



Promoting a fishable, swimmable Hoosic River!

Our Teams Are Out In the Watershed

It's summer and that means our water quality monitoring work is in full swing so as to better assess the River's health and wellbeing.



Bacteria monitoring is being attended to by our summer interns Zee Taylor of Williams College and Jakob Revett of MCLA. These two are also testing nitrogen in the River at several locations.

Our partnership with Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for chemical analysis at 4 sites is being attended to by our Three Amigos (aka board members) Thom Gentle, Wendy Hopkins, and Mark Merrill.

Temperature monitoring is spearheaded by HooRWA board member (and Rural Lands Stewardship Director) Dan Gura.

New this year we are partnering with Science on the Fly to obtain more data for chemical analysis at three sites with volunteers Kurt Gamari and Pamala Tworig from Hoosic River Revival.

Also new this year our president Andrew Kawczak is in the River taking samples for DNA testing to better understand who is contributing to bacteria counts when they are high.



SAVE THE DATE!

RiverFest

**Learn about & celebrate
the Hoosic River Watershed
with the Hoosic River Watershed Association
& Trout Unlimited Taconic Chapter**

**at The Spruces, Williamstown, MA
Saturday, August 17, 11am-2pm
River & Trailside Clean up 2-3pm
Rain date August 24.**



More details at hoorwa.org/event/riverfest/

In September we will conduct our annual benthic macroinvertebrate study.

Broadleaf Arrowhead

Latin Name: *Sagittaria latifolia*
This plant gets its name from the shape of its dark green leaves, that form an arrowhead. It also has a stalk of 3 petal white flowers, with yellow centers. They can grow up to 3 feet in water or wet soils.

Fun Fact: The tubers of this flower are edible, gaining it the nickname "duck potato" and "wapato" by the Cree.



Floodplain Flora Booklet

Intern Zee Taylor has been working on a little booklet of flora which help stabilize riverbanks. You can pick up a free copy at Wild Soul River, Cole Ave., Williamstown, MA or at events HooRWA tables.



A Berkshire connection in ‘forever chemicals’ fight

By Lauren Stevens, HoorWA Board Member

[This piece was originally published in The Berkshire Eagle](#) in June 2024, “THE VIEW FROM WHITE OAKS”, a regular environmental column for *The Berkshire Eagle*

Kris Hansen ground up Hoosic River crayfish for her 1991 honors thesis in chemistry at Williams College in order to determine where highly carcinogenic PCBs were getting into the river in North Adams. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection responded, Sprague Electric and later owners of the property cooperated, soil was carted away or capped and, while an advisory limiting eating of fish from the river continues, the level of PCBs has diminished markedly.

After grad school, Hansen worked in the environmental lab of the 3M Company. By sampling blood provided by the Red Cross, she determined that a forever chemical — perfluorooctane sulfonate— was in just about every person and beast. Instead of trying to remedy the situation as had happened in North Adams, 3M, which manufactured the substance, first ignored her then harassed her and accused her of disloyalty and then eventually forbade her working on PFOS, sidetracking her career.

Try these at the next spelling bee. The family of laboratory- made chemicals that resist breaking down includes perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), known as perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). They are ubiquitous in U.S. households, binding Teflon to pans, protecting leather and fabric from stains as Scotchgard, preventing your pizza box from getting soggy and as a soapy foam used by firefighters. Most of the product was sold by 3M to Dupont, and Dupont sold it to other companies for a variety of applications.

Meanwhile, back at the Hoosic watershed, in 2021 citizen activist Michael Hickey identified PFOA as polluting public and private water supplies in Hoosick Falls, N.Y., and, not long afterwards, the same substance appeared in the water in Bennington and North Bennington, Vt. Studies by David

Bond at Bennington College showed a swathe of the Green Mountains covered by airborne PFOA contamination. These findings traced to St. Gobain Performance Plastic plants in Hoosick Falls and nearby Vermont. St. Gobain, Dupont and associated companies, but not 3M initially, settled with the affected residents.

Some of Hansen’s work, unattributed, made its way to the Environmental Protection Agency, leading 3M to decide to stop manufacturing PFAS in 2000. The company announced the “surprising” discovery that PFOS had been found in blood banks.

Hansen, troubled at the substance’s presence in humans and animals, for many years nevertheless clung to 3M’s official position that the product wasn’t toxic.

She considered it a victory when 3M stopped its manufacture. She raised her twins. But in the 20

For your pleasure along the River
Click on “Recreation” at hoorwa.org
for activities to do along the Hoosic River.



Wild Edibles Walks series

- In partnership with Wild Soul River on 3rd Thursdays. Go to wildsoulriver.com & click on Events to register.
- In partnership with Offerings for Community Building on 4th Tuesdays, call The Clark Art Institute to register 413-458-2303

For a listing of all HoorWA programs go to:
HoorWA.org/calendar



Kris Hansen picks up trash on the banks of the Mississippi River near her home in Minneapolis.

years that passed since she first tested blood, it became apparent the substance was harmful. And, it turned out, 3M already knew that from animal tests it had conducted long before Hansen was employed there.

It became clear that these forever chemicals were forever toxic and that they accumulate in their host. She left 3M in 2022 and decided to tell the story of her work, beginning with an article by Sharon Lerner in The New Yorker magazine earlier this year.

According to that article, 3M produced 100 million pounds of PFAS before it stopped, so there is plenty of it still around. Although levels in humans are

decreasing, this past April the EPA ruled that no level was safe and that the chemicals were likely to cause cancer.

Hansen writes that the reaction to The New Yorker article has been “largely positive.” She was invited to speak this month on “workers’ rights and protections” at the National PFAS Meeting in Ann Arbor, Mich.

How was that? I reached out to her to find out.

“Good! It was a conference with both scientists and community groups so more energy than a typical science conference. I think PFAS is the next PCB for folks who value water,” she wrote.

2023 Annual Report is in and available online at HoorWA.org

Consider Serving on Our Board

We are looking for community members passionate about our Watershed and who want to help grow and diversify our board.

You can also serve on a committee.

We need folks who would like to help us with our water quality work and with public and school field trip activities.

Please contact office@hoorwa.org to explore further.

Many thanks to our business sponsors and grantors!

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- Offerings for Community Building
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Sponsorships are a great way to support HoorWA’s work. We would love to have YOU as a business sponsor in 2024! Please join us! Contact office@hoorwa.org for details.



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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.

www.hoorwa.org
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Find HooRWA on social media!



RiverFest!

Saturday, August 17, 11am-2pm at The Spruces, Williamstown, MA
Get to know the species who live in the River. Attend a workshop on fly tying, fly casting, macroinvertebrates, wild edible plants. Participate in a River-inspired poetry share and sing along. See demos on water quality monitoring.
This event is free and open to the public. Rain date is Saturday, August 24.

P.O. Box 667
Williamstown, MA 01267

HOOSIC RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

HooRWA

