



MUSKY HOME RIVERS UPDATE

Volume 2, issue

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OCTOBER—DECEMBER 2009

M&M Mars Employees Complete Riparian Buffer

On October 9th, some twenty employees of the Musconetcong watershed's largest employer, M&M Mars, came out to help plant a riparian buffer along the Mansfield bank of the main river above the Penwell Dam as part of giving back to the local community through service work.

The employees spent most of the day carrying native shrubs and trees to the river and up and down its banks, digging holes, planting, and then adding wire cages to keep deer and beavers from eating the new plantings. In total, nearly 500 feet of the river edge was replanted after the road, route 57, was relocated from next to the river many years ago. This area of the river is critical for a proper riparian buffer because the nearby, downstream dam has slowed the velocity of the river and widened it, bringing unwanted thermal pollution in the form of higher water temperatures for that stretch. The river here was also eroding the riverbank on the Warren County side due to a lack of roots holding the soil in place along these banks.

Numerous fish rose to small BWOs during the work day making for one very distracted Musconetcong Home Rivers Coordinator as well as for some of our M&M friends who also enjoy trout fishing. Many thanks to the great efforts of these employees and TU looks forward to working with



Second Public Meeting on Finesville Dam Removal

On Tuesday, December 1st, the Musconetcong River Restoration Partnership held our second NEPA required public meeting to announce our Draft Environmental Assessment of the Finesville Dam, the first dam upstream on the Musky from the Delaware River. Little public opposition was met again as was our experience during the first meeting in December of '08. If all goes according to plan, the funding for this project which is firmly in place will be released for us to begin work on permitting and design with the dam's ultimate removal and 1/2 mile river restoration beginning in late summer of this year. TU is an integral member of this partnership, and is working with this group to remove the Hughesville and Warren Glen dams upstream.

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Special points of interest:

- Point Mountain TCA now a YEAR-ROUND TCA due to TU's efforts
- Awaiting NOAA Open Rivers funding to perform feasibility studies for the Hughesville and Warren Glen dam removal projects
- .NJ F&W acquires 366 acres below Point Mountain for additional angler access to nearly 1 1/2 miles of river formerly in private hands

Halloween Riparian Buffer by E. Schwiebert Chapter



On the morning of Halloween '09, TU members, led by the Ernie Schwiebert chapter, planted a riparian buffer along the banks of the Musky on the lower river in Holland Township off Cyphers Road across from the former Hughesville paper mill with permission from the mill's current owners. Many hands made light work on that day and there were rumors of fish caught after the work was completed and a large group waiting for a local pub to open its doors for lunch. Involving New Jersey's nine TU chapters is a highly effective way to leverage our collective work to help make the Musconetcong Home Rivers Initiative highly successful. Many thanks to all those involved!

Dam removal update

"take care of
the fish and
the fishing will
take care of
itself"
- TU Founding
Fathers

The Finesville Dam is next on our list to remove. This dam is the first dam upstream of the river's confluence with the Delaware River and blocks anadromous fish passage for such species as river herring, American Shad and eels. This dam removal project, including over 1/2 mile of river restoration to the upstream impoundment, is fully funded and awaiting the green light from the NRCS pending approval of our draft Environmental Assessment. We received some very excellent news from the owners of the Hughesville and Warren Glen dams which are the # 2 and # 3 dams upstream of the Delaware River. They are also the second most and the highest dams respectively in this watershed. Warren Glen at 37 1/2' is actually the tallest dam in the state! The owners have asked TU and our partners to move forward with a feasibility study to remove both dams. This would open up fish passage from the Delaware River all the way to the Bloomsbury Dam and would open for good the Musconetcong Gorge, the single most spectacular natural area in this watershed. TU would request a new year round TCA if and when the Warren Glen dam is removed as it would open up approx. 1 1/2 miles of pocket water not seen in any other river in the state, including the Ken Lockwood Gorge on the South Branch Raritan. We have applied for more than \$500,000 to complete the feasibility studies, do some additional river restoration work downstream below the Finesville Dam to remove the remnant dams formerly known as the Riegelsville Dam (2 wooden coffer dams and one stone dam), and to provide funding for design and engineering work to remove the dams and restore the river in those areas. Exciting news indeed! Stay tuned for more developments this Spring...



Musconetcong Gorge
pocket water below
the Warren Glen Dam



River Restoration Project Update

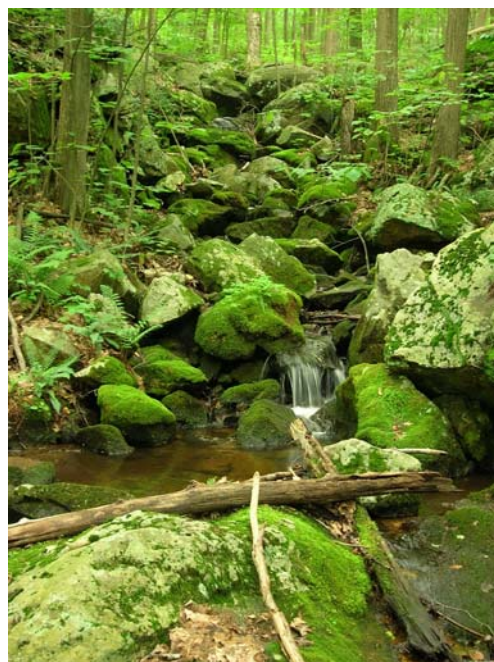
2010 will be a very busy year for the Home Rivers Initiative. On top of dam removal and riparian restoration projects, TU will undertake in stream river restoration projects on a scale never before seen in the Garden State. Some of these projects will be done in conjunction with our partners in the Musconetcong River Restoration Partnership (such as the river above and below the Finesville Dam on the lower river) and others will be TU stand alone projects, funded through the Farm Bill, US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Trout and Salmon Foundation, NJTU chapters, and other sources. Design plans are now in hand and DEP permit applications are being prepared to restore approx. 1/3 mile of river behind the Cliffdale Inn along rt. 57 in Mansfield Twp. as well as a wide, flat stretch in the Point Mountain TCA that is 1/4 mile long, adding significant fish habitat for that very popular angling destination. In addition to these two sites, we are working with three contiguous land owners in lower Washington Twp. (Warren County) above the state's Musconetcong WMA at Shurts Road, to restore the river over more than a half mile that will include removal of a hand-built stone weir on state land and two weirs on the private land upstream. Pools will be dug, engineered riffles will be constructed and point bars using the river's bedload removed from the pools will be constructed to narrow the river channel which will keep sediment moving downstream instead of depositing it through this stretch of river. Past poor land use practices of tree removal, the rt. 31 bridge upstream and straightening of the river channel many years ago have made this project a necessity and a priority for restoration. It is great to work with motivated landowners and funding agencies such as the NRCS who utilize Farm Bill funds to improve wildlife habitat, in this case aquatic wildlife, by cutting edge river restoration methods to be performed by Urbani Fisheries out of Bozeman, Montana.

Warren Glen Dam



See you on the water or in the woods!

Brian Cowden—Musconetcong Home Rivers Coordinator



A Musky wild brook trout tributary

“Take a course
in good water
and air; and in
the eternal
youth of Nature
you may renew
your own. Go
quietly, alone;
no harm will
befall you. ”

- John Muir