



Musconetcong River News

Spring 2015

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Asbury, New Jersey

River-Friendly Farm Certification Program

By Grace Messinger

Have you seen this sign yet? You will start to see it more and more as you drive past the various farms in the Musconetcong Watershed over the next few years.

The first of its kind in the state of NJ, the goal of the River-Friendly Farm Certification Program is to improve the water quality in the Musconetcong and Raritan Rivers through increased implementation of farmland best management practices. Managed by North Jersey RC&D (RC&D) it's a voluntary certification program designed to help farms take a leading role in preserving the community's environmental health, and acknowledge farms that protect our shared natural resources through responsible management. Today, progressive farmers recognize environmental excellence and sustainable development as important components of their farming operation for the viability of the business into the future. Whether located on five or five hundred acres, farms have a wonderful opportunity to manage their land to protect the soil, water, and wild life resources, and become a model for others. Through certification, farms can become more economically sound while preserving and enhancing the local environment.

The program works with each individual applicant to plan, find funding for, and implement practices that help protect and enhance water quality in the northwestern and central NJ watersheds. Agricultural producers seeking certification are evaluated on their soil loss management, pesticide management (how much or how often is fertilizer or pesticide being used?) nutrient management (if animals are on the farm, how is the manure being handled? Are soils being

Grace Messinger, Executive Director & Jennifer Byrne- Ag. Outreach Specialist, North Jersey RC&D present farm owners Bernie and Sharon Beatty with certification award.



tested?) conservation buffers (are there trees and shrubs around bodies of water?) and irrigation water management.

Once the Program criteria are met on a property, the agricultural producer will receive recognition that they are being a good steward of the land and protecting our rivers and streams. Recognition includes signage and publicity, which can be a real draw for a direct marketing farm operation.

One of the most recently certified River-Friendly Farms and the first in the Musconetcong River Watershed, is the 150-acre BSB Holstein Farm, owned and operated by Bernie and Sharon Beatty.

"We can't afford our future if we don't invest in today," Bernie says. Over the past two decades, the Beatty's have greatly reduced their impact on the watershed and have improved the quality of the Musconetcong River and West Portal Brook. They have implemented strip-cropping, conservation tillage, cover cropping and crop rotation, which are practices that reduce soil erosion and protect the quality of the river while sustaining farm productivity.

RC&D is seeking more River-Friendly Farm applicants and is available to speak with any interested group or individuals

about the program. Please contact Jennifer Byrne at (908) 852-2576 ext. 126 or Jennifer.Byrne@nj.usda.gov. Applications and further information can be found on the River-Friendly website at njriverfriendlyfarm.org.

Free technical assistance is provided through the River-Friendly Farm Certification Program process for producers to implement best management practices that protect water quality and enhance efficiencies on-farm. Farms that become certified receive a plaque and a River-Friendly Certified Farm sign, and will also be recognized in local newspapers and events as excellent stewards of the land and protectors of our rivers and streams.

The North Jersey RC&D Council is a regional nonprofit organization serving Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren Counties in New Jersey. Through partnerships with municipal, state and federal agencies, as well as many private entities, the Council develops and manages programs and projects that promote the conservation and improvement of the region's resources and protect the area's quality of life. For more information, visit www.northjerseyrcd.org. 📞

The relationship between the Musconetcong River and the Morris Canal

By Chuck Gullage

Most of the dams along the Musconetcong River were constructed to create mill ponds to serve as sources of water power for the many mills on the river. Over time all but four of the mills were closed, abandoned, or converted to other uses. The Musconetcong Watershed Association has been actively involved in working with the dam owners and our partners to remove the obsolete dams. However, some of these dams were constructed for another purpose: to create reservoirs and ponds, or slack-water navigation routes for the Morris Canal, which was considered a technical marvel for its water-driven inclined planes to cross the northern New Jersey hills.

The Morris Canal was 102 miles long, running from Jersey City at what is now called Liberty State Park on the Hudson River to Port Delaware in Phillipsburg on the Delaware River. The canal opened in 1831 and was abandoned in 1922. Within a few years of abandonment much of the canal was destroyed. Locks were disassembled and filled in, machinery at the canal planes was scrapped and portions of the canal bed itself were filled in. Today the Morris Canal Working Group is working together with the state, counties, municipalities and many private owners of former canal property to preserve the former canal right-of-way to create a public greenway across the state.

Many people don't realize the Morris Canal and the Musconetcong Watershed/River were closely linked. In 1831 the Morris Canal Company purchased the Brooklyn Forge and Dam on the south end of Lake Hopatcong and replaced it with a higher dam, raising the level of the lake to 12 feet to convert the lake to a reservoir for the canal. This made Lake Hopatcong the largest reservoir and highest point along the canal. The lake was then connected to the main portion of the Morris Canal via a short feeder canal allowing water to flow east and west in the canal. In addition, the canal company constructed a dam on the Musconetcong in Stanhope just downstream of Lake Hopatcong to create Lake Musconetcong. This lake served as another canal reservoir and also a slack-water navigation route for a short portion of the canal just below Port Morris.

During the active years of the canal, on a daily basis you would see canal boats transiting the lake pulled by mules along the crescent shaped towpath above the water. Today if you use any of the popular web-based mapping programs you'll be able to see the canal bed and towpath submerged in Lake Musconetcong.

Morris Canal Plane 2 West is located about a mile west of Lake Musconetcong on Plane Street in Stanhope. At the base of Plane Street is another dam used to raise



photo by Bill Leavens

Aerial view of the remains of the Morris Canal Towpath across Lake Musconetcong

the level of the Musconetcong River to create a short slack-water link between the bottom of the canal plane and the main body of the canal. This dam has been lowered, but still exists along with its concrete towpath bridge.

From Netcong the canal winds its way through the woods running along the Morris and Essex branch of New Jersey Transit and Route 80 to Plane 4 West, just above Waterloo Village. The canal company had constructed another dam on the river on the west end of the village to raise the water level to create another pond and slack-water area in Waterloo Village. Canal boats descending the plane entered the slack-water portion of the river, passed through Guard Lock 3 and continued west on the canal behind Smith's Store.

The dam at Saxton Falls created another pond and slack-water area called Saxton Lake for canal boat navigation. Boats would continue West on the canal along Waterloo Road to an area known as Guinea Hollow, the site of the former Elsie's Tavern. They would pass through Lock 4 West and enter the slack-water lake down to Saxton Falls. From there the canal boats would pass through Guard Lock 5 West and continue in the main portion of the canal towards Hackettstown.

Although the canal has been abandoned for almost 100 years, all of these Morris Canal points of interest along the Musconetcong River still exist. Some have been preserved and are open to the public for exploring. If there's enough interest, MWA can plan an excursion of these sites this Summer or Fall. Adventurers would have to drive to each of these locations, but at each location has interesting hiking opportunities. 🍷

MUSCONETCONG

WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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Asbury, NJ 08802
908-537-7060
www.musconetcong.org

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Run for the River Celebrates Crystal Anniversary – 15 Years!



Runners take off at the starting line

By Val Thorpe

Sunday, May 3, 2015 marked the 15th Anniversary of the Musconetcong Watershed Association’s annual “Run for the River.” This 4-mile course attracted nearly 200 runners and walkers, and many more friends and members of the community who came out to cheer runners along on the first brilliantly beautiful day of spring. The festivities began with free tethered balloon rides, compliments of Unity Bank of Washington, providing spectacular views of the Village of Asbury. Once again donating his time and DJ talents, Dave Werkhiser of “Davey and the

Wave Runners” entertained the crowd and motivated our participants.

Although the heat hit early in the day, it did not deter our enthusiastic runners from giving it their all. Coming in first overall in the male category once again was Chris Martalus. Chris completed the 4-mile course at 22:43 with a pace of 5-minute, 41-second miles, beating last year’s course time of 23:14. Rebecca Civrczak placed first overall in the female category coming in at 31:38 with a pace of 7-minute, 55-second miles. Chris and Rebecca proudly accepted their medal and embroidered fleece blanket, commemorating their

achievements.

While participants rehydrated and noshed on bagels donated by Muheisen’s of Washington, medals were presented to the top 12 male and female age categories to honor their accomplishments. Following the awards ceremony participants had a chance to slip on the t-shirts they earned and participate in a free drawing which included cash, massages, a seafood dinner for two, and the highly anticipated big boxes of M&M candies. Once again, MWA member and owner of Countryside Studios, Adreinne Kaczynski, donated the grand prize valued at \$450. In all, 39 participants walked away very happy thanks to our generous donors. The complete list of the prizes can be found on our website at www.musconetcong.org.

Now is the time to mark your calendar for the 16th Annual Run for the River, taking place on Sunday, May 1, 2016! And please join us in thanking our sponsors, some new, and many who have been dedicated supporters for several years. This event would not happen without them! We hope you will consider visiting all of our sponsors and donors when you shop. ☺

Gold Sponsors

- Borealis Compounds Inc.
- Engineering & Land Planning
- Hawk Pointe Golf Club
- Princeton Hydro
- Unity Bank
- Washington Animal Hospital

- Musconetcong Sewerage Authority
- Paddler's Cove
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- STS, Hackettstown
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- Warrenside Tavern

Silver Sponsors

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- Four Paws Playground
- George's Plumbing
- Gullage Family
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- Hunterdon Orthopedic Institute
- Dr. Sally Jorgensen
- M&E Engineers, Inc.

Supporters

- Amy S. Greene Environmental Consultants
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Drawing Donors

- Countryside Studios
- Dunkin Donuts, Rt. 31
- Farmview Golf Club
- Gibson's Gym
- Greens & Beans Floral Studio
- Hong Kong Palace Restaurant
- Hunterdon Health & Wellness
- Lawrence Pharmacy

Refreshments

- Muheisen's
- ShopRite of Hunterdon County

Volunteers hit the Musky for the Annual River Clean-up



Boy Scout Pack #63 at the River Resource Center

Thank you, Mother Nature, for granting our request for a dry, warm day for the MWA's Annual River Clean-up on April 11th. After a very cold and wet start to the season, nearly 300 enthusiastic participants were able to comfortably don the complimentary bright t-shirts, commemorating their clean-up efforts.

Armed with trash bags, work gloves, water and snacks, scouts, community groups, families and concerned individuals joined forces to clean the Musconetcong Watershed's riverbanks and surrounding areas the entire length of the Musky, from Lake Hopatcong to Reigelsville.

Participants picked up trash in Warren, Hunterdon, Sussex and Morris Counties collecting about 250 bags of trash and recycling, 50 tires, and some larger items like patio furniture, couches, a toilet, and even a car windshield and front dashboard. These efforts did not go unnoticed. Back at the River Resource Center in

Asbury for a post-cleanup barbeque, participants shared stories of residents and anglers stopping to thank them for their efforts.



Trash collected by the Old Tri-County Fire Dept. location.

It was great to see familiar faces who make a point each year to avail themselves for this important event. We also made some new friends of the river this year.

Along with our clean-up crews, location leaders, and event volunteers, the MWA would like to give special thanks to: Mohawk Canoe Club and NJ Trout Unlimited for their special efforts in and along the Musconetcong River, and Brian Cowden for managing several sites delivering supplies and directing teams... Bill Leavens, Rick Ege and Oliver Grimsdall for the thankless job of hauling trash bags in their personal vehicles from along the roadsides to the pre-determined trash pickup locations... Emily Susko from HOPE (Helping Our Planet Earth) club at Hackettstown High School for collecting and donating snacks and water... Hunterdon County DPW for donating trash bags and gloves, and the following groups for hauling the trash away for us:

Warren County Mosquito Commission, Hunterdon County Solid Waste, Warren County Road Dept., Byram Twp. Department of Public Works, NJ State Park Services, and Republic Services. 🌱

We're Social! Follow us on:



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Meetup

Musconetcong River Area Outdoor Activities

SAVE THESE DATES!

July and August: Meet the River Programs 10:00 am-12:00 pm Bring your children with us down to the river's edge to splash in the water. They'll turn over some rocks and maybe be lucky enough to catch a frog! Children will need to wear water shoes, old sneakers, or sandals with a strap on back. No bare feet or flip-flops please! Parents must be present but do not need to get wet - there will be plenty of volunteers on hand. We will not be swimming, just getting putting our feet in the water. Choose from 5 dates:

Saturday, July 25 – Location TBD • Saturday, August 1 – Bloomsbury
Wednesday, August 5 – Bloomsbury

MWA members are free, non-members are asked to donate \$4/child, max \$16/family.

Tuesday July 14: River Talk “Moth Night” 8:30 pm In celebration of National Moth Week, president of the North Jersey Butterfly Club, Wade Wander, will shed a light on these fascinating creatures with an interactive presentation at the River Resource Center, 10 Maple Ave., Asbury. This River Talk starts and ends later than our usual talks to allow time for our special guests to arrive. Come learn why moths are among the most diverse and successful organisms on earth with an estimated 150,000 to 500,000-plus species, ranging in size from a pinhead to the hand of an adult. MWA members are free, non-members are asked to donate \$3 per person (\$12 limit per family). To register contact Kyle Richter at kyle@musconetcong.org or call 908-537-7060.

Saturday, August 1: MWA Volunteer Appreciation BBQ 11:00 am-2:00 pm Join the MWA Board and Staff for a special Volunteer Appreciation BBQ. See details in the box below.

Saturday, August 15: Night Hike with the Musconetcong Watershed Association 9:00-10:00 pm Save the date for this night hike! More details to follow shortly... To pre-register, contact Kyle at 908-537-7060 or email kyle@musconetcong.org

Feeling Lucky?

The MWA Kayak Raffle is Back!

Purchase your ticket for an Old Town Heron 9 kayak - perfect for local rowers offering easy maneuverability and high stability on flatwater and slow-moving rivers. Prize package includes Carlisle Paddle and Extrasport Life Vest. Total package value: \$500. Purchase your \$10 ticket online at www.musconetcong.org under “What’s Happening,” in person at the River Resource Center: 10 Maple Ave., Asbury, NJ, or at Paddlers Cove: 384 E. Washington Ave, Washington, NJ. Call MWA at 908-537-7060 with questions. The winning ticket will be pulled at the 16th Annual MWA Run for the River event on Sunday, May 1, 2016. You do not need to be present to win. Good luck!

MWA Volunteers Recognition BBQ at the RRC!

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. – Winston Churchill

Where would we be without our amazing volunteers? You happily share your time and talents to assist us with our many projects, programs and events. Now it’s our time to give back to you. Please join us on Saturday, August 1, 11am-2pm at the River Resource Center: 10 Maple Avenue, Asbury, NJ. Allow our grateful board and staff to cook and serve you lunch. Take a relaxing paddle in the mill pond – we’ll provide the kayaks and life preservers. Please call Val at 908-537-7060 or email val@musconetcong.org for more information. Remember, August 1st is all about YOU!

For more information or to register for any of these events, please email val@musconetcong.org or call 908-537-7060, unless otherwise noted. Also find us on Facebook or visit our website at www.musconetcong.org. MWA River Resource Center (RRC) is located at 10 Maple Ave., Asbury, NJ

The Musconetcong Watershed Association

The Musconetcong River Valley is rich in scenery, history, natural resources, and recreational opportunities. The river rises up in Lake Hopatcong - New Jersey's largest spring-fed lake - and is shadowed by 1,000-foot Highland ridges and slices through a deep, limestone river valley, flowing swiftly to the Delaware River. Along the way the "Musky" passes by state and county parks, bustling towns, vital industries, historic villages, and some of the most productive farmland in the state.

The Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) is a non-profit organization formed in 1991 to protect and enhance the Musconetcong River and its related resources through advocacy and environmental education programs, scientific research and river restoration projects. The MWA scope spans the 158 square-mile Musconetcong River Watershed, and includes portions of four counties, and all or portions of 25 municipalities. The Musconetcong River became part of the National Wild and Scenic River System in 2006.

MWA members are part of a network of individuals, families and organizations who care about the Musconetcong River and its watershed. They are kept informed about issues concerning the river and its related resources by receiving quarterly issues of the *Musconetcong River News*.



PO Box 113
Asbury, NJ 08802

MWA Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the Musconetcong Watershed Association in which I will receive membership benefits and publications. I have enclosed a check payable to **MWA** for the membership category listed below:

- \$20 Student
- \$30 Family
- \$50 Supporter
- \$100 Sustainer
- \$250 Steward
- \$500 Champion
- \$1,000 + Life Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Musconetcong River News

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