



# Musconetcong River News

Winter 2016

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Asbury, New Jersey

## MWA River Watchers Go Hi-Tech!

*By: Nancy Lawler,  
Water Quality Coordinator*

The MWA Water Quality program has received a grant from the Watershed Institute to measure changes in river flow downstream of Lake Musconetcong and how these changes affect river health and those living downstream. Our River Watcher Citizen Science Program will build, install and maintain high-tech electronic sensors at the bottom of the river. These sensors will record flow data continuously, in real time and will send that information to our website for the public to view. MWA is receiving project assistance from Raritan Valley Community College engineering students under direction of Peter Stupak and generous technical assistance and hardware from American Sensor Technologies, Inc. which is located in Mt Olive, NJ as well as Stroud Water Research Center in Avondale, PA.

MWA is hoping this project provides much needed information about how changes in flow from the Lake Musconetcong Dam impacts downstream river water levels and quality. Anyone interested can observe how managing flow from

Lake Hopatcong affects river flow at the USGS gage just downstream of the outflow from the dam at [www.waterdata.usgs.gov/usa/nwis/uv?01455500](http://www.waterdata.usgs.gov/usa/nwis/uv?01455500). The next closest gage is at Bloomsbury, approximately 40 miles downstream—there is no gage downstream of the dam at Lake Musconetcong that records when water level is adjusted there. This means that when there is a large water release from Lake Musconetcong, communities downstream are often surprised by the fast rise in water level in the river. The same is true when flow is reduced—individuals and businesses whose activities depend on sufficient flow might run into a difficult time.

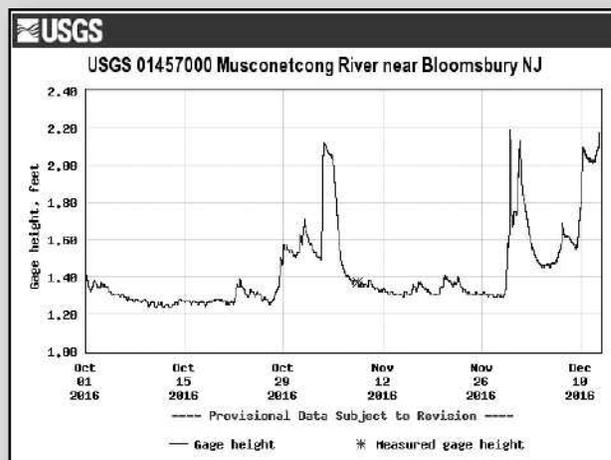
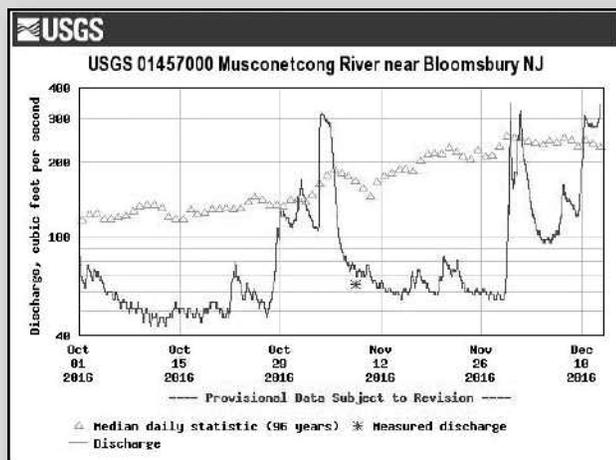
A stream gage downstream of Lake Musconetcong would solve the problem, but it traditionally costs \$25,000 to install a new gage. The maintenance costs then run approximately \$16,000 per year. These sensors and other equipment that MWA is now able to build will be a fraction of this cost!

If you would like to learn more about how you can participate in this and other projects, please email MWA's Water Quality Coordinator, Nancy Lawler at [nancy@musconetcong.org](mailto:nancy@musconetcong.org). ☺

## River Running Below Average

### Last Quarter Water Levels for October – December, 2016

The first graph represents discharge measured in cubic feet per second. Discharge is the amount of water flowing through the designated area at a given time. The second graph represents the gage height measured in feet. These measurements have been taken on the Musconetcong River near Bloomsbury, NJ. For live updates, visit the “Etc” tab of our website: [www.musconetcong.org](http://www.musconetcong.org). ☺



# Welcome, Alan!



Alan Hunt,  
Executive Director

MWA welcomes new Executive Director, Alan Hunt. Alan was a previous member of MWA's Board of Trustees and has a passion for the work being done in our watershed. He comes to MWA with seven years' experience working in the non-profit sector and several years of experience managing his own consulting business as well as seasonal employment with the National Park Service and Hunterdon County Park System.

Alan studied Environmental Studies at Bates College and Environmental Management at Duke University. He later went to receive his Ph.D. from Newcastle University in England where he studied Rural Development.

Growing up on a family farm along the Musconetcong River, Alan is a local resident in the Musconetcong watershed and has a history of interest in the health of

the river and its surrounding landscape. Alan takes over as Executive Director after the recent departure of former Executive Director, Beth Styler Barry. Beth, along with the current staff and board of trustees, anticipates a smooth transition and is excited to see how Alan's strengths will benefit our already successful organization. ☺

## Farmer Outreach Spotlight: Bernie Beatty

By: Nick Zemplachenko,  
Conservation Coordinator,  
North Jersey RC&D

Recently, North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) staff set out into the field to conduct site visits and interview farmers on their successes from this year's aerial cover cropping efforts and to discuss their conservation practices in general. RC&D has chosen to highlight farmers who exemplify the kind of practices that can be extrapolated across the region as true soil conservation heroes.

One such farm, nestled down a half mile-long lane in the Musconetcong Valley, is the Beatty Farm. Owner and operator, Bernie Beatty, has been farming this area a long time now. The Beatty Farm was once a booming dairy farm and a past awardee of the Dairy Producer of Distinction Award, an award given to those operations with outstanding farm facilities and stewardship. The milking herd was sold in 2013, and only seven milking cows remain, but the Beatty Farm operation has made the transition to crop farming. Today, the farm grows corn, wheat, soybeans and alfalfa on their crop fields. In addition to their crop program, and handful of milking cows, they also now have a small herd of goats on the property.

This River Friendly® Certified Farm is comprised of 117 tillable acres, 80 of which were part of the NRCS/North Jersey RC&D aerial cover crop seeding program. The cover crop, which produced great results, has definitely been a beneficial component to the crop operation. This



Bernie Beatty is a retired dairy farmer that moved to crop farming, pictured here in front of a cut-corn field, on his 155-acre farm in rural Ashbury, Warren County.

year, the cover crop seed mixture was comprised of cereal rye, crimson clover, red clover and tillage radish. Previous to his inclusion in the aerial cover crop seeding program, Bernie was running only a single species cover crop and drilling it in after crop harvest. This method often proves difficult, as success tends to be reliant on a number of different factors including weather, timing of harvest, and specific cover crop species limitations due to shorter growing degree days.

The River-Friendly Farm Program, directed by RC&D, is a voluntary certification program designed to recognize farms that protect our shared natural resources through responsible management. Producers seeking certification are evaluated on their soil loss management, pesticide management, nutrient management, conservation buffers, and irrigation water management. The Beatty Farm has been a certified River-Friendly Farm since 2014, the first within the Musconetcong Valley to earn such recognition. ☺

### MUSCONETCONG WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

PO Box 113, 10 Maple Ave.  
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908-537-7060

[www.musconetcong.org](http://www.musconetcong.org)

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# A Look Back: Beth's Time at the MWA

Wednesday, December 7, MWA staff, board of trustees and members bid farewell and best wishes to Beth Styler Barry. Beth has served as Executive Director for MWA for the past 12 years, and during her time, she has contributed many successes to the organization. A dinner was held in her honor at Hawk Pointe Golf Club which yielded an impressive turnout. As all of

Beth's well-wishers mingled, a slideshow played highlighting photos of Beth's achievements including the renovation of the River Resource Center, dam removals and well attended events. Beth was presented with gifts including a bowl made from wood taken from the Asbury Grist Mill which is a current MWA project as well as a framed photo of the

Musconetcong River in the winter. Beth leaves the MWA for an exciting opportunity to work for The Nature Conservancy as a River Restoration Manager working on the Freshwater Conservation Team. We all wish Beth the best and were happy to have a night like this to celebrate her as well as the exciting future of the MWA. 🎧



# An Easy Way to Improve Your Drinking Water

**By: Kyle Richter,**  
*Education and Outreach Coordinator*

Did you know that as a homeowner you are responsible for the maintenance of your septic system? A properly maintained septic system is key to protecting not only your investment in your home, but clean water as well. The safe treatment of household sewage is important to prevent the spread of infection, disease and other water resources. Household wastewater contains nitrogen, phosphorus, disease-causing bacteria and viruses. A properly functioning septic system will effectively remove most of these pollutants.

A septic system works by collecting all the wastewater from your house in a tank buried in your yard. The tank holds the water long enough to allow the solids to settle out to the bottom of the tank, known as sludge, while grease and oil float on top, known as scum. A T-shaped outlet pipe prevents them from leaving the tank. The liquid wastewater left in the middle, called effluent, leaves the tank and enters the

drainage field. The drain field consists of perforated piping which drains to a porous surface, allowing the wastewater to filter through the soil. The soil accepts, treats and disperses wastewater as it percolates through the soil. The soil naturally removes harmful coliform bacteria, viruses and nutrients, before it ultimately discharges to the groundwater.

There are several small towns along the Musconetcong River where residents and businesses are served by septic systems and cesspools. Because of the geology of the area, bacteria from leaking or poorly maintained septic systems may enter the drinking water supply, or be carried into the river by storms. The MWA received a grant from the William Penn Foundation to design and promote a septic system education pro-

gram to include drinking water sampling to qualified residents in the towns of Hampton, Bloomsbury, Washington and Franklin. This project aims to reduce the human contribution of bacteria to the river, or groundwater, by helping residents understand the importance of septic system maintenance.

The program offers free water testing to residents who have had their septic system pumped out on or after January 1, 2014 (must provide proof of septic pump out). The free water test includes: pH, Nitrates, Arsenic, Total Coliform (Bacteriological) and Sample Pick-up, a \$100 value! If you would like to participate in this program, or would like more information, please contact Kyle Richter at [kyle@musconetcong.org](mailto:kyle@musconetcong.org) or call 908-537-7060. ☺

## Four things you can do to protect your septic system

- 1 Inspect and pump your system every three years
- 2 Use water efficiently
- 3 Don't dispose of non-biodegradable items or household hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets
- 4 Care for your drainfield

**By: Karen Doerfer,**  
*Communications and Administrative Coordinator*

Following the removal of the Hughesville Dam, MWA volunteers, board members and staff have worked toward restoring the river banks at this site. Most recently, MWA partnered with AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador, Taran Sayal to coordinate volunteers for a tree planting. Using trees donated by New Jersey Audubon, with funds from the William Penn Foundation, MWA was able to plant 50 large trees including Red Maple, Pin Oak, Sweet Gum, Black Gum and Sycamore which will be used as part of a riparian buffer that will improve water quality along the Musconetcong River. The trees will provide shade, filter pollutants and prevent erosion. For more information on how to become involved in future volunteer efforts, please email [info@musconetcong.org](mailto:info@musconetcong.org). ☺

## Restoring Water Quality at Former Hughesville Dam Site



Photo Credit: Taran Sayal, AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador

# SAVE THESE DATES!

**Saturday, January 7:** MWA Holiday Party from 1:00-4:00 pm. Join MWA's Board of Trustees and Staff as we wrap up 2016 and celebrate the holidays. This event is FREE to members. Please RSVP to [karen@musconetcong.org](mailto:karen@musconetcong.org) by Monday, January 2.

**Friday, February 3:** River Talk "Paint the River Party" from 6:30-8:30 pm. The Paint Party Studio from Lopatcong, NJ will be coming to MWA's River Resource Center (10 Maple Avenue, Asbury, NJ) to help attendees paint a beautiful picture of our Musconetcong River. This event is \$30, and all attendees will be able to take their painting home at the end of the evening. This event is BYOB, and all attendees must be 21 or older. Tickets can be purchased on our website: [www.musconetcong.org](http://www.musconetcong.org).

**Friday, March 24:** Annual Meeting at 6:30 pm. Join MWA as we recap 2016 and celebrate our 25th anniversary as an organization! A buffet style dinner will be served at Hawk Pointe Golf Club. This event is FREE to members! Please RSVP to [karen@musconetcong.org](mailto:karen@musconetcong.org).

**Saturday, April 15:** 25th Annual River Clean-up from 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Time for spring cleaning! From Lake Hopatcong to the Delaware River, email [ambassador@musconetcong.org](mailto:ambassador@musconetcong.org) to pick your location to pick up the trash. We will provide trash bags, work gloves, water, snacks and a souvenir t-shirt. Afterward, join us at the River Resource Center (10 Maple Avenue, Asbury, NJ) for a FREE BBQ!

**Saturday, April 29:** 6th Annual Native Plant Sale from 9:00 am-2:00 pm at the RRC. Purchase beautiful native species that will provide lasting enjoyment and save you money, water and time. Native plants provide food and habitat for our wildlife and are economical for the homeowner since they do not require fertilizers or pesticides. Experts will be on hand to help you choose the best plants for your needs and location.

## 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](http://www.musconetcong.org) under "Events" 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 our Run for the River on May 17, 2017. You do not need to be present to win. Good luck!

### We're Social! Follow us on:



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*Meetup*  
Musconetcong  
River Area  
Outdoor Activities

For more information or to register for any of these events, please email [karen@musconetcong.org](mailto: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 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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