



# The Hoosic River Voice

News from the Hoosic River Watershed Association Summer 2005

## New Life for Adams Flood Chutes?

### Funds Earmarked for Feasibility Study

Thanks to U.S. Representative John Olver, a budget bill recently passed by the House includes \$500,000 for the Army Corps of Engineers to do a feasibility study on restoring Hoosic River habitat in Adams, MA, by modifying the existing flood control structures. The funds are part of the FY 06 Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

The bill as a whole is a mixed bag from the watershed point of view, but the Hoosic may do well out of it. Nationwide, some destructive projects are funded and some wildlife programs are cut. Funds for projects like the flood chute restoration (from Section 1135) were actually cut from \$25

million to \$18 million. Even \$25 million is far short of the national need to modify Corps projects, which is why the Corps shut down an earlier study of the Hoosic flood chutes in 2004. Despite this, there's reason for hope. As written, the bill now lets Congress choose the projects to be funded, instead of letting the Corps set its own priorities. That's good news for a small but worthy river with a friend in Washington!

### “Win-win-win” Scenario

HooRWA is a leader among organizations and agencies that have long advocated modifying the Hoosic's flood control chutes. While flood protection remains a primary concern with everyone, it is

no longer necessary to have flood protection at the expense of wildlife habitat or access to the river for residents and tourists. Retaining flood protection while restoring habitat and riverfront is challenging but possible—and is a “win-win-win” situation. A feasibility study is one step toward bringing back a real river in place of a walled-off, well-engineered gutter.

*A feasibility study is one step toward bringing back a real river in place of a walled-off, well-engineered gutter.*

*The half-million-dollar question: How can we change this picture?*



### The Next Hurdles

First, of course, the Senate must pass the appropriations bill. Also, the Corps will only use 1135 funding for ongoing projects, not new ones. Is a project that was recently shut down for lack of funds an “ongoing” program, or will it be dismissed as “new”? Time will tell. Either way, HooRWA will continue to work for restoration. If you are interested in helping, contact us!

*For more information visit [www.hoorwa.org/](http://www.hoorwa.org/)*

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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.*

**Stephanie's Corner**

Now that summer gardening is in full swing, here are words of watershed-friendly gardening wisdom, most from the *Narrow River Handbook - A Guide to Living in the Watershed 2002*.

The trick is to foster healthy, resistant plants with good practices (rather than with pesticides and herbicides), reduce water use, and prevent pollutant runoff. Here's how:

**Use soil amendments** such as compost, aged cow manure, and leaf mold.

**Weed, water, and mulch.** Mulch reduces evaporation, insulates roots, and keeps down weeds.

**Give plants room.** Competing for space weakens plants, making them susceptible to disease and pests.

**Choose native plants.** Native plants require less maintenance and support local wildlife.

**Water early or late** in the day to reduce evaporation. Use drip or trickle irrigation rather than a sprinkler.

**Use physical pest and weed control.** Put out traps for slugs and

Japanese beetles. Pull weeds by hand and hoe. (An hour of weeding in June can save several hours in August)



**Avoid fertilizers high in soluble nitrogen.** They encourage tender, green growth at the expense of sturdiness and strength, and often leach from the soil before plants take absorb them. Buy fertilizers that are high in water-insoluble nitrogen. Organic fertilizers are generally high in water-insoluble nitrogen.

**Reduce your lawn.** This reduces the need for watering and herbicides. Also leave grass clippings on the lawn – this returns nutrients to your lawn and reduces yard waste.

**Leave a buffer.** If your property abuts a watercourse, leave as much natural vegetation along the banks as you can. This prevents runoff of pollutants into the water.

Happy gardening!

Stephanie Boyd, President



**Thoughts from Our Local, Global, Summer Intern**



After a year of circumnavigation, with "Rethinking Globalization: Nature, Culture, Justice" as my theme, I am returning

back to the US with water on my mind. Having studied ancient water harvesting techniques, alternative sanitation systems, pesticide contamination, and the politics of water abroad, I am returning to this community with fresh eyes, hoping to engage in local watershed issues.

Having grown up in Clarksburg, with the North Branch flowing through what used to be my family's dairy farm, being beside the Hoosic feels like coming home.

This summer, I am looking forward to exploring the watershed with northern Berkshire kids and visitors in many ways: aquatic insects and creative arts-oriented workshops, trail maintenance at Lower Linear Park, and splash hikes, clean ups and even bicycle fishing! We will be teaming up with Overland Travel, and forming new

partnerships with the Williamstown Youth Center, Williamstown Reading and Recreation Summer Program, and KUB (Kids Upward Bound) Academy, an adventure-based reading and math program. I also will be generating Hoosic-specific resources for teachers, planning for public events, and enhancing our website. Stay tuned, too, for reports from the *Headwaters to Stillwater Expedition* Eileen and I are scheming. Hope to see you on the river!

-Erin Blanchard, Williams '06





## Around the Watershed

### Water Quality Update

You can now look at the results of HooRWA's 2004 study of water temperature in the South Branch, on the HooRWA website. Here's the sneak preview: Between Cheshire and Adams, tributary brooks play a significant role in keeping the river cool and clean for trout and people alike. The take-home message? Keep those tribs shaded and undisturbed! The details are at [www/hoorwa.org/monitoring](http://www.hoorwa.org/monitoring).

### Members Mobilize in Hoosick Falls

River access. Habitat restoration. Rail trails. Riverfront improvement. Education programs. We'd like a magic wand to address these issues in every part of the watershed, but the truth is, it's local people who really get things started and make them happen. We'd like to salute some of those local people in and around Hoosick Falls, who recently started meeting to discuss river-related issues and work on them with HooRWA. Mark Revet, Alex

Brooks, Paul Miller, Kevin O'Malley, and Charlie Kovage discussed a number of potential projects that we will report on as they progress. If you are interested in being part of this group, contact Michael Batcher (518-686-5868 or [mbatcher@netheaven.com](mailto:mbatcher@netheaven.com)).

### A Promising Site in Pownal

Meanwhile, in North Pownal, another group of dedicated volunteers is working on the transformation of the former Pownal Tannery land (now the Strobridge Recreational Complex) into an open-space recreation area. The Pownal Recreation Implementation Committee, currently headed by Ken Norris, is facing the exciting (and large) task of planning the future use and management of this 700+ acre piece of largely forested riverside land. If you are interested in getting involved (especially if you are from Pownal!), please contact us, or get directly in touch with the Implementation Committee.



## Put a Trout on Every Plate

This isn't about eating fish. It's about taking care of the river. If you purchase an environmental license plate in Massachusetts, \$40 of the fee is a tax-deductible gift to the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET), which funds water-related environmental education and protection programs.

MET funds are critical for supporting HooRWA's education and recreation activities. A recently awarded grant of \$12,800 enables us to do everything from school outreach to Riverfest. And MET is one of the few remaining sources of state funds for river programs.

Won't you put a trout on *your* plate? It makes a BIG difference! There is more information at [www.MassEnvironmentaTrust.org](http://www.MassEnvironmentaTrust.org), or [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv), or at your local Registry.

THANK YOU!



## Join HooRWA and help build a better Hoosic Watershed!

I want to be a part of HooRWA and work for a biologically healthy, economically vibrant, and ecologically sustainable Hoosic River watershed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I'm interested in volunteering for HooRWA projects.

Enclosed are my membership dues for the calendar year 2005.

- Student \$20
- Family \$35
- Kingfisher \$50
- Great Blue Heron \$100
- River Steward \$500
- Other amount \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose an additional \_\_\_\_\_ contribution.

Please return to HooRWA, P.O. Box 667, Williamstown, MA, 01267

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***The Hoosic River Voice***

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## Summer Events With HoorWA



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### **July 16. Thoreau Hike. (co-sponsored with MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation)**

Follow the route of Henry Thoreau's 1844 hike up Mount Greylock, stopping at appropriate points for readings from his account of the trip. The round trip is a rigorous 11 miles and takes 5-6 hours. (Shuttle available for those hiking one-way only.) Meet at Notch Rd. entrance to Mt. Greylock Reservation. Bring stout shoes, lunch, and water. Dress for changes of weather and elevation. For info about start time, shuttle, etc., visit <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/events.htm> or call the Greylock Visitors Center, 413-499-4462.

**August 13. Reflections from the River.** Rivers inspire remarkable writing! Cool your dog days listening to these readings about being on, in, or near rivers. Members and friends of HoorWA will share favorite pieces from Annie Dillard, Edward Abbey, Loren Eiseley, Li Po, and others. Bring a reading to share! New material is welcome. 7 PM, Papyri Books, 49 Main St., N.Adams. For more info, contact HoorWA.

### **August 27th. Hoosic River Ride.**

*Main sponsor:*



the **Hoosic River Ride**  
August 27, 2005

Ride 31 or 62 miles (50 or 100 km) through MA, VT and NY! RAIN or SHINE. 8:30 start for long, 9:00 start for short loop. Start and finish at Mt. Greylock High School, 1611 Cold Spring Rd. (Route 7), Williamstown, MA. Register at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) or [www.bikereg.com](http://www.bikereg.com); or get printable forms at [www.hoorwa.org](http://www.hoorwa.org). Fee for both loops is \$35 before Aug. 1, \$45 after Aug. 1. See more info about T-shirt, buffet, goodies, at [www.hoorwa.org](http://www.hoorwa.org)!

  
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