



Musconetcong River News

Spring/Summer 2020

Published quarterly by The Musconetcong Watershed Association

Asbury, New Jersey



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www.musconetcong.org

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20th Annual Run for the River Brings Community Together Virtually

The health concerns that this year has brought led MWA to the difficult decision of canceling or indefinitely postponing most of our spring events. Like our members, MWA board and staff look forward to our spring events as a time to reconnect with our community and provide updates about what is going on in the watershed. We also rely on these events as fundraisers that help us to continue to run our programs that we do not get through grant funding.

It is because of this, that we were excited to try a virtual Run for the River event. Participants were asked to get #MovingfortheMusky and share photos of them engaging in their favorite activity. Most participants ran, walked, or jogged the 4-miles that this legacy event is known for, but some kayaked, fished, and biked—surpassing the 4-miles asked and getting some much needed time outdoors.

While we did not know what to expect, we quickly came to realize that virtual or not, our supporters and community members were craving time outdoors and a virtual connection with friends and like-minded peers. To date, this was one of our best attended events that even garnered great local press with newspapers trying to pick up positive news whenever possible.



MWA Staff vs. Board running challenges swept our Facebook feed! (Pictured: Kyle Richter, Watershed Programs Coordinator and Beth Styler Barry, Trustee)

This year has made MWA take a step back, analyze challenges, and make difficult decisions, but if our 20th Annual Run for the River is any indication of what a dedicated community can do, we are hopeful going into our 2021 spring event season! We look forward to sharing in person events when it is safe again, but have loved connecting with you virtually in recent weeks.

Thank you to our 2020 Run for the River Sponsors!

Gold: The Gullage Family, Princeton Hydro, Unity Bank; Silver: Amy S. Greene Environmental Consultants, Barlow Family Tribune, Brewster and Judith Perkins, Four Paws Playground, Frank Rymon and Sons, Holland Liquors, International Process Plants, Mid Jersey Orthopaedics, Musconetcong Sewerage Authority, RiverLogic Solutions, Rockefeller Group, Schaible's Plumbing & Heating, SOS Woodstoves, and Wells Fargo Advisors. ☺

An Insider's Guide for Reporting River Emergencies on the Musconetcong River

IN CASE OF
EMERGENCY
CALL 911

Call **911**, to report an **Emergency** accident, drowning or condition that threatens lives or property immediately (fire, toxic dumping, bridge collapse).

Call **NJDEP's Hotline (1-877-927-6337)** if the emergency condition also threatens the environment or wildlife (chemical or oil spill, illegal dumping of waste, or abuse). See "Tips when calling NJDEP" below.

If you receive a report from someone about an emergency incident that might be negatively affecting the river:

1. Ask if they have called 911 or NJDEP (1-877-WARNDEP). If they haven't, please ask them to do so—eyewitness reports are the most valuable.
2. If they are unwilling or unable to make the call, follow the "Tips" below to report the incident.

Tips when calling NJDEP

1. Call 1-877-WARNDEP (after you call 911 if incident is life or property threatening).
2. Reporting is anonymous, but provide contact information if you wish.
3. Report "I am reporting an incident on the Musconetcong River. It is a (pesticide or spill, bank collapse, fish kill, or an abuse by people that is ongoing)".
4. "The incident is at (GPS, street crossings, or addresses are best)".
5. Ask where to send incident photos if available (taking upstream and downstream views are important as well as incident photos).
6. Ask which agency will be responding and their estimated time of arrival. Record incident numbers or any information NJDEP shares with you.

After emergency services have been called:

Share the incident information with MWA staff by phone or email with the date, time, location, and your reporting details—this information and any photos will help MWA follow up, if policy changes are necessary to prevent future incidents.



Posting incidents on our Facebook page: please don't imply that MWA will address emergency situations—we don't have staff trained to do that. Post only factual information that you know first-hand about the incident on the MWA Facebook page. Do not discuss, share, or respond to personal information about landowners, business owners, first responders or agency personnel—this can create serious problems for MWA.

For more information about reporting environmental or wildlife non-emergencies <http://www.nj.gov/dep/warndep.htm>.

To learn more about how human actions affect the river, become an MWA River Watcher!

Other Important Numbers

- General Information
1-866-DEP-KNOW or 609-777-DEP3
- Class B Recycling Centers
609-292-9880
- Class D Universal Waste
609-984-6985
- Drought Hotline
1-800-4-ITS-DRY or 609-633-0560
- Environmental Claims - Spill Fun
609-777-0101
- Forest Fires
to report during business hours
609-292-2977
to report on evenings and weekends
911
- Hazardous Waste
609-984-6985
- Information Resource Center (DEP Library)
609-984-2249
- Industrial Site Evaluation
609-777-0899

- Landfill Information
609-984-6985
- Medical Waste
609-984-6620
- Open Public Records Act (OPRA)
609-341-3121
- Parks and Forestry
609-984-0370
- Permit Coordination
609-292-3600
- Pesticide Information
609-530-4070
- Pollution Prevention
609-777-0518
- Press Inquiries
609-984-1795
- Private Well Testing Act
866-4PW-TEST
- Public Water Sampling Results
609-292-5550
- Radon Hotline
800-648-0394
- Recycling Information
609-984-3438
- Right-to-Know State Program Info
609-292-6714
- Safe Drinking Water
609-292-5550
- Site Remediation Info Program
800-253-5647
- Stormwater Permitting
609-633-7021
- Underground Storage Tanks
609-292-8761
- Water Testing
609-292-3950
- Wildlife Information
609-292-9450

VOLUNTEER Spotlight

An Interview with Joseph Saccente

There are many ways to give back. MWA is an environmental organization that focuses on water quality monitoring, native gardening, and cleaning up our watershed. However, we are a small organization, and as such, benefit incredibly from those who can provide high-end skillsets to offset the hundreds or thousands of dollars that their services would normally cost.



Joe Saccente volunteering for an MWA cleanup day at the River Resource Center.

Joe Saccente is a Senior Site IT Support Technician at a MARS Wrigley shared services center in Mount Olive, NJ. He supports hardware and software information technology services throughout this large, corporate organization.

For MWA, Joe has volunteered his time to upgrade our existing laptops, fix our Shared Drive intranet storage system, and provide IT upgrade consultation recommendations based on his expert opinion. As an environmental enthusiast, Joe has been on several MWA hiking trips and volunteered his time to our native garden during our springtime cleaning days.

When he is not volunteering for MWA, Joe also is also dedicated to supporting organizations looking for cancer and other disease treatment options. Through the MARS IT department, he repurposes retired computers for the Folding at Home project. Folding at home is a distributed calculation platform that was developed by Stanford University and relies entirely on the central processing units of computers to process protein folding and the movement of proteins implicated in many diseases. Donated computers work to provide insight into the way that proteins are folded in different environments to better understand how they work with different parts of the human cell. Changing the temperature or pressure may open a protein up for exploitation by different drugs or

treatment options. There are roughly 300,000 active Folding at Home teams, and thanks to Joe's hard work, MARS is in the top 500 contributors.

Q&A

MWA: Why is volunteering important to you?

Joe: I have always felt that volunteering for a cause that you care about helps grow your personal interest in different activities. I

enjoy hiking and fishing, and it has been rewarding to see the benefits that the work of myself and others have been a part of through volunteering for the MWA. I think water quality is important and it was exciting to learn about the dam removals improving fish habitat.

MWA: Do you think volunteering can help further a career?

Joe: I do believe that volunteering can help further a career as it can help grow your professional and personal skills. IT is always changing and progressing forward, so when support MWA's technology needs, I am continuously building my skillset and learning new technologies in different working environments.

MWA: What is your advice for someone looking to volunteer?

Joe: Volunteer for something that you are passionate about. If you do that, you will absolutely get as much back as you put in. At MARS we have five principles, one of which be mutuality. A volunteer venture should be mutually beneficial to the nonprofit and yourself. You should also look for volunteer opportunities where you can use your professional skillset in order to build your resume and network in your community.

If you would like to become a volunteer of the MWA, please email info@musconetcong.org, and be sure to include your interests and availability.

For more information on the Folding at Home project, visit <https://foldingathome.org>.

Connect with Us Virtually!

Since we are still uncertain of what the future holds for our events and in-person gatherings, MWA board and staff have been hard at work trying to connect with you virtually. You can view River Watcher training videos on our website, so that when we are able to get back into the water, you will be ready to take samples with us. We've shared Earth Day videos on native garden crafts and how water drains from land to the Musky. Aside from videos, we are increasing our blog content, so you can learn about what is going on with us, who our partners are, and fun nature facts that you can take with you.

Tish Lascelle, MWA Board President, has been hiking our Education Trail near the River Resource Center and along the Musconetcong River. Here are her observations on slugs! To read more of Tish's blog series, visit our website.

Notes from a Musky Trail Hiker #1: A Plug for Slugs

It's less like exercise, and more like exploration. Each week I will share some biology observations from my hike on the Musconetcong Wildlife Management Area trail in Asbury.

—Tish Lascelle, MWA President

This morning I observed slugs hanging out on skunk cabbage leaves. Being... well... slugs, they were easy to photograph. A good first subject. Let's see... what do I know about slugs? The first thing that came to mind was an old joke I heard years ago—that slugs are snails who have gone through a divorce. “Yep, she got the house.” They are both mollusks, but the slug is not disadvantaged by a lack of shell. A shell slows down a snail; whereas, the slug can zip around and slide into small crevices. Their main survival strategy is their icky, sticky slime—which makes it

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Warming Water Woes in the Watershed: Harmful Algal Blooms

By: Nancy Lawler,
Water Quality Program Coordinator

It's hard to believe that, only a year ago, our watershed was hit with Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). Beach closures and health advisories in our lake communities affected people that owned and worked for businesses that depend on visitors coming to enjoy lake activities. It took months to get a handle on the problem—and figure out what municipalities, the state, and the region should do about it.

People that live, work, and recreate around the lakes learned a lot about HABs. They learned that the greenish paint-like scum known as “blue-green algae”, is actually a type of bacteria. These cyanobacteria naturally occur in lakes and streams, but are usually present in low numbers. Their numbers explode into a “bloom” when conditions are right—lots of sunny days, warm temperatures, calm water conditions, and high levels of phosphorus from fertilizers in the water.

Attempts to control HABs could create more problems. Chemical algaecides work by breaking cell walls; when used on cyanobacteria, cyanotoxins are released into the water. These toxins harm people, pets, livestock, and wildlife on contact. While symptoms can appear mild, such as rashes, intestinal distress, headaches, or dizziness, cyanotoxins also cause serious health consequences that require medical attention. Cyanotoxins could poison fish; eating them could be dangerous.

We learned that high levels of phosphorus in water feed the bacteria. Phosphorus binds tightly to soil. When loose soil washes into waterways during storms,

it sinks to the bottom of a lake or pond as sediment. Phosphorus-contaminated mud usually mixes back into the water for many years. Scientists have found that the most effective way of managing cyanobacteria blooms is to put the bacteria on a diet: reduce the amount of sediment getting into waterways, and reduce the amount of fertilizer.

The economic effects of HABs in our watershed and region were devastating last summer and required cooperation from the entire community to address the problem. Every resident and business, and every level of government needs to work to stop the use of fertilizers with phosphorus, and stop soil from getting into our streams and lakes. Existing stormwater basins must be refitted with materials that remove phosphorus from runoff. Rain gardens need to be installed where they can slow sediment-laden stormwater from running into waterways.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) came up with new guidelines and thresholds in response to community worries and questions. In addition, this April, the state agency announced that the Lake Hopatcong Commission and Lake Hopatcong Foundation (LHF) received \$500,000 to implement strategies that will prevent and reduce the impact of HABs with the help of Rutgers University and consultants. The grant will be reinforced with funding and in-kind match from the Commission, LHF, Morris and Sussex Counties, and the lake municipalities. Funding is likely to be made available to other lake communities as well.

MWA will help by working with NJDEP to distribute materials to help citizens identify HABs. We are also looking to find out what the cyanobacteria levels are in places that NJDEP may not monitor. You can help too! If you suspect that a waterways has a harmful algal bloom, report it to NJDEP at <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bfbm/cyanohabreporting.html> so they can follow up. 🎧

Photo Credit: NJ Department of Environmental Protection
Harmful Algal Bloom appearing as scum on the surface of the water.



Limiting phosphorus in sediment in your community? Follow the R's:

- Reduce the size of your lawn
- Replace lawn with native plants—they don't need fertilizers and they support pollinators!
- Request that your local nurseries and garden centers carry native plants for your yard!

'Connect with Us Virtually'

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harder for predators to make dinner out of them.

I wondered if slugs could be consumable protein if I ever found myself in survivalist mode. A quick Google search told me that the answer is 'no'. There are reports of people getting sick from brain-invading parasites after they ate slugs, apparently inadvertently. Note to self: another good reason to wash and check my fresh produce.

Even though slugs evoke an “ick” response from most of us, they have their merit. We environmentalists are all about recycling and the slug is an excellent recycler. They feast on delicious, decaying organic matter and return it back to the earth as fertilizer. Scientists at Ithaca College have also studied slug goo to see if it could be a model for medical adhesives, replacing stitches and staples in some applications. Biomimicry—looking for nature-inspired solutions—fascinates me.

In my final plug for the slug, you have to admit that a creature with eyes on stalks reminiscent of submarine telescopes is just kinda' cool.



Welcome Jane!

We are pleased to welcome Jane Heeckt to the MWA as our new Policy Assistant. Through additional funding from the William Penn Foundation, we recently increased our staff capacity to address policy in our watershed. MWA has always been involved with policy. Connecting with Congress and local officials helped us establish our Partnership Wild & Scenic River status, and we are continually working to protect the river from harmful development and increased pollution.



Jane Heeckt,
MWA Policy
Assistant

Jane is supporting our policy initiative, titled Great Waters NJ. Jane brings over 20 years of experience managing projects at companies across a range of industries, and as an independent consultant.

Born in Grand Island, Nebraska and raised in Lebanon Township, Jane has a B.A. in Literature from Fordham University. An introductory class in environmental science, taken to fulfill her college science

requirement, sparked her interest in environmental protection. Jane's research on contamination at the Diamond Aerosol site not far from her home inspired her to join the Sierra Club, and her research paper earned her the opportunity to go to Washington D.C. as a volunteer lobbyist.

After graduating from Fordham, Jane stayed in New York and worked for several years in publishing and on Wall Street before returning to New Jersey. Jane currently lives with her family in Franklin Township. ☺

SAVE THESE DATES!

The Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) takes the health of our members, staff, and board seriously. We advocate for the health of the river because clean drinking water improves the health of communities. We have been closely monitoring the social distancing guidelines on group gatherings in New Jersey and have adjusted many of our spring events accordingly. When possible, we have offered online alternatives, but many of our events have been postponed or canceled.

Below are the fall events we are hoping to run, but please keep checking our website or subscribe to our Instream Update emails for the latest updates. You can subscribe to our Instream Updates by emailing info@musconetcong.org and "Subscribe" in the subject line. We hope you and your family stay healthy and safe during this uncertain time, and we look forward to seeing you when we can do so safely.

POSTPONED! Annual Members' Meeting. 6-9 pm. Hawk Pointe Golf Club, 4 Clubhouse Drive, Washington, NJ 07882. 2020 is off to an exciting start for our organization, and we have a lot to share! Please join us for light refreshments as we announce all the projects, programs, and changes to come. [Click here to register for free!](#)

Saturday, October 10 – Wine Tasting on the Musky. 2-5 pm. Warren County Rod and Gun Club, 279 Asbury Bloomsbury Road, Asbury, NJ 08802. Join the MWA for a scenic afternoon and sample fine wines, local beers, and live music. This is a tentatively scheduled date. Check back for more updates and how to purchase tickets later this summer.

Saturday, November 28 – Point Mountain Hike. Meet at 10 am. Join MWA as we hike the Ridge Trail of Point Mountain Reserve. This is a good hike for beginners and expert hikers. The trail is diverse and challenging at times and includes a steep and rocky incline. Bring a snack and water to the gravel parking lot on Point Mountain Road, 0.3 miles from Route 57. MWA members are free! Non-members are asked to donate \$3 per person (Not more than \$10/family). This is a tentatively scheduled date. Check back for more updates and how to register later this summer.

Thursday, December 3 - Asbury Mill Dinner. 6-9 pm. Hawk Pointe Golf Club, 4 Clubhouse Drive, Washington, NJ 07882. The Asbury Mill has come a long way since it was originally donated to the MWA in 1999. Now, we invite you to learn about this restoration process and what the future goals of the Asbury Mill are. This is a tentatively scheduled date. Check back for more updates and how to purchase tickets later this year.

We're Social! Follow us on:



Facebook
Musconetcong
Watershed
Association



Instagram
@MuskyWatershed



Twitter
@MuskyWatershed



Meetup
Musconetcong
River Area
Outdoor Activities

For more information or to register for any of these events, please email info@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 1992 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 26 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:

- \$20 Student
- \$30 Family
- \$50 Supporter
- \$100 Sustainer
- \$250 Steward
- \$500 Champion
- \$1,000+ Life Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Mail to:

Musconetcong Watershed Association
PO Box 113, Asbury, NJ 08802

- ◆ *What's Inside:*
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