



BRASSnews

Newsletter of the Boquet River Association, Inc. | Summer 2009 Issue

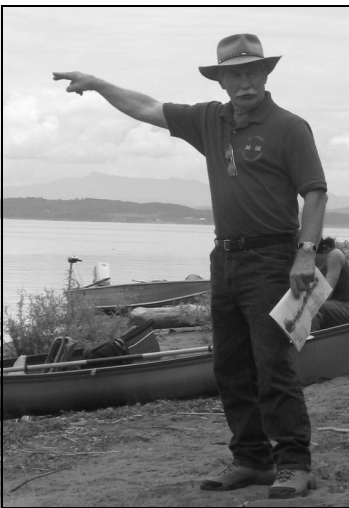
Willsboro Historic Canoe Ramble

In commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's exploration of Lake Champlain, the Boquet River Association (BRASS) joined forces with Willsboro historian Ron Bruno to organize a historic canoe paddle. The event was hosted on June 13th, in conjunction with Willsboro's town-wide celebration of the Quadricentennial. More than 50 people attended. Executive Director Julie Martin was ecstatic at the turnout, saying, "I really appreciate all the people who joined us to enjoy the river and learn its history. Not only did it make for a great event but it shows that people value the river and what it represents to the community."

The tour began at the Willsboro public boat launch, just downstream from the dam. Before pushing off, Ron Bruno provided a historical context to the upcoming trip. He told of the industry that thrived on the river and altered it. Peter Paine elaborated, describing the paper pulp mill that once flourished on the bank. Julie Martin followed with an explanation of BRASS's role as a steward of the Boquet River Watershed so that it can be a place of beauty and recreation for years to come. At the end of the presentation, everyone received a historical map of the Willsboro segment of the river beautifully illustrated by Steven Kellogg. Maps in hand, the well-informed group launched their boats to see the sites for themselves.



Along the route, participants passed the location of a former horse track, brick yard, and road. One paddler also noted that the river is still very much alive. He referenced the lush banks and pointed out a mink and a turtle. At the mouth of the river, the group pulled their boats onto the sandy bank of Noblewood Park. Bruno and Paine continued the story of the river, telling of General Burgoyne's encampment, farming activities, and log booms. Martin took the opportunity to invite participants to join BRASS and to take part in future rambles.



Ron Bruno directing attention to the site of Burgoyne's encampment.

As the tour concluded, the group assisted one another by shuttling individuals back to the start to pick up their vehicles. The more ambitious chose to make their way back upstream, despite the high water level. Prior to the group bidding their farewells, BRASS received overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding its coordinated trip. It was truly a celebration of the river, appreciating both past and present.

BRASS thanks all the participants for their enthusiasm and taking part in the celebration. Thanks to Peter Paine for sharing his family's story and perspective on the river and a very special acknowledgment and thanks to Ron Bruno for contributing his wealth of knowledge and coordinating with our efforts. If you would like to make the historic paddle on your own, stop by the BRASS office for a copy of Steven Kellogg's map of the historic river sites.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(as of 1/1/09)

- Jeff Kelly, *President*
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TOWN REPRESENTATIVES (APPOINTED)

- Doug Ferris - Willsboro
- Joel Harwood - Lewis
- Megan Murphy - Elizabethtown
- Gayle Perry - Essex
- Dawn St. Louis - Westport

STAFF

Julie A. Martin
Executive Director

Emilie Stigliani
Administrative Manager

BRASS Board Meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 PM. Members are invited to attend. Call or email to confirm dates and location.

The BRASS newsletter is prepared by Emilie Stigliani with written contributions from the staff, Board of Directors, and others. It is edited by the staff and Board of Directors of the Boquet River Association, Inc. We invite your submissions, inquiries, letters, and memberships.

Please submit to:

info@boquetriver.org

Boquet River Association

P.O. Box 782

Willsboro, NY 12996

(518) 963-4710

Introducing Our New Administrative Manager



Let me introduce myself. My name is Emilie Stigliani and I am honored to work with the Boquet River Association as Administrative Manager. Since I was hired, I have come to know BRASS and its members through my daily office duties, board meetings, and community events. I am impressed by the organization's successes and excited to be a part of its continued evolution under Julie Martin, our executive director.

I hope to contribute my knowledge and skills to future projects, drawing from my experience volunteering with City Year, a non-profit dedicated to uniting young people of all backgrounds in providing youth programs to inner city neighborhoods. I believe that BRASS's commitment to enhancing the Boquet will continue to assist and vitalize the watershed communities. So far, I have had the opportunity to work in several townships along the Boquet: removing refuse dumped along the river at the Trashy Art Day event in Willsboro, planning and paddling the Willsboro Historic Canoe Ramble, and digging into the clay banks on Merriam Forge Road in Westport to plant my share of the 2,000 seedlings donated by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Prior to accepting this position, I earned my B.A. degree in Spanish, with a minor in English literature, from the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) in 2007. Before graduating, I cofounded Green Project UNI, a student run environmental action group that dedicated its first year to expanding the university's recycling program. Soon after graduation, I accepted a position in New York City teaching English to nonnative speakers. There, I pursued writing and editing for travel publications and participated in a fiction writing group. Eventually, I returned to the UNI to teach intensive English.

This spring, I came to the Town of Essex to spend time with family and to work on personal writing projects while planning an adventure to South America. When presented with the opportunity to stay in the area and work for BRASS, I recognized the possibilities and challenges. I embrace the experience and look forward to the knowledge and insights it will provide.

I continue to make my home in Essex, commuting most days by bicycle to the BRASS office in Willsboro. When not at work, I am undertaking various writing projects and hand milking cows at Essex Farms. Over the coming months, I look forward to exploring areas along the Boquet River and to meeting more of BRASS's dedicated members and volunteers.

Feel free to contact me at info@boquetriver.org.

GRANT UPDATES

Natural Heritage Trust Quadricentennial Grant

BRASS was awarded a \$1,000 grant from the Natural Heritage Trust. The grant was used to create two historic brochures of the Willsboro and Wadhams sections of the Boquet as part of the Quadricentennial celebration. Steven Kellogg contributed his charming illustrations and Ron Bruno and Evelyn Brant assisted BRASS in preparing the written content. BRASS then teamed up with Bruno to lead a canoe trip from the Willsboro boat launch to the mouth of the river (see page 1). BRASS coordinated with Bob Harsh and the United Church of Christ for its second historic ramble where more than 30 participants toured various sites in Wadhams including the restored hydroelectric plant. The group also learned of the former mills that once flourished on the riverbanks. Both rambles were reminders of how the river shaped the area and how the people, in turn, shaped the river. BRASS thanks Steven Kellogg, Ron Bruno, Evelyn Brant, and Bob Harsh who were instrumental to this project.



Illustration by Steven Kellogg

Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) Grant

BRASS entered into a contract with Willsboro-based North Country Technology to revamp and maintain its website for one year. This project gives BRASS the opportunity to add more recent news to our site. We look forward to sharing updates and pictures of projects in the watershed and having our latest brochures, press releases and newsletters available for download. The new and improved site will incorporate the information on the current site as well. Improving our website will help us spread the word about the challenges our river faces and what BRASS is doing to address them. Accessible to anyone with a computer, we hope the new website and updated information will increase people's awareness about our work and help BRASS expand its membership and volunteer-base to ensure the long-term viability of the organization. Stay tuned!

Department of State (DOS) Environmental Protection Fund Grant

In June, BRASS and the DOS finalized the task schedule and budget for the grant to develop an up-to-date Boquet River Watershed Management Plan. The \$50,000 grant, awarded to the Town of Westport, requires a 50/50 match. This means we need to generate an additional \$50,000 of in-kind / volunteer services to satisfy the contract. To help do so, BRASS has teamed up with Paul Smith's College and the Adirondack Watershed Institute to conduct watershed assessments, analysis, and subwatershed prioritization. The other major source of the match will come from the volunteer Project Advisory Committee, which has an essential role in overseeing the project. Committee members will articulate local issues, assist with education and outreach, and review products prepared by the consultant (BRASS). All members of the committee, excluding New York State representatives, are valued at \$15/hour toward the match. The Project Advisory Committee will be formed once we have an executed contract, which is expected at the end of this year.

If you are interested in participating in this very important process, please contact us.

BOQUET BRIEFS

Seedling Planting

This year's seedling planting took place at Merriam Forge Road in Westport on the property of Rachel Hunter and David Goldwasser. The road was recently moved back from the riverbank for safety reasons and this allowed for the establishment of a riparian buffer on the old road bed along the Boquet. Plants and trees provide a healthy filter for sediment, excess nutrients, and pesticides that may run off into the river. Keeping these pollutants out of the water helps it to maintain a stable habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The vegetative buffer will also help stabilize the bank, shade the river and provide habitat for wildlife. BRASS kicked off the process by planting more than 1,000 seedling varieties including silver and red maples, pussy and stream-co willows, red osier dogwoods, and elderberries.



A group of diligent BRASS volunteers picked up their shovels to assist with the planting. This proved to be no small task as they dug into the resistant clay soil. Persevering despite the conditions, the group worked in harmony—digging holes, planting, and watering—until the 300 yard stretch was dotted with seedlings. The following day, the rain did its part to encourage the seedling's growth.

In addition, Joan Lilly and Cynthia Fairbanks planted hundreds of seedlings including white pines along their riverfront property just upstream of the Merriam Forge Road site. John and Robin Crandall's family also planted a variety of trees and shrubs to help stabilize their eroding bank on Decker Road.

BRASS extends a big thank you to the Department of Environmental Conservation for providing the seedlings, the volunteers for their dedication and hard work, and the Town of Westport and the Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District for their support. We also thank Rachel Hunter, David Goldwasser, Joan Lilly, Cynthia Fairbanks, and the Crandall Family for their cooperation and assistance in buffering our river.

News from the Essex County SWCD

In April, the Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) received its new hydroseeder, which is available to all Essex County municipalities wishing to use it. The seeder was purchased through a grant awarded to the Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of NY (CWICNY). The hydroseeder holds 900 gallons of water. Seed, fertilizer and mulch are mixed into it and applied to roadside ditches and steep banks. The grant also provided funds to purchase enough material to stabilize and vegetate approximately 75 miles of ditches in Essex County! Any town in the county wishing to vegetate its ditches to slow runoff and reduce erosion should contact the SWCD at 962-8225.

BRASS is pleased to share this exciting news. We encourage all the towns in the Boquet Watershed to take advantage of this opportunity to reduce the amount of sediment entering the Boquet River and Lake Champlain!

Black Ash Remediation Project Update

Work is underway on a 500-foot section of riverbank just upstream of the Willsboro canoe launch. The bank was shaped with an excavator to reduce its steep slope, and the newly graded slope was stabilized and protected using stone riprap and willow plantings. This erosion control project will reduce the amount of silt and sediment entering the river. Also in progress at the same site is the



creation of a wetland treatment area. This portion of the project aims to decrease the amount of phosphorus dis-



charged into the river from the Willsboro wastewater treatment plant. The outfall is located one mile upstream of Lake Champlain. Studies have shown that wollastonite tailings have the capability of removing phosphorus from wastewater when filtered slowly through it. Once completed, the Town of Willsboro's already-treated effluent will be diverted to the wetland cells where, with the help of wollastonite, additional nutrients will be removed before being discharged back into the Boquet River and, eventually, Lake Champlain.

The Mountaineer Trail Run

On June 20th, The Mountaineer held its 5th Great Adirondack Trail Run in Keene Valley. This annual BRASS and Ausable River Association (ASRA) fundraiser was a success despite a rainy forecast. Experienced runners, including BRASS board member Jay Fiegl, completed a demanding 11.5-mile course while others participated in the 3.5-mile fun run. Carol Treadwell, executive director of ASRA, and A.J. Longware, BRASS board member, led the children in a mask-making activity that taught about the effects invasive bugs have on the Adirondack ecosystem. Adults got involved by improvising their bug boogey to live music. BRASS board members Libby Treadwell and Megan Murphy assisted in serving food to the runners and their families. Thanks to Sam's Club, Lake Placid Pub and Brewery, and BRASS and ASRA board members for contributing to the event. A very special thank you to The Mountaineer and Patagonia for their continued support of our watershed improvement efforts.



Artistic Stewards of the River: Trashy Art Day

On Saturday, May 16th, the lawn in front of the Willsboro Visitors Center was transformed into an avant-garde sculpture garden. The featured artists, BRASS's faithful volunteers, created installation art pieces from any nonorganic medium available along the Willsboro section of the Boquet River. Teams of volunteers joined together to create structures that spoke of preserving and enhancing the Boquet by keeping its banks clean.

At 9 AM, about 15 energetic volunteers converged at the Willsboro Visitors Center to pick up garbage bags and gloves before breaking into small groups and heading to one of three designated riverbank locations: Mill Street, Gilliland Lane including the boat launch, and a site along a tributary in Reber. Over the next two hours, groups collected a half-ton of garbage, counting a car hood and rims, a stove top, unidentifiable scrap metal, and an array of tires. These, along with the bagged waste, were brought back to the Willsboro Visitors Center where they were unloaded and put to use.



Teams worked in harmony to create unique sculptures that represented diverse perspectives. Bank Shot, the largest structure, was named after an arcade game that was the central feature to the composition. With a more traditional interpretation, another group created Give a Hoot Don't Pollute using the rusted car hood and some small tires to depict a very large but friendly looking owl. Child participants joined forces with their parents to construct BRASSquetball, a ball cleverly balanced on its make-shift hoop, and The BRASS Band, a pint-sized drum set constructed of car rims.

When all the sculptures were complete volunteers posed proudly with their creations and then helped move the remaining trash behind the building where the Willsboro road crew picked it up. Julie Martin expressed her appreciation for all who contributed to the successful event, saying, "It's an event like this that reminds me of BRASS's unique role in the watershed. As a grassroots volunteer-oriented organization it is our responsibility to raise awareness and educate others about the importance of keeping our river clean. By working together, we are more likely to accomplish these goals."



If you were unable to join us this year, we encourage you to participate next spring. Trashy Art Day helps carry out our mission of stewardship and enhancement of public awareness about the Boquet River. Once again a sincere thanks to our committed volunteers, the Town of Willsboro, and the Willsboro Department of Public Works for making this event possible.

Thank you to all BRASS volunteers!

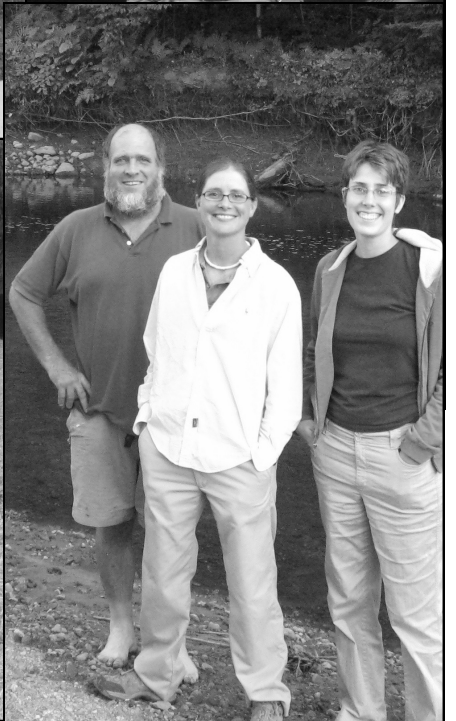
Our work is not possible without your generous contributions.

Ausable River Assoc.
Evelyn Brant
Ron Bruno
Bryan Burke
Brad Caldwell
Gary Chilson
Tom Clark
Edward (Ted) Cornell
John Crandall
Robin Crandall
Anita Deming

Beverly Eichenlaub
Cara Easley
Cynthia Fairbanks
Doug Ferris
Jameson Fiegl
Jay Fiegl
Kristen Fiegl
Sophie Fiegl
Matt Foley
David Goldwasser
Bob Harsh

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Steven Kellogg
Jeff Kelly
Joan Lilly
A.J. Longware
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Schell McKinley
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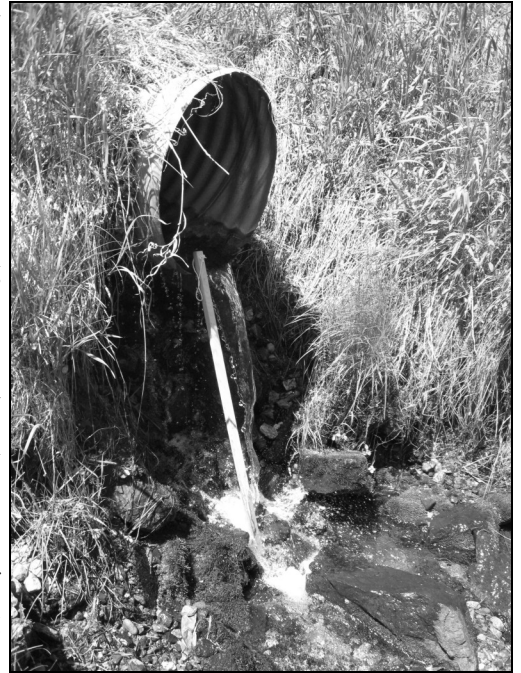
Melissa Murray
Tripp Murray
Peter Paine
Gayle Perry
Lee Petty
Mary Reynolds
Linda Smyth
Dawn St. Louis
Carrie Treadwell
Libby Treadwell
Willsboro Visitor Center



The River Connects Us.... so let's reconnect it!

The Boquet River is a long, skinny ecosystem that consists of a community of organisms interacting with each other and the non-living forces and materials that flow across its indefinite borders. Many of us have noticed that the Boquet River ecosystem is not functioning properly and we can tell because the fishing seems to have gotten worse over time rather than better. Scientists readily admit that they know very little about the complex system of life called an ecosystem but there is one essential fact that is undisputed – to function properly, an ecosystem must be intact.

Like humans, who build their roads along the natural corridors carved across the land by rivers and streams, fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates all use the stream as a travel route. These organisms move up and down the stream on a daily and seasonal basis and their need for different habitats changes as they grow and develop. Brook trout, for example, seek cold water sections of rivers and streams during the summer heat. Different sections will offer different feeding opportunities throughout the day and season and many species regularly travel up and down the stream in search of a meal. Several species travel to spawn, such as adult trout and salmon, and young fry need to travel to better juvenile and eventually adult habitats. In addition to organisms within the stream, terrestrial animals also move up and down the stream corridor to meet their daily and seasonal needs. Unfortunately, our use of these same river and stream corridors for roads has severely damaged these long, skinny ecosystems by cutting them into little pieces.



Our roads cross and re-cross rivers and streams and everywhere that they do, a culvert or bridge allows the water to pass beneath the road. If not constructed properly, taking into account the needs of the non-human travelers, these culverts transport water, satisfying our travel needs, but become insurmountable barriers to fish



and other animals. These barriers fragment the river ecosystem into short segments, few of which are big enough to support healthy populations of species, especially fish.

Water-level fluctuations, especially during major rainstorms and spring runoff, or droughts, force fish to seek safety and relief by moving up or downstream. If travel is prevented by barriers, the fish become highly susceptible to heat stress, overexertion, overcrowding, and low oxygen levels making them vulnerable to disease, predators and death by asphyxiation. Barriers prevent fish from finding suitable spawning areas leading to a

decline in natural reproduction. Barriers also prevent fish from seeking and finding sufficient food at different times of the day and year resulting in death by starvation.

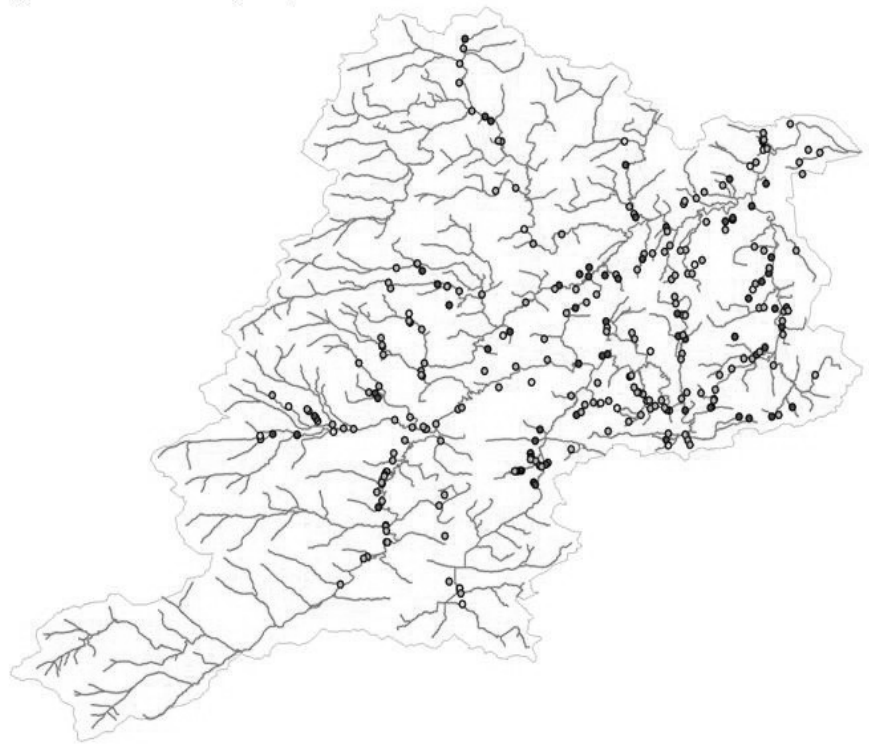


Several steps are needed to help restore the continuity and health of the Boquet River ecosystem. The first step is to determine which road crossings prevent fish passage. If fish can't travel freely up- and down-stream, few other species can either. BRASS and the Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), have recently completed a survey of more than 290 bridges and culverts along the Main Stem and its many tributaries. Once the separated segments of the river have been identified and mapped, the second step is to prioritize the most important segments to reconnect in order to maximize the

limited funds available for fish passage improvements. Fishery experts at the USFWS will examine fish habitat in the separated segments to determine which segments of the fragmented ecosystem are most crucial to the fishery. Eliminating a barrier that connects several miles of very poor fish habitat is not as good as eliminating a barrier that connects even just one mile of excellent habitat.

Once the sites have been prioritized based on a number of factors, we'll work together with our local and county highway departments and state Department of Transportation to develop a schedule for culvert replacements. Funds will be solicited for the engineering plans, permitting process and the actual construction projects. We will also incorporate the prioritized list of barrier culverts to repair or replace into the Boquet River Watershed Management Plan. Cooperation in the restoration of the Boquet fishery is imperative to success, and having an action plan designed by the key players in the watershed is the most important step. **The river connects us and it's up to us to reconnect the river!** *Thanks to Gary Chilson for contributing to this article.*

Boquet River Watershed
Draft Culvert Inventory Map



Wild River

BRASS and Premises Storefront Gallery invite the public to attend Wild River — an invitational art exhibit celebrating the Wild River and riparian wildlife.

September 11 to October 10, 2009

The event will be held at Premises Storefront Gallery, 2303 Main Street, Essex, NY. Join us for the opening reception and BRASS Awareness Event on Sept. 11, from 6-9 pm.

All artists have donated a piece of their work to support BRASS's mission.

BRASS will receive 100% of the sale of all artwork!

Featured artists include:

Kevin Raines,

Jill Schoenfeld,

Roderick MacIver,

and more!

The gallery will be open for viewings on Saturdays from 10-2 pm or by appointment. To make an appointment, contact Beverly Eichenlaub at (917) 202-6492 or beverly@premise-s.us.

For general information about the exhibit, contact BRASS at (518) 963-4710 or info@boquetrivier.org.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

CIRCLE ONE:

New member!

Renewed member

Updated information

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Local Phone _____ Winter Phone _____

Winter Address _____

Winter City _____ State _____ Zip _____

_____ Atlantic Salmon	\$50	_____ Speckled Trout	\$25
_____ Brown Trout	\$35	_____ Minnow	\$10

Please make checks payable to the Boquet River Association. In most instances, your membership is fully tax-deductible as a charitable contribution.

BRASS had an educational display at the following events in 2009:

- The Mountaineer Trail Run
- Adirondack Waterfest
- Essex County Fair

Professional Training and Workshops attended:

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Seminar
- Black Swallow-wort Training

As a partner organization, BRASS attends the following meetings:

- Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York (CWICNY)
- Essex County Water Quality Coordinating Committee
- Willsboro Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Have you renewed your BRASS membership?

The membership year runs from June 1st to May 31st

BRASS is a small, member-funded, volunteer-based, non-regulatory organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of water and life in the Boquet River Watershed.

It is the support of our members and their contributions that allows us to continue our efforts.

Boquet River Association



WATER TESTING

Total Coliform and E. Coli testing bottles, provided by Life Science Laboratories, are available at the BRASS office in Willsboro, Dogwood Bread Company in Wadhams, Cornell Cooperative Extension in Westport, and local Town halls. Contact BRASS in advance to find out which bottle to use. For more technical questions, contact Life Science Laboratories at (315) 388-4476. Once you have your sample, keep it cool and **bring it to the Elizabethtown Town Hall any Tuesday morning by 9:30 AM.** For those individuals and communities who find it more convenient to drop samples off in Plattsburgh, contact Endyne Lab to arrange for bottles and testing at (518) 563-1720.

Please complete and return this form to:

Boquet River Association

P.O. Box 782, Willsboro, NY 12996.

Updated information may also be emailed to:

info@boquetriver.org



BRASS

The Boquet River Association, Inc.
3743 Main St.
P.O. Box 782
Willsboro, NY 12996

Non-profit Org

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Permit 165

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BRASS is a grassroots non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of water and life in the Boquet River Watershed.

Not on BRASS's email list?

If you would like to be notified via email about meetings, events and volunteer opportunities, please email info@boquetrivier.org and request that your name be added to our email list.

Tel./Fax. 518.963.4710

info@boquetrivier.org

www.boquetrivier.org

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