

# The Musconetcong River Restoration Partnership

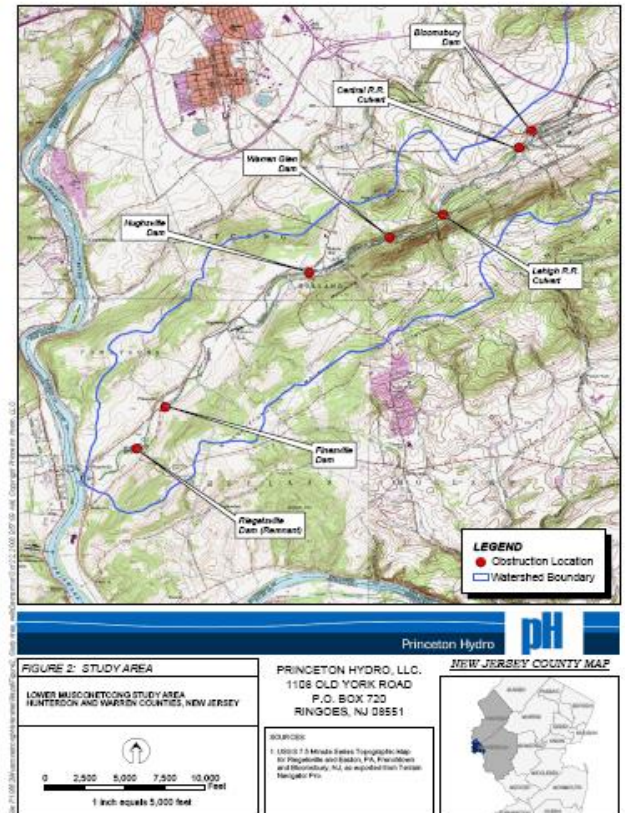
The Musconetcong River Restoration Partnership is a multi disciplinary team of agencies, organizations and individuals working to improve and restore the Musconetcong River. The Musconetcong River Restoration Partnership includes the Musconetcong Watershed Association, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), American Rivers (AR), North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development (RCD), New Jersey Trout Unlimited (TU), the NJDEP-Division of Fish & Wildlife (DFW), National Park Service (NPS), private landowners and others.

While the health of the river is generally good, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection has identified thermal pollution and nutrient enrichment as serious water quality problems for certain areas of the main stem of the Musconetcong River. In some areas, the riverbanks are severely eroded. In some cases, land use activities have eliminated native trees and allowed invasive non-native vegetation to become established. These factors stress the ability of these critical ecosystems to function properly.

The Musconetcong River Restoration Partnership is examining many restoration alternatives available to improve the health of the river. There are many components to river restoration. The most common efforts focus on stream bank stabilization, enhancing riparian buffers by adding trees and natural grasses, enabling fish passage, removal of dams and other man-made structures, adding meanders, and stocking the river with fish or other living organisms.

The Musconetcong River watershed, a drainage area of 157.6 square miles, includes portions of Morris, Hunterdon, Warren and Sussex counties, and all or part of 25 municipalities. The “Musky”, as it is often referred to, runs 42 miles from Lake Hopatcong to the Delaware River, and its watershed consists primarily of forest (49.5%), urban land (19.5%), and cropland (17.8%). Ground water is the primary source of drinking water here. In the limestone valleys of the Musconetcong Watershed there is a constant mix of surface water and ground water. Protecting the water quality in the river will protect the drinking water for watershed residents.

Initially, the partnership will focus its study of river restoration alternatives in the Lower Musconetcong watershed. This area is shown in the map and can be roughly defined as the area below Route 78 to the confluence of the Delaware River. In this area, the river runs



through Bloomsbury, Greenwich Township, Holland Township and Pohatcong Township. The four dams that span the river in this section of the watershed, located in Finesville, Hughesville, Warren Glen, and Bloomsbury, will be assessed.

The partnership hopes to preserve and protect the Musconetcong River and its watershed for present and future residents, restoring the natural flow, native vegetation and high quality fish and wildlife habitat there. In addition to being one of the most scenic river valleys in New Jersey and the surrounding region, the Musconetcong valley is a high-quality setting for a wide variety of recreational activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, canoeing, camping, nature study and other outdoor activities.

## **Partner List and Contact Information**

**Natural Resources Conservation Service** – Natural Resources Conservation Service – technical assistance and possible financial assistance on fish passage, stream habitat enhancement, streambank stabilization and riparian buffer restoration **Contacts:** In Warren County, Dan.Mull@nj.usda.gov; in Hunterdon County, Gail.Bartok@nj.usda.gov.

**US Fish and Wildlife Service** – technical assistance and financial assistance from the Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program **Contact:** Eric Schrading, Eric\_Schrading@fws.gov or www.fws.gov.

**The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration** – technical and possible financial assistance through the American Rivers-NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program. **Contact:** Carl Alderson, carl.alderson@noaa.gov or www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/.

**American Rivers** – technical, outreach, and regulatory assistance, and possible financial assistance through the American Rivers-NOAA Community-Based Restoration Partnership and other grant funding. **Contact:** Laura Craig, lcraig@americanrivers.org or www.americanrivers.org.

**North Jersey RC&D Council** – technical assistance and possible financial assistance on riparian buffer restoration. **Contact:** Marcus Gray, mgray@northjerseyrcd.org or www.northjerseyrcd.org.

**Musconetcong Watershed Association** –local landowner outreach, education, technical assistance. **Contacts:** Beth Styler Barry, beth@musconetcong.org or Bill Leavens, bill.leavens@gmail.com.

**NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife** – technical assistance on local fisheries issues. **Contact:** Pat Hamilton, Pat.Hamilton@earthlink.net.

**Trout Unlimited** – technical assistance from Eastern Conservation Staff, landowner outreach, limited funding as well as volunteer assistance from local TU chapters.

**National Park Service.** **Contact:** Paul Kenney, Paul\_Kenney@nps.gov.