



# Summer 2017 Newsletter

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Dear Friend,

***Happy Summer! And thank you for all you do to protect the environment!***

In order to save trees and money, this year we are delivering this 2017 *Summer Fundraising Appeal* by email. Although email is perhaps not as satisfying to receive as a colorful print presentation, we hope this message will not only share with you the many exciting achievements made possible by your previous support, but also convey our need to raise a significant portion of our annual budget via this appeal. We respect you as friends and donors, so we do not bombard you with email and snail mail requests all year long.

**So now is the best time to give!**

BEAT runs on a very tight budget and we carefully evaluate every expenditure before we make it. We do *so much* on a shoestring that we couldn't include all our activities from the past 6 months in this email or it would have been far too long! We are committed to paying our small staff a living hourly wage, but the fact is, we can't afford to employ them full time. We dearly wish would could - not only for them, but because the ongoing challenges to environmental protection in the Berkshires never seem to lessen.

**Bottom line, we continue to depend on you to help us maintain our strong position as a key environmental watchdog, steward, and educator in the Berkshires.**

*Your donation today* - however large or small - will help our staff do what they do best: protect our natural environment from threats and thereby protect all living creatures that depend upon these habitats.

Grants certainly play their part in making our work possible - and we apply for many grants each year - but in the current political and economic climate, grant funding is harder to find and harder to win no matter how worthy the project. That is why we rely on individuals such as yourself to support our shared mission.

**Only with your help can we continue this work.**

If you have never given to BEAT before, please consider doing so now. It means so very much to the environmental health and well-being of the place we call home and the creatures that share this home with us. If you have given before, thank you, thank you! We appreciate it so much.

As you may already know if you receive our weekly BEAT News (if not... [sign up here!](#)), BEAT achieves *so much* for such a small organization. Together with our devoted volunteers, we undertake a

great many projects on behalf of wildlife and natural areas. We are thrilled and honored to do this work together with you. **We simply cannot stand by while anyone or any activity attempts to bring environmental harm to our precious natural areas and the wildlife that depend upon them!**

Please read on to discover more about our current environmental work only made possible by your generous gift to BEAT!

Thank you so much for your support!

*Jane Winn  
Executive Director*

### **Protect Berkshire wildlife!**

[DONATE NOW ▶](#)

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Click above to donate via Paypal or credit card or make your check payable to "BEAT" and mail to:  
BEAT, 29 Highland Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 01201

## **BEAT is tackling Invasive Hardy Kiwi before it's too late**

Throughout last winter, BEAT's volunteers braved the elements to cut, clip, and map invasive hardy kiwi in Burbank Park. What was once considered an uncontrollable problem is starting to feel much more manageable.

First off, we now have a much better idea of the extent of the problem. Five interns from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) spent hundreds of hours mapping kiwi distribution in Burbank Park. Picture gigantic monoculture amphitheaters bringing down the forest – those are the patches most easily mapped. But what often goes unnoticed are the small, emergent shoots just starting to pop up throughout the forest floor. These take much longer to find and a much keener eye. Fortunately, the MCLA interns were up for the challenge. What would have taken BEAT ages was done in a single season thanks to their help!



Every Thursday throughout the winter, volunteers assembled at the highest density patches to clip and cut climbing vines. The idea was to stop the vines from taking down any more trees and thus stunt the expansion of the invasive. You can now find a stark juxtaposition of brown-dead kiwi vines against the vibrant green kiwi covering the forest floor that we intend to tackle this summer.

BEAT has been awarded a grant from Northeast Integrative Pest Management to convene a northeast working group (NJ, NY, and New England) to coordinate efforts to control invasive hardy kiwi.

## **WHAT YOUR DONATION TODAY MAKES POSSIBLE:**

Help pay staff salaries to manage the kiwi eradication project, mentor and supervise student interns, analyze data, and collaborate with other organizations for more effective results.

# **Transportation Ecology Study: BEAT working to protect wildlife crossing roads**



This summer, BEAT is teaming up with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Mass Audubon to collect data along Route 8 in Otis.

Essentially, we're piloting a new type of transportation ecology project in which volunteers will be asked to collect information on traffic volume, culvert dimensions, roadkill hotspots, and wildlife tracks. All that information will be collated into a profile that will be delivered to Mass Dept. of Transportation (DOT) so that they can improve the roadway for motorist safety and wildlife passability. It's all rather exciting stuff as this project will go on to become the template for statewide transportation ecology studies!

The road segment on Route 8 was carefully chosen because it bisects large parcels of conserved land in a regional wildlife corridor known as the *Berkshire Wildlife Linkage*. BEAT is committed to maintaining and improving this wildlife corridor so that plants and animals can freely move through the landscape, find and acquire resources, and adjust to our changing climate. Barriers like roads, towns, and associated infrastructure make this more difficult and in some cases create bottlenecks. Organizations involved in the Berkshire Wildlife Linkage are working to ensure our wildlife and plant life have the opportunity to thrive well into the future.



You are welcome to help, though there will be a fair amount of walking up and down slippery banks. Contact [elia@thebeatnews.org](mailto:elia@thebeatnews.org) if you would like to get involved! In the meantime, please donate to this important program.

## **WHAT YOUR DONATION TODAY MAKES POSSIBLE:**

Help protect wildlife as they attempt to cross roads and navigate populated areas. Support BEAT staff as they work to create safe pathways for our cherished wildlife through collaboration, volunteer and student recruitment, and data collection and sharing.

# **BEAT is working to protect our waterways from contamination**

Over the past two years, BEAT, volunteers, and project partners have



been surveying 18 miles of the Housatonic River for point source pollution as part of our "Model Separate Storm System & Monitoring Project." This project, funded by the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET), incorporated digital surveying, mapping, water quality testing, and partnerships with the Housatonic Valley Association, The City of Pittsfield, and Berkshire Community College (BCC).

Essentially, the project's goal was to locate and evaluate stormwater outfalls (pipes that lead to the river and, ideally, discharge only stormwater) for possible cross-contamination from sewer lines. Unfortunately, we found instances of cross-contamination.

Believe it or not, our teams located, surveyed, photographed, and mapped 288 stormwater outfalls! Curiously, 114 of the 288 outfalls found were unknown to the City of Pittsfield prior to our survey. Forty-three outfalls exhibited dry weather flow – discharge occurring when it has not rained in 72 hours. We sought to answer the question: *If it is not rain water, what is it?* Nine outfalls were sampled for the sewage indicator "bacteria fecal coliform" and of those, six tested outside the state reg 105 CMR 445.010. We are now working with the City of Pittsfield to fix the two outfalls that conveyed the highest concentration of fecal coliform. You can find more info, the project report, and the final map [here](#).

#### **WHAT YOUR DONATION TODAY MAKES POSSIBLE:**

Our Mass Environmental Trust funding has ended, however, important work on preventing and addressing pollution must continue. Your donation will enable us to continue to pay staff to work with government, organizations, and community stakeholders to address contaminants entering our rivers and streams.

***Protect Berkshire wildlife!***

**DONATE NOW ▶**

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**BEAT's No Fracked Gas in Mass program maintains pressure on fossil fuel development in Massachusetts**

**No Fracked Gas in Mass** never rests in defending against the environmental threat of fossil fuel projects in Massachusetts. A large part of that work is advocacy for 100% renewable clean energy, and

working to educate and protect consumers against ratepayer abuses. We were instrumental in educating our neighbors, businesses, and elected officials about the unnecessary rate hike proposed this year by Eversource. Helping to pack hearings with concerned citizens and provide guidance on communicating concerns via the hearing process, BEAT believes developing clean energy alternatives and making them affordable to *all* residents of the Commonwealth is crucial to alleviating climate change and its damage to the environment and wildlife.

Despite the tireless efforts of all of us at BEAT/No Fracked Gas in Mass and countless partners across Massachusetts, work on Kinder Morgan's CT Expansion pipeline proceeds in Sandisfield. This was a case of a broken political system yet again running roughshod over local protection efforts with the result of 4 miles of unnecessary fracked gas pipeline being installed through protected state land characterized by unique natural areas. We continue to closely monitor wetlands protections and Conservation Commission meetings in Sandisfield to ensure environmental safeguards are in place and are fully abided by.



This past winter, activists held a "funeral" for Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, an act that mandates the right of citizens to the quality of life that clean water and undeveloped open space can provide. Land in Sandisfield and Otis State Forest now deforested by Kinder Morgan crews was under Article 97 protection. Unfortunately, after a

long, hard fight, when this protection was ultimately tested in Berkshire Superior Court against the U.S. Natural Gas Act, Article 97 lost.

Visit the [No Fracked Gas in Mass website](#) to learn more and to sign up for our NFGiM newsletter to stay informed and access in-depth knowledge on numerous ongoing and new fossil fuel projects across the state. And join others across the Commonwealth in standing up for the environment in the face of political and industrial efforts to extract, ship, and export dangerous fossil fuels despite all evidence that these energy sources bring dire consequences to the climate and therefore to all life on earth. We now know that "natural" gas – now primarily extracted across the U.S. through fracking – is *not* the "bridge" fuel it was once thought to be. In fact, it is more dangerous to our environment and our climate than oil when the full impact of extraction methods and methane leaks from fracking sites and transmission pipelines is taken into account.

*[NOTE: If you'd like your gift to directly benefit our No Fracked Gas in Mass program, please put a note on your check or in the online donation comment space to let us know.]*

#### **WHAT YOUR DONATION TODAY MAKES POSSIBLE:**

Our No Fracked Gas in Mass program is unique in its singular focus on destructive fossil fuel projects – both proposed and underway – that are unnecessary in meeting our region's energy needs. Whether

educating the public about these boondoggles or directly intervening in project approval process, No Fracked Gas in Mass works to protect our natural areas, wildlife, and human beings from the ill effects of fossil fuels.

## **BEAT's Monthly Tracking Club Helps Conserve Land!**

While driving along Swamp Road in Richmond, about a half mile north of Bartlett's Orchard, many a motorist pulls over in awe at the sight of a heron rookery. What's long been a favorite wildlife viewing spot is now officially Mass Audubon land and what's more, BEAT's Monthly Tracking Club had a role to play in the process!



Last November, Mass Audubon reached out to BEAT to ask about wildlife connectivity in this little Richmond wetland. Using GIS maps and models, BEAT enthusiastically endorsed the conservation effort. However, Mass Audubon wanted more info in the form of wildlife data from the field. It was a perfect job for BEAT's monthly tracking club!



The club, donning handheld GPS units, measuring tapes, and cameras, collected evidence of resident river otter, deer, coyote, bear, bobcat, raccoon, beaver, muskrat, skunk, and - new one for the tracking club - the hickory spiral beetle. Using that data, BEAT produced a wildlife map that circulated through the Mass Audubon ranks and formed one of

the leading arguments for conservation.

Now, you can be sure the heron rookery and surrounding land are here to stay. Mass Audubon officially conserved the Tracy Brook Wildlife Sanctuary this past December.

### **WHAT YOUR DONATION TODAY MAKES POSSIBLE:**

BEAT's Program Manager, Elia Del Molino, organizes and guides the Tracking Club throughout the year. In addition to the fun the group has trekking across the fields and forests of Berkshire County, Tracking Club members fulfill an important role collecting data on wildlife habits and habitats. Join the Tracking Club by emailing [Elia](#). And please donate to make sure BEAT has the resources to keep it going!

# **BEAT reaches out to educate and activate for wildlife!**

BEAT reaches thousands of people each year through our outreach and education efforts. And we will now benefit from the expertise and enthusiasm of our new staff member, Elizabeth Orenstein! Already hitting the ground running, Elizabeth will be the new face of BEAT's many outreach activities, including Pittsfield Green Drinks (sponsored by BEAT), Third Thursdays, area Farmers Markets, and at so many venues throughout the year. Elizabeth will also be compiling The BEAT News each week, and sharing our news and activities with local and regional media. *Please welcome Elizabeth to the team!*



## **WHAT YOUR DONATION TODAY MAKES POSSIBLE:**

Publishing The BEAT News each week, lining up special guest presenters and hosting Green Drinks every month, maintaining a vibrant presence at Third Thursdays and other public events, and informing and educating the population at large about important environmental issues and actions they can take.

***YOU make our shared mission possible!***

**DONATE NOW ▶**

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## **SIGN UP for THE BEAT NEWS!**

The BEAT News compiles current environmental news, events calendar, and public notices to keep you informed every week! Please sign up [HERE](#) today.



***BEAT has once again been chosen as a [Great Nonprofit](#)!*** We run a tight ship on a shoestring! Join other donors in supporting BEAT to protect the environment for wildlife in support of the natural world that sustains us all.



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