

GREEN RIVER VILLAGE PRESERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 27

Fall/Winter 2021-22



Dear Neighbors and Friends of Green River,

As we head into the shorter days and brighter lights of the holiday season, we hope this newsletter finds you healthy and successfully dealing with these still challenging times. We are writing to share news of what's happening in Green River, provide an update on our past spring and summer activities, and share a summary of the projects we are undertaking this fall and winter.

NEWS FROM GREEN RIVER VILLAGE:

The Village remains active and vibrant. While not quite as fully occupied as it was a year ago, it's still heartening to see lights shining brightly in our neighbor's houses. Two village houses that have been for sale for several months (including the long-time iconic B&B opposite the church) are rumored to now be under contract so, we anticipate that some new residents will be joining us shortly.

The Annual Carol Sing

Normally, at this time of year, we would be preparing for the 59th annual Green River Carol Sing, but due to the persistent and variable pandemic, we felt it wise and safest to cancel the service again this year. Not only is this disappointing to us and the nearly 100 people and families who cherish and attend this beautiful country service, it presents the Trust with a major financial problem. The annual carol sing has consistently been our primary source of revenue for the year. Large and small donations made at the service, have always provided the base funding needed to deal with the recurring maintenance and new project needs of the dam, the church, and

the surrounding land. We ask that you review our extensive (and expensive) project list and consider donating what you can to help close what could be a debilitating funding gap for the Trust. Unfortunately repairs and maintenance requirements never take a break and the cancellation of the carol sing for two years in a row puts a lot of pressure on our finances and decision making.

The Green River Crib Dam and Swimming Area

This past summer, the swimming areas above and below the dam were re-opened to the public and we are pleased to report that the problems that resulted in overcrowding and road blockages last year, were much reduced this summer. We attribute this year's turnaround to the fact that many regional swimming areas that had been closed, due to the pandemic, were re-opened; the wet weather discouraged swimming; and the creation and posting of signs telling people where and how to park all played a part. We also posted signs detailing clear guidelines for using and sharing the swimming area. While successful, all these efforts require considerable time and financial resources to monitor the area and produce attractive and effective signage.

The Sediment Problem

Due to Tropical Storm Irene, the continuous upstream erosion and subsequent deposit of silt and debris behind the dam continues to pose a weight impoundment threat to the dam and reduces the area available for swimming. If the silt is not removed on a regular basis, the dam will be threatened, and the entire swimming area will ultimately fill with sediment. The Trust is solely responsible for performing the sediment removal, with no assistance from the Town or State. What used to be necessary once every five years, now must be done every two years at a cost of over \$8,000 per occurrence. At that rate, this is a financial burden that will not be sustainable without generous donations from friends and neighbors.

Sediment Removal Delay Leads to a Bright Spot

Our summer 2021 plan for removing the sediment behind the dam was to close the dam for five days during a period of low water flow, remove the sediment and reopen the area. While we were able to successfully open the spillways and drain part of the area, the constant rain and high-water levels made it impossible to bring in the heavy equipment necessary to remove the sediment. So, after six weeks of waiting, we were forced to close the spillways and postpone the project until June of 2022. Despite our general disappointment, one bright spot of the long delay, was the repeated opportunity Board members had to explain to visitors and locals alike what was happening and why. One day, two daughters of the late Doug Riggs, a long-time lover and chronicler of the Green River, engaged one of our board members in a discussion at the dam that led to an impromptu and delightful recounting of the many reasons that Doug and his family loved this area so much. In addition, the family gave us a generous donation (in their father's name) to help us with our work. Moments like this offer all of us the opportunity to reflect on how special this area is, the reasons we live or visit here and why this village, and the surrounding area deserve our attention, work, and preservation efforts.

The Fish Ladder and Retaining Wall

For the first time in over 20 years, the fish ladder on the west side of the dam was totally blocked by sediment and was not operable all year. We called on a group of fish passage experts from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to help us identify and solve the problem. After a site visit and much discussion, they sent us a formal “suggested correction plan” that involved the bi-annual removal of sediment and the removal of part of the west bank to increase river flow to the fish ladder. This bank and brush work will be completed in tandem with the sediment removal next spring. In addition, after draining the water, we discovered a large hole in the west retaining wall. This was repaired by Paul Murray, a local mason.

The Green River Church

Last fall, during our annual raking and cleanup activities, it was discovered that the church’s eastern side fascia boards, (where the roof meets the outer walls) had serious rot and deterioration issues that needed to be professionally repaired and painted immediately. Following an inspector’s report and estimates received from building, painting and tree removal contractors, we determined that the total cost to make the repairs and mitigate the problem would be in excess of \$15,000. This, added to the \$8,000 cost for sediment removal, totaled over \$23,000 which was far more than the Trust was able to bear on our own. Looking for emergency financial assistance, we contacted the 1772 Foundation and the Preservation Trust of Vermont and after submitting an extensive grant application, we were fortunate to receive a grant for \$7,000 to help offset the cost of repairs to the church. This grant was a matching grant, which meant that the Trust had to match the grant award dollar for dollar. We worked with local contractors Morse and Mindel for the restoration carpentry; Eddie Charbonneau Painting for the painting; and Anson Baldwin Tree Company for the trimming of trees that were deemed to be causing the problem. Thanks to their excellent work, the repairs were made, the painting was done, the trees were trimmed and the church, once again, sits proudly overlooking the village. Maintaining a 180-year-old church is a never ending and expensive job and while completing these repairs was a major accomplishment, the Trust still faces \$15,000 worth of major maintenance costs going into next spring. We will continue our work on the church, the dam, and the land as long as funds allow.

Proposed Fall / Winter 2021 Projects and Events

The following projects are planned for fall/winter 2021-22

1. Fall clean-up chores (raking, hauling and branch trimming) as well as the removal of invasive plants surrounding the upper and lower swimming areas will be completed.
2. Small trees and brush will be removed adjacent to the lower swimming hole and on the east side of the church.
3. The stone steps to the lower swimming area have been cleaned and re-pointed.
4. We will clean and inventory the contents of the church attic which used to be a local school classroom.
5. Our website www.greenrivervillage.org will be updated and expanded.
6. We will continue supporting local land conservation efforts impacting approaches to the Village.

Important Note:

While the Town of Guilford maintains the Green River Covered Bridge, the Trust is responsible for all sediment removal behind the dam and the fish ladder as well as all maintenance of the dam, the church, the village center triangle, and the surrounding land. **For example, this summer, we paid \$250.00 to inoculate the stately ash tree standing on the village triangle, against attack from emerald ash borers.** This will also be an on-going cost. We are totally dependent on individual donations to finance these tasks since we receive no outside financial assistance from the Town or the State.

Please help and do know....

The Green River Village Preservation Trust is a recognized non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation of the historical, physical and community resources of Green River Village. The board is a true “working” board comprised of 11 volunteers. The only maintenance work that we pay for is weekly lawn mowing. All other routine seasonal chores and DIY projects are performed by board members and others who are willing to help. It takes a lot of time, energy, planning and money to carry out these duties, and physical and financial resources are further strained when extraordinary events such as storms and major repair projects arise and demand immediate attention and resources. Your donation of time and money to assist with these projects is critical and much appreciated.

There are now two ways to donate:

All donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged in writing.

Pay by Check

Make your check payable to GRVPT and send it to:

Lynn Pancake
Treasurer, Green River Village Preservation Trust
1082 Green River Road
Guilford, VT 05301

Pay by Credit Card

Donate using a credit card by visiting our website at www.greenrivervillage.org and follow the DONATE link.

And, if you are interested in physically helping with any of our many projects, please send a note to Lynn Pancake at the above address.

Thank you for your support and best wishes for a joyful and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

The Green River Village Preservation Trust Board

Diane Murphy – President, Steve Detra -Vice President, Addie Minott– Secretary,
Lynn Pancake – Treasurer and Chris Beebe, Michael Becker, Eddie Charbonneau, Steve Lembke, Brian Link, Gabe Maulucci, and Addison Minott