



River Continuity Project - Volunteer Description

If interested, contact Alison Dixon, Berkshire Outreach Manager, at adixon@hvatoday.org or call 413-394-9796 for more information and to learn about scheduled trainings.



SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

There are over 900 places in Housatonic River's watershed in Berkshire County where roads cross streams, rivers or brooks. **Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)** and the **Housatonic Valley Association (HVA)** are partnering to collect data for all the stream crossings in the Berkshire County portion of the Housatonic Watershed. BEAT is working to collect data for all the stream crossings in Berkshire County.

Few people consider the effects of road crossings and other infrastructure on the quality of stream habitat. The design and condition of a stream crossing determines whether a stream behaves naturally and whether animals can migrate along the stream corridor. Safe and stable stream crossings can accommodate wildlife and protect stream health while reducing expensive erosion and structural damage. River Continuity works to reduce impediments to the movement of fish, wildlife, and other aquatic life that require instream passage. *Assessing the stream crossings is the first step in evaluating whether crossings should be fixed or replaced. As towns replace culverts, this information can aid in replacing it with a wildlife friendly culvert.*

TRAINING for this position is about half a day. There is about a training period inside and field training outside that is about 3 hours. In addition, initially you will work directly with the Survey Coordinator to ensure comfort with the data collection process.

DUTIES: You will work with a teams (of two or three volunteers) Each team will be provided with a map with that identifies all the stream crossings in that area. You will drive to each stream crossing and then complete a data form for each crossing staying within the realms of safety and accessibility.

RECOMMENDED SKILLS:

Be able to find your way! One member of the team must have decent map reading skills and be able to locate the correct stream crossing on the topography map provided.

Be steady on your feet! You will be clambering around the stream crossings which may be culverts or bridges. While we don't want you doing anything dangerous there is a definite need to be reasonably physically able.

Be able to measure and record data.

Able to use a GPS to obtain Latitude and Longitude coordinates (preferable). There are a few available for loan from the Berkshire HVA office.

Be comfortable with using a digital camera. Volunteers may need to use their own camera. Unfortunately, we don't have numerous cameras to lend. Photos of each crossing are important and a minimum of two photos / crossing are preferable. You will need to send the photos by email or, if you prefer, provide on a disk.

All team members don't need to be good at all of the skills listed above. For example, if one team member is good with the GPS – then the assistant(s) can leave that job up to him/her.

TIME COMMITMENT: We would hope that you would be willing to commit two – four days each month for much of the data collecting season. Obviously there will be weeks that you aren't available and weather may prevent data collection on some days. It is preferable to assess when water levels are very moderate, rather than very high. The season for data collection is roughly from mid-April to mid-December. We have 250 culverts to assess and if we get to more that is great! Expect to assess as 4 - 6 crossings in ½ day. It is typical to go schedule for a minimum of 2 hours and a maximum of 4 hours each time you collect data.

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