



Musconetcong River News

Spring 2017

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Asbury, New Jersey

MWA Celebrates Silver Anniversary

*By: Karen Doerfer,
Communications & Administrative Coordinator*

It was a rainy afternoon, but that didn't dampen the spirits of board, staff, volunteers and members who attended MWA's Annual Member's Meeting which was held on Friday, March 31. As with every Annual Meeting that MWA hosts, there is always a feeling of celebration in the room. Each year, attendees are able to listen and reflect on accomplishments from the prior year while also getting to be the first to know what is in store for the coming year. However, this year was of particular cause for celebration as it was MWA's 25th year as an established non-profit organization!



From L to R: Tish Lascelle, MWA; Eric Schradling, US Fish & Wildlife; Alan Hunt, MWA; Geoff Goll, Princeton Hydro; Kerry Kirk Pflugh, NJDEP

To mark this momentous occasion, three speakers were invited to give their first-hand experiences as MWA partners. Eric Schradling of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kerry Kirk-Pflough of NJ Department of Environmental Protection and Geoff Goll of Princeton Hydro each recalled unique stories of dam removals and other activities along the watershed all the way from the lake community down to the Delaware River Confluence.

Founding Board Member, Richard Cotton also recalled MWA's early days, and Executive Director Alan Hunt gave us a preview of things to look forward to. MWA plans to remove an obsolete building in Asbury, NJ and open the land up to the public as a park. He also men-

tioned the Warren Glen dam as being our next target toward restoring the Musconetcong River as a more free-flowing body of water.

The evening was finished with celebratory cake, more mingling amongst friends and peers and the most popular quote of the night, "Here is to another 25 years!"

2017 Water Quality Report: things are heating up

*By: Nancy Lawler,
Water Quality Program Coordinator*

The Musconetcong is one of the cleanest rivers in New Jersey! But data collected by our volunteer River Watchers shows that summer water temperatures are increasing. In the past year, we've recorded some of the highest temperatures ever—in nine years of river monitoring.

Higher temperatures are a problem for fish and other river life. Warm water doesn't hold as much oxygen as cool water, so river inhabitants like native brook trout that need high amounts of oxygen don't do well in water temperatures above 68°F. In addition, bacteria reproduce more quickly in warm water and pollutants can form toxic compounds—creating an unhealthy place to live for people, pets and livestock.

What can you do? You can help by creating more shade by replacing some lawn area with native shrubs and trees—even tall grasses and perennials can cool the ground better and help reduce the temperature of water runoff from your property. Where can you get those native plants? Our Native Plant Sale (see pages 4 and 5) or ask your local nursery for suggestions!

For the latest information on the health of the Musconetcong, see the 2017 Water Quality Report Card at www.musconetcong.org.

Executive Director Reflections

Gary Pohorely, Executive Director 1992-1997

In the early days, we were six concerned citizens who met in Richard Cotton's living room to try to figure out how to create a watershed association. The first step was becoming a 501(c)(3), and that was accomplished with the pro bono assistance of attorney, Howard Apgar. We moved from living rooms and found free meeting space at the Franklin Township municipal building, and then settled in at the Asbury Methodist Church.

MWA has come a long way since then, and it is gratifying to see the

organization flourishing. I am optimistic for the future—given the dedication of the staff, trustees and members.

John Brunner, Executive Director 1997-2004

I first came to know the MWA, its members, and the river itself in 1993, just a year after MWA was founded. At the time, I was a staff member with Delaware Riverkeeper Network and oversaw a water quality monitoring network along the entire middle Delaware River, with emphasis on the major tributaries.

MWA signed up to conduct water quality monitoring at a few stations along the Musconetcong closer to the Delaware River confluence. I worked with several volunteers and attended a few Board of Director meetings. As an avid canoeist, I couldn't resist exploring the river, and over time, it became one of my favorite paddling destinations.

In 1997, I came on board to serve as MWA's Executive Director and enjoyed seven of the very best years of my watershed career. The Wild and Scenic River Study was just getting underway, and I brought to bear several years' experience working on the Lower Delaware River Wild and Scenic Study. The study was all about meeting people throughout the watershed. Field tours around every part of the watershed took place by air, land and canoe. Copious research was conducted to document

the river's many natural, cultural and recreational assets. Interviews and tours with the likes of Richard Cotton, Bill Leavens, Ed Sekula and many others help complete the story of why this small river was indeed eligible for the nation's 'Hall of Fame' for rivers. This information was distilled and articulated in the Musconetcong Eligibility and Classification Report, the first step required by the National Park Service was fulfilled.

Many other projects were going on during the study. We received a grant from NJDEP to produce the state's first Waterway Trail Guide which turned out to be one of the most enjoyable projects. With assistance from the Mohawk Canoe Club, we paddled the river between Byram and Bloomsbury three times to identify river conditions and GPS all the river access points, as well as hazards such as dams.

A transformational development occurred when the Riddle Family donated the Asbury Mill and the adjoining property to MWA. I worked with the Heritage Conservancy of Doylestown, PA to produce a report that envisioned the River Resource Center and Asbury Mill as the hub of recreational and cultural activities within the middle section of the Musconetcong Valley.

Finally, with the Wild and Scenic Study completed, the next step was to develop a River Management Plan, the centerpiece of which would be the removal of most of the obsolete dams that choked the river. As luck would have it, MWA was asked by the owners of the Pumphouse Restaurant in Hackettstown about taking ownership of a property across the river, along with ownership of the dam which had recently been deemed an unsafe, medium hazard dam. Thus



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www.musconetcong.org

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Past Executive Directors from L to R: Beth Styler Barry,
John Brunner and Gary Pohorely

Reflections

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Executive Director Reflections *Continued from page 2*

began MWA's first partnership with Trout Unlimited, American Rivers and Princeton Hydro to remove the Gruendyke Mill Dam. Up the road from the Pumphouse, MWA partnered with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to install an expansive riparian buffer project along a small trout producing stream that runs directly in front of the M&M Mars Plant.

Working alongside all the great Musconetcong Watershed people enriched my life in so many ways. Enduring friendships were made, lessons were learned in every corner of the watershed and along every mile of New Jersey's greatest river. It has been gratifying to watch MWA continue to grow and accomplish so much over the past several years and the future looks even brighter, thanks to all the great people who care about the river and its watershed.

Beth Styler Barry, **Executive Director 2004-2016**

Landmark anniversaries provide a great time to reflect on accomplishments. My family took its first MWA membership in 1993, and I became staff in 2000. I served as the Executive Director from 2004 through 2016, so I have had a front row seat to a lot of change and growth.

From the beginning in 1992, staff worked from home and board meetings took place in homes, municipal buildings and churches which is where I began my position. In 2006, after more than a decade of studies and outreach to secure local required support, the Musky became part of the Wild and Scenic River System. Then, in 2009, the MWA River Resource Center opened its doors in a donated, restored building. The headquarters received the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Platinum Certification in 2010.

Over the years, the MWA Watershed Education Program took root and it is now in numerous elementary schools, high schools and a handful of colleges and universities. Camp Musky began in 2010 and continues to grow. The River Watcher program, began in 2007, grew out of the early commitment to monitor the quality of the Musconetcong River

and its tributaries. The MWA began to really get its feet wet as it led five dam removals, among the first in the state of New Jersey, between 2008 and 2016. Even though I have passed the torch as Executive Director, I look forward to working with MWA on future projects and am excited for the future of this organization.

Alan Hunt, Executive Director **2016-Present**

Every time I walk into the River Resource Center, it feels like home. As a native to the area, I truly appreciate MWA's focus on water quality monitoring, outreach and education, and dam removals. With the Asbury Mill restoration, we are deepening our role in cultural resource preservation and historic interpretation of the region. Our watershed's identity is based on its natural, scenic and historic landscape—which are resources to protect, conserve and pro-



Alan Hunt, Current Executive Director

mote. I hope we can explore together how conserving these resources can also promote the region's sustainable economic development, for recreation and tourism, and to inspire others to do as we have done, with restoring historic structures and giving them new purpose. ☪

MWA goes to Capitol Hill

By: Alan Hunt, Executive Director

Congress provides the funding for the Partnerships Wild & Scenic River Program. The Musconetcong is one of thirteen rivers nationally that receives funding to implement the National Wild & Scenic River Program. Each year before Congress proposes the federal budget, we update our three Representatives and two Senators about last



L to R: Alan Hunt, Rep. Leonard Lance, Bill Leavens

year's activities and what we've got planned for the coming year. Bill Leavens, Board Secretary and Alan Hunt, Executive Director, met with Representative Lance (NJ-7), who has been a strong supporter of the Musconetcong (in photo). He was the only Representative from our watershed, and one of two Republicans, to join with 36 other Representatives in a joint funding request for the Partnership Wild & Scenic River Program. The MWA also met with staff from Representatives Gottheimer (NJ-5) and Frelinghuysen (NJ-11), and staff from Senators Menendez and Booker. Aside from the Wild & Scenic program, MWA also discussed the critical role the NJ Field Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service plays in securing funding and approvals for dam removals. MWA also participated in congressional meetings with the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, which advocates for the newly authorized Delaware River Basin Restoration Program, which would provide targeted support for watershed restoration projects including those undertaken by the MWA. ☪

April Showers Bring May Flowers...

By: Kyle Richter, Watershed Programs Coordinator

And those flowers would look great in a garden designed to capture and treat all of the rain from those showers. These gardens are known as “Rain Gardens.” Rain Gardens are a landscaped, shallow depression that captures, filters and infiltrates stormwater at the source—before it becomes runoff. Rain Gardens are typically filled with plants, native to the area, to increase habitat and reduce maintenance. Rain gardens are a highly functional way to help promote better water quality, and they are also gardens that are an attractive part of your yard and neighborhood. Rain garden benefits include: reduced flooding, removal of pollutants, replenishment of ground water, native plant habitat for wildlife and enhanced beauty!

North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council received funding from the NJDEP Water Resource Management Division of Water Monitoring and Standards, Bureau of Environmental Analysis,

Annual Plant Sale, Now Extended!

*By: Tish Lascelle, President,
MWA Board of Directors*

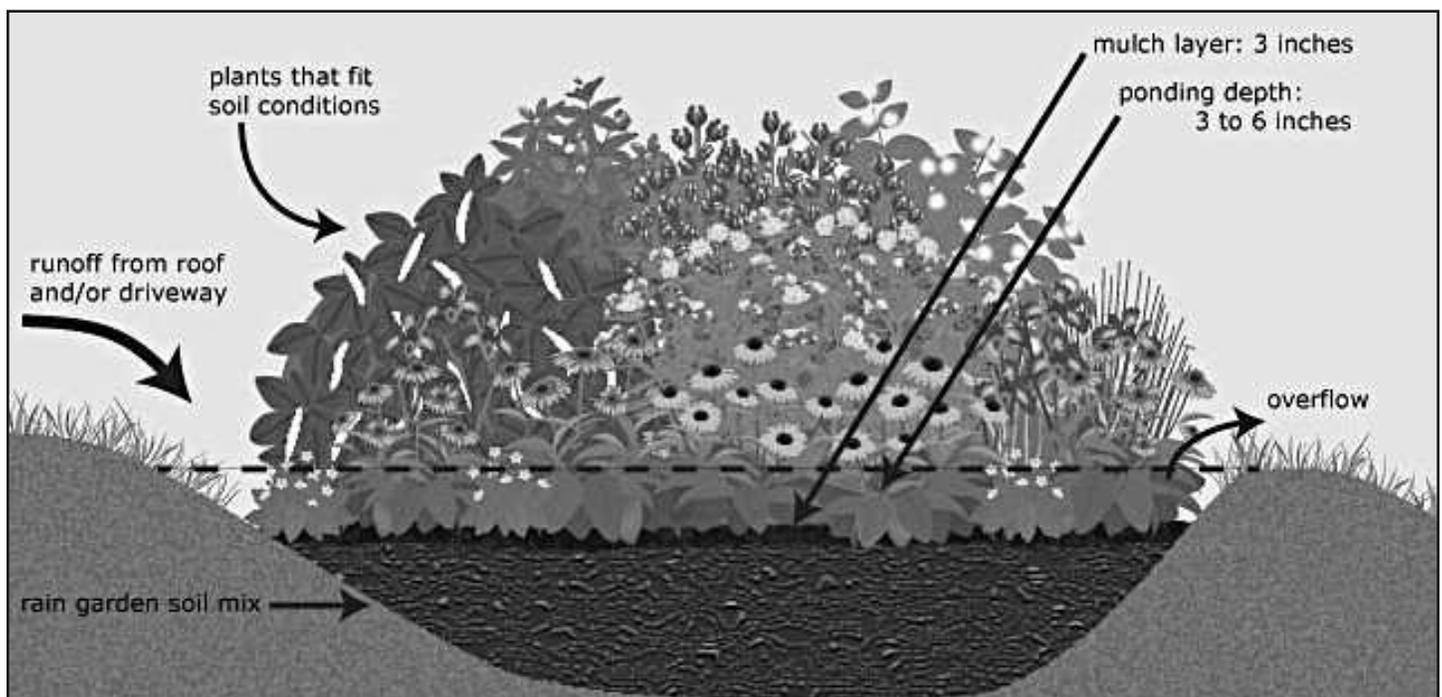
On Saturday and Sunday, April 29 and 30, MWA will hold its annual Native Plant Sale. Held rain or shine, from 9 am ‘till 2 pm each day, the sale is attended by Master Gardeners who can help homeowners select the right plants for their unique yards. At our River Resource Center, visitors will see how the MWA incorporated only native plants on our property. Of course, it’s early spring and hard to imagine, but it’s one of the finest local displays of wildflowers and wildlife as summer emerges.

Native plants are not only beautiful, but they are essential to our ecosystem, providing us with many benefits.

According to the NJ Invasive Species Strike Team, the state is home to 2,000 native plants, 327 migrant and resident birds, 90 mammals, 44 reptiles, 35 amphibians, 421 marine and freshwater fish, 180 damselflies and dragonflies and 151 butterflies. This list includes 424 threatened and endangered species! Planting natives will ensure the survival of our wildlife. Native plants have the genetic variability to fight disease and survive droughts. Because they require little or no need for fertilizers or pesticides, using them in your yard means less chemicals, less need to water and less contaminated water run-off that could reach your drinking water system. Native plants provide benefits to the river, to wildlife and to people. ☺

Restoration and Standards (BEARS) 319h grant program, to provide assistance and funding to install rain gardens for free to residences and business in the Lower Musconetcong Watershed. We will schedule a time to visit your property, work with a professional landscape architect to determine the size, shape and location for

your garden, review garden options, and answer any questions along the way! If you would like more information on rain gardens or are interested to see if you qualify for a free rain garden, please contact Kyle Richter at kyle@musconetcong.org or call (908) 574-5368. ☺



SAVE THESE DATES!

Saturday, April 29 & Sunday, April 30: Native Plant Sale from 9:00 am-2:00 pm. MWA has extended our Native Plant Sale to two days! Don't miss this extra opportunity to shop native at a great price!

Sunday, May 7: 17th Annual Run for the River. Registration at 8:30 am behind Asbury Fire Co. Walk or Run a four-mile loop in the scenic Musconetcong Valley. Awards are given to top runners followed by a FREE raffle for all participants. Please visit www.musconetcong.org/runfortheriver.php for more information or to register.

Sunday, May 14: Mother's Day Paddle, meet at 10:00 am. Hampton to Bloomsbury. Kick off the summer paddling season at MWA's annual Mother's Day Paddle! Email kyle@musconetcong.org for more information or to register.

Saturday, May 27: Stephen's State Park hike, meet at 10:00 am. Hikers will learn the art of Geocaching as we hike the trail and look for treasures along the way! Email kyle@musconetcong.org for more information or to register.

Saturday, June 10: Point Mountain hike, meet at 10:00 am. Our first Point Mountain Hike of the year! Please join us as we hike the trail in the warmer weather. Email kyle@musconetcong.org for more information or to register.

Sunday, June 18: Father's Day Paddle, meet at 10:00 am. Hampton to Bloomsbury. Email kyle@musconetcong.org for more information or to register.

Saturday, July 8, July 22, August 5, August 19: Meet the River, meet at 10:00 am. A preschool-age program to orient kids with the river. Sessions take place at Point Mountain or River Resource Center. Email kyle@musconetcong.org for more information or to register.

MWA Kayak Raffle is Back!

Purchase your ticket to win a Perception Sound 10.5 kayak—perfect for local paddlers. This kayak offers easy maneuverability and high stability on flatwater and slow-moving rivers. This prize package also includes a Harmony life vest and Bending Branches Whisper paddle. The total package value is approximately \$550. Purchase your \$10 ticket online at www.musconetcong.org under "Events" in person at the River Resource Center (10 Maple Ave., Asbury, NJ), or at Paddlers Cove (218 Route 31 South, Washington, NJ). Call MWA at (908) 537-7060 with questions. The winning ticket will be pulled at our Run for the River on May 17, 2017. You do not need to be present to win. Good luck!

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Meetup
Musconetcong
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For more information or to register for any of these events, please email karen@musconetcong.org or call (908) 537-7060, unless otherwise noted. MWA River Resource Center (RRC) is located at 10 Maple Avenue, 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 1992 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 26 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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