



Children loved the macroinvertebrates at the bug table.

RiverFest a Great Success

Thanks to the support of the local business people, Shelburne Falls was the site of many residents and visitors enjoying this 18th educational celebration of the Deerfield River. New this year was a free shuttle bus taking visitors from one end of town to the other and pointing out our contributors and activities. The Wingmasters, cooperatively sponsored with the Franklin Land Trust, was a unique demonstration of five birds of prey from a 17-pound golden eagle to a 13-ounce Saw-whet owl. Julie Colier's handling and description of the birds enthralled the capacity crowds.

Emily Gopin and Sarah Pirtle had helped children make head dresses to wear in the Frog and Flower parade, and Philippe Simon led children in the drum corps--with drums they had made from old paint cans. Hoopoe the Clown entertained and engaged people on the street in his own special way. DRWA had their display with the Bug

Guy (Mike Cole) with his macro invertebrates from different stretches of the river. Helping in many seen and unseen ways were the Student Conservation Corps interns who had helped plan this event and carried it out. They are a great bunch of young people doing community service as a way of working off some of their college loans. Next year, save the second Saturday after Memorial Day.

DRWA Gets a Close Look at Hydroelectric Operations

Winding through mountain gorges and pausing in reservoirs from the Somerset Reservoir 25 miles north of the Massachusetts border in southern Vermont to its terminus in Greenfield at the Connecticut River, the Deerfield River works for and is controlled by three companies that operate a series of dams and hydroelectric generating stations along its length. Highly regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the network of mostly small generating facilities provides intermittent boosts of hydro energy to the nation's power grid.

Ownership of the hydro facilities has changed hands in the last few years, and few on the DRWA board had ever visited all of the sites, so it seemed appropriate to ask the new owners to show off their operations. On June 23, Matthew Cole of TransCanada Power Co. Hydro Northeast organized a tour and provided a van to haul fifteen DRWAers to each hydro facility. The trip provided a total picture of how the river is used to generate electricity.

For the tour, which could not be completed in a single day, the river was divided into the Vermont section for June and the Massachusetts section for the July trip. The Vermont facilities are all operated by TransCanada.

We drove first to the storage reservoir at Somerset, which does not have an associated generating station, but stores water for controlled release as needed downstream. Somerset is surrounded by the Green Mountain National Forest where there are picnic facilities, boat launching and hiking trails. On our way out the long gravel access road, we followed a young moose who trotted along in front of us for about a mile before a truck coming the other way spooked it into the forest.

At the next reservoir, Searsburg, a large wooden barrel-like conduit paralleling the river diverts water downstream to the Searsburg generating station--visible from Route 9, just west of Wilmington. Matt took us into this station

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and explained why the pipe is needed—to get enough "head" to turn the generators.

The next impoundment on the Deerfield is Harriman Reservoir, used extensively for recreation, as well as water storage. It is known for its famous Glory Hole spillway. Matt explained that with FERC re-licensing of all the dams in the 1990s, a constant minimum flow is required from all of the dams, so that what 20 years ago was often a dry river bed is now a flowing stream. The 1924 Harriman dam was once the largest earth-filled dam in the country. Another huge conduit pipes water 2 1/2 miles through the mountains from the reservoir to Harriman Station, just upstream of the Sherman Reservoir. Sherman sits on the Vermont/Massachusetts line and once served the Yankee Atomic Plant with cooling water. It now has a picnic area and a handy boat launching ramp as well as a pair of resident eagles.

The July tour started at the Number 5 dam below Sherman in Monroe Bridge, where first a tunnel, then an open canal, takes most of the Deerfield's water to the Number 5 station. At this point things change drastically. Another Canadian-owned operator, Brookfield Generating Company, controls a short segment of the river and uses it to supply its huge Bear Swamp pumped-storage generating plant. This facility includes lower and upper reservoirs and an underground generating/pumping station. Our tour was guided by Ken Thane who demonstrated a model that explains how the water is pumped from the lower to the upper reservoir. The pumps reverse to act as generators during peak demand times. The generating activity can change the level of the river behind the dam some 18 feet, but cleverly does not affect river flow. The dam in this facility is the Fife Brook Dam--the source of the white water releases enjoyed by rafters, boaters and tubers at Zoar Gap and beyond.

The next dams, #4 and #3 in Charlemont and Shelburne Falls, are again TransCanada facilities. They use a tunnel and a canal respectively to feed their small generators. Below the #3 dam is the Gardner Falls facility, owned by Con Edison Co, of New York. It has its own dam and uses a canal to feed the generators, which are operated automatically by water level sensors. Dave Schmidt and Charley Molongoski led this tour.

Downstream, #2 Dam (TransCanada's again) is one of the least accessible, but the company provides a good public launch site for the impoundment at Wilcox Hollow for cartop craft. To get to the dam, the tour had to go through a locked gate and private drive. This dam and generating station forms a single unit. It has interesting pneumatic flash boards atop the dam which can be activated remotely. Matt Cole says there are plans to build a portage route for boaters around the dam.

#2 dam is the last, because #1 was never built, so the river flows unobstructed to the Connecticut River.

Board News Changes on the Board

After almost two years serving as DRWA Board Secretary, Catherine Reid presented her resignation as she has accepted a teaching position at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, NC. As a consolation prize, Catherine sent us a very interesting article she wrote on the history of the Deerfield River, originally published in Historic Deerfield Magazine. You can find it on our web site under "What's New?" We will miss Catherine's efficient work on the board, and wish her all the best in her next adventure.

Also resigning from the Board is Vice-President Carrie Banks, whose responsibilities at her paid job, Riverways, are increasing and preventing her from serving on watershed association boards. Fortunately, Carrie will continue her much appreciated involvement with DRWA, including managing our membership database, helping Polly Bartlett with Riverfest planning, and stream teams.

There are therefore two openings on the board. We welcome inquiries from members who would like to join the DRWA leadership. Please contact **Françoise Walk** at drwa@deerfieldriver.org.

Green River Chapter News

We met June 5 in Greenfield and voted to name the chapter "Friends of the Green River." Plans were discussed for staffing a booth at the Green River Festival on the Greenfield Community College grounds Friday July 14th and Saturday July 15th. The Green River Chapter showcased its educational display and the Enviroscape, and sold brand new T-shirts! To get involved in Green River issues, call **David Boles** at 413-773-7560. Our next meeting will be **Sunday September 17th** at the Guilford Elementary School in Guilford, VT. Meeting will start at 4pm, followed by a potluck dinner.

Saturday **September 30th** will be this year's river cleanup, starting at 9am at the Green River Swimming Area on Nash Mill Rd. in Greenfield. Entertainment and a picnic will take follow the cleanup at 1 PM.

Save These Dates for Meetings

Green River Chapter Meeting: Sunday, September 17th, 4 – 7 pm, at the Guilford Elementary School, Guilford, VT. *This meeting includes a potluck dinner.*

DRWA's Annual Meeting: Tuesday, October 17th, 6:00 pm, at the Arms Academy (Shelburne Falls Historical Society), Church & Maple Streets, Shelburne Falls. Refreshments, brief meeting, speaker to be announced.

Colrain Programs Highlight Vernal Pools, Farms, and Forests

The March vernal pool program cosponsored with the Colrain Open Space Committee was well attended. There was concern about the lack of late-winter snow cover, and the ensuing lack of March and early April rain. Not to worry, these seasonal wetland creatures have adapted pretty well to extreme conditions over the last 10,000 years.

A "Sustainable Farming" program with Larry Shearer, also cosponsored with Colrain Open Space, drew a nice crowd to the Colrain Community Church. Mr. Shearer is soon to take his dairying operation "organic."

The May "Woodlot Management" program, the final cosponsored presentation with Colrain Open Space, helped get several local landowners out to walk their land and learn about sustainable wood harvesting with Rita Thibideau and Dave Celino.

North Parish School Puts Mini-Grant to Work

The fourth grade at North Parish School in Greenfield has completed its "Classification of the Atlantic Salmon in the Deerfield River" project, which was granted \$300 from DRWA's mini-grant program. Grant funds were used to purchase a digital camera and accessories that were used by students to document their work and outings. Christa Gardner, K-5 Technology Teacher for The Greenfield Public Schools, wrote "The children and teachers that participated in this project thoroughly enjoyed learning about the river, its inhabitants and the Deerfield River Valley." To see the students' work, follow the link on our home page at www.deerfieldriver.org.

DRWA is accepting proposals for the coming year's grants. Please see details at:

<http://www.deerfieldriver.org/minigrants.htm>

Student Conservation Corps Helped Clear the M-M Trail

The Shelburne end of the Mahican-Mohawk trail was cleared of winter debris thanks to thirteen Student Conservation Corps interns. This is still a "Rough Walking Trail" and should be respected as such. Our motto is "Protect the land and let the people scramble." Sluice Brook is usually "jumpable." Dragon Brook, where our log bridge was taken out last fall by a log coming down the brook, is a longer jump and should not be attempted in any high water event. We hope to put some stepping

stones in the brook which will help during summer and fall.

Please note: we need *volunteers* to help with trail work. We hope to have a new Trail Supervisor on duty by the time this letter comes out but we need the arms and clip-pers and saws of the many people who enjoy this trail. If you can help, please contact **Polly Bartlett** at 625-6628.

The South River Bridge is still bound up in paperwork so hikers should be prepared to wade the river. We have not given up hope to span this river with an all weather footbridge but TransCanada Hydro Northeast who owns the property always finds another hoop for us to jump through. So keep your wading sneakers handy for a while longer.

Deerfield River Watershed Association's Fall Hike Schedule for 2006

The DRWA is again offering a series of hikes or bike trips to help the residents of the Watershed know and enjoy their surroundings. All hikes are open to the public at no charge. Shoes or boots are required.

Saturday September 9. Hawley Bog and side trip for lunch at a spectacular overlook of the Chickley River Valley. This will be a very easy hike on trails and logging roads. Because parking is limited, we will meet at the parking lot for Avery's Store in Charlemont at 10:00 AM. Pre-registration with the leader is requested. Polly Bartlett, 625-6628

Sunday, October 1: Spruce Hill in Savoy State Forest. This is an easy hike which is relatively flat for the first mile then climbs steeply to the ridge which overlooks Adams and North Adams. We will meet at the Shunpike Rest Area on Route 2 West of Charlemont Center at 10:00 AM to carpool as necessary. Shoes or boots are required. Pre-registration with the leader is requested. Polly Bartlett, 625-6628

Sunday, October 15 10AM Bike the Green River. An easy 25 mile bike from the top of the Green River watershed in Marlboro, all the way downhill to Greenfield. We will leave cars in Marlboro and carpool back there at the end of the tour. You can meet an hour early at the Skyline Restaurant and have breakfast before getting on your bike. Bring a lunch and water, helmets required. 10 people maximum. Option to stop half-way in Green River Village. Pre-registration required with Françoise Walk mf.walk@verizon.net or 413-774-7025. We will contact participants before the hike to arrange for transportation. Fair-weather-only event!

**Volunteers Needed:
2006 Macroinvertebrate Assessment
of the South River watershed**

The DRWA will perform its second year of macroinvertebrate monitoring over the weekend of September 23 and 24. This year, we will collect macroinvertebrate samples and physical habitat data from as many as ten stream and river reaches in the South River watershed. The data will be used to determine the current ecological health of the South River and its major tributaries, including Pumpkin Hollow, Poland, and Creamery brooks. We are also currently performing a study of the effects of the current hydropeaking regime on the macroinvertebrate communities of the Deerfield River. Our next round of sampling is set for Sept 27 (Wed), Sept 28 (Thurs) and, if needed, Sept 30 (Sat). If you can help on any or parts of those days, please contact Mike. Interested volunteers can contact project leader Mike Cole at 413-774-5515 or mcole@abrinc.com

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The Deerfield River Watershed Association is a volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation, protection and care of the Deerfield River and its tributaries in the interests of its adjacent communities. Its activities include water quality monitoring, educational programs, administration of volunteer programs and participation in dam licensing matters.

Marie Françoise Walk, *President*
Joan Adler, *Treasurer*

Board Members:
David Boles, Polly Bartlett, Peter Buell, Robert May,
Karl Meyer, Ted Merrill

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