

BATTEN KILL WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Newsletter July 2005

***** ANNUAL MEETING AUGUST 2, 7PM AT THE GEORGI IN SHUSHAN, NY***
“THE HYDROLOGY AND GEOLOGY OF THE BATTEN KILL WATERSHED”
*** MAJOR RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT***
*** THREE NEW RIVER STEWARDS*** SCIENTIFIC STUDY RESULTS*****

Annual Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance will be held at the Georgi Museum in Shushan, NY on August 2, 2005 at 7pm. There will be a presentation entitled “The Hydrology and Geology of the Batten Kill Watershed: Glaciers, Aquifers, Springs, and Recharge” by Laurence Becker, Vermont State Geologist and David DeSimone, Geologist. Since water is the essence of the Batten Kill, it should be a useful presentation. The presentation will cover the basics of the geology and hydrology of the watershed. The geological formation of the area will be reviewed, and the particular features that influence the river and streams will be discussed, including the interaction of ground water and surface water. There will also be elections of board members. Refreshments will be served. The Georgi Museum is on Adams Street in Shushan. To reach it turn off Rte 313 West between Cambridge, NY and Arlington, VT at the Shushan sign on Hwy 61. Cross the Batten Kill and turn left. Follow the road all the way into the center of town and turn left on Adams just past Yushak’s store. We hope to see you there!

US Forest Service & Orvis to Fund Major River Restoration Project

The Alliance has entered into a cost sharing agreement for \$85,000 with the Green Mountain National Forest to design and execute a large habitat restoration project in Arlington. The Orvis Company will assist the Alliance in raising the matching funds of \$90,000 required to fund the project. This exciting project will involve improvements along an extended reach of river that can really begin to make a difference for fish habitat. The installation of large woody debris, pools, cover, and shelter will address the biggest problems found with the Batten Kill habitat in the scientific studies. Past channel alterations and the removal of large trees along the riverbanks have contributed to a near absence of in-stream fish cover. Such cover serves as a refuge from predators, floods, and warm temperatures, and is especially important for young trout.

This restoration project will begin on Twin Rivers Farm in West Arlington owned by Dr. and Mrs. William Lesko. The multiyear project will be executed by GMNF and VT Dept. of Fish & Wildlife experts, with assistance from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Bennington County Conservation District. Since the Alliance will coordinate the project our operations will have partial funding into 2007.

The project site will be monitored for changes in fish populations and habitat. In addition to improving trout cover and shelter, habitat restoration benefits the river in other ways, such as reducing bank erosion and excess sedimentation. The project will serve as a demonstration project for future initiatives. Perhaps we will be able to undertake similar restoration projects elsewhere on the river in both NY and VT in the future.

The Batten Kill Fishery, a Review of Scientific Findings 2000-2004

The Green Mountain National Forest and the VT Fish & Wildlife Department are planning a public open house and poster session to present the results of the 12 studies of the river undertaken in Vermont. The studies include everything from water chemistry and temperature to the role of predation. This presentation of study results will be offered twice in order to allow as many people to come as possible. The sessions will not be a lecture presentation, but a series of displays that people can view and discuss. Refreshments will be served. The first Batten Kill Scientific Open House will be held at the Manchester Town Hall on Rte 7A from 5pm to 8pm on Thursday October 27. The second will be at the East Arlington Federated Church Hall on Ice Pond Road from 11am to 3pm on Saturday October 29. The public can drop in at any point during those time periods. The sessions will allow the public to view displays that summarize the different studies and ask questions of the scientists and technicians who completed them. It will provide all stakeholders with a common scientific understanding of conditions for trout on this river. Discussions of regulations and policies for fishing on the river will occur at later public meetings. These scientific results will serve as an important component of the fishery management decisions that will be made in the future. Please try to attend one of these sessions.

The River Stewards Funded by Orvis with a \$5,000 Grant

The Orvis Company has provided \$5,000 to finance the River Steward Program for summer 2005. The River Stewards go out on the river to educate the public about safety and 'river etiquette', gather data about river use, and assist riparian landowners with conservation projects. Orvis funded the program in 2004, and they are being extraordinarily generous to do so again. The three new stewards are Ruth Bolster of Sunderland, Ava Pickering of Arlington, and Jennifer Durham of East Clarendon. Ms. Bolster is from Sunderland and has a B.S. in Marine Biology from the University of New England. Ms. Pickering is a junior at St. Lawrence University with a major in Sociology. The first two women have lived in the Batten Kill watershed all of their lives. Their local knowledge combined with their skills and education will make them excellent River Stewards. Ms. Durham has a degree in Natural Science from Castleton State College and currently works with the Natural Resources Conservation District in Southern Vermont on watershed issues. She is an experienced kayaker and will be applying her expertise and knowledge earned elsewhere to the Batten Kill and its problems and opportunities. The three River Stewards will be meeting at the Arlington Recreation Park parking lot on Rte 313 West at 10 am every Sunday if anyone wishes to meet them. And look for them on the river in NY and VT.

BATTEN KILL WATERSHED ALLIANCE

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Executive Director: Cynthia Browning (802)375-9019 exdir@battenkillalliance.org

Board of directors: Bill Bullock, Greg Cuda, Jim Henderson, Pete Hetko (Chair), Al Klein, Ken Nicholson, Jay Skellie, Jim Walker, and Charlie Wilson

Mission: To coordinate, educate, and promote stewardship for the benefit and enhancement of the Batten Kill watershed in the states of Vermont and New York.

PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW - *individual membership is \$20 per year; family = \$25; sponsor = \$50; business = \$100.*

This newsletter and the work of the BKWA is made possible by volunteers, funds from the US Forest Service Green Mountain National Forest, donors, and member dues. The BKWA is an equal opportunity organization.