



## *Promoting a fishable, swimmable Hoosic River!*

### State of the River

HooRWA's annual *State of the River*, held 12/1/22, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act and featured Thomas Jorling, co-author of the Act and former Commissioner of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. His talk provided fascinating insights into the creation of the Act. 50+ people were in attendance. The presentation is available on WilliNet.

### Thompson Mill on the Hoosic River to be Re-envisioned

Tom Jorling brought to our attention the disreputable state of the abandoned Thompson Mill in the Village of Valley Falls, N.Y. The mill was condemned in 2009 after a fire. HooRWA approached Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT), with whom we had worked on other river cleanups, suggesting we work together to clean up the site. Jorling having provided contacts at NYDEC, the two entities approached Valley Falls. Kristina Younger, then the president of RLT, became the project manager and is currently leading us through a series of federal and state grants with the goal of demolishing the building, removing hazardous material, and creating a park. Two HooRWA board members serve on the project oversight committee with Village representatives. See the article below for background. - Lauren Stevens

### Valley Falls plans for future park on abandoned mill site, by Kenneth C. Crowe II, 12/11/22

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Photo credit: Paul Buckowski / Times Union

**VALLEY FALLS** – For the village's 510 residents, plans to transform the abandoned Thompson Mill site into a public park on the Hoosic River received a push forward when the Village Board hired a consulting firm to work on the project.

“Cleaning up the burned-out mill and turning it into a riverside park for our residents to enjoy is a long-standing priority for the village. Becoming a designated Brownfield Opportunity Area will open up more pathways to getting that done,” Mayor Jay Overrocker said in a statement.

**HooRWA's Annual Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 21, 7pm**  
Program:  
Are there surprises in Christmas Brook?  
A report on a student's research  
Tanzman Award  
Board meeting  
at the First Congregational Church of Williamstown  
Watch for updates on our website regarding Covid protocols.  
HooRWA.org

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Thompson Mill on the Hoosic River by Andrew Kawczak

### For your pleasure along the River



Cheshire Lake, January 22, 2023 by Andrew Kawczak

Winter means ice fishing for many folks. Cheshire Lake, which is the headwaters of the South Branch of the Hoosic River, is a popular destination to enjoy this winter pastime.

#### Walking on Ice & Ice Fishing Safety Tips:

- ⇒ New/clear ice is stronger than old/white ice
- ⇒ Check ice conditions frequently as you move along
- ⇒ Avoid traveling on ice-bound rivers and streams
- ⇒ Avoid slushy areas
- ⇒ Watch for large cracks or heaves in the ice
- ⇒ Avoid water discharges and culverts where there is flowing water

For more on ice fishing visit:

[mass.gov/info-details/get-started-ice-fishing](https://mass.gov/info-details/get-started-ice-fishing)

[hoorwa.org/calendar](https://hoorwa.org/calendar)  
Click on our calendar for listing of programs

*Thompson Mills continued from page 1*

The Thompson Mill was a thriving company when it opened in 1860. Moving into the final decades of the 20th century that changed.

The Thompson Mill closed in 1992 and fell into disrepair. It was condemned in 2009 after a fire that ravaged the building. Rensselaer County foreclosed on the property in 2018 for unpaid property taxes.

The village acquired the property from the county to move ahead with its park project.

Its 23.43-acre site with the three-story 13,000-square foot brick mill building is located along the river near the Route 67 bridge.

The Village Board awarded a contract in November to the planning firm Bergmann Associates for \$125,000 to prepare a Brownfield Opportunity Area nomination to file with the state Department of State, according to a statement on the project. The village received a \$125,000 grant from the State Department for this work and will match it.

“This contract award is the result of a competitive solicitation process that generated a lot of interest,” Kristina Younger, the village’s project manager, said in a statement.

The nomination study will build on the previous Environmental Protection Agency-funded assessment of the old Thompson Mill site, and the village’s 2018 District designation on the National Historic Register, Younger noted. The project also includes opportunities for public participation and strategies for seeking more money for clean-up and construction of the park.

Two phases of environmental assessment have been conducted at the property. Additional environmental assessment work has to be done and may require building demolition.

Bergmann Associates of Albany has done similar planning work of former mill sites in small villages. The planning work is expected to take 18 months.



### Water Quality Monitoring: Conductivity

HooRWA is always interested in learning more about the Hoosic River, its tributaries and it's watershed for purposes of their protection and enjoyment. In December 2022 HooRWA embarked on a new water testing program, to evaluate the impact of road salts in our riverine ecosystem. The program is currently being pilot tested in the Green River.

With MADEP grant funding, HooRWA is partnering with Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) to measure water conductivity in area tributaries. Measuring water conductivity helps us assess how much salt ends up in the river, which will inform potential impacts on wildlife.

New, fairly expensive hardware was procured and is being fully exercised and evaluated. Data training and data collection is occurring. In the Spring of 2023, we anticipate having some useful data to report. Other locations within the watershed are also planned.

- Andrew Kawczak



conductivity sensor within conduit



Green River, south of Rt. 2  
Sensor placement



### Music & Poetry Along the River

Poets and musicians in the Hoosic River Watershed: You are invited to participate in Riverworks 2023! Let the River inspire you to craft a poem, song, or instrumental piece about and for the Hoosic River and/or its tributaries.

Watch for details on this artists project supported in part by Cultural Council of North Berkshire.



### Annual Membership Renewal

It's about that time of year again. Please renew your HooRWA membership for 2023 to assist us in advocating for and protecting the Hoosic River and the habitat of its watershed.

Levels: Friend \$40; Advocate \$100; Guardian \$250; Steward \$500; Ridgetop Society \$1000

Renew online at [hoorwa.org/about/members](http://hoorwa.org/about/members)

Renew by mail at: HooRWA  
PO Box 667, Williamstown, MA 01267

Watch for our spring renewal letter in your mailbox soon.



Wake-robin Trillium by Arianna Alexandra Collins



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*HooRWA is dedicated to the conservation, habitat restoration and enjoyment of the Hoosic River and its watershed, through education, research, and advocacy.*

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