

BEAVER MEADOW

FRIENDS OF
Green River Reservoir

Vermont

Friends of
Green River Reservoir

Fall 2016
Newsletter

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Green River Reservoir Dam Relicensing Situation

Background

The dam which creates Green River Reservoir belongs to Morrisville Water and Light (MWL), a municipal power company. MWL originally owned all land which the State purchased to create Green River Reservoir State Park. All dams must be relicensed every 30 years by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the first step toward which is a state certification. MWL is in the process of having their four dams relicensed and is appealing the recent Water Quality Certification issued by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) which requires that the water drawdown in winter be limited. MWL has appealed that decision stating that it would no longer be economical to operate

the Green River dam under the limitations required by ANR's Water Quality Certification and that therefore removing the dam is a possibility. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is required by the federal clean water act to protect aquatic habitat and states that these limitations are necessary.

The Friends of Green River Reservoir (FGRR) Board has been actively engaged in monitoring MWL's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Green River Reservoir Dam re-licensing process. This is a complex process involving multiple parties that began in 2010. As recently reported in the media, this re-licensing process has been highly contentious (see recent articles in the *News and Citizen* and on *VT Digger* (<http://vtdigger.org/2016/09/18/conflicting-goals-create-dilemma-green-river/>) for more detail.

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Camping beneath the Milky Way at Green River Reservoir

RON KELLEY



Dam Relicensing *cont'd from page 1*

Statement by the FGRR Board to the Membership:

The FGRR Board is actively seeking more detailed information regarding the issues at contention and will be advocating for reasonable, environmentally sound and sustainable solutions that include the ongoing sustainability of the Park's reservoir. To be able to influence this process, the Board is seeking formal party status in the Environmental Court's proceeding. This will enable the Board to have access to all information that will form the basis of any court decision, question witnesses, ask for additional information, and be part of any formal and informal negotiations. We have filed our intervention request and should know the outcome of that request before October's end.

Friends of Green River Reservoir, Inc.

— Fall 2016 —

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On August 9, 2016, as required by Federal law, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) filed with FERC their decision regarding the Water Quality Certification that would apply to MWL's four hydroelectric generation projects under review. The GRR Dam is one of those projects. On September 7, MWL filed with the Vermont Environmental Court (EC) an appeal of ANR's August 9 decision. On September 9, American Whitewater and Vermont Paddlers Club, Inc. filed a separate appeal of ANR's decision regarding the number of summer water releases. These appeals automatically result in a proceeding being opened in Vermont Environmental Court and will stay implementation of all newly-proposed ANR recommendations. The timing of the conclusion of this process is hard to predict and could take more than one year.

Since our last membership communication, we have received the "Statement of Questions" from both appellants: (1) MWL and (2) the American Whitewater and Vermont Paddlers Club, Inc. (AWVPC). Their "questions" identify the specific areas of concern in ANR's Certification and will define the EC's scope of investigation. A link to the Statement of Questions is posted on the FGRR website's *News* page. The Board has also posted a letter in various local publications and has received a number of new members. This increased support will enable us to have the option of obtaining the assistance of legal and environmental experts so as to be a stronger and better prepared participant in this ongoing legal proceeding.

On October 6 your Board met to review the previously mentioned "Statement of Questions" and to

further refine its strategic approach to resolving the issues that appear to threaten the long-term survival of the Green River Reservoir. Although the task appears complex and no simple solution is apparent, we remain confident that developing solutions to the issues at hand can be achieved and that the Reservoir will continue to provide the quality wilderness experience that we have come to know and value. We will be updating the FGRR website as new information becomes available. Thank you all for your support, suggestions, and comments.

The Board will actively communicate with our membership as to the status of this process as we work towards a solution that ensures the preservation of the reservoir. *We believe that one constructive step right now would be build the FGRR membership base and therefore encourage you to reach out to your friends to become FGRR members.* Anyone can join the FGRR by visiting the FGRR website at <http://www.fgrrvt.org/get-involved/>. This will provide us with a credible and strong base of community support for any steps needed to preserve the treasure that we have in the Green River Reservoir.

Check the FGRR website under News (<http://www.fgrrvt.org/news-events/>) for the latest information on this situation. We will send emails occasionally as well; if you want to receive them be sure that we have your current email address. Michael Wickenden is taking the lead on this issue for the Board, and can be reached directly at michael.wickenden@gmail.com.



Big Bass and Wacky Worms

BY ERIC NUSE

If I could only have one lure to fish for bass it would be a green rubber worm. Year after year, in all seasons it is my top producer. The good news is they are inexpensive, works great in weedy conditions and they are fun to use. My favorites are Gary Yamamoto Sinkos in variations of green, 4-6 inches in length and paired with an 0/4 worm hook.

To rig it weedless, I sink the tip of the hook into the big end of the worm about 1/4 inch. (fig 1) Then push the hook out the side and slip it up the shank and over the L by the eye of the hook. Now twist the worm on the hook so it is spanning the gap and sink the hook into the side of the worm and over the barb. (fig 2)



FIG 1



FIG 2

A variation of this set up is to simply hook the worm through the middle or Wacky. Only use this in open water without weeds.

The secret to success is in how you fish the worms. I like to use a medium weight, 7 ft spinning rod with 6 lb line and no additional weight. Cast the worm out into a likely place for bass. With a slack line, let the worm sink for 5-10 seconds. The deeper the water the longer you let it sink. Watch the line, if it moves to the side or seems to stop before the worm should have hit bottom you may have a fish taking it.

Don't reel in or try to set the hook. Instead, with your rod tip high, slowly tighten the line; if you feel weight and some slight shake, immediately lower your rod to slacken the line and open the bail. Wait several more seconds; now tighten the line with your rod tip down. If you feel weight, start to lift the rod; if it is more weight than just touching weeds or feel movement, set the hook with a hard upward sweep. If all has gone well you should be into a nice, hard fighting small mouth bass.

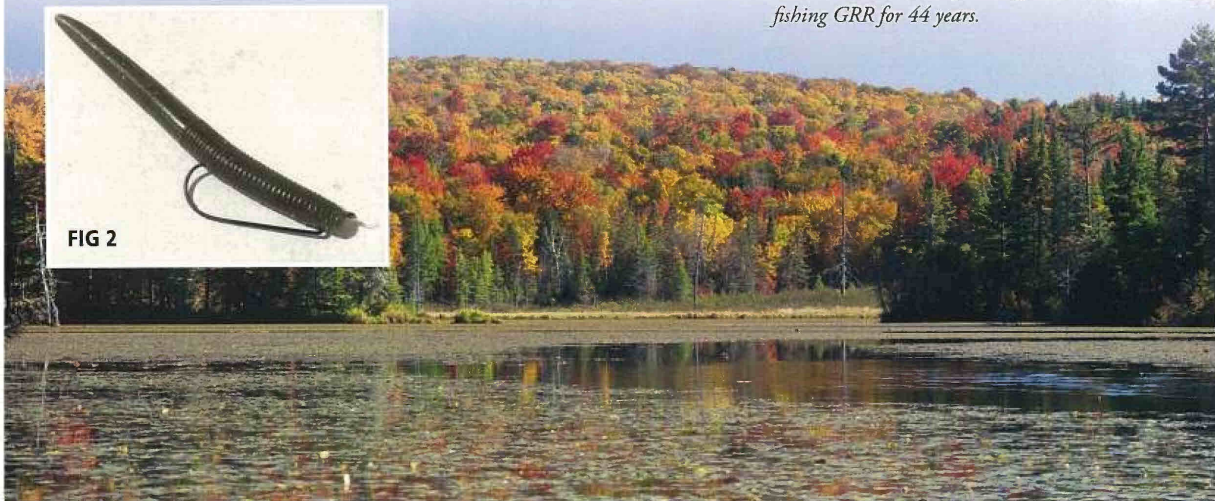
If when you tighten the line and don't sense a fish, continue to lift the rod, then lower it and let the worm settle down again. Repeat several times before casting out in the next likely place.

If you are rigged up Wacky, it is effective to jig the worm in at a faster pace than described above. When you feel a hit, give some slack line, and wait a second or two before setting the hook. The key to worm fishing is giving the bass time to get the worm in its mouth. If you have too tight a line or strike too fast you will not get hook ups and will find the worm pulled down on your hook. If you wait too long after the take, they will swallow the worm and it will be hard to unhook them.

Worm fishing takes patience and finesse. Slow down and enjoy. There is no better place than Green River to enjoy nature and connect with a hard fighting small mouth bass.

Good luck and see you on the Rez!

Eric Nuse is a naturalist, former game warden and board member of the Friends who has been paddling and fishing GRR for 44 years.





Report from the Green River Reservoir State Park Staff on the Past Summer

BY ROSS BRYANT, PARK MANAGER

Green River is a magical place. This is my fourth season here and my first as the Park Manager. This has been a great year here and although we have a long season we never tire of the beauty of this place in all seasons and all types of weather.

We managed to complete many projects this summer. Some you will see and some are more behind the scenes. We added nine yards of stay-mat to the ADA trail to correct the grade on it and also worked on the launch ramp. We continued to flip the ends on our composting toilets as needed. The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps built a new composting toilet at site 15, so now all of our

sites have the toilet system. Another important project was the removal of hazard trees in the spring and again in the fall. Our staff has also gone to Zack Woods every day to ensure that camp sites are cleaned and all trash is picked up.

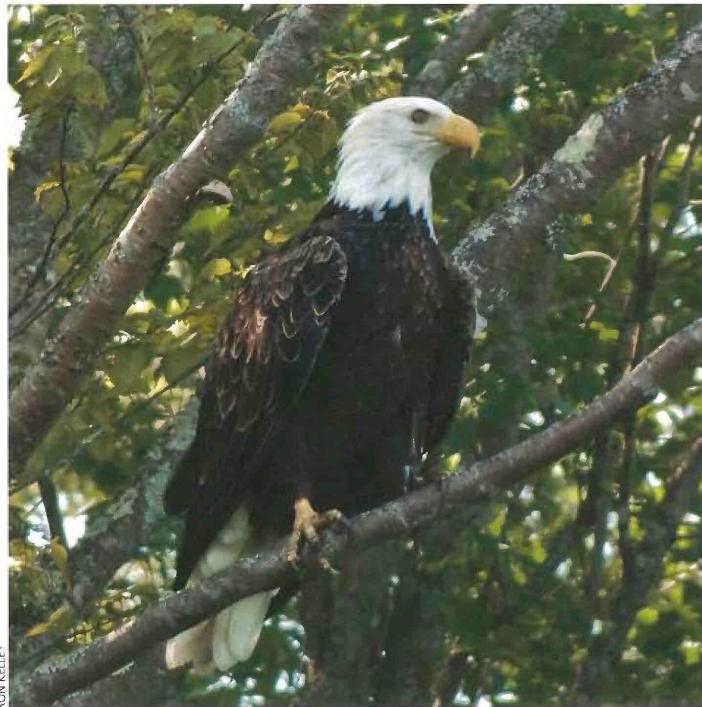
We cleaned campsites over 1000 times this year. Sites are checked every time a camper checks out to ensure they are ready for the next guest. This involves checking the wood shaving buckets, cleaning the fire pits, and checking the site for trash. We only find trash on rare occasions since most of our visitors are familiar with the Leave No Trace ethic and our *pack it in, pack it out* policy.

We have had around 13,000 visitors (day users and campers) this season. Many of these are families who come year after year and in a way are looked on as part of the family. Over the years we have watched their children go from infants to toddlers, we have seen their older children grow up, and we have met their grandchildren. These guests come from Vermont, from states far and near, and from other countries.

Green River has an abundance of wildlife and the staff and guests have reported viewing moose, deer, fox, coyotes, otters, beavers, grouse, Belted Kingfisher, Bald Eagle, and of course everyone's favorite — the loons. We get more questions about loons than we do about anything else here and it is a privilege to be able to see and hear them every day.

My staff and I had a great season here. We are proud to be able to offer our guests an exceptional experience and proud that our guests helped us have an exceptional experience in turn. Our hope for the future is that Green River can continue to be an exceptional experience for all who visit or work here. I would also like to offer my thanks to a great staff that were instrumental in us being awarded the honor of being selected as Region 4 "Park of The Year."

*Ross Bryant, Park Manager
Kevin Gallagher
Shannon Blake
Ethan Page
Eric Zawadski
Matt Carroll
Sally Cole*



RON KELLEY



Loon Update for 2016

BY RON KELLEY

2016 was a difficult year for loon reproduction in Green River Reservoir State Park. Due to the dry winter, water levels were below normal from early spring through the initial loon nesting period. The southwest cove pair could not access their past island site so ended up nesting in a higher-risk spot. The merganser inlet pair also chose a high-risk location. Both nests suffered from egg predation. Raccoons were numerous this season and may have been the lucky predators. The northern loon pair began nesting on Loon Island but later shifted to the floating raft, similar to 2015. The eggs apparently hatched but the newborn chicks did not survive. The access bay pair was the lone success story for the reservoir. They began nesting on their traditional tiny island on May 19 and produced two chicks that hatched about June 17 and survived into the fall. The Zack Woods loons produced one chick instead of their usual two.

The annual loon count on the reservoir in July detected the four territorial pairs, the two chicks and one additional adult, for a total of 9 adult loons and the two chicks.

Statewide, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies reports that our state's Common Loons had record



RON KELLEY

breaking success. Ninety-three pairs attempted to nest statewide, with 65 pairs successfully hatching 98 chicks. Chick survivorship was higher than the previous two years (78% survival rate), which contributed to the record number of chicks surviving through August. More than 280 volunteers helped monitor and protect Vermont's loons this summer with assistance from Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department game wardens. See the VCE website for the full report. The dedicated loon conservation work coordinated by VCE, Vermont Fish & Wildlife, and statewide volunteers over the years has brought this once endangered species back to great success!



RON KELLEY



FGRR NEWS



Mary Holland Program a great success

Mary brought many natural objects — from skulls to bear scat to bird nests, filling four tables — and wonderful photographs as she led us on a Naturally Curious expedition through the months of the year. Some 60 people (adults and children) attended the program at Lamoille Union High School, and were unanimously enthusiastic about all they learned.



Annual Meeting July 2016

The Annual Meeting at Butternut Mountain Farm in Morrisville: after a delicious supper, each member of the board introduced themselves and the role that they play as part of the group. It was noted that the FGRR was built with folks who are scientists, designers, regulators, etc., which provided a base to establish this vibrant organization. The membership re-elected Terri Gregory, Eric Nuse, Mike Wickenden to three-year terms concluding in 2019 and elected Lisa Dimondstein and Tom Kastner for two-year terms ending in 2018. Full minutes of the meeting are on the FGRR website. Pictured above left to right around the table are Terri Gregory, Mike Wickenden, Ron Kelley, Emma Marvin, Sheila Goss, Sally Laughlin, John and Judy Clark, and Milford Cushman.

Award Presented

The Vermont Recreation & Parks Association presented their highest award — Theresa S. Brungardt Award — to the Friends of Green River Reservoir and Cushman Design Group at the Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation at Lake Morey Resort on September 22, for the composting toilets at the launching area at Green River Reservoir State Park, designed by CDG.

Left to right: Kelley Osgood, project manager of CDG; Terri Gregory, board member of FGRR; Susan Bulmer, Dept. Forest, Parks and Recreation regional manager; Milford Cushman, CDG President and vice president of FGRR board.



Membership Renewals

Memberships run for the calendar year — if you have not yet renewed for 2016 please go to www.fgrrvt.org/get-involved/ and click “become a member or renew your membership” button.

