

# Musconetcong River News

Summer 2007

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Asbury, New Jersey

## State proposes Category One protection for Musky

***New amendments to New Jersey's Surface Water Quality Standards will protect the Musconetcong River and its tributaries by upgrading them to Category One waterbodies.***

*By Beth Styler Barry*

Category One waters are defined by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) as "waters protected from measurable changes in water quality characteristics because of their clarity, color, scenic setting, other characteristics of aesthetic value, exceptional ecological significance, exceptional recreational significance, exceptional water supply significance, or exceptional fisheries resources."

When a river is classified as Category One, it is afforded extra protections that govern what can be discharged into the river. In addition, a special 300-foot buffer zone is established where new building or other activities may be prohibited. This buffer zone allows water to be filtered by vegetation and cooled before entering the river, protecting water quality and the habitat of many important plant and animal species.

### **How have rivers been upgraded in the past?**

Most of the Category One waters were designated by the NJ DEP in 1985 and the basis for the upgrades were not specified. Between 1985 and 2002, the Department designated waterbodies as Category One based on trout production. The trouble with using evidence of trout production as a basis for upgrade is that surveys are

rarely done and yield questionable results.

Since 2002, the NJDEP has granted category upgrades based upon a more scientific approach. Most recently, with the inclusion of macro-invertebrate counts, stream habitats, varieties of fish reproduction, chemical water quality, and endangered and threatened species habitats the Department has granted Category One upgrades citing "exceptional ecological significances." In addition, the Department has upgraded several streams and reservoirs based upon "exceptional water supplies."

### **What is being proposed?**

Using the information collected in reviewing recently upgraded waterbodies for Category One designation, the NJ DEP is proposing to establish new definitions. These new definitions better define the data and criteria utilized to identify waterbodies that qualify for consideration for upgrade to Category One designation. These definitions are data driven and will better serve to identify waters that are truly exceptional.

### **How can the new definitions help the Musconetcong River?**

In the past, the river has missed out on reclassification because of a lack of evidence of native trout species breeding in the main stem of the river.

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## Hackettstown Dam Removals Are Imminent

*by Bill Leavens*

If things proceed the way they have been going for the past month, around the time you read this we will be conducting a press conference at the Pump House Restaurant on Rt. 46 at the Hackettstown/Mount Olive border. That event will herald the removal of the first of twenty or so dams that obstruct the Musconetcong River. This will be the culmination of a project that your organization has been working on for five years.

Presently we are negotiating an agreement with a major residential developer who is clearing stone from a site within two miles of the Gruendyke dam. We need about 1600 tons of large round rock in order to build weirs to stabilize sediment upstream of the Gruendyke and Seber dams in Hackettstown. The majority of the cost of stone purchase would have been trucking and it is extremely fortuitous that stone was located so close to the project.

David Schaaf, Warren Co. Soil Conservation District Manager and Tim Dunne of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service were instrumental in locating the stone at the construction site. Brian Cowden, Vice Chair of the New Jersey State Council of Trout Unlimited, conducted negotiations with the builder. The efforts of these gentlemen on behalf of the river have been extraordinary.

*Continued on page 2*

## Protection for Musky

The new definitions focus on the biology and chemistry of the river and the presence of threatened and endangered species. With the new focus on “ecological integrity”, the Musconetcong River clearly meets the criteria.

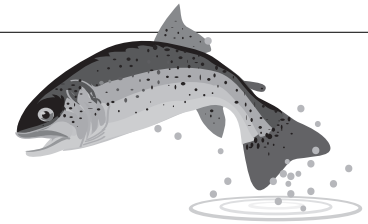
New Jersey’s vulnerable streams deserve protection that is determined by more than the presence of trout reproduction. The new clear, data-driven definitions will promote better decision making by the NJ DEP for the reclassification of streams. Streams should be upgraded based upon the presence of endangered or threatened species, ability to support exceptional aquatic communities or their connection to drinking-water sources.

### Do we really need more regulation?

The Musconetcong Watershed is experiencing intense development pressure, and protective regulatory

*Continued from page 1*

mechanisms are essential to protect its exceptional water resources from degradation by residential, commercial or other development. There is no better way to ensure protection of a river that runs along the edge of 25 municipalities and four counties than this proposed state protection. The patchwork of protection - or lack of protection - offered by individual local ordinances leaves the river vulnerable. An upgrade to Category One is key for the long-term protection of the Musconetcong River.



This information is a summary of the complete proposed rule change titled “Surface Water Quality Standards Proposed Amendments to N.J.A.C. 7:9B-1.4 and 1.15” The complete text of the proposed rule change can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/proposals/052107b.pdf>

## Hackettstown Dam *Continued from page 1*

This dam removal project has been the result of close collaboration between a number of interested parties whose sole aim is to remove obsolete dams from the river. These include Musconetcong Watershed Association, Trout Unlimited, American Rivers, The New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs, Princeton Hydro, the Town of Hackettstown, Warren County, Morris County and Gruendyke owners Rodger and Eileen Cornell.

As a result, there will be healthier native fish populations that are able to

move throughout a greater range. The water will be cooler and better able to support aquatic life. Water quality will improve and the Wild and Scenic Musconetcong will be easier to negotiate for paddlers.

With these two impoundments removed, we only have eighteen or so dams to go. This project serves as a demonstration of how public/private partnerships can undertake the necessary but expensive jobs that are required to return the Musconetcong to its free-flowing, pre-industrial state.

# MUSCONETCONG WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

908-537-7060

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

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### Petite Powerhouse

Brook Hyland, age 4, was the youngest runner in this year’s MWA Run for the River. Her parents, Peter and Allison have participated in the event every year since it began. Brooke ran the entire 4-mile course. If you haven’t come out for the Run for the River yet, you are missing a lot of fun, a chance to win great prizes and a very cool T-shirt.

# 2007 Run for the River

The MWA would like to thank all our sponsors and supporters...

We couldn't do it without you!!!



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# MWA Annual Meeting

*By Beth Styler Barry*

The MWA held its Annual Members Meeting on Friday April 27, 2007 at Hawk Pointe Golf Club. Members were invited to attend bird walk held just before the meeting led by **Linda Gangi, Birding and Wildlife Trail Project Associate with the New Jersey Audubon Society**. After returning from the bird walk, sandwiches and soft drinks were provided by Hawk Pointe catering services. Everyone

who attended the pre-meeting walk received a free bluebird house to take home.

Following the bird walk, members enjoyed a discussion of wildlife habitat in the Musconetcong Watershed led by **MacKenzie Hall, Natural Resource Conservation Services Private Lands Biologist**. A brief business meeting followed.



*MWA members led by Linda Gangi of the New Jersey Audubon Society toured bird habitat either preserved or created during the building of Hawk Pointe Golf Community. On the bird walk, the following species were observed:*

- ◆ Eastern Kingbird
- ◆ Green Heron
- ◆ Tree Swallow
- ◆ Barn Swallow
- ◆ Rough-winged Swallow
- ◆ Chimney Swift
- ◆ Northern Harrier
- ◆ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- ◆ Eastern Bluebird
- ◆ Red-winged Blackbird
- ◆ House Finch
- ◆ American Robin
- ◆ Rusty Blackbird
- ◆ Brown-headed Cowbird
- ◆ White-breasted Nuthatch
- ◆ Tufted Titmouse
- ◆ Song Sparrow
- ◆ European Starling

## Enter the MWA Kayak Raffle!



*For hassle-free water play, the popular Perception Swifty 9.5 is a good kayak for beginners. This lightweight (39-pound) boat allows almost anyone to become a kayaker. It is maneuverable, stable, easy to use, and easy to transport. It is also easy to get in and out of (a big plus for those new to kayaking). The Swifty is best used on lakes and mild rivers, and it features a backrest, seat-back pad, and foot braces for comfort.*

**Ticket Price - \$10.00**

Kayak Package includes Swifty 9.5 ft kayak, life vest and paddle, a \$500 value.

Order online at [www.musconetcong.org](http://www.musconetcong.org) and your ticket will be mailed to your home.

*Tickets also available at:* Paddler's Cove

384 E Washington Ave., Washington, N.J.  
908-835-0624

*Drawing will be held on* **Sunday September 30, 2007** at the  
**5th Annual MWA Wine Tasting Event.**  
Winner need not be present.

# SAVE THESE DATES!

**Sunday September 30, 2007 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.** Mark your calendar for the 5th Annual MWA Wine Tasting. Join us for a great selection of international wines, food, live music by Jam-Bone and a beautiful afternoon at this riverside event. The wine tasting is held at the Musky Trout Hatchery, 279 Asbury-Bloomsbury Road (Route 632) in Asbury. For more details contact [Beth@musconetcong.org](mailto:Beth@musconetcong.org) or call (908) 537-7060. Non-alcoholic beverages will also be available. Rain or shine, we'll be under a pavilion. Tickets are \$25.00 each and are available online at [www.musconetcong.org](http://www.musconetcong.org) or at the door.

**Saturday November 24th, 2007 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.** Join us for our annual Hike at Point Mountain. Each year MWA members and friends set aside the Saturday after Thanksgiving to burn off those extra calories by hiking the trail at the Point Mountain Reserve. All are welcome, novice and expert alike. Call (908) 537-7060 or email [beth@musconetcong.org](mailto:beth@musconetcong.org) for details, directions or to register.

**Note:** If you are not receiving e-mail reminders for these events it means that we do not have a current e-mail address. If you'd like to receive reminders and occasional "Musky News Briefs" please contact [beth@musconetcong.org](mailto:beth@musconetcong.org).

**Enter the MWA Kayak Raffle**  
**Run for the River**  
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**Musconetcong River News**



Asbury, NJ 08802  
 PO Box 113



**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 shadowed by 1,000 foot Highland ridges, it 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 and 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.

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*.

**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 Steward
- \$500 Champion
- \$1,000 + Life

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Mail to:*

**Musconetcong Watershed Association**  
 PO Box 113, Asbury, NJ 08802