



BRASSnews

Newsletter of the Boquet River Association, Inc. | Spring 2015, Volume 30

Letter from the President

By Anita Deming, President

Your “membership” and “friendship” are critical to the Boquet River Association. The time to enroll has come again and we hope you will find some resources to help us protect and enhance our water resources and communities. We no longer have a paid director, so all of your money goes directly toward projects including:

Clean Up Day and Trashy Art – Volunteers remove garbage from the along the Boquet River and ponds and promote keeping it clean with the Art from Trash event as a reminder not to litter.

Water Testing – BRASS is testing the river water in every sub-watershed and corresponding it with historical data to watch for trends and identify any emerging issues. If we find something, we will report it to DEC to retest and analyze further.

Rambles – Every season BRASS Board members host guided tours of the river and its drainage areas. We climb mountains, hike, bike, bird, collect mussels, canoe and kayak, and have a great time while learning about our landscape and wildlife. This spring BRASS hosted a white water canoe trip from Split Rock Falls to Lake Champlain.

Plant Trees – This year BRASS volunteers will be planting trees at the Ben Wever Farm, Elizabethtown Foot Bridge, and Elizabethtown Fish and Game Club. We are teaming up with the Essex County Soil and Water Conservation Service to plant trees at McFadden’s property in Whallonsburg as a part of a stream bank stabilization project. BRASS is also assisting the Town of Willsboro to plant forage and trees after the dam removal and North Bank Stabilization projects are implemented.

Newsletters – BRASS produces two newsletters a year. We are hoping to transition to an on-line newsletter soon. Less paper, printing and postage will save lots of money. Also, an on-line newsletter will allow you to quick access to links for more information or to sign up to help with projects.

Press Releases – BRASS periodically issues press releases to increase public awareness about projects and issues that are impacting the Boquet Watershed.

Celebrate Free Fishing Day with the BRASS Fish Fest at the Elizabethtown Fish and Game Club. Last year we taught fly casting and conducted other river oriented events with about 60 neighbors of all ages. This year the Fish Fest will be Sunday, June 28th from 10 to 1. Mark your calendar and join the fun!

(Continued on page 6)



Trashy Art Event 2014
Willsboro, NY



Paddle Ramble 2014
Wadhams, NY



BRASS Fish Fest 2014
Elizabethtown, NY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Anita Deming, *President**
Bob McGoldrick, *Vice President*
Schell McKinley, *Treasurer*
Jeff Clock, *Secretary*

AJ Longware
Tom Clark
Matt Foley
Bruce Misarski
Vic Putman
Kathy Linker
Laura Newmark
Daphne Hallowell
Dave Reckhan

**TOWN REPRESENTATIVES
(APPOINTED)**

Anita Deming - Elizabethtown
Vacant- Essex
Kathy Linker - Lewis
Daphne Hallowell- Westport
Jeff Clock - Willsboro

BRASS Board Meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 pm. Members are invited to attend. Call to confirm date, time and location.

*518-962-4810 ext. 409
c 518-586-1564

Our Mission

BRASS is dedicated to enhancing the quality of water and life in the Boquet River watershed.

The newsletter is prepared by AJ Longware with written contributions from the Board and others. All pictures were taken by BRASS unless otherwise noted.

Boquet River Association
P.O. Box 374
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
info@boquetriver.org

“The River Connects Us”

The Future of the Willsboro Dam

By Victor Putman, Coordinator, Greater Adirondack Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.

The Town of Willsboro dam has been around for over 200 years (1813) and was part of a two dam system which provided water power to an iron works, saw mills and the of paper mill. The Grist Mill (1810) which still stands (precariously) between the location of the two dams and which predates the dam used a wing dam to divert water from the rapids into the lower section of the structure and may have used the dam for power but definitive proof is not yet available. The main dam was reconstructed around 1890 and re-planked numerous times since, including the most recent effort around 1982-3. The timber crib structure is currently failing as sagging is evident as well as missing boards are creating considerable flow through the structure. Observations in 2014 noted that at flows around 170 cfs there is only flow through the dam and no flow over the dam. The Town was offered the dam structure in the early 1970’s following closure of the paper mill (1965) and owns the dam with an access easement but does not own the land under the dam.

On October 8, 2014 a public hearing was held at the Willsboro Town Hall to allow public input on the future of the Willsboro Dam. The failing condition of the structure and the options available to the community were discussed. The public hearing was held following the September 10, 2014 public informational meeting to discuss the results of the Dam Assessment reports and photo-simulations prepared by Roy Schiff of Milone and MacBroom. With coordination assistance from the Greater Adirondack Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) and financial support provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Lake Champlain Basin Program, several well attended Public Informational meetings were also held over the past year and a half. The final report completed last September concluded that the options available to the Town included removal, repair, replacement and/or do nothing. Removal was the recommended solution and was supported by the public based on the surveys and simulations of varying flow models and the potential impacts on the community. Some of the conclusions of the reports and investigations included:

- Removal of the dam would provide additional storage of ice during winter and spring, reducing the likelihood of flooding from ice jams which are an annual threat to the downtown area.
- Repairs to the dam super structure were not a feasible option because being over 100 years old, the timbers could not be replaced without removal.
- Flood insurance could be reduced for some building’s in the flood plain
- Lamprey movement beyond where the dam is situated is not likely. Lamprey trapping over the past 11 years at the dam and half way up the rapids found no lamprey. Migration that far is unlikely due to the existing bedrock steps and force of the water flow.
- The costs of dam replacement were also considered and were estimated to be in excess of \$1,100,000 for a new concrete structure.
- The DEC Fish ladder was also noted as a concern if the dam were removed. The fish ladder apparently has not worked as well as had been anticipated

(Continued on page 3)

Willsboro Dam (continued)

and is in need of maintenance and repair. The DEC has noted that funding for repairs has not been a priority due to the high costs and lack of fish passage effectiveness. Removal of the fish ladder would be expected if the dam is removed.

- Other predominant issues included the change in aesthetics, public safety and potential economic impacts from improved fisheries.

During the Public Hearing numerous residents voiced support for removal of the dam as it no longer served a direct financial or industrial use; that Willsboro has evolved from a manufacturing economy including paper mills, saw mills, grain milling and iron works to a tourist destination. Other commenters noted that dam removal might help the local economy if fisheries could be enhanced. Other comments addressed the need to recognize the past history of the dam with appropriate signage on the dam's former contribution to the prosperity of the community.



A letter from Anita Deming, BRASS president, was read into the record stating the BRASS Board's support for removal of the dam and an offer of assistance to the Town with plantings along the new stream bank where exposed sediment might require re-vegetation. Mr. Peter Paine also spoke in favor of dam removal and committed funding from the Champlain National Banks' Community Foundation to further assist with restoration efforts.

Following the Public Hearing, the Town Board of the Town of Willsboro met at its' regularly scheduled Town Board Meeting, where further discussions were held on the future of the dam and its' various impacts. Councilman Benway noted that the deteriorated condition of the dam was a serious liability to the Town as sections of the dam were starting to be washed downstream creating safety concerns to boaters and fisherman as well as potential swimmers at the Town Beach. Supervisor Gilliland noted that the Town was not able to secure more competitive insurance policy premiums due to the dam coverage requirements. Councilwomen Sheehan and Sayward reiterated their concerns for public safety and costs to the community for dam replacement and how the town might appear aesthetically without the dam. Councilman Lustig recognized the public's support voiced at the public hearing and acknowledged the potential for funding for dam removal. A resolution was subsequently offered by Councilman Benway to remove the dam contingent upon available funding to cover dam removal excepting in-kind efforts for which the Town of Willsboro could be responsible (e.g. hauling debris). The resolution passed unanimously.

The next steps toward dam removal have been completed with design plans and specifications under review by the permitting agencies (DEC and ACOE). The dam removal design will include removal of a portion of the Fish Ladder that does not impact the retaining wall next to Gilliland Lane. The section closest to the road will be retained, filled with stone/concrete and sealed. In addition, the proposal will include construction of a

(Continued on page 4)

Willsboro Dam (continued)

viewing platform to be situated on the retaining wall and a new dry hydrant, to replace an existing one that was destroyed by ice jams.

A grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service will cover the costs of dam removal design and permitting. Additionally, the USF&WS has also committed \$50,000 for dam removal with an additional \$200,000 needed to complete modifications to the fish ladder, filling the sluiceway on river left and restoration efforts. The remaining funds for dam removal have apparently been committed by the LCBP budgeted through Great Lakes Fisheries Commission allocations contained in the 2015 Federal Farm Bill. The dam removal permits are in process with application documents and removal design under review by DEC and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The schedule for dam removal is pending the approval of permits as well as the pass through of funding from the various agencies to the community. Since typical in-stream construction permits restrict work during sensitive life cycle phases of aquatic organisms low river flow conditions are needed to minimize disturbances of these organisms. If all conditions for funding and environmental factors are favorable, the dam could be removed in summer or early fall 2015, in time for the spawning migration of salmon up the river.

Restoration of the river corridor will be needed to provide a vegetative cover over any exposed sediment that remains. The community and river will benefit from additional plantings and perhaps an extension of the river walk.

As a side note, before Willsboro received its' name from William Gilliland, the first settler, the area was known as "The Falls" – a tribute to the natural bedrock cascade that created the first barrier to boaters and was the logical settlement site that helped shape our region into an industrial and commercial center. Removal of the dam will start a new era for Willsboro, one that will value the natural, historical and recreational resources of the community as a destination for anglers, boaters, hikers, and history enthusiasts.



Help Protect Our Watershed from Invasives

More than 70 nonnative invasive plant species have crept into the Adirondacks including shrubby honeysuckles, buckthorns, and Japanese Knotweed. Invasive species not only change the way an area looks but the way it functions ecologically. Infestations can disrupt water and nutrient absorption, crowd out native habitat and can create a toxic environment for wildlife and humans. Invasives degrade natural habitat quality which can reduce the number and variety of fish and wildlife. For example, Giant Hogweed is on the federal noxious weed list because of its poisonous sap, that can cause severe skin irritation, blistering and scarring.



Visit www.adkinvasives.com for more information

Trees for Tribs

By **Laura Benedict**, Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District

Riparian buffers have multiple benefits including wildlife enhancement, reduction of erosion, and aesthetics. Trees for Tribs, a DEC program, provides seedlings for many of our riparian projects. They offer a wide variety of trees and shrubs that grow well in riparian areas. Tree shelters are also available to help protect some seedlings from deer browse as well as creating a micro climate which stimulates accelerated growth. Volunteers are always welcome to help. Call 962-8225 for information about planting dates and locations.



Pictured: Planting trees and shrubs along a riparian area that drains into the Boquet.

Trees and Shrubs Planted:
Chesterfield- 150
Crown Point- 125
Essex- 205
Keene- 80
Willsboro- 645

Reckahn Named Friend of BRASS 2015

By **Anita Deming**

This year's "Friend of BRASS" award was given to Dave Reckahn, District Manager, at the Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District. He is dedicated to Essex County helping solve problems for farmers, town highway superintendents, landowners, and anyone using the land or water along the Boquet and Lake Champlain. Dave has helped the Boquet River Association by writing and administering grants for stream bank stabilization and reconstruction projects, fencing livestock out of streams and constructing manure storage areas to meet code, training local youth about the water cycle at conservation field days, as well as training highway superintendents and construction businesses in protecting waters and wetlands near their projects.

BRASS helps Dave by writing letters of support attesting to the importance of various projects and by providing "in-kind" labor and citizen participation that is often necessary to match the grant monies.



From the President (continued)

ANNUAL FUND RAISERS INCLUDE:

Membership and Annual Appeal – If you are not already a member, please join. You will receive the newsletter and know that you are helping to protect the river by covering BRASS operational expenses. The annual appeal fundraising event is held in November, when you can donate extra money to help BRASS complete larger projects.

The Mountaineer Trail Run – Annually, the Mountaineer hosts a trail run, which ends in Keene Valley. The AuSable River Association and BRASS provide the food for runners and spectators, where we usually make a thousand dollars. We are very grateful to the Mountaineer for their support.

Letters of Support and In-kind Donations – BRASS writes letters of support for various agencies and provides matching donations in the form of labor (often tree planting) and expertise (providing citizen input and background on the Boquet River). Citizen participation is very important toward getting grants for public projects.

Cookie Run- BRASS hosts a smaller, four mile fun run (or walk) along the scenic Boquet River from the Dogwood Bakery to the Peirce Farm and back. Every participant gets a large cookie and we award pies for the Best runner in several age groups, depending on how many pies we get. Last fall we had five pie prizes including apple, blueberry and raspberry. The run is usually the second weekend in October, so mark your calendar and join the fun.



**Cookie Run Winners 2014
Wadhams, NY**

FRIENDS OF BRASS:

You could really help BRASS by signing up to be a “friend” on Facebook. When we have a project, the friends get an email notice and can sign up if it is something they want to do. You could plant trees, bake cookies, write articles for the newsletter, help clean up the river, lead a Ramble, give a talk, or think of your own project. To join the Friends of BRASS group, email Kathy Linker at sneezebeez@yahoo.com, sign up on BRASS’ Facebook or call Anita Deming at 518-962-4810 x 409.

GRANTS FUNDING EFFORTS:

BRASS has decided to use our non-profit (NFP) status to support grant writers and contractors that would be willing to do projects with us. This way, we can meet our goals without having to maintain a payroll. If you are interested in applying for grant money to help the Boquet River/Watershed, contact Anita Deming and we can work together using our NFP status to help fund your ideas.

SPECIAL PROJECTS UPDATE:

The Department of State Planning Grant draft was Watershed Improvement Plan submitted with all of your input. Thank you so much if you were one of the participants who attended the public input sessions. We are currently waiting for the State’s comments before we can post the plan on our web site.

Lake Champlain Basin Program Sponsored Wollastonite Filter testing: BRASS gathered 3 engineers, the Town of Willsboro Supervisor and the Waste Water Superintendent at the filter site to dig up the intake pipes. The filter cloth was clogged with wollastonite crystals. The group decided that increasing the number and size of the holes, which are surrounded by pea gravel, would move the water and help clean more phosphorous from the effluent. The Lake Champlain Basin Program approved funding for reengineering

(Continued on page 7)

From the President (continued)

and construction in one cell to test the theory. The new plans have been implemented and water testing will begin with DEC approval of the site.

Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) – This year LCBP provided us with \$3800 in funding to send a mailing to all past members, requesting that they join the Association again. We hope to gain more members and friends from this effort.

US Fish and Wildlife: BRASS supported the dam removal project in Willsboro and has agreed to help replant the riparian zone with perennials and shrubs in the center of town.

Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP): Brendon Quirion came to our annual meeting to delineate where the worst invasive plants are in the watershed and solicited our early detection of new infestations of invasive species. We have agreed to help with landowner contact for removal and notification of new sites.

Soil and Water Conservation – The culvert update was completed after Irene washed out so many and some were replaced.

Canoe Trail – We are seeking funding to print a guide book for canoeing the Boquet River.

Bylaws – We amended the by-laws this year at the Annual Meeting. There were significant changes in the mission, committees, operating procedures, logo, and the number of board members, which was increased from nine to ten.

On behalf of the BRASS Board, THANK YOU for your support!



New BRASS hats and T-shirts are available for \$15 each or \$25 for both when purchased together. Contact adklady1@westelcom.com We will ship via USPS for \$5.

MEMBERSHIP FORM Select: New member Renewed member Updated info Gift Membership*

Name _____ Address _____

Email _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Check here if you wish to receive your newsletter by email. **Alternate Address (Summer/ Winter)**

Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Life Membership \$500

Full Creel \$100

Brown Trout \$35

Minnow (student) \$10

Atlantic Salmon \$50

Speckled Trout \$25

Additional Donation \$ _____

*If this is a gift membership, please let us know if you would like us to send a gift card in your name:

Please make checks payable to the Boquet River Association.

Complete and return this form to: Boquet River Association, P.O. Box 374, Elizabethtown, NY 12932

You can join BRASS, renew your membership and/or donate to BRASS online at www.boquetriver.org

In most instances, your membership and donation is fully tax-deductible as a charitable contribution.

Boquet River Fish Fest

FREE* Fishing & Fun Day

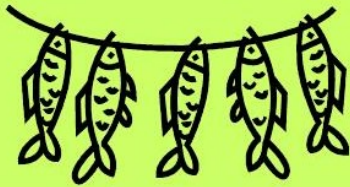
**No NYS Fishing License Required*

Sunday, June 28th, 11am to 2pm

At the Elizabethtown Fish & Game

County Route 8

(E'town-Wadhams Road)



Fun for All Ages!

Fly & Spin Casting Lessons

Demonstrations

Loaner Rods & Reels

Fishy Exhibits

Fishy Crafts for Kids

And Lots More!



BRASSnews

Boquet River Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 374

Elizabethtown, NY 12932

BRASS is dedicated to enhancing the quality of water and life in the Boquet River watershed.

What's Inside This Issue:

Letter From the President

Willsboro Dam Project

Trees for Tribes

Invasive Plants



Ted Cornell