SUMMER PROGRAM ASSOCIATES

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THANK YOU, REGINA & LUCAS!

BIOBETTERY

IN THE BERKSHIRES

This year, BEAT collaborated with community partners to host the 13th annual 24-hour biological survey, usually known as ‘Berkshire BioBlitz’. With the unprecedented loss of biodiversity taking place globally, we think it’s crucial to inform our community of this crisis, which is why we emphasized the importance of biodiversity this year by referring to the program as ‘Berkshire Biodiversity Day’ instead.

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UPDATE

BEAT’S RAIN GARDEN

2021

2022

2021

2022

SUPPORT BEAT WITH A T-SHIRT

Show your support for BEAT with one of our yellow-spotted salamander shirts, hand-painted and designed by Chelsea, our education & outreach coordinator. There are several shirt options in our online Bonfire store, www.bonfire.com/store/thebeatnews.

BEAT is so grateful to all our community partners and generous donors who give their time, talent, and money to make this work possible. Thank you!

thetheatnews.org | 20 Chapel St. Pittsfield, MA | (413) 464-9402 | team@thetheatnews.org

CLEANER AIR IN THE BERKSHIRES

There have been two major developments making the air cleaner in the Berkshires!

NO MORE TRASH INCINERATION

BEAT was pressuring the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to force Community Eco Power, the Pittsfield trash incinerator, to comply with their permit and stop emitting an incredible amount of pollution into our air. Well, it turned out that the facility was in such disrepair that it could not be rehabilitated and instead had to shut down. We see this as a massive victory for clean air.

PUT PEAKERS IN THE PAST

It was an exciting year for the Put Peakers in the Past campaign. As you may remember, we have been challenging the owners of the three Berkshire County fossil-fueled peaking power plants to transition to clean energy and storage or shut down. Peaking power plants are electricity generators that only run when demand for electricity is very high – usually on the hottest set of days in the summer. They contribute a disproportionate amount of pollution for the small amount of electricity they generate and usually run when electricity prices are exceptionally high – plus, they get paid a huge amount to be on standby for over 90% of the year.

Our coalition of 27 community groups reached out to the owners of all the peakers in the Berkshires. Cogentrix, owner of Berkshire County’s Doreen Street and Woodland Road peakers in Pittsfield and Lee, has shut down both facilities and has added their West Springfield peaker to the shut-down and transition list. The West Springfield generating station is a large brownfield site, and the plant will be converted, in stages, to house solar generation and large, grid-scale battery storage. We’re also now working with Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN), Slingshot, and Clean Energy Group to develop a campaign to take on all 30 peaker plants across the state!

We work together with the community to protect the environment for wildlife in support of the natural world that sustains us all.

2022 NEWSLETTER

Note from the executive director:

This winter, we will host Dan Gardoqui – a skilled wildlife tracker, naturalist, and educator – on Friday, January 20, at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield. Dan will show photos and share stories of wildlife from personal experiences. On Saturday, January 21, Dan will lead small groups on two back-to-back wildlife tracking workshops.

Also, a big thank you to Greylock Federal Credit Union for providing a massive victory for clean air.

Inside BEAT, we accept batteries for recycling – AA and 9-volt batteries (alkaline or rechargeable), button cell batteries, power tool batteries, sealed lead acid batteries, but NOT vehicle batteries.

Now we need to decrease the amount of trash we all create!

Many items are banned from being “thrown away” and must be reused or recycled – but this law is not well enforced. While we are pressuring DEP to step up enforcement, we are also trying to find ways for people to easily and inexpensively get rid of what they do not want. At BEAT, we have two bins for textiles like clothes, sheets and blankets, curtains, stuffed animals, bags – just to name a few! All items must be clean and dry, but they can be ripped or stained. You may also drop off clean pairs of shoes in these bins.

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FROM OUR DIRECTOR

As I sit in my office, looking out at our amazing pollinator/rain garden, I am so grateful to all of you who helped get us here! I looked at last year’s newsletter with photos of planting the garden – just as it started raining. And it never stopped all last year! We couldn’t even hold our usual cleanups because the river was so high.

This year is totally different. The state has been in a drought almost all year long. But our garden is huge! With blue vervain and other native plants over nine feet tall! All summer, it was filled with pollinators, and we still have lots of bees taking advantage of the goldenrod, but now the birds are feasting as well.

The next step is to begin renovations of our Environmental Leadership & Education Center to make it fully accessible and fossil fuel free. If you want to take a look around and give us your thoughts, contact Jane (jane@thebeatnew.org).

WATER QUALITY IN THE BERKSHIRES

This year, BEAT partnered with Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) and Hoosic River Watershed Association (HooRWA) to install temperature loggers in coldwater streams throughout Berkshire County. We will also start monitoring these streams for road salt starting this winter. Coldwater streams are an essential natural resource because certain species of fish, such as brook trout, need water that remains under 20ºC throughout the year. Our preliminary results, which are portrayed in the graph, suggest that most of our waters that remain under 20ºC throughout the year. Our preliminary results, which are portrayed in the graph, suggest that most of our waters that remain under 20ºC. While this is good news, we should remain cautious and implement best management practices for coldwater streams by restoring riparian plants to help shade coldwater streams, removing old dams that are not being used, and replacing undersized culverts with bridges.

A TALE OF TWO STREAMS

Two streams of particular interest to us are Roaring Brook and Mill Brook in Lenox, MA. We wanted to monitor these streams because Roaring Brook has very few anthropogenic obstacles, while Mill Brook has several dams and undersized old road culverts that need replacement. Our results suggest that both streams remain under 20ºC throughout the year, and if anthropogenic disturbances were removed from Mill Brook, it could be an even better habitat for brook trout.

THE FIGHT AGAINST FOSSIL FUELS

No Fracked Gas in Mass is coming up on nine years, working to oppose new fossil fuel projects being proposed around the area. We’ve expanded to start taking on existing fossil fuel infrastructure that is no longer needed to meet our energy needs. These are just some of the campaigns we’re focusing on!

FIGHTING NEW FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

We continue to oppose new fossil fuel infrastructure on multiple fronts. Current projects and proposals include the new peaker plant currently being constructed in Peabody, MA; Eversource pipeline proposals in Springfield, Longmeadow, Westborough, Ashland and Douglas, MA; the Northeast Energy Center LNG facility in Charlton, MA. Also, as ISO New England sends out alerts over a perceived shortage of gas capacity, the Winter Gas Electric Forum held by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in September brought enough calls for new gas transmission lines into New England that we’re challenging assertions that gas is a viable solution.

EFFICIENCY, IMPROVED NEIGHBORHOODS, AND MORE

We also continue to advocate for energy efficiency, recently talking with municipal housing authorities about maximizing efficiency and lending support to the current Mass Save Community First liaisons. We’re working with BRC’s Gray to Green initiative to inform community-led neighborhood development of green spaces and better living conditions for Pittsfield’s underserved neighborhoods. And stay tuned for local air quality monitoring initiatives!

THE BEAT NEWS

Did you know that our weekly newsletter has local, state, national, and global news, a jobs board, public notices for regional development, and a community calendar? Subscribe today at THEBEATNEWS.ORG.
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### UPDATE

#### Beat’s Rain Garden

I looked at last year’s newsletter with photos of planting the garden, I am so grateful to all of you who helped get us here! This is another project that was made possible with the generous support of our community. We hope to continue to expand the rain garden - just as it started raining. And it never stopped all last winter. The river was so high. I almost didn’t plant anything, I thought it would be washed away. But it was filled with pollinators, and we still have lots of bees and butterflies. I think that’s why we ended up with almost all year long. But our garden is huge! With blue vervain and other native plants over nine feet tall! All summer, I think it’s crucial to inform our community of this crisis, which is why we

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