



Spring 2015

Thanks to you, we have made tremendous progress in the past year!

Stewardship: *We mobilize local citizen-scientists & volunteers to restore and maintain the ecological integrity of our region.*



River Cleanups: When waters need cleaning, BEAT responds! In 2014, BEAT and Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) volunteers cleaned up over 20 miles of river, pulling *tons* of trash from the waterway. BEAT and HVA have four river cleanups scheduled in 2015.



When it comes to cleaning up rivers, we don't mess around!

If you want to play a part in cleaning up our environment, please contact us!



Spring Peeper

Crossing Guards: To get across roads, some species need a helping hand.

Ever seen a Boy or Girl Scout help an elderly person across the road? BEAT helps amphibians and turtles (species gravely impacted by roads and associated traffic) in the same way.

Amphibian Crossing Guards (ACGs): Amphibians migrate, it's a fact! Imagine hundreds of frogs and salamanders crossing a busy roadway on a wet spring evening. Imagine real life *Frogger*. In 2014-15, BEAT recorded 981 amphibians trying to cross Route 57 in Monterey, guarding more than 600 to the other side. Next year, BEAT would like to expand its ACG program. *Contact BEAT now to set up an ACG near you!*

Turtle Crossing Guards (TCGs): Turtles are an ancient species over 230 million years old. Yet, despite enduring eons of geologic upheaval and slews of predators, they find themselves in dire straights. Roads and associated traffic are one of the greatest threats to turtles, in many cases single-handedly driving populations to the brink. Researchers estimate that at least half of all turtle species are in serious trouble. In 2014-15, BEAT set up seven TCG teams that will monitor turtle crossing hot spots in eight towns. *If you know of a turtle crossing hot-spot, please contact BEAT!*



Snapping Turtle

Watchdogging:

Working with you to protect the environment for wildlife

BEAT Opposes Proposed Pipelines: Northeast Energy Direct (NED) and CT Expansion "loop"

BEAT learned early about Kinder Morgan/Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co.'s proposal to build a natural gas pipeline (NED) across northern Massachusetts and a "loop" in Sandisfield. We were the first to publicly speak out against the projects, because the projects would significantly impact Berkshire County's environment and wildlife. Based on our extensive research and that of trusted experts, we believe there is no need for these pipelines and that most of the 2.2 billion cubic feet of fracked gas flowing through NED will be exported to Europe and/or Asia. Both pipelines would cut through many acres of forest and wetlands, including "permanently" protected state lands.

There are safer, greener, and less costly energy alternatives being ignored by industry and industry-friendly regulators – such as energy efficiency, peak demand reduction, the fixing of gas leaks, and appropriately sited renewable energy. That is why we are actively opposed to these projects.

Photo credit: North Jersey Pipeline Walkers



As these two proposed pipeline plans work their way through the environmental review process, BEAT is there every step of the way as an informed watchdog and a formal "intervener," insisting that all applicable environmental laws and regulations be followed and that environmental hazards be minimized.

Outreach and Education:

Because we believe an informed, engaged citizenry is the environment's best protection

people's minds and to give them a voice. From the pipeline battle to the big wildlife tracking study we participated in, BEAT took action on behalf of the natural world in 2014-15!

BEAT participated in: The New England Wildlife and Transportation Conference, Burlington VT; Vernal Pool Certification Course, Dalton MA; The Westfield River Watershed Symposium, Westfield MA; Wildlife Tracking for Beginners, Great Barrington MA; Wildlife in the Corridor/A Presentation for Landowners, Sheffield MA; Wildlife Tracking Workshop, Sheep Hill, Williamstown MA.

Green Drinks: an informal gathering of like-minded environmentalists. Every third Tuesday of the month, BEAT hosts Pittsfield Green Drinks, an informal gathering open to all environmentalists. The drinks aren't green, but our conversations are. 2014-2015 Green Drinks keynote speakers included: Becky Cushing/MassAudubon, Frank Lowenstein/New England Forestry Foundation, Amanda Jacir/Center for EcoTechnology, Richard Pree/Citizens Climate Lobby, and Mike Leavitt/Berkshire Natural Resources Council.

Website: BEAT's website has everything you need to get up to speed and involved in local environmental issues. Visit our website for news, program descriptions, our blog, and more information on our organization. www.thebeatnews.org



Collecting stream crossing data in the field
Photo by Carrie Banks

Stream Crossings: addressing river and stream continuity issues

BEAT works to repair and/or replace road-stream crossings (culverts and bridges) using the triple bottom line of affordability, wildlife connectivity, and structural integrity. In 2010, BEAT started surveying stream and river crossings that constrict streams and rivers – meaning poor connectivity for migrating fish, blowouts during extreme weather events, and forcing terrestrial wildlife onto roads rather than beneath them. In 2014-2015, BEAT surveyed 53 culverts bringing our total to over 600. In 2016, BEAT and its partner the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA), in collaboration with the town of Pittsfield, will replace its first culvert. BEAT and HVA will continue to survey and find monies to replace and/or repair the most important wildlife crossings in Berkshire County.

BEAT staff and volunteers put on presentations, conduct workshops, and table at events to keep wildlife and the environment at the forefront of



Verifying bear sign using bite marks

is very small and in jeopardy of collapsing. BEAT will continue to monitor and identify pinch points to better protect and enhance the corridor. As of 2015 there are 76 members of BWT. *If you are interested in joining BWT, please contact elia@thebeatnews.org.*

BEAT is supported by people like you, and by project grants from Norcross Wildlife Foundation, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, Central Berkshire Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, and the Markham Nathan Fund for Social Justice. Our stream crossing replacements work is supported in part by a grant from Natural Resources Damages fund through the Housatonic Valley Association.

BEAT By the Numbers

1-Year Time Period, 2014-15

1,228	volunteer hours
869	The BEAT News subscribers
612	amphibians guarded across roads
324	volunteers contributing to BEAT projects
312	miles tracked for wildlife
63	road-stream crossings surveyed
52	editions of The BEAT News published
43	pipeline presentations
20.3	miles of river cleaned up

www.thebeatnews.org

Stewardship (continued from page 1)

Connecting for Wildlife (CFW):

Addressing terrestrial wildlife habitat connectivity issues

In 2013, BEAT embarked upon a long-term project to protect and enhance a wildlife corridor in western Massachusetts that connects the Hudson Highlands to the Green Mountains. In 2014-2015, Berkshire Wildlife Trackers (BWT) – a group of certified trackers that are trained to monitor habitat – recorded 2,425 data points and tracked over 321 miles, recording every species in the area from mink to moose (no mountain lions recorded). This data is being used to identify "pinch points" – locations



Track contemplation!



A red fox sighted on a wildlife cam in Sheffield



A bobcat sighted on a wildlife cam in Great Barrington

The BEAT News: weekly e-newsletter with everything a local environmentalist needs to know! With a subscription list of 869 and 52 editions per year, The BEAT News is western Massachusetts' best provider of environmental news. Our staff compiles events, job notices, and need-to-knows from agencies all over the state so you can receive them in one convenient place. *If you are interested in subscribing to The BEAT News, please contact us!*



I am SO impressed with all you've done with BEAT in 10 years! You have really been an inspiration to me, personally. Without BEAT, the Berkshires would be a biologically and socially poorer place, I have no doubt.

Bernie McHugh, Former Director of the Mass Land Trust Coalition



Do you have your own idea of how you might be able to help BEAT protect the environment for wildlife? If so, let us know! Send an email to: team@thebeatnews.org or call us at 413-230-7321.

There are so many opportunities for you to get involved!

- Learn to certify a vernal pool • Help with a wetland survey • Track and monitor wildlife • Videotape events
- Help with stream crossing surveys • Table at events • Attend 3rd Thursdays • Website maintenance
- Distribute posters, brochures & flyers • Donate money or goods • Leave a legacy to BEAT in your will!

BEAT is fiscal sponsor to two organizations that were created in 2014 in response to the pipeline threats: **Massachusetts Pipe Line Awareness Network (MassPLAN)** and **No Fracked Gas in Mass**. BEAT staff, MassPLAN, and No Fracked Gas in Mass have devoted thousands of hours to gathering facts about the pipeline projects, creating and maintaining educational websites, supporting groups of citizens organizing in their towns, and presenting balanced, accurate, and relevant information at town and select board meetings, regulatory hearings, one-on-one meetings with legislators across the Commonwealth, marches, rallies, festivals, street fairs, concerts, and more to prove the case that we don't need these destructive projects. We seek your support as we continue to lead and collaborate with the huge grassroots, anti-fracking uprising in Massachusetts, and support clean, renewable energy alternatives to fossil fuel use.

300 BEAT volunteers worked over 1,200 hours in 2014 for wildlife!
Check out BEAT's 5-out-of-5 star rating at www.GreatNonProfits.org!



¿Hablas español? Si tienes preguntas de como ayudar con nuestra misión, puedes contactar-nos electrónicamente a elia@thebeatnews.org.



Parlez-vous français? Si vous avez des questions ou voulez à l'en savoir plus au sujet de la façon aider dans notre mission, vous pouvez contactez-nous par l'email chez bruce@thebeatnews.org.

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www.thebeatnews.org

Contact BEAT:

team@thebeatnews.org • 413-230-7321

Mailing address:

29 Highland Avenue • Pittsfield, MA • 01201-2413



Spotted Salamander