



# Musconetcong River News

Spring 2021

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Asbury, New Jersey

## Oil Rush Legacy: Removing Pipelines from the Musky

In a 2013 issue of the Musconetcong River News, Trustee Emeritus Chuck Gullage wrote that pipelines from the Changewater tank farm and pumping station remain in the Musconetcong River. These pipelines were installed by the Tidewater Oil Company in 1887, to bring oil from Central Pennsylvania to Bayonne, NJ. These were the first commercially viable petroleum pipelines in North America. Despite their legacy, they have sat unused just below the River in our watershed municipalities of Lebanon and Washington Townships.

The current owner, Chevron, has recently subcontracted with an engineering firm to safely remove these pipes. MWA is partnering with Chevron to ensure local residents and recreationists can safely access the river during the removal process. MWA and National Park Service (NPS) hope to continue our partnership with Chevron after removal to further improve water quality in this section of the river.

### Q&A with Chevron

#### Why are you removing these pipelines?

Chevron received a request from the NPS to remove the pipelines from the Musconetcong River. Since that time, Chevron has performed environmental investigations and assessments to determine a safe and feasible way to do so in support of the Musconetcong's Wild and Scenic River designation, as a courtesy to kayakers and other recreationists. Chevron is prepared to carry out this plan in the late Summer/Fall of 2021.

#### What did the pipelines contain?

The pipelines were formerly used to

transport crude oil and No.2 Fuel Oil. They have not been used since the facility closed in the 1980s.

#### How will Chevron keep the river safe during the pipeline removal?

The pipeline removal includes a phased installation of aquabarriers to isolate the pipelines so work can be conducted in dry conditions. The pipelines will be flushed out (with contents taken off site for disposal), plugged, and capped prior to removal. The pipes will then be removed with excavators in sections and will be disposed at a licensed disposal facility.

#### Can the public recreate on the river during the pipeline removal?

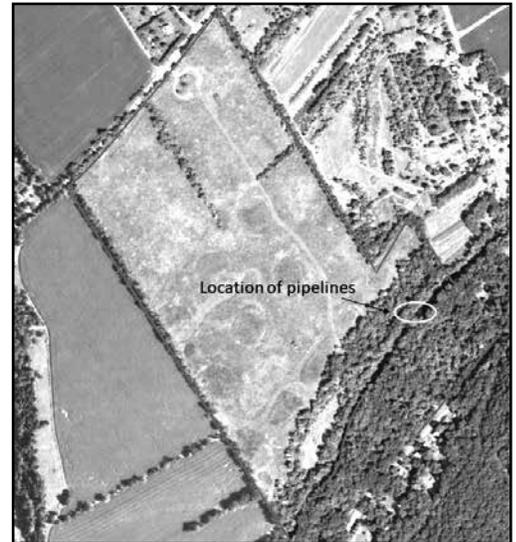
A portion of the river will be open during the pipeline removal activities to allow water to flow while the aquabarriers are installed. That said, for the safety of the public, we advise recreators to avoid this section of the river during construction and execution of the project.

#### Where is this work being conducted?

Approximately 1,500 feet downstream of the Changewater Road bridge.

#### How will Chevron keep fisheries safe during the pipeline removal?

The work will be performed after July 31 to avoid the March-June sensitive timing for trout and May-July sensitive timing for other game fish. Chevron's work will be conducted in dry conditions surrounded by an aquabarrier, to isolate the work from the river. The river will also continue to flow around the



*Site of former tank farm at 180 E. Asbury Anderson Road, Washington Township, and off Musconetcong River Road, Lebanon Township.*

aquabarrier, maintaining fish passage.

#### What is the status of the cleanup of the former tank farm property that is adjacent to the river?

Separate from this pipeline removal project, Chevron has been working under the oversight of NJDEP on cleanup activities at the Changewater site since the 1980s. Past cleanup activities included facility decommissioning, site assessment and excavation of impacted soils.

Current cleanup activities include the recovery of weathered crude oil and diesel from groundwater wells. These materials are recovered with a solar-powered automated belt skimmer system. Recovered material is stored in double-walled steel collection tanks

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**MUSCONETCONG**  
  
**WATERSHED ASSOCIATION**

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*www.musconetcong.org*

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**MWA Elects New Officers**

While MWA trustees are elected for three-year terms at our Annual Meeting, officers of the organization are elected annually by the trustees. At the April Board of Directors meeting, the following new officers were appointed: **Richard Cotton** – President, **Erik Henriksen** and **Mary Paist-Goldman** – Vice Presidents, **Chris Stout** – Treasurer, and **Bill Leavens** – Secretary.

Richard was a founding member of the MWA and is the Managing Partner of Hawk Pointe Golf Club and Asbury Farms Real Estate Development. A fourth-generation area resident, Richard has spent most of his professional life land planning, serving agricultural organizations and effectuating a balance between economic development and environmental conservation in the community.

Erik Henriksen has been a long-term MWA member and Treasurer. He also serves on the Lebanon Township Environmental Commission and Open Space Committee.

Mary Paist-Goldman has been active with the MWA for nearly 15 years and has most recently been our Secretary.

Chris Stout is our newest trustee, but he comes with a deep commitment to conservation and stewardship founded by his love for fishing. Chris is a Certified Public Accountant.

Finally, Bill Leavens returns to his role as Secretary. Bill is one of MWA's most long-term and dedicated trustees and a past-president. He serves on the Washington Township (Morris) Planning Board and is a member of the Township's Environmental Commission.

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**Farewell, Kyle!**

Earlier this month, MWA bid farewell to Kyle Richter, Watershed Programs Manager. In his over 7 years with the organization, Kyle has moved from Education and Outreach Coordinator, promoting watershed-wide stewardship at local schools, municipal meetings, and MWA events to Watershed Programs Coordinator, later being promoted to Manager.

Kyle is credited with growing MWA's Camp Musky to the popular summer program it is today. He expanded the sessions to include an extra week focused specifically on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) curriculum. Campers made swimming robots, analyzed aquatic insects, and learned other valuable problem-solving and life skills.

As Kyle's position shifted to more river restoration work, he began to focus on ways to mitigate flooding throughout the watershed, especially during heavy rainfall. Kyle began work on removing a remnant dam in Hackettstown that MWA hopes to continue this summer. He was also awarded a grant from the NJ Department of Environmental



*Kyle Richter*

Protection to work with riverfront property owners to source and plant vegetative buffers on their property along the river, preventing stormwater runoff from entering the stream and helping to cool water temperatures for aquatic wildlife, like trout, to thrive.

Throughout his time with the MWA, Kyle has gained skills in leadership and management that he will surely take with him to the Lake Hopatcong Foundation as he works to establish his new role as Executive Director. While he will be missed by members, campers, and MWA Board and Staff, we are excited to be able to work with Kyle as he manages the headwaters to the Musconetcong River. 🌊

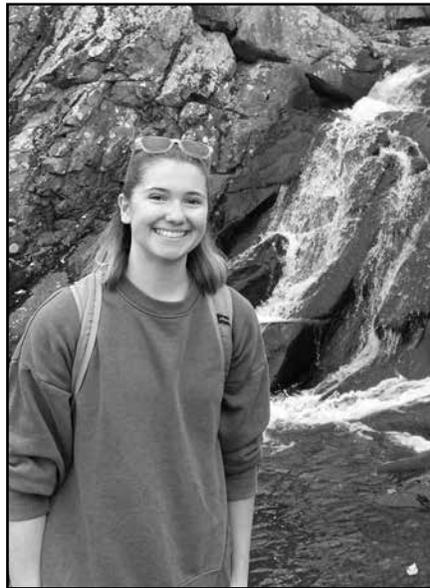
## Welcome, Sam!

Samantha Johnson joins our team as our new Water Quality Field Specialist. Sam will be working with Christa Reeves, Water Quality Program Coordinator, to monitor water quality in the Musconetcong River and to manage teams of River Watcher volunteers who will be collecting water samples and maintaining our sensor stations.

Sam first became passionate about the environment, especially rivers, when she participated in a stream assessment and macroinvertebrate sampling on the Musconetcong River during a high school field trip. During college, she volunteered as an MWA River Watcher where she expanded her field skills and her knowledge of river ecosystems.

Last fall, Sam received funding from the Independent College Fund of NJ which she used to conduct a research study titled, "Determination of Microplastics Concentrations in the Sediment of the Musconetcong River." She presented her findings at the ICFNJ Undergraduate Research Symposium in April, and was recognized as first runner up. She looks forward to expanding on this study in the future, as well as educating members of the community on her findings.

From working an internship with the Environmental Sustainability and



*Samantha Johnson*

Engineering Academy this past spring, Sam has discovered her passion for education. As a teacher, she hopes to use her experience in the field to immerse students in the real world of science, inspiring the next generation of scientists.

Samantha Johnson was born and raised in Hackettstown, NJ and is currently a student at Centenary University where she is completing her degree in environmental science, and working toward her teaching certification in biology. In her free time, Sam loves to hike, kayak, and teach tap dance classes. 🎧

## Getting to Know Our Volunteers:

*A message from Ryan Jiorle,  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator*

As the new Community Engagement Coordinator for the MWA, one of my first priorities has been developing a new system to engage with our volunteers. As our organization takes on more projects, our need for volunteer support continues to grow. Whether it's gardening, helping to run our Camp Musky summer program, or working on our trail along the river, we have a diverse set of opportunities that require different skills. However, we know you may not be interested in all of the volunteer opportunities we have going on. Our goal is to learn which activities you want to learn more about and which ones are not relevant to you.

This is why we've developed a new page on our website, called "Get Involved," where you can learn about the different kinds of volunteer roles at the MWA and sign up to receive updates about the ones you're most interested in. By signing up, you can also indicate the geographic areas you'd like to serve in, so if you live in our northern watershed, you don't have to get calls for volunteers for an event in our southernmost sections (unless you don't mind the travel, of course!). Whether you are a brand-new volunteer or someone who has been serving alongside us for years, we encourage you to sign up at [musconetcong.org/get-involved](https://musconetcong.org/get-involved).

Our goal is to have all of our volunteers registered through our new system to make sure you're getting the information you need!

If you have any questions about getting involved, or if you just want to introduce yourself, please reach out to me at [ryan@musconetcong.org](mailto:ryan@musconetcong.org) or by calling (908) 765-8788. I look forward to serving with you! 🎧

## Return of the Clean-up

It turns out the grass *is actually* greener on the other side—thanks to all of our volunteers' efforts at MWA's annual River Cleanup on Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. We are so happy to have been able to resume a tradition as old as the MWA itself, and it would not have been possible without your help. With more than 400

volunteers covering twenty sites along the Musconetcong River, we are very grateful we could adapt to the unique circumstances of this year and still hold this event. We appreciate everyone's cooperation and flexibility and hope to see you around our beautiful watershed again soon! 🎧

# THANKS, VOLUNTEERS!

# Congressman Malinowski Visits the Warren Mill Dam

Last month, MWA, joined by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and property owners International Process Plants (IPP), met with Congressman Tom Malinowski (NJ-07) to discuss a feasibility study and plans to remove the Warren Mill dam, which straddles Holland Township, Hunterdon County and Pohatcong Township, Warren County.

MWA is grateful for Congressman Malinowski's support in securing federal funding for this project, which will help to open up an additional 5 miles of river for fish passage and improve local water quality. Removal of the 330' wide and 39' tall dam is significantly complicated by its size and the volume of accumulated sediment upstream of the dam.

Congressman Malinowski visited the site with Alan Hunt, MWA's Director of Policy and Grants, Canny MacGonagle, MWA Board member, Eric Schradung, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

Michael Palmquist, Senior Environmental Specialist, NJDEP Office of Natural Resource Restoration, and Stanley Sackowitz, Senior Vice President of Real Estate, International Process Plants. Our next steps will be to hire an engineering firm to complete the conceptual plans for the removal and ecological restoration.

In a show of support for this project the Congressman provided a statement to the MWA:

*"The Warren Mill Dam removal project has been a priority for the nearby communities for over a decade, and the feasibility study is a huge step forward toward the removal of the dam, and the ecological restoration of the Musconetcong River. The removal will improve water quality and create a larger habitat for local wildlife species, including the American shad. My office*



MWA's Alan Hunt shows Congressman Tom Malinowski (NJ-07) the Warren Mill dam.

*is proud to support the Musconetcong Watershed Association in their ongoing removal efforts, and I will continue to work in Congress to bring federal funding back to New Jersey."*

For ongoing updates of the Warren Mill dam removal project, please check our website: [musconetcong.org](http://musconetcong.org).

## 'Oil Rush Legacy: Removing Pipelines from the Musky'

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on site. The recovered material is non-hazardous and is safely disposed at a licensed disposal facility. These activities will continue until NJDEP is satisfied that all regulatory requirements have been met.

### How has Chevron prevented historical site impacts from reaching the river?

There is an oil recovery system that captures the remaining residual product and prevents any discharges to the river. There are also monitoring wells between the impacted area and the river that serve to monitor conditions in the groundwater.

### What cleanup activities have been performed to date?

Numerous environmental investigations have been undertaken over the years to

understand potential environmental impacts. Soil impacts were remediated through excavation and onsite treatment. Groundwater remediation started in the 1980s and includes operating the belt skimmer system to collect weathered crude oil and diesel from groundwater.

### How did Chevron get involved in the site?

Chevron's predecessors (including Tidewater Pipe Company, Getty Pipe Company and Texaco) operated a tank farm with aboveground storage tanks on the property from the early 1900s to 1981. Chevron acquired the property through merger with Texaco in 2001 after the facility was decommissioned.

### How long will that cleanup take?

Cleanup activities are ongoing and will continue until NJDEP is satisfied

that all regulatory requirements have been met. This property is in long-term operations, maintenance, and monitoring (the final stages before closure). While Chevron cannot speak for the agency, we expect that the long-term operations and maintenance could take several more years.

### What are redevelopment plans for the overall site?

While Chevron continues to work under the oversight of the NJDEP to remediate the site, Chevron's real estate teams are evaluating potential end-uses.

Visit our website or follow @MuskyWatershed on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to learn more about this project as it unfolds.

# Adopt-A-Sensor: Help Us Keep the Musky Cool

By Christa Reeves, Water Quality Program Coordinator

As we enter our spring and summer water quality monitoring seasons, MWA has put out calls for volunteers to help steward our network of online and Bluetooth sensors. One of the many features these sensors offer is the ability to provide temperature information. Temperatures are warming across the globe and the Musconetcong is not immune. Our EnviroDIY live sensors and HOBO Bluetooth pendants take temperature readings every five minutes, providing robust data on temperatures throughout the watershed. Some causes of increased rising temperatures in the River are in areas nearest paved land, lack of shade over the River (canopy cover) and slow-moving water behind dams. It may be more comfortable when you wade in to kayak, canoe or fish, but these changes in temperature have an impact on our local ecosystem.

Warmer water contains less oxygen than colder water. As the temperature rises and dissolved oxygen decreases, aquatic life begins to experience stress. For example, rainbow trout can survive in water up to and exceeding 24°C (75°F), but they stop growing at 23°C (73.4°F). It stands to reason that a fish that is oxygen deprived and temperature stressed, will be dramatically more stressed after being reeled in and trying to fight an angler's hook. In many cases, they will not survive being caught and released.

It's not only the common rainbow trout that are stocked into the river for recreational purposes that are stressed. In Segment A of the Wild and Scenic portion of the Musconetcong, lives the threatened and endangered Brook Floater mussel. Adult freshwater mussels are filter-feeders; they strain plankton, bacteria and other particles from the water column. However, rising water temperatures stress freshwater mussels by reducing their ability to burrow, which they need to be able to do to prevent becoming exposed to the air when water is low, escape predation, or avoid fast flows that can wash them into unsuitable habitat. High water temperatures can also affect their

ability to breathe, feed, grow, and reproduce, and ultimately lead to higher rates of mortality. To further c o m p l i c a t e matters, mussels require a host fish to reproduce. The mussels larvae attach themselves to certain species of fish, in a parasitic relationship. If host fish are not available, the larvae will die. The host fish for the brook floater include slimy sculpin, longnose dace, blacknose dace, golden shiner, pumpkinseed, yellow perch, and margined madtom. Almost all of these fish require temperatures below 23°C.

Another consequence of warmer temperatures is an increase in the likelihood of harmful algal blooms (HABs) forming. In recent years, scientists and residents have observed an increase in frequency and severity of HABs. HABs tend to bloom during the warm summer and fall months. A key temperature limit that has been identified by the EPA is 25°C (77°F). Warmer temperatures create a competitive advantage for certain types of algae, as seen with the toxin-producing cyanobacteria, *Microcystis*. Through a grant from the Watershed Institute, MWA is expanding our monitoring this year to include run-of-the-river recreational lakes, such as Saxton Lake, to assess cyanobacteria levels and with this, more temperature monitoring.

Temperature is a crucial factor in a healthy aquatic ecosystem and gathering accurate and timely data assists in focused restoration and monitoring efforts. In this effort, MWA has a need for volunteers to help steward our sensor network. If you have 20 minutes every couple of weeks, and would like to have a reason to visit the river (like you need one), Adopt-A-Sensor! We will provide you with scrub brushes and training. You will need a



Sensor photo provided by the Stroud Center.



Picture of a HOBO bluetooth pendant that takes temperature readings every five minutes.

smartphone and a pair of waterproof boots or waders. This is a great way to keep in tune with what is happening in the river and contribute, not just to the MWA and your community, but to the entire Delaware Basin. This data is used by scientists at Stroud Water Research Center to analyze larger scale trends in water quality and quantity. This research allows us to prepare for climate change and understand broad ecological impacts of things like road salt use and stormwater runoff.

If you would like to adopt one of our sensors please contact: Christa Reeves, Water Quality Program Coordinator at [christa@musconetcong.org](mailto:christa@musconetcong.org), or Ryan Jiorle, Community Engagement Coordinator at [ryan@musconetcong.org](mailto:ryan@musconetcong.org). 🍌

# Camp Musky is Back!

We've brought our summer camp program back and in-person for 2021! Camp Musky is a fun, educational day camp for kids ages 5 to 12+. We offer an outdoor learning experience and hands-on, river-based programs, thanks to our safe and convenient access to the Musconetcong River as well as a network of trails near our office in Asbury (Warren County). Over the course of five weeks in July and the beginning of August, we host weeklong programs for different age groups and with different themes:

July 5 - 9: Explorers (Ages 5-6)

July 12 - 16: Stream Team (Ages 7-9)

July 19 - 23: Trailblazers (Ages 7-9)

July 26 - 30: River Rangers (Ages 10-12+)

August 2 - 6: STEM Camp (Ages 8-12)

## Explorers

Campers will explore nature through storytelling, cooperative play, and creative art and crafting projects designed to deepen their connection with nature. Each morning, we will depart on an exciting journey exploring the river and its surroundings while collecting and recording treasures found along the way. We will use their collections along with other artistic mediums, paints, beads and clay to create and express the different aspects of life on the river.



While encountering all of the things that can be seen, and even some things that cannot, campers will develop a nature journal and discover ways of creating a record of what their senses experience.

## Trailblazers

Campers will explore the connection between humans and nature. Understanding the plants and animals in our local ecosystem, and safe ways to interact with them, will create opportunities for children to explore nature in a creative, uninhibited way. They will develop an appreciation for the basic components necessary for sustainability including use of water, shelter and food. Campers will see how nature provides all of these necessities to the plants and animals living there.

## Stream Team

Stream Team will explore the connections between the Earth's ecosystems, and the microorganisms within those ecosystems. They will be exposed to practices of sustainability and environmental ethics as well as practices in classification of insects, birds, flowers and trees. Explorations of the river and our path to developing deep, lasting connections with our bio-region will be documented in a nature journal.

## River Rangers

Older campers will learn that for humans to live sustainably we need to use the Earth's resources at a rate at which they can be replenished. River Rangers will develop an appreciation for the basic components necessary for sustainability, including use of water, shelter and food. River Rangers will learn how each habitat explored provides the necessities for the creatures it supports. Each day, there will be an exploration of the Musconetcong River and an in-depth investigation of stream and field life in the Musconetcong Watershed.

## STEM Camp

Science, Technology, Engineering, and yes even some Math! STEM Camp will use hands-on learning to foster creativity, problem-solving, life skills, resourcefulness, patience and curiosity. Using core STEM principles, we will



work together to solve real world problems to help us monitor the mighty Musky's health. We will, of course, make time to explore the river and play some games!

The first two weeks, Explorers and Stream Team, will run Monday – Friday from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, while the last three weeks run from Monday – Friday from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. Space is limited this year, so please sign up as soon as possible using the forms on our website: [musconetcong.org/camp-musky](http://musconetcong.org/camp-musky) (this webpage is also a good source of information!). If you have any questions about Camp Musky, please contact Ryan Jiorle at [ryan@musconetcong.org](mailto:ryan@musconetcong.org).



# Push Back Your Lawn (and protect our streams!)

Research that MWA has conducted on river water quality reveals that a good portion of riverine environmental degradation comes from runoff pollution. The ground adjacent to our rivers and streams is a ready conduit for fertilizers, pesticides, and animal fecal matter.

As reported in our Winter 2021 edition of the Musconetcong River News, our aim with the *Push Back the Lawn* initiative is to sustain and enhance habitat for our fish and wildlife populations by helping municipalities and landowners to restore their land along the Musky and its tributaries.

We could beseech you to never use any chemicals on your lawn and chase geese from your property. An easier and more suitable way to treat the problem is to plant a thick blanket of native vegetation along any watercourse that fronts your property. We want to help you.

We are developing a page on the MWA website to share a list of appropriate plants and techniques. Critical to this is advising where plants and other materials are provided. We will share a list of plant sellers in the region who are working with us so landowners can get those plants in the ground. Managing your property is not difficult and we want to make it easy and practical to transform your landscape where it might affect a stream.

Landowners are often the ‘missing link’ in our restoration work, yet they

have a particular interest in improving the water quality in the Musconetcong. This initiative is also an educational adventure that the whole family can engage in. We will provide planning and practical support to assist towns and residents to do their part to filter rain water before it contaminates our streams.

As an example, geese are not happy near high vegetation. A stand of tall grasses along the water’s edge is where threatened predators might lurk. At the same time, that thick buffer of vegetation will absorb runoff pollutants before they can enter the water.

Municipalities and counties also have a reason to protect local water quality. However, they often lack the expertise and means to plan and implement beneficial plantings. We will be working with them to coordinate their efforts.

Please contact us for information if your property is next to a stream. And join us at our Native Plant Sale on Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 2 pm at our River Resource Center in Asbury (Warren County), NJ to choose native perennials to start your garden. Or go to our website and shop online! 🍷



*Photos: Students planting a vegetative buffer of native plants along the West Portal Creek at Ethel Hoppock Middle School. West Portal Creek is a tributary to the Musconetcong River.*

## ‘MWA Elects New Officers’

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Outgoing President Tish Lascelle said, “This is a strong leadership team for MWA’s future. Although Vice President Cinny MacGonagle and I both step out of our officer roles at the same time, there is great depth of experience on this reformulated Executive Committee.” Tish and Cinny will continue as trustees on the Board. “I have found it challenging and rewarding to serve as President,” Tish noted, “but it is very healthy for

a Board to develop trustees and rotate leadership.” Tish served as President for six years and Cinny was Vice President for about 15 years.

Trusteeship is a great way to expand your commitment to the mission of the MWA. If you have been a member or volunteer and would like to consider a more active volunteer role on MWA’s Board of Directors, please reach out to us, and we can discuss this opportunity with you. 🍷

### We’re Social! Follow us on:



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Meetup  
Musconetcong  
River Area  
Outdoor Activities

For more information or to register for events, email [info@musconetcong.org](mailto:info@musconetcong.org) or call (908) 537-7060, unless otherwise noted. MWA River Resource Center (RRC) is located at 10 Maple Avenue, Asbury, NJ.



## The Musconetcong Watershed Association

The Musconetcong River Valley is rich in scenery, history, natural resources, and recreational opportunities. The river rises up in Lake Hopatcong - New Jersey's largest spring-fed lake - and is shadowed by 1,000-foot Highland ridges and slices through a deep, limestone river valley, flowing swiftly to the Delaware River. Along the way the "Musky" passes by state and county parks, bustling towns, vital industries, historic villages, and some of the most productive farmland in the state.

The Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) is a non-profit organization formed in 1992 to protect and enhance the Musconetcong River and its related resources through advocacy and environmental education programs, scientific research and river restoration projects. The MWA scope spans the 158 square-mile Musconetcong River Watershed, and includes portions of four counties, and all or portions of 26 municipalities. The Musconetcong River became part of the National Wild and Scenic River System in 2006.

MWA members are part of a network of individuals, families and organizations who care about the Musconetcong River and its watershed. They are kept informed about issues concerning the river and its related resources by receiving quarterly issues of the Musconetcong River News.

## MWA Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member of the Musconetcong Watershed Association in which I will receive membership benefits and publications. I have enclosed a check payable to MWA for the membership category listed below:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Student         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustainer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Steward   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporter       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Champion  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000+ Life Member |  |

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Mail to:**  
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  - ◆ Camp Musky is Back!
  - ◆ Push Back Your Lawn (and protect our stream)

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