



Natural Resources Conservation Service
220 Davidson Avenue, 4th Floor
Somerset, NJ 08873

www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov

**Restoration of the Lower Musconetcong River
Public Meeting - December 2, 2008**
Bloomsbury Fire Company RiverView Banquet Facility
91 Brunswick Ave., Bloomsbury, NJ

Exhibits from USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Musconetcong Watershed Association, US Fish and Wildlife, American Rivers, and Trout Unlimited were on display throughout the evening. Staff were available at each booth to field questions. Recorders were present to capture comments provided.

Public comments at the various stations (6:30 p.m. to 7:15 p.m) were as follows:

Trout Unlimited Station – Evan Madlinger, Recorder

- Are breeding trout in the River?
- Aquatic weeds in Lake Hopatcong? Drain down lake and take out weeds.
- What were the original uses of the dams? Saw mills
- Are any dams still functional? Yes
- Who owns the dams? Private landowners
- What about stabilization of the stream banks? Boulders and plants
- What about native vegetation? Always use native vegetation in restoration projects.
- Cost of taking down dam? Half bringing the dam up to code. Plus partnership money.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Station – Jim Wick, Recorder

- WCRGC (Warren County Rod and Gun Club) – Still have out of pocket costs concern. When done right (As was), don't need to come back (no maint.)
- Joe Urbani (Fisheries Biologist, Joe Urbani Associates, Inc) – spoke about other river restoration projects he's been involved with – permitting went smoothly. No NJDEP LURP visits or phone calls during construction.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Kent Hardmeyer, Recorder

1. What kind of projects does NRCS get involved with
- 2) What is the purpose of a fish ladder and what kinds of fish are in the River,
- 3) The owner of the dam said he wanted it removed - he also said he wasn't sure the dam was actually his.
- 4) Someone questioned the purpose of the dam, and suggested that we shouldn't be in a big hurry to take it out as there may be other beneficial purposes it could serve.

The meeting was convened at 7:15 p.m. by Robert Tudor, Deputy Director of the Delaware River Basin Commission who served as moderator.

Tudor acknowledged and thanked the Bloomsbury Fire Company for opening their facility for the public meeting at no charge. He introduced the groups working together as the Musconetcong River Restoration Partnership, namely the agencies and organization working with NRCS on the environmental assessment for river restoration. These include the Musconetcong Watershed Association, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), American Rivers (AR), North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development (RCD), Trout Unlimited (TU), the NJDEP-Division of Fish & Wildlife (DFW), National Park Service (NPS), private landowners and others.

Mr. Tudor also presented the Needs Statement and Meeting Purpose.

NEEDS STATEMENT: There is a need to restore the connectivity of the Musconetcong River for the benefit of native aquatic fish and wildlife species. There is also a need to reduce the liability associated with dams that is currently being borne by the individual dam owners.

Beth Styler Barry, Executive Director for the Musconetcong Watershed Association provide some background information and explained why the Association is pursuing river restoration at Finesville and other areas along the Musconetcong.

Greg Westfall, Water Resource Planner and Environmental Compliance Coordinator for USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Somerset, NJ, and Robert Snieckus, National Landscape Architect with USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington, DC explained the Lower Musconetcong River Restoration Project focusing on Finesville area.

Public Comments were as follows the formal presentation meeting (7:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.):

- Partial removal “very expensive” is it more expensive than full removal.
 - Agust Gudmundsson – Expensive but may cost less than dam failure
- Agust Gudmundsson - Local businessmen may be in dire straits if the cost on the dam owners is totally theirs. Partners are needed.
- Matt Davis – Is the Finesville dam dangerous and is this documented by New Jersey?
 - Darin Shaffer – The Finesville Dam has not been analyzed. It is considered to be a low hazard dam and is not being actively pursued by NJDEP.
- Are there funds for dam restoration?
 - Bob Tudor – No NJDEP dollars are available.
 - Rick Axt – There are some low interest loans available.
- John Ghiggeri of Holland Twp – Does the owner have a preference?
 - Jim Grodon (dam owner) – either removal or partial removal preferred.
- Stephanie Lindloff (American Rivers) – Denil fishways can be costly. \$40,000 per vertical foot...this dam is approximately 7 feet or \$280,000.
- Bill Leavens (Musconetcong WS Assn) – most objections are due to aesthetics. If you look downstream now – that is what you will see after removal. Will removal reduce noise of water flow?
 - Bob Snieckus (NRCS) – We can design “white noise” into a project if desired.
 - Beth (MWA) – Gruendyke location is at least as loud after dam removal as before.
- Agust Gudmundsson (TU) – I’m all for breach. He suggested that if anyone has concerns they should visit the Gruendyke site noting that there are ospreys and eagles at the site now in Hackettstown – four (4) truckloads of tires and garbage was removed from the former Gruendyke dam pool location.
- John Kolba (Bloomsbury) – Who owns Bloomsbury Dam? Is it scheduled for removal? Will the state revise the flood plain map after dam removal?
 - Darin Shaffer – owners can be identified by reviewing the tax records at municipal offices. If they own the boundary against the river then they may own the dam as well. Re-mapping of the flood plain is possible following dam removal.
 - Rick Axt (Licensed Land Survey and TU) – He suggested that a new survey done. FEMA will study this if you ask them.
 - Geoff Goll (Princeton Hydro, LLC) – Landowner can apply for new flood plain determination.
- Tim Dunne – Effort was originally for 4 dams in lower Musconetcong River Watershed and all dams on the Musky. Funding available now is only for the Finesville Dam for an anticipated action to develop fish passage in 2011.

- R. Ege (TU) – 100 percent removal slide in the Power Point showed slow water. Did NRCS look at narrower channel and higher velocity.
 - Bob Snieckus (NRCS) – We can look at it.
- Josh Galster (Montclair State) – Is there active monitoring of the projects already completed so that this information can be used to analyze the effects of alternatives.
 - Trout Unlimited and American Rivers (Stephanie Lindloff) responded that there have been numerous monitoring studies in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Wisconsin. Dissolved oxygen increases, temperature decreases sometimes up to 15 degrees and fish diversity increases.
 - Katherine Axt – turbidity monitoring below Gruendyke dam site has been conducted and similar monitoring is planned with the Seber dam. Data is displayed on-line under “E2.”
- Bob Tudor (DRBC) – Has there been sediment sampling?
 - Tim Dunne and Geoff Goll – Yes sampling has occurred and there are no concerns.
- A Phillipsburg (?) resident asked whether we looked at nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen)
 - Geoff Goll responded that the organic matter was sampled but that it was very low. Over 90 percent of sediment was coarse-textured and unlikely to contain contaminants/nutrients.
- Dave Dech (Warren County Planning) asked what would be the impact of dam removal/modification to the County Bridge over the River and whether it has been studied.
 - Geoff Goll indicated that this has not been looked at yet and that the hydrology and hydraulics will need to be analyzed. Dam removal generally reduces the hazard to downstream bridges.
- Evan Madlinger (NRCS) – Are there any effects on downstream Delaware River flooding?
 - Bob Tudor and Rick Axt responded that they would be insignificant as this is a “run of the river” (same amount of water in as water out) dam with no flood storage.
 - Darin Shaffer stated NJDEP Dam Safety requires a pre- and post- breach to have be the same flood elevation.
- Agust Gudmundsson (TU) – Any time line?
 - Tim Dunne responded that the plan for dam work/ladder would be in 2011.
- Rick Ege (TU) reported that temperature data loggers are in the River and TU has data available.

Written Comments 12/2/08

Large Index Cards were provided for attendees at the Musconetcong River Restoration Public Meeting on December 2, 2008 for those who preferred to submit written comments. Two cards were turned in.

1. Comments from David A. Saam, Milliford, NJ 908-995-7347
 1. Would like to see Musconetcong flow free entire length allowing for salmon and steelhead runs from the Delaware.
 2. As the value of the property along the Musconetcong increases we must have access to the river along its entire length for fisherman and nature seekers. It cannot be locked up by landowners or interest in the river will die and not get support.
 3. As a landowner bordering property with springs flowing to the Musconetcong, I am very concerned about restrictions that may be forced on me if and when I sell my property.

What about water removal from the river?

2. Comments from John Ghiggeri, Holland Township
johnghiggeri@yahoo.com

In my opinion, it's a no brainer. Remove the dam.

Do it ASAP before costs escalate.

It was printed on the agenda, announced during the presentations and at the close of the meeting that written comments are welcome through January 30, 2009.

Send written comments by January 30, 2009

to: barbara.phillips@nj.usda.gov

or

Barbara Phillips, Public Affairs Specialist
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
220 Davidson Avenue, 4th Floor
Somerset, New Jersey 08873

Musconetcong River Restoration Public Scoping Meeting
December 2, 2008 --- Meeting Attendees

Name	Reason for Attending	E-mail
Bill Leavens	Musconetcong Watershed Association	Bill.leavens@gmail.com
Beth Styler Barry	Musconetcong Watershed Assn. - Speaker	beth@musconetcong.org
Matthew Gottesfeld		Mwg9758@aol.com
Richard Cotter	Trout Unlimited	rccotter@aol.com
Brian Cowden	Trout Unlimited	Bcowden@njtu.org
Jim Grodon	Finesville dam owner	
David Caccaug		
James Grodon		
Evan Madlinger	NRCS - Recorder	Evan.madlinger@nj.usda.gov
Fred Blazure	Trout fishing	
Rick Axt	Trout Unlimited	
Katherine Axt	DEP	
Bill Hanley	Stewartsville Resident	billhanley@att.net
Michael Zawacki	Warren County Rod & Gun Club	mez@embarque.l.com
Paul Woodworth		pwoodworth@princetonhydro.com
Tony Chianlly		
Michael J. Ghiggeri	Interested in river	
David A. Saam	Watershed interest	
John A. Ghiggeri	River interest	johnghiggeri@yahoo.com
Matt Davis	River interest/fishing	Matt.davis@yahoo.com
Erik Henriksen	Musconetcong Watershed Association	ehenriksen@comcast.net
Ginny MacGougle	Musconetcong Watershed Association	
David Dech	Warren County Planning	
Erik Purasson	Pohatcong Resident	epurasson@hotmail.com
Agust Gudmundsson	NJ Trout Unlimited	agusthg@comcast.net
Brett Bragin	Information	marshmaster@embarqmail.com
Jim Wick	NRCS - Recorder	
Carl Alderson	NOAA	Carl.alderson@noaa.gov
Stephanie Lindloff	American Rivers	slindloff@amrivers.org
Ed Ney (?)	NJ TU	
Mary Kathryn Kopec	Watershed Ambassador	americorps@northjerseyrcd.org
Christine Hall	NRCS	chall@northjerseyrcd.org
Darin Shaffer	NJDEP Dam Safety	Darin.shaffer@dep.state.nj.us
ShayMaria Silvestri	NRCS - CRC	Sharmaria.silvestri@nj.usda.gov
Barb Phillips	NRCS - PAS	Barbara.phillips@nj.usda.gov
Paul Kenney	Partnership Team	Paul_kenney@nps.gov
Josh Galster	Interest	galsterj@mail.montclair.edu
Stephen Bottac	Interest	captainkilohertz@yahoo.com
Robert Tudor	Meeting Facilitator	Robert.tudor@drbc.state.nj.us
Tim Dunne	NRCS	Tim.dunne@nj.usda.gov
Matt Harrington	NRCS - NEPA	matt.harrington@wdc.usda.gov
Kristin Smith	NRCS - NEPA	Kristin.Smith@gnb.usda.gov
Robert Snieckus	NRCS - Speaker	Robert.Snieckus@wdc.usda.gov
Greg Westfall	NRCS - Speaker	Gregory.westfall@nj.usda.gov
Kent Hardmeyer	NRCS - Recorder	
Gail Bartok	NRCS - Recorder	