



2018

Annual Review

MUSCONETCONG



WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION

A note from the Board President Tish Lascelle

“Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man.”

-Stewart Udall, US Secretary of Interior, 1961-1969

Quite simply, the MWA exists to protect the Musconetcong watershed and thereby, people like you who live, work and play in this beautiful place as well as those who are downstream of us. There are so many different ways to protect a watershed and we must be very strategic in choosing where and how to deploy our resources. The best protections leverage help from volunteers and partners and have a big/lasting impact.

Some of our work produces an immediate benefit. For example, we coordinated our 26th river cleanup this past year, and we installed a stormwater-filtering rain garden at the Asbury Mill. Each of these activities is visible and directly protects our river. But sometimes our work is like brushing your teeth – an investment made now for a significant benefit in the future. It's not always exciting, but it's the best way to ensure the Musconetcong can be enjoyed for generations to come. We invested a lot of time this past year advocating for compliant, responsible development in the watershed. One river property proposed for new homes has had periods of activity on and off for 10+ years. While we still can't claim either victory or defeat, we continue to monitor the developer's actions and engage when we see the right places and timing to make a difference.

Looking toward the year ahead, we have a number of plans to highlight recreational opportunities in the watershed. We will be releasing an online, interactive paddling map of the river, complete with suggested river runs and places to put in/take out kayaks and canoes. We're also hoping to complete the new Musconetcong Island Park (page 5) for more accessible fishing and swimming.

There is nothing quite like a day of recreation on the Musky to bring home the value of our work. We believe that the Musconetcong River flows through every life in the watershed in some way.

Thank you for sharing our vision and supporting our work!

-Tish Lascelle

About our Front Cover

Charlie Fineran volunteers for MWA and is the Chairman of the Musconetcong River Management Council. As the Director of Open Space, he takes photos of local parks and wildlife including this clouded sulphur butterfly on aster.

A note from the Executive Director Alan R. Hunt, Ph.D.

This year there were clearly two themes on our mind: Wild & Scenic Rivers and the Asbury Mill.

First, 2018 marked the 50th Anniversary of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. Originally, we had not planned much fanfare, but opportunity came knocking. This is a familiar theme for MWA as our long-time friends know. The National Park Foundation made sure to include Rivers in its funding awards and we landed the matching funds for the Musconetcong Island Park project (Page 5). We also hosted the Wild & Scenic Film Festival On Tour, which included us in the River Connections film, telling the story of Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers. We worked with our municipal and county partners to add Wild & Scenic River signs to our river's bridges. Turning a derelict site into a park, utilizing films for outreach, and promoting the National Wild & Scenic "brand" builds our visibility in new ways as the region's demographics change.

Second, we were able to secure significant funding to complete exterior restoration of the Asbury Mill. One of the best parts of being at MWA is seeing the visible change we bring to the community. I love the new windows and stucco up on the Old Main Street side. This work continues into 2019. But one of the lessons this year was the importance of experts. As we shift from the ease of working with skilled masons and carpenters following the old lines of the Mill's structure to the more complex, modern systems like the septic system installation, we needed to hire and retain professional experts. Most grants do not cover those expenses. The Mill Dinner we hosted helped, and we hope we got everyone caught up on the project's long journey (Page 8).

We continue to work toward removing the Warren Glen dam and making strides on other stream restoration projects – with 2018 largely being a planning year for both.

Our volunteers, staff, and Board can't be thanked enough for how they help improve the watershed. With their help, we tried out a few new things – hiring a seasonal Environmental Educator for Camp Musky (Page 7), developing a new grounds plan with the Grounds Committee and Wild Ridge Plants, and applying for a National Water Trail designation for the river and Lake Hopatcong – our first collaborative project with Lake Hopatcong Foundation. And onward we go into 2019!

Alan Hunt

About our Back Cover

Brian Butler is an elementary school teacher in Washington, NJ and a member of the MWA. He particularly enjoys the stretch of the Musky from Hampton to Asbury, NJ.

Wild & Scenic Rivers Celebrating 50 years



Film Festival Panel of Speakers moderated by Krassi Lazarova, Centenary University.

Hosting a Film Festival

2018 marked the inaugural year of MWA and the Musconetcong River Management Council partnering to host the Wild & Scenic Film Festival On Tour. This initial festival was created to promote the 50th Anniversary of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act of which the Musconetcong is a Partnership Wild & Scenic River managed by the River Management Council.

By hosting the festival at Centenary University in Hackettstown, NJ, the MWA expanded its reach to the northern part of the watershed. This helped us to diversify MWA membership.

An informed panel of speakers spoke on topics relating to the films' topics of river conservation, wildlife protection, and having fun outdoors. Local and like-minded nonprofits including North Jersey RC&D, Trout Unlimited, Lake Hopatcong Foundation, Sussex County Bird Club and more tabled the event which also helped to increase awareness of regional environmental issues and projects.

The MWA and Musconetcong River Management Council agreed that this was a successful event that should continue on an annual basis.



MWA worked with the greater Musconetcong River Management Council to create and print Wild & Scenic River signs for bridge crossings along the Musconetcong River. (Photo left to right: Cole Baldino, New Jersey Delaware River Coordinator, Trout Unlimited; Paul Muir, Mayor, Bethlehem Township; Alan Hunt, Executive Director, Musconetcong Watershed Association.

Creating Musconetcong Island Park

#WeAreParks

MWA continues to move forward on the removal of a defunct and unsightly lab building across from the Asbury Mill in order to create Musconetcong Island Park. The building was previously used as a laboratory by Asbury Carbons and was donated to MWA from the Riddle Family at the same time that we received the Mill and River Resource Center—MWA's current headquarters. As it stands, the unused building is a hazard, but at one time it played an important role for industry along the river. This history will be acknowledged and captured with an interpretative sign as part of the restoration.

Once the lab building is removed, work will begin on creating Musconetcong Island Park. MWA plans to reinforce the stairs leading down to the island for safer access. It is our hope this park will be a place where local residents can access the river for recreational pursuits and it will provide another eco-tourism location where people can learn about the Village of Asbury's history.

Thank you to our funders: NJ Green Acres and National Park Foundation for making Musconetcong Island Park possible.



MWA volunteer Andrew Curtis created a rendering of a vision of the completed Musconetcong Island Park.

2018 Water Quality on the Musky

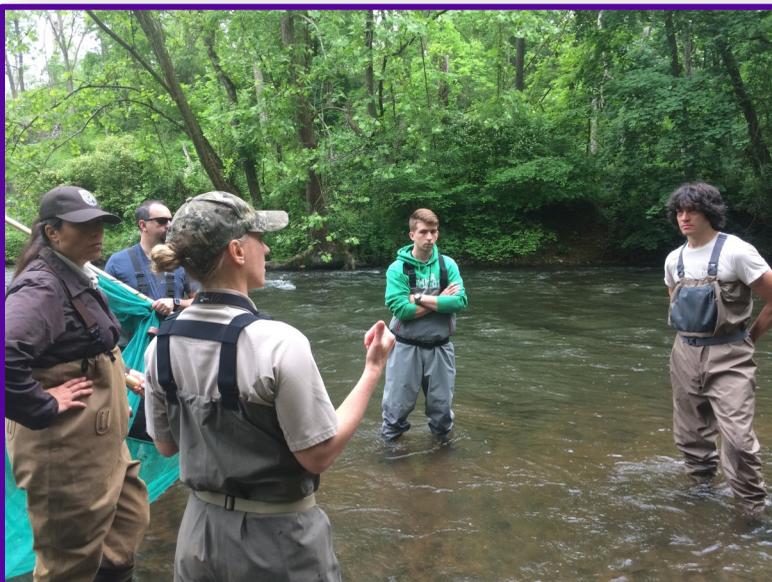
MWA's Water Quality program has had its busiest year yet!

MWA staff is working with U.S. Fish & Wildlife and Princeton Hydro to assess water quality and fish habitat near the former Hughesville Dam site. Unfortunately, this year's analysis revealed the presence of the New Zealand Mudsnail in this section of the river. MWA reacted quickly and spread the word to other professionals. MWA plans to host informational training about the snail as part of our River Watcher program.

In 2018, MWA and Montclair State University continued to partner on the collection of water samples for a bacteria tracking project and monitored water flow along the Musky. Overall, 12 sites were monitored throughout late spring, summer, and early fall. Once data has been reviewed, MWA will partner with agencies, municipalities and other nonprofits to inform and shape environmental policy.

Partners at the Stroud Water Research Center and the Academy of Natural Sciences worked with MWA to collect data at eight sites in the Musconetcong and Lopatcong Watersheds as part of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative. With the help of Trout Unlimited, two sensors were also installed in a tributary in Franklin Township and on Lubber's Run.

Overall, a lot of partner support and volunteer efforts helped to create an effective water quality monitoring year. MWA is excited to see the outcomes!



Cathy Marion, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Biologist – training MWA interns and Princeton Hydro engineers on the use of electroshocking to catch fish.

Education Programs & Camp Musky

Education Program

MWA's Watershed Education Program is a hands-on classroom and field program. Students spend three days in the classroom learning about fresh water ecology, ground and surface water characteristics, and the historic and geological features unique to the limestone valleys in the Musconetcong and Delaware River watersheds. On the fourth day of the program, students travel to the river where they complete a macroinvertebrate study and chemical analysis of the stream to learn a little more about the health of the river. This program promotes a sense of stewardship for the environment that is rooted in knowledge of science, local ecology and history. In 2018, MWA's watershed education program was presented to 28 classes in six local schools, educating over 480 students on the importance of protecting our natural resources.



Camp Musky

Camp Musky is an educational and fun day camp for kids aged 5 to 12. It offers an outdoor learning experience through hands-on, river-based programs. Campers utilize the beautiful River Resource Center property and adjoining preserved 30 acres of meadows, woods, wetlands and river as they explore the environment through nature based activities, stories, crafts, games and projects. In 2018, we added Board Member Tomas Gonzales as our Camp Environmental Educator! Tomas led campers on birding expeditions, daily hikes, and river explorations. Over the course of the summer, 46 campers attended this program.

The Asbury Mill

2018 Highlights

MWA's vision for the restoration of the Asbury Mill is coming along! We'll be offering frequent tours of this historic beauty beginning in the Fall of 2019. Future uses of the building include space for our growing staff and interpretive displays for community education. We also plan to make the space available as a unique setting for public meetings and private events.

Progress in every construction project is governed by time and the availability of funding. We are grateful that our principal funders, Franklin Township, Warren County and the New Jersey Historic Trust, understand the building's possibilities and support our work. MWA is also fortunate to have found experienced and enthusiastic contractors to work with. Project Manager Paul Schroeck has brought order and sequence to this major restoration effort, and principal contractors, mason Pat Breslin and millwright Paul Grefe, are true experts in their fields. The beauty of their work shines through the functional simplicity of the building.

As work on the outside of the building is finished, the Mill is taking on the 1906 appearance that we have chosen to represent. This Spring will see completion of the exterior work; the remaining windows will be installed and the stone walls will be re-pointed and finished. Once the exterior is completed, interior work will accelerate. Former MWA Board member Jim Hedden has also literally laid the groundwork for a creative, practical and economical heating system.

In 2018, MWA hosted a charrette – a meeting with local leaders, neighbors and planners – to determine how to best use the available space. As an outcome of that discussion, we'll be submitting plans to add an external elevator to the back side of the building, providing disabled-visitor access where there currently is none. Because the building is in a historic district, this will require permission from Franklin Township, Warren County and the State Historic Preservation Office.

The Asbury Mill represents a proud period in Asbury's past and we are proud to preserve cultural values, such as the Mill, within our watershed.



MWA charrette participants receiving a tour of the Asbury Mill.

Delaware River Watershed Initiative

#4states1source

2018 marked the beginning of Phase 2 of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI). The DRWI is a William Penn Foundation funded collective of 50 nonprofit organizations who work across four states, in eight distinct regions – known as clusters, to protect one shared source of clean water. These groups work together to restore waterways, protect forested headwaters, encourage responsible land use and farm management, create access to nature, and ensure clean water for all. MWA has been part of the DRWI since its inception, working with 12 organizations in the New Jersey Highlands Cluster, which comprises 690 square miles in Northwest New Jersey and is made up of five major watersheds – the Musconetcong River, Paulins Kill, Pequest River, Lopatcong Creek, and Pohatcong Creek.

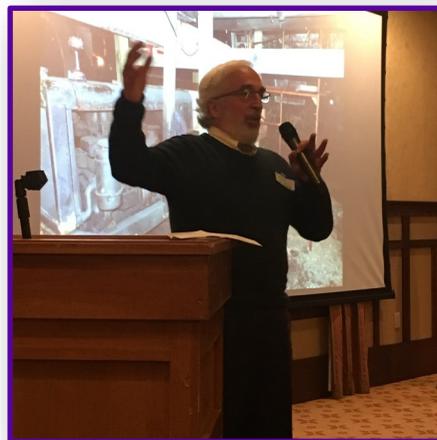
In Phase 2, MWA has been and will continue to work towards protecting and restoring the Musconetcong River by working with municipalities to improve stormwater management, which will reduce runoff to the Musconetcong during storm events. Working with partners, MWA plans to restore streams that are susceptible to erosion, which will help reduce the sediment flowing into the river and improve wild brook trout habitat. MWA also serves as the NJ Highlands Cluster's Water Quality Data Coordinator. MWA is excited to continue working with our partners and the William Penn Foundation. To learn more about this initiative visit www.4states1source.org.



2018 Events

Legacy Events

The **Run for the River** remains one of MWA's biggest fundraisers to date. This year's Run brought out locals who continue to support our mission as well as a new generation interested in protecting clean water. MWA's **Native Plant Sale** continues to teach the community that plants local to our region are most effective in preserving water quality in the watershed while also being pretty to look at, naturally pest resistant, and drought tolerant. Finally, the **River Cleanup** continues to break records in MWA volunteerism. In 2018, 460 volunteers collected 274 bags of trash and recyclables and 31 tires as well as other larger trash items throughout the Musconetcong Watershed.



New Event

MWA celebrated the continued restoration of the historic Asbury Mill with a dinner fundraiser held at Hawk Pointe Golf Club in December. Members, stakeholders, board, staff, and the local community came out to hear about the history of this local landmark and MWA's plans to restore and repurpose it. This was the largest fundraiser event of the year and helped MWA reach our \$10k fundraiser goal for 2018. This money can now be used as matching funds when trying to secure grants and larger fundraising efforts.

2018 Financials

The Musconetcong Watershed Association is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We rely on grants, fundraisers, memberships, and donations from environmentally conscious individuals who support local water quality... People like you! Below are our financial highlights from 2018. Financial reports are available upon request by contacting Brenda Berardo, MWA Finance Manager.

2018 Sources of Funds

Government Grants	\$571,751
Non Government Grants	\$261,002
Individual Contributions	\$35,633
Events	\$33,121
NJ RC&D	\$22,544
Programs	\$21,066
Memberships	\$16,570
Facilities Rental	\$5,375
Interest	\$828

How Funds Were Spent

Program Management	\$163,076
Water Quality Management	\$143,326
Management & Gen. Operations	\$103,945
Watershed Management	\$56,902
Education	\$55,771
Fundraising	\$35,314
Dam Removal	\$8,889

Thank you, volunteers!

Volunteers provided **4,015** total hours of service which is equivalent to **\$110,270** of in-kind support for the MWA. This helps us meet grant reporting goals and matching funds requirements.





Our Mission:

The Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and improving the quality of the Musconetcong River and its Watershed, including its natural and cultural resources.

www.musconetcong.org