



FRENCH RIVER LOG

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Welcome to the September 2010 issue of the French River Log, the newsletter of the French River Connection. You are receiving this because at some point you gave us your email address, and we have been sending you announcements and meeting minutes. There is information about how to unsubscribe at the end of this newsletter.

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Perryville Trace is a Great Place



On July 12, the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism announced a list of 1,000 Great Places in the state to visit, selected from among 12,000 nominations. Our own Perryville Trace, opened to the public in 2008, is on the list. Other local sites include the Nichols College Campus, Carl's Oxford Diner, Hodges Village, the Clara Barton Birthplace, Huguenot Fort, Webster Lake, Memorial Beach, and the Webster Main Street Historic District.

The Perryville Trace is a one-mile round trip woodland path, beginning at the closed French River bridge on Perryville Road in Webster. From downtown, take School Street toward Connecticut and turn right on Perryville Road, continuing to the point where it's blocked off for bridge construction. There is a sign and a small parking area. Observe the old curved granite step dam, a type rarely seen anymore, and walk upriver, enjoying the river views and solitude. The Trace is especially beautiful in its fall colors. [Take a virtual walk here](#). The trail has been extended several hundred feet since this tour was produced.

Ernie Wins the Bike



The winner of our bike raffle was drawn August 7 at the Dam Trail Race. The winning ticket holder was Ernie Benoit. Thanks to Pat McGarrah of Southbridge Bicycles for donating the bike, to all who worked hard to sell tickets, and to those who supported us by buying them. The event netted approximately \$1100 for our projects.

Another Successful Race is in the Books



Over 120 runners from New Hampshire to New York converged on Hodges Village on the sunny, cool morning of August 7 for a little run through the woods, the Dam Trail Race. This year, there were two courses, of 11.5 and 5 miles. When it was over, the overall winner of the long race was Jim Johnson of Salem. The top female finisher was Heather Kolpa of Shrewsbury. For the short race, the top finishers were Dan Ford of Cherry Valley and Ashley Krause of Easthampton. French River Connection members who ran included Bruce Gobi and Heather Bell.

This year, we thank the following sponsors for \$250 donations: Hometown Bank, North

Oxford Mills, Industrial Packaging Supply, Wilson Language Training, Central Massachusetts Podiatry, and Polar Beverages for providing all the water and other

drinks for the runners. Their support enabled us to net approximately \$2200.

We also thank Market Basket Oxford, Wal-Mart Oxford, Shaw's Webster, Stop and Shop Putnam, Price Chopper Webster, Big Bunny and Big Y Southbridge, DelRay Doc's in Webster, and Isador's Deli in Oxford for their contributions of food or store gift cards. Finally, we received prize gift cards and other items from Point Breeze Restaurant, Isador's Deli, Carl's Oxford Diner, Central Massachusetts Podiatry, Dick's Sporting Goods, Great Canadian Canoe and Kayak Company, Pine Ridge Country Club, and Pizza Post.

The Dam trail race couldn't go on successfully without the help of many volunteers to park cars, man water stops, monitor the course, manage food, take pictures, sell raffle tickets, provide baked goods for prizes, and other tasks. This year we had 18 French River Connection volunteers turn out to give up their

morning for this great fundraiser and many more responded to help Race Director John Grenier put on a first class event. Thanks to them all.



French River Park Schedule

The Webster Office of Community Development is working hard toward a goal of getting some work started this year, so that the Park can be completed next spring. One of the complications is a tight schedule to translocate whatever mussels may be found in the adjacent riverbed, and start work soon thereafter as required by our approved plan. The bid documents for the work have been completed and were made available to bidders August 25. There will be a bidders conference September 2, and bid opening September 13, with a contingent award that week. Release of funds is expected before September 25, following completion of the last of several environmental reviews. Meanwhile, mussel translocation is scheduled for September 20. If all of this falls into place, work should begin on the site before October 10.

The design of the Park is pretty much as it has been presented over the past year. Imagine that weed covered wasteland transformed into a great feature of a revitalized downtown.

Leovich Landing Launch Installed



On August 12, the boat launch at Leovich Landing was installed by Lavallee Construction and a group of volunteers. The launch is constructed from granite curbstone donated by the town of Oxford. Other features of the site are scheduled to be completed by Oxford Boy Scout Troop 147 as an Eagle project, with machine site work done on September 18 and all other work done on September 25 starting at 9am. The troop welcomes our participation on that day; we can provide encouragement and logistical support when needed, while they do the work. By the terms of our grant from the Last Green Valley we must

provide the necessary volunteer and in-kind support to match the grant amount, so when we're helping the scouts we're also fulfilling that requirement.

Thompson Cleanup Completed

Although this year's Thompson French River cleanup was cancelled by the organizers, that didn't stop us from working on "our" section from Perryville to Wilsonville. We found very little lightweight trash like plastic bottles, so we left them for another time and concentrated on heavyweight items: two pickup truck doors, a large compressed gas tank, eight feet of waterlogged couch cushion, and the usual assortment of tires and bicycles. On August 26 Norma O'Leary and grandsons Karlin and Jarrett Thomas collected the last of it for transport to the recycling center.



Earlier in the year we conducted a cleanup on both sides of the river above Perryville. One always hopes for the day when no one would think of throwing their junk in the river, but judging by this year's collection, there is a long way to go.

Don't Forget French River Day September 18

This year French River Day will be September 18 at Buffumville Lake, from 3 to 6. **If you intend to come, please let [Elaine](#) know by September 4.** We will furnish hamburgers, hot dogs, condiments, plates, and utensils. Please bring a potluck dish or dessert or beverages; let Elaine know. Bring chairs, family and friends.

French River day is simply a few hours of relaxing, chatting and eating picnic fare in one of the pavilions at the park, with others who share the vision of a clean river enjoyed by all. No water quality monitoring, no picking up trash, no digging pipe trenches.

Buffumville Lake Park is located in Charlton, MA. Take Interstate 395 south to Exit 4B to Oxford. Go through Oxford center and continue straight for 2.5 miles to Buffumville Park on the right. Tell the attendant you are attending the FRC picnic and you will not pay for parking. The FRC picnic is located in a shelter/pavilion about 100 feet down the disabled access road near the parking lot exit. Park in the lot and walk down the access road. We will be on the right.

The French River: How Low Did It Go?



For a month until the storm August 22, the Webster USGS gage had been hovering around 4.25 feet, and the discharge has been mostly in the neighborhood of 3 cubic feet per second, around 20 gallons. These are historical lows. The situation was exacerbated early in July when the coves above North Village Dam dried up, much to the consternation of paddlers and anglers. The headpond was refilled in a couple of weeks, but to do that, water had to be held back from the reaches below the North Village Dam for a time. Our water quality monitoring teams have found two of the tributaries dry, and others are so low it is difficult to cover the TROLL probe. After all the rain,

discharge reached above 20 cubic feet per second, but a week later it is once again around 3.

[Please Join Us](#)

If you agree with what we're doing, we would love to have you as a member or volunteer. Unrestricted membership donations are what enable us to initiate projects and to pay for necessities like insurance. These funds get leveraged many times over when we use them to advocate for projects with professional materials and services. Volunteer hours just help do more, and can be cited when we need to match grant funding. We're providing a way for citizens to participate in the betterment of French River watershed communities. If you like a cleaner river, and parks, trails, and boat launches, come on along with us!

[Visit us on the web at http://www.frenchriverconnection.org](http://www.frenchriverconnection.org)

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