

HINSDALE (East Branch)



- 1** **Old Mill Trail** 413-394-9796
P.O. Box 251, 1383 Route 102, South Lee, MA
Wander back in time along the Housatonic River for 1.5 miles. First half of the trail is wheelchair accessible. The ruins of a nineteenth century textile mill hint at the river's influence on this community. Visit www.hvatoday.org.
Directions: From Route 8 south in Hinsdale, turn left onto Old Dalton Road, cross the River and immediately take a left into the trailhead parking area.

DALTON (East Branch)



- 2** **Wahconah Falls State Park** 413-442-8992
Nestled in a hemlock grove, Wahconah Brook spills over falls before cascading into a deep pool. Follow the trail from the parking lot to the base of the falls. Picnic, grill, fish and hike to the upper falls. No swimming. Visit www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/western/wahf.htm.
Directions: From the junction of routes 8 and 9 in Dalton, follow Route 9 east/Route 6A north/North Street. Turn right onto North Street/Waconah Falls Road and follow for 0.5 mile (becomes unpaved). Parking area on right.
- 3** **Crane Museum of Papermaking** 413-684-6861
30 South Street, Dalton, MA
Housed in Crane's 1844 Old Stone Mill and on the National Register of Historic Places, the museum commemorates the first paper mill in Dalton founded by Zenas Crane in 1801. Open 1-5 pm weekdays, June – October. Free. Visit www.crane.com.
Directions: Take Housatonic Street off Route 9. Follow signs to parking lot above museum.

PITTSFIELD



- 4** **D** **Wahconah Park (West Branch)** 413-499-9344
105 Wahconah Street, Pittsfield, MA
This 1919 ballpark is one of the oldest baseball stadiums in the country with one of the last remaining wood pro ball grandstands. Lou Gehrig once hit a home run into the Housatonic River behind the right field fence. Today the Pittsfield Colonials call the park home. Visit www.pittsfieldcolonials.com or call 413-238-2961 for more information about the Colonials. Adjacent to the ball park is a **car-top boating access site**.
Directions: Follow Route 7 north through downtown Pittsfield. Turn left onto Wahconah Street; the park is on your left.
- 5** **Clapp Park (Southwest Branch)** 413-499-9344
West Housatonic Street (Route 20), Pittsfield, MA
Here the Southwest Branch and West Branch from the main stem of the Housatonic River. This 33-acre city park boasts athletic fields, a running track and basketball court open year round.

- 6** **F** **Fred Garner Park (East Branch)** 413-499-9344
Pomeroy Avenue, Pittsfield, MA
Located between the confluence of the East Branch and main stem of the Housatonic River, this city park was reopened in early 2008 after being used as a staging area for PCB cleanup work in the Housatonic River. The park includes a **car-top boating access site** and nature trail along the river. Paddle south through the protected lands of the Housatonic Wildlife Management Area.



- 7** **Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary** 413-637-0320
Berkshire Sanctuaries,
472 West Mountain Road, Lenox, MA
Owned by Massachusetts Audubon Society, this sanctuary was once a Mahican Indian landing site and later owned by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. Today it offers a quiet retreat from the

bustle of downtown Pittsfield just one mile away. The Sacred Way Trail is an easy, well-graded river walk alongside beaver habitat. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 7am to dusk. Admission fee for non-members. Visit www.massaudubon.org.
Directions: From routes 7 and 20 in Pittsfield, take Holmes Road for 2.7 miles to entrance on right.

- 8** **Arrowhead** 413-442-1793
780 Holmes Road, Pittsfield, MA
This National Historic Landmark home of Herman Melville, author of Moby Dick, is owned by the Berkshire County Historical Society and operates as a house museum interpreting the life of the Melville family. Open daily, Memorial Day weekend to Columbus Day. Admission fee. Visit www.mobydick.org.
Directions: From routes 7 and 20 in Pittsfield take Holmes Road for 1.5 miles.

LENOX



- 6** **Decker Canoe Launch**
New Lenox Road, Lenox, MA
Paddle through the state-owned Housatonic Valley Wildlife Management Area with October Mountain views.
Directions: Northern part of Lenox off Route 7 at the Housatonic River bridge on New Lenox Road.

- 9** **Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum** 413-637-2210
10 Willow Creek Road, Lenox, MA
Visit the historic Lenox Station built in 1903. Ride along the Housatonic River in restored 1920s passenger coaches hauled by vintage diesel-electric locomotives while your conductor narrates the trip between Lenox, Lee and Stockbridge. Visit <http://berkshirescenicrailroad.org>.
Directions: From routes 7 and 20 in Lenox take Housatonic Street. Travel 1.5 miles. Turn left onto Willow Creek Road to the museum entrance marked by a railroad crossing sign.

- 10** **1** **Woods Pond**
Crystal Street, Lenoxdale, MA
The dam that holds this scenic millpond once powered local industry and helps stop downstream migration of PCB contaminated river sediment. Paddle upstream into marshy coves and flooded forest and enjoy spectacular views of October Mountain State Forest. Take the **Woods Pond Pedestrian Bridge** to the east side and into October Mountain State Forest.
Directions: At the intersection of Housatonic and Crystal Streets (Lenoxdale) continue straight across the railroad tracks. Parking on right between the tracks and pedestrian bridge.

LEE

Downtown Lee is on the National Register of Historic Places. Lee marble is used around the world – including the base of the Washington Monument. From the Route 20 bridge in downtown Lee to Willow Dam off Route 102 in South Lee is a trout-stocked catch-and-release area. No fishing allowed from June 15 to August 15 within 100 feet of posted fish refuge tributaries.



- 11** **October Mountain State Forest** 413-243-1778
256 Woodland Road, Lee, MA
Herman Melville named the mountain while enjoying autumn views from his home in Pittsfield. Hiking trails abound including the Appalachian Trail and the scenic Schermerhorn Gorge Trail. Seasonal camping (fee) and car-top boating allowed. No alcohol. Open sunrise to sunset. Visit: www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/western/octm.htm.
Directions: From Route 20 (downtown Lee), turn right onto Center Street. Follow Center Street which becomes Columbia Street for one mile to Bradley Street. Turn right onto Bradley Street (becomes Woodland Road). Follow signs one mile to campground entrance.

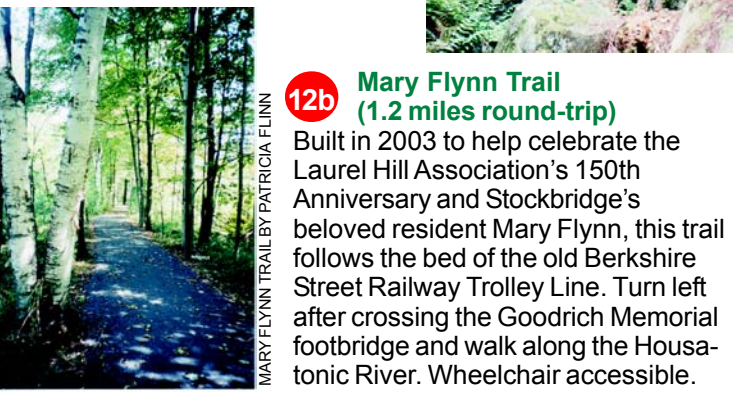
- K** **Lee Car-Top Boating Access Site**
Across from the Lee Athletic Field off Main Street/Route 20 is a **car-top boating access site**. Paddle south through some quick water and enjoy beautiful views of Beartown Mountain and scenic farmland.

STOCKBRIDGE

One of our nation's most recognizable historic village centers also boasts a great trout-stocked catch-and-release area from the Glendale Dam (along Route 183) south about a mile to the railroad bridge. No fishing allowed from June 15 to August 15 within 100 feet of posted fish refuge tributaries.



- M** **Park Street Car-Top Boating Access**
Park Street is a turn off of Route 7 in Stockbridge just south of the Red Lion Inn. Paddle downstream through the Stockbridge Golf Course. Pull out before the Glendale Dam at the Glendale Middle Road Bridge adjacent to the railroad tracks.
- 12** **Laurel Hill Association**
PO Box 24, Stockbridge, MA
These trails are maintained by the Laurel Hill Association, the nation's oldest village improvement society. The first three trails begin after crossing the Goodrich Memorial Footbridge at the end of Park Street. Visit www.laurelhillassociation.org.
- 12a** **Ice Glen**
(one mile round-trip)
This short difficult hike through a boulder strewn glacial ravine rewards with deep shade of old hemlocks and pine so cool that ice can persist in cranberries into the summer. At the glen's south end is reputedly the tallest pine in Massachusetts.



- 12b** **Mary Flynn Trail**
(1.2 miles round-trip)
Built in 2003 to help celebrate the Laurel Hill Association's 150th Anniversary and Stockbridge's beloved resident Mary Flynn, this trail follows the bed of the old Berkshire Street Railway Trolley Line. Turn left after crossing the Goodrich Memorial footbridge and walk along the Housatonic River. Wheelchair accessible.

- 12c** **Laura's Tower**
(1.5 miles round-trip)
Moderate hike uphill through old stand forest. Climb Laura's Tower to enjoy panoramic views of the Berkshires and the Housatonic Valley.
- 13** **The Mission House** 413-298-3239
19 Main Street, Stockbridge, MA
Owned by the Trustees of Reservations, this National Historic Landmark was the colonial home of the first missionary to the Mohicans. Just west on Route 7 is the historic Stockbridge Cemetery where former slave Elizabeth "Mumbett" Freeman is buried. Visit www.thetrustees.org.
Directions: From Route 7 and Route 102 in Stockbridge Center, take Route 102 (Main Street) west for 0.2 miles. The Mission House is on the right at the corner of Main and Sergeant streets.

- 14** **Bowker Woods Lower Trail (one-mile loop)**
Donated by Richard Rogers Bowker, an influential American editor and Stockbridge resident, this is a short loop through white pine. **Directions:** Take Glendale Middle Road off Route 102 in Stockbridge for 0.8 miles. Look for the sign a short way into the woods.

- 15** **Norman Rockwell Museum** 413-298-4100
9 Route 183, Stockbridge, MA
This museum houses the world's largest collection of original Rockwell art along with his studio, which was moved here from Stockbridge Center in 1986. Studio open May to October. Stroll along the Housatonic River and enjoy the Terrace Café. Admission fee. Visit www.nrm.org.
Directions: From junction of routes 183 and 102, follow 183 south for one mile to entrance on the left.

- 16** **Butler Bridge (1882)**
Butler Road, Stockbridge, MA
Enjoy river views from this pedestrian bridge just a short walk from the Norman Rockwell Museum. Access Butler Road from Route 183 in Glendale or Glendale Middle Road in Stockbridge.

GREAT BARRINGTON

- 17** **Monument Mountain Reservation** 413-298-3239
Route 7, Great Barrington, MA
Owned by The Trustees of Reservations, this 500-acre reservation includes a scenic section of Monument Mountain and several loop hikes. Enjoy views from the 1,642-foot summit of Squaw Peak. No fee, donations welcome. Trails open during ice-free months, dawn to dusk. Visit www.thetrustees.org.
Directions: Trailhead on Route 7 (three miles south of Stockbridge center; four miles north of Great Barrington).

- 18** **Rising Paper Company**
Route 183, Housatonic, MA
This Romanesque Revival factory built in 1873 is on the National Register of Historic Places.



- 19** **Housatonic River Walk** 413-528-3391
Behind Main Street, Great Barrington, MA
Stroll along this half-mile riverside greenway trail behind Great Barrington's Main Street. Extraordinary volunteer efforts removed tons of debris and created this trail. Now a National Recreation Trail, it is managed by the Great Barrington Land Conservancy and volunteers.
Visit the **W.E.B. Du Bois River Garden Park** located at the corner of River and Church Streets, 200 feet from where the great civil rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois was born in 1868. Du Bois wrote that he was "born by a golden river." Don't miss the **William Stanley Overlook**. In 1886 Stanley demonstrated his high-voltage alternating current transmission and lit up a stretch of Main Street. His design became the prototype for all transformers and the basis of modern electrical power distribution. Visit www.gbriverwalk.org.

- N** **Bridge Street Car-Top Boating Access Site**
Just off Route 7 on Bridge Street, behind the former Searles Middle School. Downstream the river is a mix of quick and flat water.

- O** **Brookside Road Car-Top Boating Access Site**
On Brookside Road about 0.5 mile from Route 7, look for the access sign on the left just before the bridge. Downstream the river is a mix of quick and flat water.

SHEFFIELD



- 20** **P** **Old Sheffield Covered Bridge**
Once the site of the oldest covered bridge in Massachusetts (1837), this 1999 replica is as close to the original as modern engineering allows. Open to foot traffic only, the site is a town park with **car-top boating access**. On the National Register of Historic Places.

- 21** **The Ashley House** 413-229-8600
117 Cooper Hill Road, Sheffield, MA
Owned by The Trustees of Reservations, this National Historic Place showcases the Ashley family and the enslaved African Americans who lived here in the 18th century, including Elizabeth "Mumbett" Freeman whose stand for freedom helped end slavery in Massachusetts. Anchor site on the **Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail**. Visit www.thetrustees.org.

Directions: From Sheffield center, take Route 7 south 1.6 miles. Turn right on Route 7A and follow for 0.5 mile. Turn right on Rannapo Road (at railroad tracks), drive 1.5 miles, turn right on Cooper Hill Road. Travel 0.5 mile to entrance on the left.



- 22** **Bartholomew's Cobble (328 acres)** 413-229-8600
Weatogue Road, Ashley Falls, MA
Enjoy some of the best panoramic views in Berkshire County from five miles of trails over the Cobble and along the Housatonic River. The alkaline soil supports unusual flora including North America's greatest diversity of ferns. Designated a National Natural Landmark in 1971, the visitors center and natural history museum is open year round. Admission fee for non-members. Visit www.thetrustees.org.
Directions: From Route 7, turn onto Route 7A. Follow for 0.5 mi. Turn right onto Rannapo Rd. Follow for 1.5 mi. Turn right onto Weatogue Rd. Entrance on left.

NORTH CANAAN



- 23** **Beckley Furnace, c/o FOBF**
PO Box 383, Lower Road, East Canaan, CT
This restored furnace produced iron from 1847 to 1919. Walk to the only turbine remaining in the Upper Housatonic Watershed used to power the blast for a furnace. View remnants of slag piles and abandoned machinery. State owned, operated by the Friends of Beckley Furnace and on the National Register of Historic Places. Open Saturdays, June to August. No fee. Visit www.beckleyfurnace.org.
Directions: From Route 44 take Lower Road. Entrance 0.5 mile on left.

- 24** **Canaan Mountain**
Designated in 1972 as Connecticut's first Natural Area Preserve, this is one of the largest, most rugged and inaccessible tracts of undeveloped forest in the state. The mountain's sharp peak towers above the Housatonic Valley and affords remarkable views of Bear Mountain and the Taconics. There are access trails from Beckley Furnace.
Directions: From Route 7 take Church Hill or Blackberry River Road. Cut through the fields just west of a pine grove.

SALISBURY

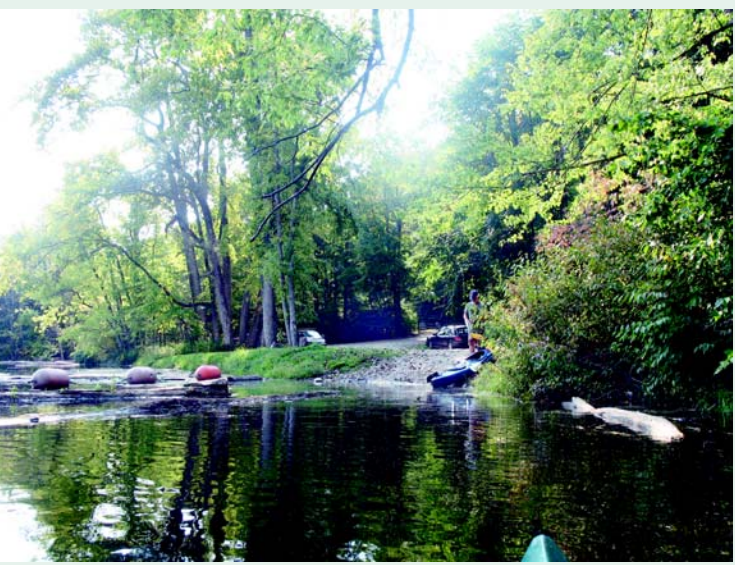


- 25** **Great Falls, Housatonic River Road, Salisbury, CT**
Tapped for power by FirstLight Power Resources, Inc., the Great Falls is a spectacularly dramatic sight late winter/early spring. Enjoy several overlooks along the trail from the parking lot and the short, educational footpath at the top of the falls explaining Amesville's history. No fee.

- C** **Car-Top Boating Access** available at the Great Falls parking area and below the Housatonic River Road.
Directions: From Route 44 East, turn right onto Housatonic River Road about 0.5 mile before Canaan town line. Proceed to pull off to the east just above the dam. Continue south along Housatonic Road to Dugway Road to the **car-top boating access site** below the dam.

- Housatonic River Trout Management Area**
Along Route 7
There are multiple informal fishing access points along the Housatonic River from below the Falls Village hydropower plant to Bulls Bridge Dam in south Kent. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection maintains a nine-mile Trout Management Area, beginning five miles below the Falls Village hydropower plant and heading downstream.

FALLS VILLAGE



Falls Village was once a bustling iron works community that produced materials for military armaments during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

- 25b** **Falls Village Nature Trail**
Water Street, Falls Village, CT
(Falls Village Hydroelectric Station)
This 0.75-mile wheelchair friendly nature trail loops through forest and fields with river views, joining the Appalachian Trail for part of its length. Markers and a trail guide show how the landscape changed to support a booming iron industry in the 18th-century along with stone ruins of a never-used dike and canal system. World class river rapids. No fee. Visit www.firstlightpower.com/stewardship.
Directions: From Route 7 take Route 126 north (blinking light) into Falls Village. Continue straight for 0.5 miles. Turn left at the stop sign. Bear right immediately onto Water Street. Parking is 50 yards on the left.

- 26** **Hollenbeck Preserve, Page Road, Falls Village, CT**
Owned by The Nature Conservancy, this 182-acre bird sanctuary has trails through wet fields to the Hollenbeck River. Enjoy hiking and bird watching. Visit: www.nature.org.
Directions: From routes 7 and 112 go north on Route 7 for 2.5 miles, turn on Page Road. Go 0.1 mile.

CORNWALL



- 27** **Housatonic State Forest, Cornwall, CT**
Located in four towns (Cornwall, Sharon, North Canaan, Canaan) in northwest Connecticut, the Housatonic State Forest offers hiking, hunting, letterboxing, mountain biking and snowmobiling. There are multiple fishing access sites along Route 7 between Cornwall Bridge and West Cornwall. Visit www.ct.gov/dep.

- 28** **West Cornwall Covered Bridge (Route 128)**
Built in 1864, the bridge spans the Housatonic River connecting the picturesque village of West Cornwall to Sharon. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Downstream on Lower River Road is an unofficial river boating access site that will soon provide handicapped fishing access as well.

SHARON



- 29** **R** **Housatonic Meadows State Park** 860-672-6772
Route 7, Sharon, CT
Along the banks of the Housatonic River, this scenic park features picnicking, fly-fishing, hiking, canoeing and seasonal fee-camping. Visit: www.ct.gov/dep.
Directions: Located on Route 7 (two miles north of the junction of routes 4 and 7).

- TRAIL MAPS AND DESCRIPTIONS** ... can be found in the *Connecticut Walk* book published by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. The book is available at www.ctwoodlands.org and local bookstores. Maps may also be available from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection at www.ct.gov/dep.
For information about hikes in Massachusetts go to www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/hiking.htm or buy *AMC's Best Day Hikes in the Berkshires* by René Laubach at <http://amcstore.outdoors.org/amcstore>.

- 30** **Pine Knob Loop Trail, Route 7, Sharon, CT**
This 2.5 mile loop is a hearty hike up two separate peaks, coinciding with the Appalachian Trail for 0.7 miles and featuring stunning vistas of the Housatonic River. Visit www.walkct.org.
Directions: On Route 7 one mile north of the intersection of routes 4 and 7. Just before this intersection, access to **Breadloaf Mountain Trail** is on the west side of Route 7.

KENT



- 31** **Kent Falls State Park** 860-927-3238
Route 7, Kent, CT
One of the most visually stunning state parks in Connecticut, Kent Falls features a 200-foot series of cascading waterfalls. A steep 0.25-mile trail along the falls allows views. Native Americans fished and camped by the falls. Later small colonial mills dotted the brook. Picnicking (grills provided) and fishing. Fee on weekends/holidays. Visit: www.ct.gov/dep.
Directions: Located on Route 7 approximately five miles south of the intersection of Route 45 and 4.5 miles north of Route 341.

- 32** **Appalachian Trail Housatonic River Walk**
The longest stretch of riverfront Appalachian Trail on the eastern seaboard, this is an easy and scenic walk on an old farm road along the Housatonic River from Kent to Sharon. The trail leaves the Housatonic River to steeply ascend Saint John's Ledges. The trail is accessible at both the Kent and Sharon ends. Foot travel only. Backpacker camping at designated sites. Stoves only, no fires. Carry in/carry out. Visit www.appalachiantrail.org.
Directions: From Route 7, turn west on Route 341. Turn right onto Skiff Mountain Road. Continue 1.1 miles and bear right onto unpaved road. Follow to the trailhead.



- 33** **The Connecticut Antique Machinery Museum** 860-927-0050
31 Kent Cornwall Road, Kent, CT
Adjacent to the Sloane Stanley Museum and operated by the Connecticut Antique Machinery Association (CAMA), this museum boasts restored steam and diesel locomotives, a fully functional blacksmith shop donated by George Lay (son of Charles Downing Lay, founder of the Housatonic Valley Association) and a showcase of Connecticut's mining heritage. Live demonstrations twice yearly. Visit www.ctamachinery.com.
Directions: Located on Route 7 less than one mile north of the junction of routes 341 and 7.

- 34** **Sloane Stanley Museum** 860-927-3849
31 Kent-Cornwall Road, Route 7, Kent, CT
An energetic and talented man, Eric Sloane (1905-1985) was a prolific artist, author, book illustrator and collector of Americana including the hand tools on display. Visit the gothic arch remains of the Kent Iron Furnace. Fee charged. Visit www.ct.gov/ctc and click on Museums under History.
Directions: On Route 7 one mile north of the intersection of routes 341 and 7.

- 35** **Pond Mountain Natural Area** 860-927-3827
120 Fuller Mountain Road, Kent, CT
Administered by the Pond Mountain Trust and The Nature Conservancy, this 800-acre peaceful preserve offers an easy 1.2 mile trail around pristine Fuller Mountain Pond and a short, steep mountain trail to the top of Fuller Mountain. Open dawn to dusk.
Directions: From Route 7 in Kent, turn right on Route 341 west. Turn right on Macedonia Brook Road. Turn right onto Fuller Mountain Road. Entrance is on the right.

- 36** **Macedonia Brook State Park** 860-927-3238
Macedonia Brook Road, Kent, CT
Hike the Blue Trail across the hills to stunning views. See the gorge and old iron works furnace at the south entrance along Macedonia Brook. Fish and picnic along the brook that cascades through the park. Rustic fee-camping available.
Directions: From junction of routes 7 and 341, follow Route 341 west. Turn right on Macedonia Brook Road. Bear left at junction of Fuller Mountain Road. Turn right on Macedonia to park entrance. Visit www.ct.gov/dep.

- 37** **S** **Bull's Bridge Recreation Area**
The Bull's Bridge Scenic Trail, Kent, CT
The Bull's Bridge Scenic Trail joins the Appalachian Trail and meets at the confluence with the Tenmile River. See waterfalls, gorges and a covered bridge dating to 1842. Hike, kayak, canoe (portage around dam) and fish. Enjoy views of an iron furnace and the Bulls Bridge Hydropower Dam. Foot travel only. Backpacker camping ONLY on designated sites. Stoves only, no fires. Carry in/carry out. Visit www.firstlightpower.com/stewardship.
Directions: From traffic light at junction of Route 7 and Bulls Bridge Road, turn west onto Bulls Bridge Road. Park on left before covered bridge.



"The best tonic is the Housatonic" ... Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.
Come explore the special places of the Housatonic River ...
from its headwaters north of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, south to Kent, Connecticut. Enjoy riverfront walks through forested hillsides, a quiet float along meandering flat water, or the heady rush of world class rapids. Quaint New England villages dot your journey, full of history and surrounded by spectacular natural beauty. Writers, artists and vacationers alike are drawn to the region from all over the world. Visit the historic home of Herman Melville, or stroll through the Norman Rockwell or Sloane Stanley museums. Find your welcome here – the Head of the Housatonic River valley in southwestern New England.



About the Housatonic River ...

into Connecticut in North Canaan, cascading over the Great Falls in Falls Village and flowing through the meadows and forested hillsides of northwest Connecticut before being harnessed in a series of three in-stream hydropower lakes.

It returns to natural flows as an estuary where it drains into Long Island Sound at Milford Point.

In total, the river drops 959 feet and drains a watershed of 1,948 square miles. Along the way, the Housatonic River helps define the rich natural and cultural heritage of the communities through which it flows.

There are more than 100,000 acres of public recreation land throughout the Housatonic Watershed ... much of it right here.



The Housatonic Valley Association
HVA's mission – since 1941 – is to conserve the natural character and environmental health of our communities by protecting and restoring the land and waters of the Housatonic Watershed.

- We look after the environmental welfare of the entire 2,000 square miles of the Housatonic Watershed — in 83 towns from Massachusetts to Long Island Sound.
- Our in-house experts work with property owners, community leaders and local, state and national organizations to leverage resources.
- Our staff lead education programs, workshops and paddle trips to familiarize people with the river as a resource.
- Our volunteer stream teams, "the eyes and ears of the river," clean up shorelines, monitor water quality and solve water pollution problems.
- We have saved more than 5,000 acres of farmland, wetlands, riverfronts and forest.
- We work across town borders to guide growth away from our most special natural places.
- We work for healthy rivers and streams, clean drinking water and natural places for our families to enjoy.



Check us out at www.hvatoday.org
PUBLISHED IN 2010 BY THE HOUSATONIC VALLEY ASSOCIATION
Photos with no credits are from HVA files.
Symbols below designate areas on map on other side.
1 Points of interest **A** Official car-top boating access sites

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (Housatonic Heritage)

exists to heighten appreciation of the region, preserve the region's historical, cultural, and natural resources, and improve the quality of life and economy of the 29 communities within the heritage area.

Housatonic Heritage encompasses the boundaries of the upper Housatonic River watershed that extends 60 miles from Kent, Connecticut, to Lanesboro, Massachusetts. It comprises 848 square miles, including nine Connecticut and 20 Massachusetts communities.

The heritage area assists communities, organizations, and citizens in the State of Connecticut and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in identifying, preserving, interpreting and developing the historical, cultural, scenic and natural resources of the region for the educational and inspirational benefit of current and future generations.

Information about historical, cultural, scenic and natural resources within the heritage area can be found at

www.HousatonicHeritage.org.



Housatonic River from the headwaters in Massachusetts to Kent, Connecticut

Recreational Opportunities

There are more than 100,000 acres of public recreation land in the watershed, offering hunting, hiking, camping, winter sports, and water-based activities.

FISHING

Fishing is a major activity along the entire length of the river and its tributaries, for both cold- and warm-water species. Some of the best fly fishing in the U.S. can be found in the Housatonic River. Since much of the length of the river from Pittsfield downstream is catch-and-release, the fish keep getting larger. There are certain advisories for fish, turtles and frogs. Visit mass.gov and ct.gov and enter "fish consumption advisories" in the search portal.

SWIMMING

Minimize skin contact with PCB-contaminated sediment, particularly above Woods Pond Dam. Wash soil and sediment from skin, clothes and shoes after a river excursion.

BOATING

The Housatonic provides excellent canoeing and kayaking. For the expert, Rattlesnake Rapids in Falls Village and Bull's Bridge in Kent offer challenging white-water runs. Flat water canoeing is best in the gentler currents in southern Massachusetts, Cornwall and Kent. To obtain a Massachusetts canoe guide, contact HVA's Berkshire Office in South Lee, 413-394-9796, visit www.hvatoday.org or send an email to mass@hvatoday.org.

HIKING

Excellent hiking opportunities exist all along the river, including the largest section of riverfront Appalachian Trail (Sharon and Kent). Many riverside communities are developing new riverside trails. HVA is working to link trails into a Housatonic River Greenway.



In general, the Housatonic River is considered clean enough for sport fishing and swimming ...

however the presence of PCB contaminated sediment in the Berkshires suggests that it is safer to swim in river segments that have a rocky or gravelly bottom. Fishing is excellent, but PCB contamination downstream of Pittsfield limits large sections of the river to "catch-and-release" only.

Since the national Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Connecticut Clean Water Act of 1967, pollution entering the river from discharge pipes is substantially reduced. However both polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polluted runoff – which carries nutrients, pesticides, sediments, road and vehicle chemicals, and animal waste – remain serious concerns.

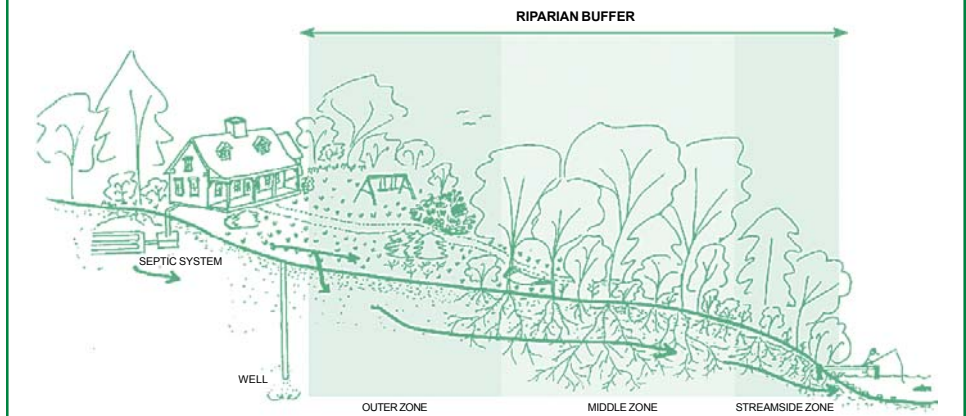
Both Connecticut and Massachusetts have strong inland wetland protection laws that help control polluted runoff. In Massachusetts the River Protection Act provides even stronger protection to river and streamside lands. Local Conservation Commissions oversee wetland and river buffer zones to minimize adverse ecological impacts. In Connecticut, these fragile areas are regulated by local Inland Wetland Commissions.

PCBs continue to affect fish and aquatic life in the river. Used chiefly as a coolant in electrical transformers, capacitors and heat exchangers beginning in 1929, the manufacture and use of PCBs has been banned in the United States since 1977. For years prior to the ban, General Electric's (GE) Transformer Division discharged PCBs into the Housatonic River and provided contaminated fill to straighten oxbows. Other industries along the river in both Massachusetts and Connecticut contributed to the PCB contamination, as well.

PCBs persist in the environment creating a long lasting concern. PCBs generally attach to river sediments and enter the food chain through fish and aquatic insects that reside and feed on the river bottom and are in turn consumed by other wildlife. In 1982 the first fish consumption advisory was posted along the Housatonic River for fish, frogs and turtles caught in the river from Dalton, Massachusetts to Kent, Connecticut.

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency and GE reached a settlement agreement in 1999. Two phases of cleanup are now completed covering the first two miles of river in Pittsfield from the GE plant to Fred Garner Park, resulting in a 90 percent reduction in PCB concentrations in the remediated area. Negotiations about the extent and method(s) for the **Rest of the River** clean up are underway. For information and updates, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/region1/ge>.

You can protect your river with a three-zone buffer system.



Streamside

From the water to the top of the bank. Protects the bank and offers habitat. The best buffer has mature forest but large shrubs may be a better choice where trees have collapsed a bank. Let it grow and let it go for the best protection.

Middle Zone

From the top of the bank inland. Protects stream water quality and offers habitat. Varies in width depending on size of stream and the soil type, slope and use of nearby land. The best buffer has trees, shrubs and perennial ground plants. It can accommodate some clearing for recreational use.

Outer Zone

Includes the yard, garden, or woods between your home and the rest of the buffer. Traps sediment. Play areas, gardens, compost piles and other common residential activities are suitable here.

Illustration and caption provided by Adair Mulligan
The Connecticut River Joint Commissions
www.crcj.org

PROTECTED PLACES



Massachusetts Wildlife Management Areas: Two Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are located in the Housatonic River headwaters. The Hinsdale Flats WMA (1,489.5 acres) in Hinsdale and the George L. Darey Housatonic Valley WMA (818 acres) that extends from Pittsfield to Lenox. State-owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife, these WMAs are open to hunting, fishing, trapping, boating and other outdoor recreation activities. Visit www.mass.gov/dfele.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern: Five areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are in the Berkshire section of the Housatonic Watershed. Designated by the state Secretary of Environmental Affairs, these areas receive special recognition because of the quality, uniqueness and significance of their natural and cultural resources. ACEC designation creates a framework for local and regional stewardship of critical resources and ecosystems. Visit www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec.

- Hinsdale Flats Watershed ACEC** (designated in 1992; 14,500 acres is located at the headwaters of the East Branch of the Housatonic River.
- Upper Housatonic River ACEC** (designated in 2009; 12,000 acres) encompasses the 13-mile corridor of the Housatonic River from

southern Pittsfield to northern Lee, and the section of the watershed that drains into this river stretch.

- Kampoosa Bog ACEC** (designated in 1995; 1,350 acres) in Stockbridge within a mile of the Housatonic River, includes a 160-acre calcareous fen – an ecological gem unique in the Berkshires.
- Schenob Brook Drainage Basin ACEC** (designated in 1990; 13,750 acres) covers sections of Sheffield, Egremont and Mount Washington. The brook and its associated wetlands comprise one of the most significant natural communities in Massachusetts including the largest continuous calcareous seepage swamp and some of the finest examples of calcareous fens in southern New England.
- Karner Brook Watershed ACEC** (designated in 1992; 7,000 acres), stretching across Egremont and Mount Washington, is one of the most scenic landscapes in Massachusetts with wooded mountains, rolling hills, open fields and streams, ponds, and wetlands. Both the South Taconic Trail and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail traverse the ACEC. Agricultural, historic and archaeological resources complement its natural beauty.

Invasive Species in the Housatonic Watershed

Invasive species are the animals and plants that are introduced into an area where they have not previously lived and where no natural predators or competitors exist. This allows them to thrive and spread unchecked, crowding out native species and upsetting the natural ecosystem balance. A few of the key invasive species in the Housatonic Watershed are listed below. For a comprehensive list, visit the National Invasive Species Information Center at www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov.

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) was introduced in the early 1800s as an ornamental plant. Now it dominates wetlands across the country choking out native wetland plant habitat.



Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) is an invasive reed that can create dense stands up to 15 feet high. There is a native variant of this plant. However it is believed that the recent and rapid proliferation of phragmites is indicative of the invasive reed.



Zebra Mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) were discovered in Laurel Lake in Lee and Lenox, Massachusetts in July 2009, and later in Laurel Brook and the Housatonic River as far south as Stockbridge. In Connecticut, zebra mussels have been found in the Twin Lakes in Salisbury. One zebra mussel can produce up to one million eggs in a season. Free-swimming larvae are no larger than the tip of a pencil making them difficult to spot. They spread quickly drifting with the current. After three to four weeks of feeding they sink, attach to any hard surface and quickly transform into a double shelled mussel. Within a year, a zebra mussel can grow up to an inch.

Rocks, logs, metal, native mussels and crayfish – even trash – can act as a base for settling larvae. As mussels begin to grow, they serve as substrate for additional colonization, forming extensive mats on lake and river bottoms. Their voracious filter feeding depletes the microscopic organisms essential to the ecological food web. Damage to boat motors, intake pipes and other structures is likely as the mussels colonize hard surfaces. The cost of controlling zebra mussels is astronomical.



Native to eastern Europe, zebra mussels were transported to the United States in freighter water ballast and discovered in the Great Lakes in 1988.

What is Polluted Runoff?

Polluted runoff comes from many sources. As rain or melted snow moves over and through our parking lots, roads, lawns and playing fields it can pick up oil, grease, gasoline, sand, salt, fertilizers, pesticides, litter and other contaminants and carry them into our river. Storm drains actually lead directly to the Housatonic River – not to wastewater treatment plants.

Failing septic tanks and pet wastes also create problems, carrying bacteria and parasites that can cause disease and kill aquatic life. Dumping household chemicals down the drain can send them to septic systems and treatment plants not designed to neutralize toxicity. Overusing pesticides and herbicides will not increase their effectiveness but will increase their impact on aquatic life when washing into the river with the next rain. High concentrations of these chemicals can kill aquatic life. Litter, too, poses a threat to river habitats and to wildlife – when ingested it blocks digestive systems.

Riverfront development that eliminates natural vegetation and soil and replaces it with impervious surfaces exacerbates polluted runoff by increasing its velocity and toxicity. Because these sources are so widespread, polluted runoff is difficult to control.

What Can You do?

The good news is that most polluted runoff can be reduced or even eliminated by a few simple actions. Here's what you can do:

- Make sure your septic system is working properly and pumped every two to three years.
- Don't pour household chemicals down your drain. Call your town hall for dates of Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days.
- Keep a smaller lawn and maintain native shrubs, trees and plants between your lawn and the river.
- Mulch leaves and yard waste into a compost area.
- Use less fertilizer on your lawn.
- If you must use pesticides, use them only in trouble spots and apply as sparingly as possible.
- Wash your car on the lawn and use vegetable soap.
- Recycle used motor oil and antifreeze.
- Properly dispose of pet waste.
- Don't be a litterbug.
- Always install and maintain silt and sediment controls when disturbing land alongside the river.
- Pave less.
- Never dump garbage, animal waste, oil, toxic chemicals or anything else into your neighborhood storm drain.
- Take action and join your local organizations in cleanups, monitoring and other river stewardship activities.
- Check out www.hvatoday.org.



The wood turtle is a "Special Concern" species in Connecticut and Massachusetts. They require clean rivers and large streams with deeply undercut banks for hibernation, and extensive areas of floodplain, forest and fields for summer foraging. In winter, they hibernate on waterway bottoms where the water does not freeze, in a hole in the stream bank, or among submerged, tangled tree roots.



The bald eagle is a Connecticut and Massachusetts "State Endangered Species." Up to 100 eagles winter in Connecticut from December to early March along major rivers and at large reservoirs. Natural year-round habitat of bald eagles includes lakes, marshes, rivers, or seacoasts, where there are tall trees nearby for nesting and roosting and plenty of fish for eating.



Male belted kingfishers prefer nest sites near creeks and rivers, but ponds and lakes, estuaries and ocean bays can support nesting pairs if the food supply is adequate and the water clear and calm enough for the birds to spot prey within two feet of the surface. Kingfishers eat fish about five inches long.

Partners protecting the Housatonic River

Appalachian Trail Conservancy – www.appalachiantrail.org
Berkshire Appalachian Mountain Club – www.amcberkshire.org
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) – www.thebeatnews.org
Berkshire Natural Resource Council – www.bnrc.net
Connecticut Appalachian Mountain Club Chapter – www.ct-amc.org
Connecticut Forest and Park Association – www.ctwoodlands.org
Housatonic Fly Fishermen Association – <http://hffa.net>
Housatonic River Initiative – www.housatonic-river.com
Massachusetts Audubon Society – www.massaudubon.org
The Nature Conservancy – www.nature.org
The Trustees of Reservations – www.trustees.org
The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area – www.upperhousatonicheritage.org
Taconic Chapter, Trout Unlimited – www.ma-ri-tu-council.org
Connecticut Chapters of Trout Unlimited – www.cttrout.org

Community Land Trusts along the River

Richmond Land Trust – 413-698-3141
Lee Land Trust – 413-243-2097
Laurel Hill Association – www.laurelhillassociation.org
Stockbridge Land Trust – 413-298-0061
Great Barrington Land Conservancy – www.greatbarringtonlandconservancy.org
Great Barrington Trails and Greenway – www.gbtrails.org
Sheffield Land Trust – www.sheffieldland.org
Salisbury Association Land Trust – www.salisburyassn.org/land-trust
Cornwall Conservation Trust, Inc. – www.cornwallconservationtrust.org
Sharon Land Trust – www.sharonlandtrust.org
Kent Land Trust – www.kentlandtrust.org
Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust – www.weantinoge.org

State Agencies

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation – www.mass.gov/dcr
Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife – www.mass.gov/dfele
Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection – www.ct.gov/dep

Federal Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency continues its large-scale commitment to addressing contamination in Pittsfield and the Housatonic River in concert with public involvement and participation.
GE/Housatonic River Site in New England – www.epa.gov/region01/ge

Legend

- Permanently Protected Land
- Route 7 and Limited Access Roads
- Major Roads
- Housatonic Mainstem and Headwaters
- Major Tributaries
- Other Tributaries and Streams
- Points of Interest
- Boating Access Sites