



The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association Spring 2012
Clean Water Habitat Restoration River Access Watershed Recreation

HooRWA's 21st Annual *Riverfest!*

Taking Its Temperature

Join us at Williams College's Cole Field on Saturday, May 26th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. for a fun-filled day for the entire family as we celebrate the Hoosic River with river fun, children's activities, music, and great food!

Our traditional morning bird walk, led by Leslie Reed-Evans of the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, begins at 7:30 a.m. by Ephs Pond at Cole Field. Other outings scheduled later in the day include a river critter walk with Elena Traister of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; a wildflower and invasive plants walk with Pam Weatherbee, noted botanist; and a display of reptiles and amphibians with herpetologist Tom Tying.

Joining us for the first time this year is Fidel Moreno, a Native American culture educator and filmmaker from Healing Winds. Fidel will lead Riverfest visitors in learning about the history of tribes in the Northeast region and their special traditions. Storytelling, arts and crafts, dance,

drumming and participating in erecting a wigwam are all part of his program.

Your admission ticket also doubles as a raffle ticket for an Old Town kayak from Berkshire Outfitters, a mountain bike from the Spoke, or outdoor clothing from Nature's Closet. Also look for the bucket-style raffle of locally donated goods and services. River rafting will take place if water levels permit.

We are very grateful this year to have lead sponsorship from Williamstown Savings Bank, with additional support from Alton and Westfall Realty and the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies.

For further information, contact the HooRWA office at 413-458-2742 or office@hoorwa.org.

See you at Riverfest!



In mid-April, while the Hoosic was running low from a lack of spring runoff, a group of volunteers set temperature monitors in the Hoosic River above and below the stormwater chutes in North Adams. The monitors will assist the Hoosic River Revival Coalition (HRR) gather information on the effect the chutes have, if any, on water temperature. It is believed the concrete structures absorb heat during the day and release it into the water at night. This might raise water temperatures to levels too high to support coldwater fish species such as trout. With over 2 miles of concrete chutes in the city, fish could be without refuge during the high heat of summer.

The monitors will be checked monthly and removed in the fall. Interns from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts will then download the data, analyze it and develop a report for HRR. Look for

the results in the fall edition of the **Voice**. This project is funded by a grant from the Berkshire Environmental Endowment Fund.



Fidel Moreno of Healing Winds



Dick Schlesinger, Cindy Delpapa, and Caroline Scully mark a temperature monitor's location.



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Watershed Association**

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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

The Hoosic has so much to celebrate, and we are celebrating! Riverfest is Saturday, May 26. The Hoosic River Ride is Saturday, August 25. Our spring and summer excursions (see schedule elsewhere in this **Voice**) offer other ways of enjoying the river that runs through our lives.

New to Riverfest this year is Healing Winds, a Native American educational and cultural organization. They will be easy to spot at the small tepee.

Riverfest activities connect with the river, whether it be the river critters hunt, the wildflower/invasive species walk, the visiting reptiles and amphibians or the exhibits of river creatures under the big tent. And the day is dedicated to fun on and about the Hoosic, with food, music, drumming, and pony rides. And by all means, follow the river trail to see river art.

Other special activities are afoot. We are looking forward to hosting interns this summer, from Mount Greylock Regional High

School and Williams College, as well as community volunteers. One of their challenges will be to survey the length of the river in three states and possibly some tributaries. The survey will augment our monitoring program, which studies water quality at specific sites through time.

We continue our stream crossing surveys, planning to inspect and report on every bridge and culvert in the Massachusetts portion of the watershed as to whether it is adequate for storms present and to come. We are planning, as a follow up, a state of the river conference in the fall to examine the effects of Irene and how to mitigate damage from future storms.

With all this going on, I would be remiss not to remind you that government resources are tough to come by these days, that grants are stretched thin and that all our activities rely on the generosity of private donors. We thank you for your support.

Lauren

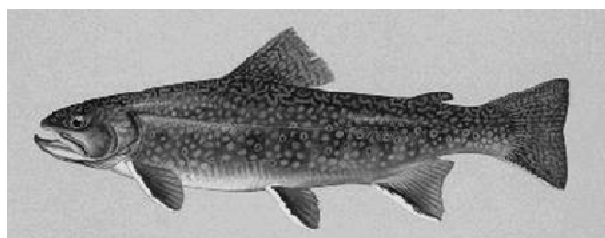
How are the fish doing?

MassWildlife's Western District Fisheries Biologist Dana Ohman presented a program on cold water streams in the watershed at the April meeting of the Taconic Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Dana reported that prior to Tropical Storm Irene, sampling studies of the coldwater tributaries that feed the Hoosic—such as the Penniman, Sweet and Money Brooks—documented a higher pH and rich insect diversity, leading to higher number of trout and slimy sculpins.

The MA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), with support from HoorWA, recently removed the Briggsville and Hoxie Brook dams. Dana reported that, by enabling fish to travel up- and downstream more easily (critical in times of heat stress or spawning), dam removal

is helping to increase trout populations in these streams as well.

DFW and volunteers from organizations like HoorWA also work to identify stream culverts that impede fish and wildlife passage. Maintaining stream continuity is a vital component of HoorWA's strategic plan. *What can you do?* If you enjoy fishing on the Hoosic or its larger tributaries, take a photo of the fish you catch and email it to us. We'll post it on our website. Your photos will help us track the fish species caught in the river and share your fishing success.





The Hoosic River Revival (HRR) Options Assessment Committee Update – by Judy Grinnell

HRR is working closely with our consultants, Milone & MacBroom, on several important criteria for revitalizing the Hoosic in North Adams. The primary one is called “the flood flow design criteria.” That is: When thinking about modifying the chutes to create access or enhance biodiversity, what historical and projected data will we use for the South Branch (coming in from Adams), the North Branch (coming in from southern Vermont), and for the Hoosic main stem (created at the confluence of the two branches just west of MASS MoCA)? Another item of discussion is the Milone &

MacBroom preliminary chute modification design options. At present, we are looking at seven options, each based on a multitude of factors such as cost, land requirements, potential for habitat, aesthetics, and public access. We expect to have an Options Assessment Report by late summer. We will then have another Community Conversation to discuss all facets of this report.

Check out our newly revised website: www.HoosicRiverRevival.org. Contact us anytime: HoosicRiverRevival@gmail.com or 413.212.2996

Hoosic River Greenway Construction Continues

The members of the Greenway steering committee (they’ve met nearly monthly since 2005) bring invaluable skills and talents to our shared task. Their efforts will show results this spring.

Mike Danforth, the committee’s volunteer civil engineer, is ably in charge of arranging for gates to be installed and a hard surface laid on the southern portion of the Greenway. (We celebrated that segment’s clearing and grading last December).

This field season’s construction, like last’s, is funded by a New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Recreational Trails Program grant. Greenway committee volunteer Maggie Casey, an experienced grant writer (and public health nurse), secured the grant for the Village.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway’s Greenway Conservancy program is funding the design and fabrication of two kiosks at either end of the southern section. (One will profile the 19th century-vintage waterworks, the other historic flood events in the Village.) Designer and new media specialist Ric Didonato, also on the committee, is guiding that effort.

Other volunteer committee members – Michael Batcher, Paula Kamperman, Charlie Kovage, Paul Miller, Matt Monahan, and Kevin O’Malley – are ecologists or Realtors or insurance pros or hydrogeologists or programmers or politicians. Everybody is **terrific!**



River Clean up Days

MCLA students joined Executive Director Steve McMahon and President Lauren Stevens on a cleanup of a stretch of the Hoosic River in North Adams in early May. Part of MCLA’s Community Day, thirteen students helped pull trash and debris from along the riverbank off Ashton Avenue. At the same time in Hoosick Falls, five volunteers from the Hoosick River Greenway Committee filled a pick-up truck 3 times! Another cleanup day is being planned for Saturday May 19 on the banks of the Hoosic behind the Cole Field in Williamstown. National Honor Society members from Mount Greylock Regional High School will partner with other

HoorWA volunteers from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Join us if you can and look for website notices of other river cleanup days along the Hoosic in Vermont and New York. Email us at office@hoorwa.org if you wish to nominate a stretch of river for a cleanup day or to volunteer.



MCLA students with some of their finds.

Hoosic River Watershed Association

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Save the Dates!
Riverfest May 26
The Hoosic River Ride!
August 25
HooRWA's State of the River
Conference, September 22 in
Williamstown.

Spring 2012



The Hoosic River Voice

Spring/Summer Excursions

8th Annual River Ride

Hoosic River, North Adams

Hosted by Hoosic River Revival

(HoosicRiverRevival.org or

HoosicRiverRevival@gmail.com or
413.212.2996)

Guided, one hour historical walks along the river. Meet at MASS MoCA under the trees

•Saturday, May 19 at 9:30 am;
(part of the Bike Fest)

•Saturday, June 16 at 11 am;

•Saturday, July 21 at 11 am;

•And every third Saturday at the same time, same place through October 20.

Wild Edibles Walk

Tuesday June 16, 6 pm-8pm
Tilldale Farm, Hoosick, NY

Join Russ Cohen, expert forager and author of "Wild Plants I Have Known and Eaten," for a walk on an organic farm near the Hoosic River and along an abandoned rail line to learn about several species of wild edibles.

Meet at the farm, on Tilley Lane just west of the traffic light at NYS Rte. 7 and County Rt. 95.

Mount Greylock

Saturday, July 21st

HooRWA president Lauren Stevens will lead his annual re-creation of Thoreau's hike up Mt. Greylock. Meet at the Notch Road gate to the Greylock Reservation at 10 am. Bring lunch and water. Dress appropriately for this 11-mile round trip.

This year, our annual 3-state touring event will start from Southern Vermont College, Bennington, VT and will include bike routes highlighting the beautiful Hoosic valley. Families are welcome, and everyone will especially enjoy the tour of Bennington's covered bridges. It all starts early in the morning on Saturday, August 25.

