



Musconetcong River News

Spring 2009

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Asbury, New Jersey

Diesel from Truck Stop spills into Musconetcong River

By Chuck Gullage

On Saturday, April 4, the MWA was celebrating a long-planned Grand Opening event at the River Resource Center. What we didn't plan on that day took place several hours earlier, about 4.2 miles west of the River Resource Center at the Travel America (TA) Travel Center Truck Stop on Route 173 in Bloomsbury, NJ. The TA Truck Stop is located on a small wedge of land bounded by Route 78, Route 173, and the Musconetcong River. Their primary clientele is the hundreds of 18 wheel tractor trailer trucks that travel Route 78 on a daily basis. At any given time during the day you might find between 80 and 100 tractor trailers parked in their lot while the trucks are being serviced and the truckers are relaxing and having a good meal.

The facility has three wastewater treatment systems. One system is to treat sanitary wastes and is actually a miniature sewage treatment plant that is currently being upgraded. The other two systems are for industrial wastes

basically treating run-off from the parking lots. The run-off water contains any diesel fuel, oil, grease, transmission fluid, and coolant that may leak from the trucks in the parking lot and end up in their storm drains. The run-off also contains any product that may drip from the trucks. This system is called an oil-water separator and operates on a gravity principal similar to a septic tank. The grit and sand, called sludge, settles to the bottom, the water accumulates in the middle layer, and the oily substances float on top. The oil is skimmed off periodically by a contractor. The sludge is pumped out by another contractor whenever the sludge level reaches 12 inches. One oil-water separator is located under the front parking lot and the other is located in the truck service garage area.

On the morning of April 3, a contractor with a vacuum truck sucked the sludge out of the oil-water separator in the garage area. According to the TA manager the contractor not only removed the sludge, but also pumped

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River Resource Center Opens

By Bill Leavens

It's done! We did it!! We're in!! The MWA staff has moved into the River Resource Center. As anticipated, amazing things are happening because everyone can be at the same place at the same time and all of the papers, documents and correspondence are in one place.

Executive Director Beth Styler Barry, Administrative Assistant Adrienne Kaczynski, Financial Manager Kim Hood, and Volunteer River Watcher Coordinator Nancy Lawler have quiet, comfortable places to work and drawers, bins and cabinets to put all their stuff. There is finally real coordination between staff members, Trustees and volunteers. Conversations are held across the room, not across four counties. It's a miracle—all our stuff is in one place!

To celebrate the completion of the building, a reception was held on Saturday, April 4 for MWA members, Asbury neighbors and the trades people who worked on the building. Following

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'Spill' *Continued from page 1*

out a large volume of the water allowing the oily scum on top to run directly into the separator outflow pipe, into the retention pond and then into the Musconetcong River. The spill was reported by residents of Bloomsbury early on the morning of Saturday, April 4 who were able to smell diesel in the water.

First on the scene were Chief Peter Horsch and the Bloomsbury Fire Company who supervised the many fire companies and others who responded to the call to set booms and assess the situation. (See photo on page 1, bottom left.) MWA River Watchers spent the afternoon traveling downstream with the Warren County Hazardous Materials Team to investigate the full extent of the spill by mid-

day a hazmat contractor, Atlantic Response, had set up booms across the retention pond outflow and stopped any further oil from getting into the river. This was a critical time on the Musconetcong because the fishing season was to open the following Saturday on April 11. By mid-afternoon the DEP Response Technician was on-site monitoring the clean-up and containment.

Executive Director Beth Styler Barry, River Watcher Program Coordinator Nancy Lawler and MWA Trustee and River Watcher Erik Henriksen, monitored the spill most of Saturday, afternoon, and I took over monitoring at about 5 p.m. that day. Our conclusion was that whatever oil had entered the river had either moved down stream to the Delaware River or evaporated and that no serious damage had occurred to the Musky. Beth and Nancy Lawler notified the Delaware Riverkeeper organization so they could watch for the spill, however, we were satisfied at the time that the situation was under control on the Musky.

Over the following two weeks I surveilled the TA Truck Stop several times and met with the manager to discuss corrective actions. I had noticed that the NJ DEP discharge permit sign on had the wrong emergency telephone number on the discharge pipe and informed the manager. (See photo on page 1, bottom right.) The manager said that the sign would be replaced to show the correct 1-877 WARN DEP number. Initially, it looked like the TA spill was under control and that everyone was on top of the situation. That all changed on April 29 when I dropped by the TA Truck Stop and discovered that the booms had been removed, the sign still had the wrong telephone number and that oil was once again flowing in the Musconetcong River. I met with the manager and demanded that the booms be replaced immediately. Beth Styler Barry called the 1-877-WARN DEP hotline herself to report the problem, however, to date the DEP has not responded to us. The following day the booms were back in place but the sign still had the wrong contact number.

Paul Kenney of the National Park Service Wild and Scenic River

Manager is also assisting in the follow-up and has written both the TA Environmental Management office and NJ DEP to bring everyone together to address this problem and agree on a long-term solution. This is the second time in two years a TA Truck Stop oil-water separator malfunction has resulted in an oil spill in the Musconetcong River, so we need to monitor the frequently going forward.

On May 28, I visited the site and found that the booms were back in place in response to concerns expressed by both MWA and NPS and that no oil was running out of the discharge pipe. Only a small oil slick the size of a dinner plate remained along the shoreline inside a boom containment, I am reasonably certain that the remaining oil is residue leaching out of the sand along the shoreline. The offending oil water separator outflow has been capped so that can no longer flow to the river and TA finally replaced the NJ DEP discharge permit sign with one showing the correct telephone number. In fact, now the area has three new signs posted around the discharge pipe. Vigilance and persistence pays off. Now we have to work on getting NJ DEP to return our calls. **NOTE: The author is an MWA Trustee and a River Watcher Volunteer.** ☺

MUSCONETCONG WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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908-537-7060

www.musconetcong.org

Trustee Officers

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Staff

Executive Director
Beth Styler Barry
Administrative Assistant
Adrienne Kaczynski

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'Resource Center'

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that we held our annual MWA member meeting. Where there would normally be a presentation about some aspect of watershed management, this year's topic was the building itself. Attendees could wander and discover the mysteries of the composting toilet, ponder the geothermal/heat pump HVAC, and glory in the building's crisp, clean architecture. A good time was had by all. And it's only going to get better as we put the building through its paces as an environmental education center.

Thanks to all who were able to attend and special thanks for those who contributed their time, talent and treasure to make it all possible. ☺

Musconetcong River 2009 Clean Up, the Biggest Ever!

by *Stuart Shafran*

After many months of planning and organizing by MWA Administrative Assistant Adrienne the 17th Annual Spring Clean Up day, Saturday, April 18th, finally arrived and was a huge success. For the first time in the history of this annual event, we were able to cover nearly the entire length of the river which begins at Lake Hopatcong and ends at the Delaware River. From Internet e-mails, press releases, local advertising, newsletter articles, and by word of mouth, the volunteer count this year was well over three hundred. One of the many changes to the clean up was a greater effort to separate out recyclables from the usual car and truck tires, car batteries, shopping carts, mattresses and box springs, indoor and outdoor furniture, plastic milk crates, clothing and... etc.

Trout Unlimited representative, Brian Cowden, organized northern

Trout Unlimited (TU) chapters to make a significant impact well above Saxton Falls, the Ernie Schwiebert and Jersey Shore TU chapters covered the lower end of the 'Musky', and Central Jersey with the help from a local cub scout troop and their parents covered all the way from Hampton Borough Park to Point Mountain. Some of our "eager beavers" continued picking up trash along Route 57 towards Hackettstown.

Central Jersey TU member and MWA trustee, Canny MacGonagle, took charge of local volunteers and scout groups in and around the town of Bloomsbury, Professor Ralston Bartholomew and students from Warren County Community College returned to the Penwell Dam area, working their way downstream to Point Mountain and the Spruce Run Lutheran Church lead by MWA trustee, Erik Henriksen, returned in

greater numbers than last year to take care of Butler Park.

Two new locations added this year were Hopatcong State Park and Stephens State Park. Boy Scout leader, Jean Thayer, lead Troop 63 and members of a geocaching group of hide and seek-

ers, from Stephens State Park all the way up to Stanhope. The park's superintendent, Helen Maurella, who was very familiar with this annual clean up, couldn't be more accommodating. She provided trash pickup and disposal in and around both parks. By separating out the recyclables for them it made the process easier and more rewarding. By noon, most of the participants made their way back to the newly renovated River Resource Center, in Asbury, for cold drinks, soap and water, environmental friendly restrooms, and a good hot meal (in that order).

Another first this year, was the additional help from the Mohawk Canoe Club. They arrived Sunday morning and paddled their way downstream from Hackettstown to the Penwell dam, stopping several times on the way to unload boat loads of debris.

As I had promised, the day was fun, fulfilling, and rewarding. The overall feedback was extremely positive, due in no small part to the weather, with countless promises to return next year. Jon Burgess, a CJTU member and first time volunteer, expressed in an e-mail to me, "It was a rewarding experience for me, and I'm proud to be a member of such a worthy group, with dedicated people like you guys involved. I look forward to more volunteer work for CJTU!" ☺



Photo by Beth Styler Barry

Above: Mohawk Canoe Club members Vin Marmorato and Dave Thiele empty one of many boat loads of garbage that club members collected when they participated in the MWA Annual Spring Clean Up.

Right: Volunteers from Central Jersey Trout Unlimited join forces with Franklin Township Cub Scouts and their parents and the Hampton Boro Environmental Commission at Hampton Boro Park before beginning work.



Photo by Nick Romanenko

SAVE THESE DATES!

NEW! • NEW! • NEW! • NEW! • NEW! • NEW! • NEW!

Three sessions of Camp Musky will run this July, registration materials can be found at www.musconetcong.org

Friday, June 26 8:30 p.m. - Star Gazing with the N.J. Astronomical Association

Join MWA and the New Jersey Astronomical Association at the River Resource Center for a night of star gazing. We'll start the program at sunset which will be at 8:35 pm and the best viewing will begin at the end of twilight which is at 9:08pm. There will be telescopes on site or you can bring your own. This is a free event for MWA Members, non-members pay \$5 per person with a \$10 maximum per family. Sunday, June 28 will be the cloud/rain date. Please call or e-mail to register - beth@musconetcong.org or (908) 537-7060.

Wednesday, July 8 6:30 – 8 p.m.(ish) - Evening Hike at the Merrill Creek Reservoir

Join us as we explore the 290-acre preserve led by Senior Naturalist Jim Mershon, who will lead us along a trail that features a variety of habitats including woodlands, fields, evergreen plantations, and wetlands. The trail provides access to the entire Reservoir shoreline, offering many scenic views, passing through a variety of habitats. While most of the trail follows old woods roads and provides easy walking, hikers should note that there are a few rocky areas. All are welcome, novice and expert alike. Please bring a water bottle use normal tick prevention precautions. We will meet at the Merrill Creek Visitors Center at 6:15 p.m. MWA members are free, all other participants are asked to make a \$3 donation, \$6 maximum per family. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail beth@musconetcong.org for details or to register. Rain date July 9.

Saturday, July 18 10 a.m. – 12 Noon - Meet the River at Point Mountain

Come out **Point Mountain Preserve**, Port Murray Road, Mansfield and get your feet wet! We'd like to introduce you to the Musconetcong River. This program will allow children to come down to the river's edge and splash around in the water. We'll turn over some rocks and maybe we'll be lucky enough to catch a frog! You'll need to wear water shoes, old sneakers or sandals with a strap on back. No bare feet and no flip-flops please! Parents must be present but do not need to get their feet wet—there will be plenty of volunteers on hand. We will not be swimming, just getting our feet wet. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail beth@musconetcong.org for details. MWA members free. Non-members will be charged a \$2 donation per child (\$5 limit per family.)

Wednesday, July 23 10 a.m. – 12 Noon - Meet the River at Point Mountain

See Meet the River program description above. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail beth@musconetcong.org for details. MWA members FREE. Non-members will be charged a \$2 donation per child (\$5 limit per family.)

Saturday, August 1 10 a.m. – 12 Noon - Meet the River at Bloomsbury

Come out to the **N.J. DEP Fishing Access** on Bloomsbury Road in Asbury and get your feet wet! We'd like to introduce you to the Musconetcong River. See Meet the River program description above. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail beth@musconetcong.org for details. MWA members free. Non-members will be charged a \$2 donation per child (\$5 limit per family.)

Wednesday, August 5 10 a.m. – 12 Noon - Meet the River at Bloomsbury

See Meet the River program description above. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail beth@musconetcong.org for details. MWA members free. Non-members will be charged a \$2 donation per child (\$5 limit per family.)

Saturday, August 8 10 a.m. – 12 Noon - Meet the River at Byram

Join us as we explore the Musconetcong River at Riverside Park on River Road (off of Route 604) in Byram Township. See Meet the River program description above. Call (908) 537-7060 or e-mail beth@musconetcong.org for details. MWA members free. Non-members will be charged a \$2 donation per child (\$5 limit per family.)

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.

- ◆ Musconetcong River Clean Up Report
- ◆ Volunteer and Learn from a New Jersey Master Gardener
- ◆ River Resource Center Opens
- ◆ Truck Stop Diesel Spill Update

What's Inside:

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 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*.

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:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustainer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Steward |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporter | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Champion |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000+ Life Member |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Mail to:

Musconetcong Watershed Association
PO Box 113, Asbury, NJ 08802