

*Floating Sober:*

## Charlemont to Enforce Parking and Alcohol Rules along Deerfield River

Facing increasing problems with parking and loitering, the Town of Charlemont passed a parking ban along South River Road, Rte 8A South (aka West Hawley Road), and Zoar Road. In addition, the Town approved an Alcohol Prohibition Bylaw where no person may possess any opened container of an alcoholic beverage or drink or consume any alcoholic beverage from such a container, on any public area, including on the river and at access points. Persons in violation of the bylaw are subject to arrest and fines of up to \$500.

The Deerfield River offers some of the best river recreation in the country, particularly during the summer when guaranteed whitewater releases attract visitors from all over the region. Many visitors often lack information on where to access the river, what precautions they should take (e.g. wearing a life vest), and what type of water conditions to expect. In addition, the consumption of alcoholic beverages has become an ever-increasing problem leading to accidents and injuries on and along the river.

Although the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR 323 2.12.5) prohibits the consumption of alcohol between Dam #5 in Monroe/Rowe to Dam #4 in Charlemont/Buckland, the regulation lacks a penalty clause – i.e. violators cannot be fined or arrested. Charlemont's new rules add penalties. Over the next couple of months, the Town will pursue other projects to designate official access points, educate river users about safety, and to reduce the traffic concerns and congestion.

**Carrie Banks**

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## Annual Meeting - Tues. Oct 16

**Join us** Tuesday October 16th for our annual meeting, held in the community room at the Four Rivers Charter School (248 Colrain Road, Greenfield--next to Greenfield Community College). Refreshments will start at 6:30pm. At 7pm we will have a brief business meeting including board elections, to be followed by our featured speaker, award-winning local author Dave Jacke speaking on Ecology, Design, and Agriculture: A New Synthesis.

Jacke, primary author of the award winning two-volume book *Edible Forest Gardens*, has been a student of ecology and design since the 1970s, and has run his own design firm, Dynamics Ecological Design, since 1984. A cofounder of Land Trust at Gap Mountain in Jaffrey, NH, he homesteaded there for a number of years. He holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Simon's Rock College and a M.A. in Landscape Design from the Conway School of Landscape Design. His talk will focus on edible forest gardening as appropriate to temperate deciduous forest regions (See [edibleforestgardens.com/events](http://edibleforestgardens.com/events)).

## DRWA Water Monitors Chase Down Bacteria Sources

This year's sampling efforts, led by Marjo Iken and Mike Cole plus support by a number of dedicated volunteers, focused on problem areas identified during last year's sampling effort. Mid-summer (July) monitoring revealed highly elevated bacteria concentrations at spots on the South River in Conway and the North River in Colrain.

As a result of the elevated counts, the locally popular "Murphy's Hole" was closed to swimming for most of the summer by the Conway Board of Health while further sampling was performed to determine the source of the contamination. Although a stormwater pipe below the next upriver Rt. 116 road crossing was later found discharging elevated bacteria concentrations shortly after rain events, the concentrations and volume discharging from the pipe seemed insufficient to be the cause of the problems in Murphy's Hole. The source of the contamination in Murphy's Hole could not be determined and bacteria concentrations returned to safe levels for primary contact recreation by the end of July.

## Chasing Bacteria Sources—from page 1

On the North River, elevated bacteria concentrations have occurred on the downriver side of the Rt. 112 bridge in Colrain center for the past three sampling seasons. We had suspected agricultural activity upriver of the bridge (which may still be contributing bacteria to the river, particularly during rain events), but through this year's efforts, we were able to identify the likely source of contamination as the Colrain Center School's septic leach field. We were able to isolate the potential source by bracketing the contaminated sampling site immediately below the bridge with a sample on the upstream side of the bridge. Additional sampling will occur at this site by MA DEP to confirm whether the source of the contamination is indeed the school.

DRWA's sampling program is supported by funding from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP). This is the third year DRWA and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments have undertaken summertime bacteria sampling on the North and South Rivers.

Mike Cole

## Mahican-Mohawk Trail Looks for New Links

On Wednesday, September 5, thirty people showed up at the Charlemont Inn for a meeting on how the Mahican-Mohawk (M-M) Trail can be improved and extended. The meeting was called by Paul Jahnige who directs the Greenways program for the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and was attended by private citizens and state and other organizations representing the interests in the trail from Deerfield to the Hudson River.

DRWA's most pressing interest is in constructing a bridge over the South River. Matthew Cole, representing TransCanada Hydro Northeast, which owns the land on which the bridge would be built, said that his company is set to move ahead with the plans for a fiberglass bridge on the stone piers at the bottom of the river gorge. This is very encouraging news, since the bridge plans are comparatively simple and DRWA has already raised much of the money necessary for its construction. If things go as planned, hikers may be able to walk across the South River by the end of the 2008 season.

In addition to the bridge, efforts are underway to create an extension of the M-M Trail from Old Deerfield to the Pocumtuck Ridge Trail which goes from South Sugarloaf in South Deerfield to Poet's Seat Tower in Greenfield.

There is also increasing interest in the Town of Shelburne in extending the M-M Trail from its present trail head on Route 2 to Shelburne Falls Village and the Pot-holes. This would be particularly interesting because it follows the original trail used by the Indians and then the



*Have fun, but stay safe:*

### Here are some safety tips for river recreation

**Respect the River:** Although water releases are controlled by the dams, unpredictable water levels, hazards and currents can happen at **any** time.

**Wear a Life Jacket:** An inflated tube does not serve the same purpose as a life jacket. In many situations the tube will continue floating down river while you continue to drown. Children should **always** wear lifejackets while on the river!

**No Alcohol/No Drugs:** Impaired judgment leads to accidents and injuries. When intoxicated individuals flip into the river, they will swim down rather than to the surface – significantly increasing the likelihood of drowning.

**High Water:** When water levels rise, currents and hazards increase. Be aware of water levels and know your limits.

**Do not stand up in moving water:** Foot entrapment between rocks or debris can allow the current to hold you underwater. Float with your feet up in front of you, facing downstream so you can fend off any rocks.

settlers going from Deerfield to the Salmon Falls. Part of this road is still visible, but significant construction problems exist. DRWA is supporting the efforts of the Town of Shelburne and the Shelburne Falls Village Partnership, which have submitted an application for a Greenways grant to design and construct a walking trail between the Potholes in Shelburne Falls and the existing Mahican-Mohawk Trail that goes eastward to Deerfield. If you are interested in helping with any part of the trail, please let Polly Bartlett know, 413-625-6628 or [dbartlet@crocker.com](mailto:dbartlet@crocker.com).

Polly Bartlett

## DRWA Awarded Grant to Monitor Vernal Pools

The Association was recently awarded \$5,160 from the Deerfield River Enhancement Fund to monitor and certify vernal pools in the Massachusetts portion of the Deerfield River watershed next spring and summer. Many people have become familiar with these temporary wetlands that typically fill with water during the fall and winter, and dry up during summer. Although usually on the smaller side, vernal pools are home to an incredible diversity of life, including not only the well-known wood frog and spotted salamander, but also dragonflies, caddisflies, diving beetles, midges, clams and snails, fairy shrimp, and others. The fairy shrimp and Jefferson's salamander are two state-listed species that are dependent on vernal pools to complete their life cycle.

DRWA will be training volunteers next winter and spring to certify these unique wetlands by identifying the animals that spend all or part of their life cycle in the pools. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) designed the certification program to encourage citizens to collect data on vernal pools and submit these data to NHESP for certification. The certification of a vernal pool increases its level of protection by proving that it exists and provides important habitat for wildlife.

If you are interested in learning more about the project or would like to volunteer, please contact Pat Serrentino at 413-772-0520 or [pserr@crocker.com](mailto:pserr@crocker.com).

The Deerfield River Enhancement Fund was established in 1999 by USGen New England, Inc. for the environmental preservation of the Deerfield River watershed. The fund is managed jointly by the Vermont Community Foundation and the Community Foundation for Western Massachusetts.

**Pat Serrentino**



Vernal pool in Hawley that has filled with water during the spring, is almost completely dry by mid-summer



**Matthew Cole from TransCanada led area residents on a tour of the hydroelectric dams on the Vermont and Massachusetts portions of the Deerfield River in June and July. Participants were shown the inner workings of 8 dams and power generators.**

**The new wrinkle in dam operations is pictured above at Dam #2 – a huge inflatable tube that replaces the usual wooden flash boards atop the concrete dams.**

**Matt's thorough presentation covered topics such as dam safety, the importance of the dams for the region's electricity supply, and river flow control. TransCanada will offer the free tour of their dams in both Vermont and Massachusetts again next year, and members of DRWA are encouraged to participate and learn why the Deerfield is considered by many to be the "hardest working river."**

**Jay Rasku**

## DRWA Fall Hike Schedule

The first hike of the Fall season was Sunday, September 23 to the Hawley Bog. This is a unique place of water plants and trees accessed by boardwalks. This very short walk follows an old road out to a beautiful view point in the Hawley highlands. We had lunch at the view point then returned to our cars on East Hawley Road.

The second hike will be along the Pocumtuck Ridge in Deerfield from Pine Nook Road to North Sugarloaf on Sunday, October 14 when the fall colors should be at their height. This hike is between four and five miles with the option of climbing South Sugarloaf (but few people have opted to do this). Since car spotting in south Deerfield is necessary, please contact the leader, Polly Bartlett at 413-625-6628 or [dbartlet@crocker.com](mailto:dbartlet@crocker.com).

The hike for Sunday, November 4 will be to explore the forested flood plains behind the Lamson and Goodnow vacant factory in Buckland. This is a place which has possibilities for community participation as indicated on the Charrette maps recently presented to the town. Watch for more information or log on the Deerfield River Watershed Association web site for more information, [www.deerfieldriver.org/hikes.html](http://www.deerfieldriver.org/hikes.html), or call Polly at the number above.

**Polly Bartlett**

Come join fellow river lovers  
and  
Friends of the Green River  
for the

# GREEN RIVER CLEANUP

Saturday September 29, 9 AM to 1 PM  
Meet at the Green River swimming area  
on Nashs Mill Rd in Greenfield

There will be  
Coffee, Juice, and Doughnuts  
Bring: Boots, long pants, rakes, shovels and  
trucks and canoes if you have them.  
Call 413-772-2020  
to sign up or get more information.

Following the cleanup:  
Stick around for  
pizza and potluck  
with music from 1 to 3 PM

## DEERFIELD RIVER CURRENT

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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 regulatory matters.

### Officers:

Marie-Françoise Walk, *President*  
Robert May, *Vice President*  
Jay Rasku, *Secretary*  
Joan Adler, *Treasurer*

### At-Large Board Members:

Polly Bartlett, David Boles,  
Ted Merrill, Peter Buell

**[www.deerfieldriver.org](http://www.deerfieldriver.org)**

## Become a DRWA Member!

Name .....

Street.....

City.....State.....Zip.....

E-Mail.....

**Individual \$15, Family \$25,**

**Contributing \$50, Sustaining \$100, Patron \$500**

**Send to: DRWA, 15 Bank Row Suite A, Greenfield MA 01301**

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**15 Bank Row, Suite A**  
**Greenfield, MA 01301**  
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