wide concrete flood chutes which funnel the river through the city. Although both branches of the Hoosic River flow through downtown, the public is currently completely cut off from the river due to the design of the chutes. The goal of the Coalition is to work with engineers and landscape designers to create a 21st Century flood control system, similar to those built in Greenville, SC and in Kansas City, MO. A modification in the design of our chutes would not only maintain flood control, but would also make the river aesthetically pleas-

ing, more accessible to the public, and a suitable environment for wildlife.

The public is invited to join members of the River Revival Coalition on a guided walk of the river the fourth Thursday of June, July, and August; this will coincide with the summer Downstreet Art Events. The tours will start at 5 pm from City Hall. For those interested in walking on their own, brochures are available at the following locations: the North Adams Public Library, Gallery 51 on Main Street, in the City Hall at the Clerk’s office, the Eclipse Mill, the North Adams Museum of History and Science, and the Hoosac Tunnel Museum.

Individuals can also download a copy of the brochure from the River Revival’s website: www.HoosicRiverRevival.org. On this recently updated website one can also find technical information on the flood chute design and the flow of the river, as well as some river restoration proposals for the Hoosic River. In addition, the website provides a summary of the Community Conversation held in North Adams last year, and photos of some of the many successful riverfront parks that have been created in other parts of the



The Hoosic in North Adams.



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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 Lauren Stevens

As incoming president, I want to thank past president Jim Niedbalski for steering us through two years of white water, as we were without an executive director and taking a financial hit due to the economy. Shelly Stiles, our program director, filled in as she has always done, and the board pitched in as well. Thanks to all.

Exciting times are ahead on the river! We enthusiastically welcome our new executive director, Steve McMahon, who comes to us with experience and enthusiasm. The watershed association is twenty-five years old. We anticipate that Steve will lead us into our second twenty-five with style and substance.

I invite you to attend a re-imagined Riverfest, May 28, 1-5 p.m., followed by a picnic/concert to 7 pm. Board members Wendy Skavlem and Wendy Hopkins have taken the lead in looking at what was working best at past Riverfests and adding new and exciting twists for 2011. Riverfest has grown to be a hinge event, as our region moves with the calendar to summer.

A number of excursions are af-

filiated with Riverfest. (Look for them soon on our website.) Other scheduled activities include the dedication of the site that was the Briggsville Dam, Rte. 8 in Clarksburg, 10:30 a.m., Friday, June 3, a joint project of the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, the US Department of Agriculture and several NGOs, including HooRWA; a ribbon cutting ceremony for Berkshire Natural Resources Council's Spruce Hill Trail, Western Summit Trailhead, 10 a.m. on June 18; the Henry David Thoreau hike up the Bellows Pipe Trail to the summit of Mount Greylock, Saturday, July 16 (co-sponsored with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation), and our own Hoosic River (bicycle) Ride, August 20.

Others will include walks along the flood control chutes in North Adams led by the Hoosic River Revival, and walks along the proposed greenway in Hoosick Falls, another HooRWA initiative in cooperation with the Village.

Enjoy the summer by or on the river.

Riverfest 2011 Schedule of Events

Riverfest, Saturday May 28, 1pm-5pm, Cole Field, Williamstown

River Raft Rides—launching every 30 minutes

River Art Walk

River Critters—River Raptors * Turtles * Critters * River Investigation

Kids Crafts—Origami * Musical Instruments * River Projects * Face Painting

Music—Otha Day Drum Circle * Moca Jam * Berkshire Choral Group

Pony Rides—1:30 pm-3:30 pm

Green Exhibitors and Food Vendors all afternoon

Rubber Duck Derby—Launches at 4:30 pm

Raffle—Winners Announced at 5 pm—Bicycle * Kayak * GPS Unit * Bucket Raffle Items

Picnic Concert, Saturday May 28, 5pm-7pm, Cole Field, Williamstown

T-Bone Daddy—Rockin' Blues!



HooRWA Welcomes Executive Director

Steve McMahon was recently named by the Board of Directors to be the next Executive Director of HooRWA. Mr. McMahon was most recently the Berkshires Regional Director for The Trustees of Reservations. As Regional Director, Steve was responsible for overseeing the region's staff in addition to fundraising, budget management, and, with the help of many volunteers, coordinating special events. The Trustees of Reservations is a statewide conservation organization and supporters of HooRWA might have visited Field Farm or Mountain Meadow Preserve in Williamstown, which were two of 13 properties in the Berkshires Region. Prior to becoming Regional Director for The Trustees, Mr. McMahon was Superintendent for The Trustees in Southern Berkshire County, directly responsible for property management at well known spe-

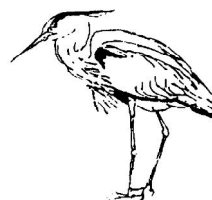


Steve McMahon, HooRWA's new Executive Director

cial places including Naumkeag in Stockbridge, Monument Mountain in Great Barrington and Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield.

Mr. McMahon is very active volunteering in the town of West Stockbridge where he lives and in Berkshire County. He serves on the West Stockbridge Volunteer Fire Department and currently helps lead the town's Sustainability Committee. Steve is Vice-Chair of the Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area, a federally designated organization that works "to preserve, promote, and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the upper Housatonic Region" from Lanesborough, MA to Kent, CT.

"I've enjoyed tracing the Hoosic River while riding along the Ashuwillticook Trail and following its course on drives through Williamstown and Pownal. I look forward to working with the Hoosic River Watershed Association Board, staff, supporters and volunteers to promote the beauty and enjoyment of the Hoosic Watershed and to help protect the Hoosic River as an important natural resource for northwest Massachusetts, southern Vermont and eastern New York", said Mr. McMahon.



Redeem Them

For an easy way to handle the recycling of returnable bottles and cans that also benefits HooRWA, we recommend B-Fair's bottle Redemption Center at 1000 Massachusetts Ave., North Adams. They will do the work and, if you mention HooRWA, we will get the deposit. It is open Tuesday-Friday, 10-3 and Saturday, 9-2. Leave the mess to them and the money to us.



Briggsville Dam Event

On Friday June 3, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, project partners will celebrate the removal of the Briggsville Dam at the site of the former structure on the North Branch of the Hoosic. Among those present will be Ann Mills, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, USDA; State Senator Benjamin Downing; State Representative Gailanne Cariddi, and Commissioner Mary Griffin from Mass. Department of Fish and Game. All are welcome. Please RSVP to Daine Baedeker Petit, USDA-NRCS, at 413 235-4371 or diane.petit@ma.usda.gov by May 27th.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Also in this issue:

- Riverfest to be held May 28
- Steve McMahon our new ED
- River Walking brochure for North Adams
- President's Message

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Greenway Cleaned Up by Geocachers

On Saturday, May 7th, members of the New York Capital Region Geocachers and others from the surrounding area hosted a Cache In Trash Out event on the Hoosic River Greenway. Cache In Trash Out is an ongoing environmental initiative supported by the worldwide geocaching* community. Since 2002, geocachers around the world have been dedicated to improving parks and other cache-friendly places.

As part of the local event, 38



geocachers gathered to remove trash from the Greenway. After three hours of hard work the group had removed six tires, three television sets, several yards of carpeting, a swimming pool liner and nearly six pickup trucks of garbage from the trail and surrounding area. Village Mayor Matt Monahan, an avid geocacher, organized the event. Greenway steering committee members Mike Danforth and Charlie Kovage were among the cleaner-uppers. A great deal of thanks goes out to all those who participated in the event!

*Geocaching is a real-world outdoor treasure hunting game. Players try to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, using GPS-enabled devices and then share their experiences online. For more information on Geocaching or Cache In Trash Out events visit www.geocaching.com.



Above, Molly carries out a tire on the Greenway. Left, Charlie's truck, filled very high.