

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

- 2003** BEAT is founded

- 2005** Volunteers remove 36 shopping carts and other trash from the Housatonic River

- 2006** Berkshire Wildlife Trackers is founded and monthly Green Drinks events commence (showcasing speakers on wildlife ecology, clean energy, botany, and more)

- 2007** Halted illegal construction of a demolition waste site along the Housatonic River bank

- 2008** First convening of vernal pool workshop for professionals

- 2009** Began stream continuity surveys and advocacy for reconnecting wildlife habitat

- 2010** First annual Biodiversity Day, also known as "Bioblitz"

- 2014** Presented across New England to stop the Northeast Energy Direct (NED) pipeline proposed to enter Massachusetts in Richmond and cross the state via protected lands

- 2015** Helped organize the first annual Berkshire Natural History Conference

In 2023, BEAT celebrated
20 years
of wins for the environment!



Did you know BEAT is a top-rated organization on Great Nonprofits? Check out the review of our work written by Bill McKibben!

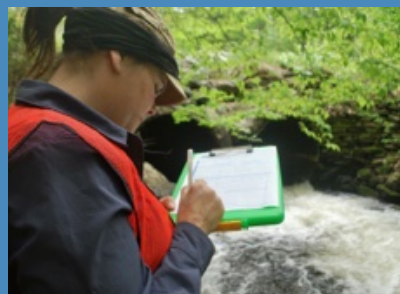


- 2016** No Fracked Gas in Mass becomes part of BEAT. Our presentations produced a huge grassroots uprising against the Kinder Morgan/Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company. The proposal was withdrawn; we won an "unwinnable" fight.

- 2017** Began surveying stormwater pipes depositing excrement into the Housatonic– the polluting pipe was traced and stopped at its source

- 2018** Working with other community groups, we succeeded in getting the first culvert on Churchill Brook replaced with a bridge to make wildlife passage possible

- 2019** First annual Kids in Kayaks event



- 2021** With the support of over 100 generous donors, we purchased the building at 20 Chapel Street in Pittsfield to become BEAT's Environmental Leadership and Education Center

- Our watchdogging efforts helped lead to the closure of a polluting, out-of-compliance trash incinerator in Pittsfield.

- 2023** BEAT and other members of the Massachusetts Peakers Coalition worked with Cogentrix to shut down its two high-polluting peaking Berkshires power plants. We are now working with Cogentrix to transition a third facility in West Springfield to solar and battery storage.

- We received a three-year grant from the EPA to conduct air quality monitoring in Pittsfield.



From Our Director

This year marked BEAT's 20th anniversary! What started as a volunteer-run effort has evolved into a mature community fixture. Our team is now seven strong – and I am so pleased to introduce our new Deputy Director, Brittany Ebeling! Please, stop in and say hi!

In June, we were honored to receive a stewardship award from the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation (ICOET) for our work re-connecting wildlife habitats. Stay tuned in 2024 for ways you can support our ongoing work on this critical issue!

Our first phase of renovations to BEAT's Environmental Leadership and Education Center is nearly complete, including the addition of a sloped walkway entrance, accessible bathroom and balcony, and renovations to both the offices and the exhibit hall. In the next phase, we will pursue a deep energy retrofit of the building, install heat pumps, solar, storage, and more. We will introduce interactive science exhibits and welcome community members to learn about the science behind environmental protection. We will also restore the riverbank alongside the Center using native plants to support a clean, cold, and connected river ecosystem in our own backyard.

Jane



MA Peakers Coalition

No Fracked Gas is now part of a coalition of organizations to take our Put Peakers in the Past program statewide. One of our best successes in the Berkshire Peaker campaign has resulted in closure of three old, dirty, fossil fuel power plants in Mass, the big one in West Springfield converting to grid-scale storage and solar, and plans to convert more than 20 additional peakers from dirty to clean energy in other states in the eastern US!



West Springfield peaker plant, soon to be transitioned to renewables

No Fracked Gas in Mass

EPA Air Quality Monitoring

After the extensive process of filing for and securing an EPA grant, we are thrilled to be launching a three-year air quality monitoring project called Breathe Easy Berkshires! The West Side and Morningside neighborhoods of Pittsfield have a life expectancy of a decade less than the more affluent Southeast area, and we know that air quality has a direct impact on these disparities.

We're working with community partners like MCLA and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to develop a public health survey that accompanies the air quality data we'll be collecting. This winter, we're deploying nine stationary monitors to measure particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide in ambient air. We're also hiring four people to use handheld air monitors and walk regular routes in these neighborhoods to identify pollution hotspots and engage with our community. As the project progresses, we'll focus on implementing targeted policies workshopped with local groups to reduce harmful substances in our air.



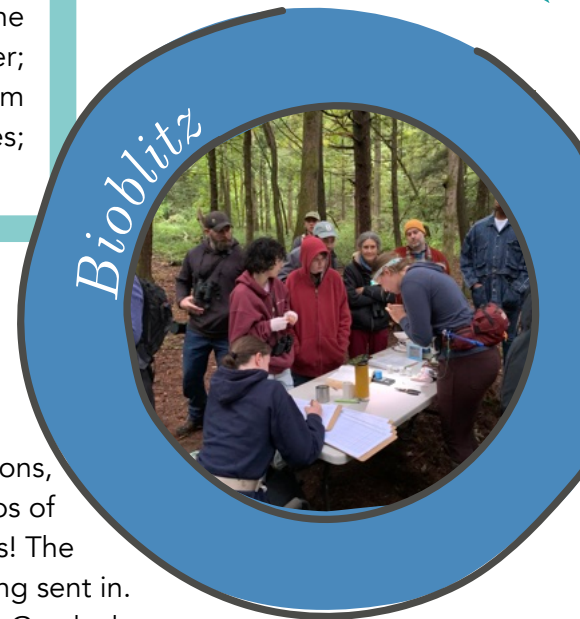
Education, Outreach, & Stewardship

Berkshire Green Drinks

After nearly 15 years of hosting our monthly Pittsfield Green Drinks gathering, we expanded our Green Drinks reach from Pittsfield to county-wide, making it 'Berkshire Green Drinks.' This past year, BEAT began changing the location of our in-person gatherings to different towns each month throughout Berkshire County. Additionally, we started producing Green Drinks as a monthly hybrid event, where we host in-person gatherings with the speaker and live stream the presentation so online participants can have their questions answered. Some highlights from 2023 include Carla Rhodes telling us about how she went from a comedic ventriloquist to a wildlife conservation photographer; learning about mustelids from wildlife biologist Nate Buckhout; hearing from geologist Mark Brandriss about what shaped the landforms of the Berkshires; and Tom Tynning teaching us how fascinating snakes are.

Berkshire Biodiversity Day

Despite a soggy weekend with nearly nonstop rain, the 14th Berkshire Biodiversity Day was a big success! We collaborated with Greenagers to host the 24-hour program at their two properties in South Egremont: April Hill and Bow Wow Woods. This year's event was packed with guided walks, presentations, and demonstrations led by experts. We had 17 specialists, 8 volunteers, groups of students from four Berkshire schools, and dozens of participants who joined us! The current tally of species identified at Bow Wow Woods is 308, with lists still being sent in. You can keep up with the final tally at berkshirebioblitz.org. Also, thank you to Greylock Federal Credit Union for providing funding that made this event possible!



Moth Night

In August, moth enthusiasts came together for a late-night tutorial on how to "moth" using the sheet-lighting method. This was one of two events BEAT organized to help spread awareness and admiration of moths for National Moth Week. We hope to make it a new BEAT tradition!

Vernal Pool Workshop

In collaboration with BEAT, Tom Tynning, an expert on amphibians and reptiles and an authority on New England's natural history, led two dozen participants through a vernal pool workshop in April 2023. Vernal pools are protected wetland habitats, and in Massachusetts, vernal pool certification relies on volunteers and community members to survey possible vernal pools and submit documented evidence of the required criteria for vernal pool habitat.

Wildlife Connectivity

BEAT received an award at the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation (ICOET) for our work protecting and re-connecting wildlife habitat in the Berkshire Wildlife Linkage area. Starting in Spring 2024, BEAT will train volunteers interested in NAACC (North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative) certified to survey for wildlife connectivity.

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Berkshire Zero Waste Initiative

In 2023, Berkshire Zero Waste Initiative (BZWI) expanded its efforts to achieve zero waste in Berkshire County. Work has included reimagining the **WasteLess Restaurants** program and collaborating with community groups to educate individuals and institutions about the current state of waste management in Berkshire County. We conducted an extensive survey to understand customers' plastic produce bag habits and published a summary report in the Berkshire Edge sharing some of the many comments received from concerned community members. BZWI has also expanded its **free recycling program** offerings to the community; we now accept small electronics and their accessories, plastic bread tags, and many more difficult-to-recycle items such as eye care and beauty product packaging. Finally, community members using our **textile drop-off bins** ensured that over 10,000 pounds of textiles were reused or recycled instead of trashed.

More Ways to Give

Your generosity is what makes our work on behalf of the environment happen. There are many ways to support our work, including:

Stock donations (save on capital gains tax)

Donor-advised funds

Employer matching funds

Name BEAT in your will, trust, or retirement plan

IRA/QCD gifts (save on income tax)

Cash/check

Secure online donation

BEAT is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit (Federal Tax ID: #27-0054356). Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

THE BEAT NEWS

BEAT's bi-weekly email shares a rich mix of information about environmentally-minded events, issues, employment opportunities, and public notices about local projects under review which have environmental ramifications. The newsletter shares local, regional, national, and global news articles of ecological importance and connects the community to action pathways for making meaningful change.



SPORT YOUR SUPPORT!

Show your love for spotted salamanders, rosy maple moths, or wood frogs— all critical species to our local ecosystem— by purchasing a BEAT t-shirt or hoodie. The designs, hand-painted and designed by Programs Director Chelsey, are printed using direct-to-garment (DTG) and direct-to-film (DTF) methods, which will keep the design from peeling as it ages and goes through washes. Choose your favorite at our online Bonfire store, www.bonfire.com/store/thebeatnews.

Your support sustains this critical work! BEAT is so grateful to all our community partners and generous donors who share their time, talents, and resources to make these efforts possible.

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