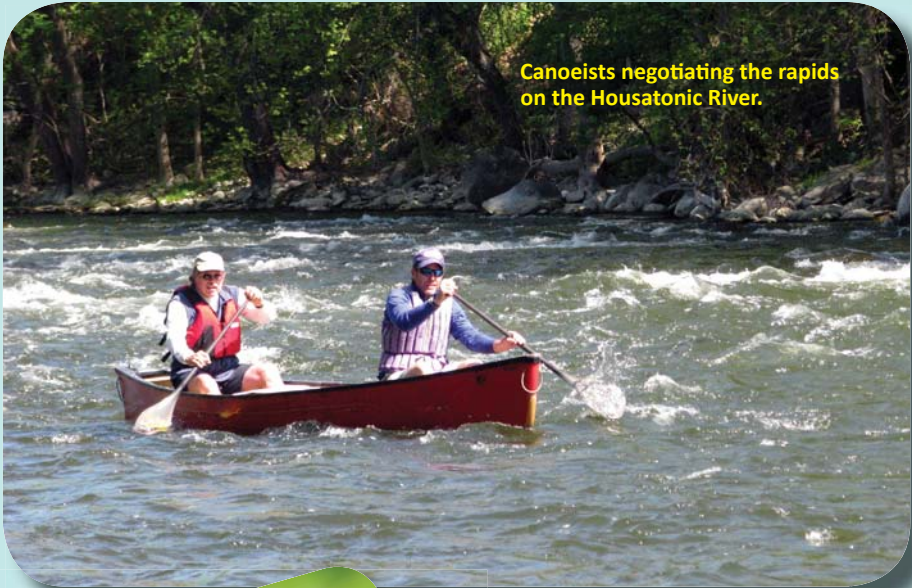




# A Paddling Guide

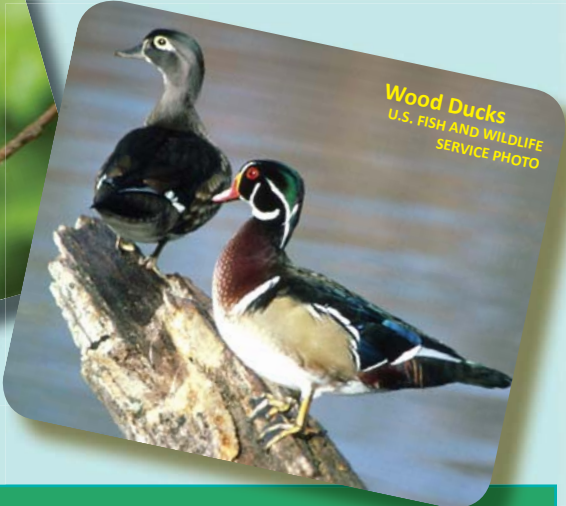
to the Housatonic River  
in Berkshire County



Canoeists negotiating the rapids on the Housatonic River.



Baltimore Oriole  
LAURA GOOCH PHOTO



Wood Ducks  
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE  
SERVICE PHOTO

**IMPORTANT!**

When paddling the Housatonic River, a clean boat certification form is required for all watercraft using the state boat ramps. Failure to comply can result in a fine. Forms are available at: [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/press/zebra\\_mussels\\_clean\\_boat\\_certification\\_form.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/press/zebra_mussels_clean_boat_certification_form.pdf).

PLEASE READ IMPORTANT INFO ON PAGE 10  
ON HOW TO CLEAN YOUR BOATS



# A Paddling Guide to the Housatonic River in Berkshire County

Fourth Edition, 2011



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HVA and HRWA merged in 1993 to form one river advocacy group  
for the Housatonic River in both Massachusetts and Connecticut.



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This fourth edition is entitled “A Paddling Guide to the Housatonic River in Berkshire County” to acknowledge the increased popularity of kayaking on the river as well as canoeing. The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) revised this edition with funding provided by the Geoffrey C. Hughes Foundation, Inc.

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Finally, thank you to all the paddlers and river enthusiasts who care about the Housatonic River. Get out and enjoy the river!

## THE RIVER'S HISTORY

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### PRE-COLUMBIAN ERA – NATIVE AMERICANS

Native Americans began using this area for fishing and hunting at least 6,000 years ago. By 1600, the majority of these residents of the Housatonic watershed were Mohicans (often translated as “people of the waters that are never still”) and populated the land from here to the Hudson River. They were part of the Algonquian Tribe and may have numbered 30,000. The Mohicans referred to their homeland as “Usiadienuk” or “beyond the mountain place” or “river of the mountain place.”

### EARLY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

When the Dutch established Fort Orange (now Albany, New York) in 1624, competition for fur trade between the Mohicans and the Mohawks began a series of wars. By 1628 the Mohicans were driven from the west bank of the Hudson and settled predominately in the Berkshires. By 1672, their population had fallen to about 1,000.

English settlement began in 1725 in Sheffield and competition for Berkshire County lands increased. By 1734, the Mohicans requested and received assistance in establishing the Indian Town of Stockbridge, and they were then referred to as the Stockbridge Indians. The tribal membership grew from 50 to more than 200 during the next 15 years. However, with land pressures increasing, the joint Anglo-Indian town eventually failed. The remaining Mohicans migrated to live with the Oneida tribe in upstate New York in 1784.

### INDUSTRIALIZATION

The Housatonic River and its tributaries were instrumental in the development of early Berkshire industry. The watershed has provided the raw power to pioneer new technologies that have enhanced the production of paper, iron, textiles, and electricity. At Great Barrington, the water below the Great Bridge (now the Route 7 Bridge) was harnessed for a saw and grist mill in 1739 by David Ingersoll. Later blast furnaces were built such as the Lenox Furnace in 1829.

The expansion of manufacturing in the 19th century increased reliance on the river's water power. Paper-making and the spinning and weaving of textiles led to the use of multiple water wheels within the same factory.



Arthur Schofield of Pittsfield and Zenas Crane of Dalton were pioneers of this technique in 1800 and 1801 respectively. Two paper mills remain: Crane and Company of Dalton and Onyx Paper Company of Lee. Crane and Company is the oldest continually owned paper mill in the country, and has been the sole source of paper used for United States currency. Samuel Church founded the first paper mill in South Lee in 1806, owned today by Onyx Specialty Papers.

To satisfy the increased demand for power, electricity was developed. William Stanley constructed the first electrical transformer in Great Barrington in 1885. Great Barrington was the first town to be illuminated with electricity distributed by Stanley's system.

### DAMMING THE HOUSATONIC

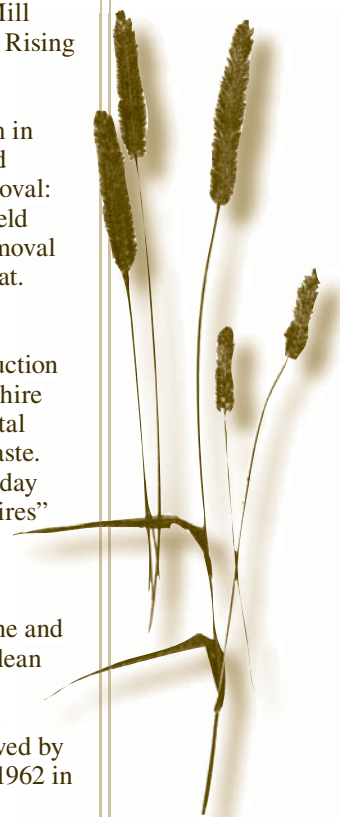
Just as mills and early factories proliferated, so did dams along the Housatonic and its tributaries. At the turn of the 20th century, there were more than 30 dams in Pittsfield. Crane and Company alone had built five dams in Dalton. Although many of the dams are now gone, some of the larger ones still exist: Woods Pond Dam in Lenoxdale, Columbia Mill Dam in Lee, Willow Mill Dam in South Lee, Glendale Dam in Stockbridge, and the Rising Pond Dam in Great Barrington.

In 2000, Crane and Company removed the first major dam in Massachusetts. In 2011, two more dams were removed and three additional dams are being reviewed for possible removal: the Nash Dam on the West Branch, Sackett Dam in Pittsfield and the Columbia Mill Dam on the main stem in Lee. Removal eliminates costly maintenance and improves aquatic habitat.

### RIVER IMPAIRMENTS

Unfortunately, industry is often accompanied by the production of waste as well as development. By the 1950s most Berkshire residents and visitors no longer thought of the river as a vital and invaluable resource. It had become a receptacle for waste. Residents could tell what dye the mills were using on any day by the color of the river. In essence, the "beautiful Berkshires" encompassed the mountains, lakes and meadows, but did not include the river.

In the 1960s, people realized that something had to be done and began to get directly involved in protecting and creating clean rivers. Watershed organizations formed to focus attention on the plight of rivers. The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) was formed in 1941 in Connecticut, and was followed by the Housatonic River Watershed Association (HRWA) in 1962 in the Berkshires. HRWA merged with HVA in 1993.



## HEALTH OF THE RIVER

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Like many rivers and streams throughout the nation, water quality in the Housatonic has improved dramatically primarily due to the mandates of the 1972 Clean Water Act. This act eliminated direct piping of pollutants into the river and required all point source discharges (from factories and sewage pipes) be monitored, treated and controlled by permits. Consequently, municipal and industrial water treatment plants were built.

Nonpoint source pollution remains a concern today and includes runoff entering the river from infrastructure, residential and agricultural settings which can include excess fertilizer, pesticide, oil, road salt and animal waste.

The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act in 1972 and the more recent River Protection Act (RPA) passed in 1996 have had a direct impact on protecting water resources throughout the Commonwealth. The RPA required cities and town to establish conservation commissions to protect wetlands and create a protective riverfront buffer on both sides of the river. A 200-foot wetland resource area is now mandated for most of the remaining undeveloped riverfront lands and these, therefore, receive wetland protection helping to protect and preserve scenic, critical habitat along the riverfront.

Although the Housatonic River is cleaner, a great deal of work still needs to be done to protect and improve our river resource.

One of the greatest contaminants affecting the Housatonic River are polychlorinated biphenyls, a family of chemicals more commonly known as PCBs. Used chiefly as a coolant in electrical transformers, capacitors and heat exchangers beginning in 1929, the manufacture and use of PCBs has been banned in the United

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Upstream of  
New Lenox Road  
in Lenoxdale

EPA PHOTO

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States since 1977. For a period of 40 years prior to the ban, General Electric's Transformer Division discharged PCBs into the Housatonic River and contaminated fill was used within the watershed.

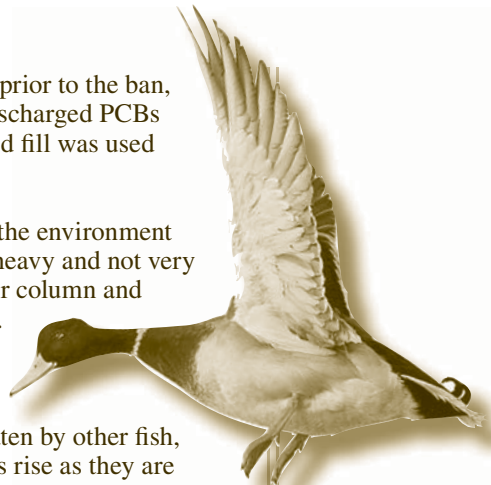
Due to their stable nature, PCBs persist in the environment creating a long-lasting concern. PCBs are heavy and not very soluble in water so they fall out of the water column and accumulate in undisturbed river sediments.

From the sediment, PCBs enter the food chain through fish and aquatic invertebrates that reside and feed on the river bottom. As these benthic fauna are eaten by other fish, fowl or reptiles, the concentrations of PCBs rise as they are stored in the fatty tissue of the predator. As a result, beginning in 1982, a "consumption advisory" has been posted along the Housatonic River. It advises against consumption of fish, frogs and turtles caught in the Housatonic River between Dalton, Massachusetts and Kent, Connecticut.

A Massachusetts State waterfowl consumption advisory recommends refraining from eating mallards and wood ducks from the Housatonic River and its impoundments from Pittsfield south to Rising Pond in Great Barrington. In all areas other than the Housatonic River area, to reduce exposure to PCBs, wild waterfowl should be skinned and all fat removed before cooking. Stuffing should be discarded after cooking. Drippings should not be used for gravy. Waterfowl should be eaten in moderation (e.g., no more than two meals per month). Canada geese are not included in this advisory.

Negotiations to clean up the Housatonic River and Pittsfield began in 1991 and a settlement was memorialized in a Consent Decree in 2000. Two phases of cleanup have since been completed. First, in 2002 cleanup of the PCB-laden one-half mile of the Housatonic River adjacent to the GE facility in Pittsfield was completed. The second phase, completed by 2007, remediated a 1.5-mile section between Lyman Street and Fred Garner Park. Currently, negotiations about the extent and method(s) for the Rest of River remediation are in process. For more information visit: <http://www.epa.gov/region01/ge>.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency has assessed that risks from PCB exposure to paddlers who use Housatonic River access areas on a frequent basis are very low. The recommendation is to minimize skin contact with sediment and to wash sediment from your skin as promptly as possible. (Source: <http://www.epa.gov/region1/ge/pcbshhealthandenviro/pcbfact.pdf>)



## FUR, FIN, FEATHERS AND FLORA – A NATURAL HISTORY

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The Housatonic Valley contains a great diversity of flora and fauna partly due to the underlying marble bedrock which increases the soil pH and allows lime-loving plant species, not found elsewhere in Massachusetts or Connecticut, to flourish.

This bedrock is overlain by fertile alluvial (silty) soils which flank the Housatonic River along most of its route through Berkshire County. The floodplain varies in breadth from a scant hundred feet to more than a half mile, through which the river is endlessly changing its course, leaving oxbows and sloughs marking its former positions.

The floodplain contains numerous plant communities. Silver and red maple, oak, black willow, hemlock, white pine, cottonwood and sycamore are common tree species. In the shaded areas, large colonies of ostrich and cinnamon ferns thrive as do spring wildflowers such as trillium, spring beauty, jack-in-pulpit and trout lily.

Thickets of alder, dogwoods, viburnums and spicebush populate transition zones between the tall trees and the fields. The open fields and pastures display a great variety of sedges, grasses and rushes including cutgrass, reed canary grass, joe-pye-weed and goldenrod.

The variable nature of the floodplain habitat allows for an extensive and highly diversified mammal population which includes the more aquatic mammals: beaver, mink, otter and muskrat, as well as moose, whitetail deer, red and grey fox, and bobcat.

The river margins support a large bird population. There are many raptors including osprey, red-tailed and red-shouldered hawk, sparrow hawk, American kestrel and bald eagle. Turkey vultures soar far overhead and may feast on carrion along the river's edge. Kingfishers and bank swallows excavate nests in the steep, muddy banks; warblers, red-winged blackbirds, catbirds and woodcocks occupy the thickets; orioles, vireos and kingbirds nest in the tall trees.

Lush water plants attract many types of waterfowl to the river such as mallard, wood duck, teal and black duck. Coot, merganser, bufflehead and golden eye migrate through the Housatonic Valley. As one paddles the river, the great blue heron,



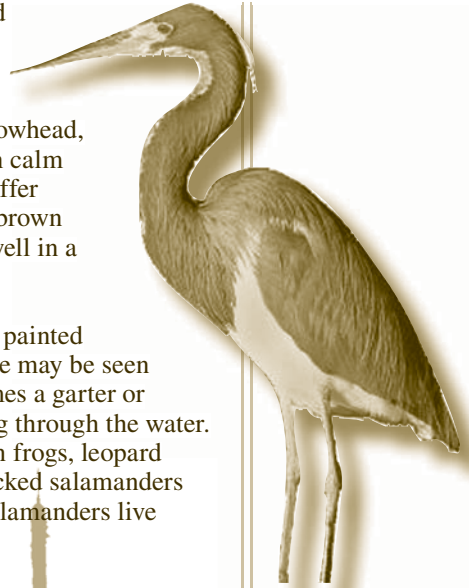
Bald Eagle  
GARY ROTHSTEIN PHOTO

the green heron, American bittern and spotted sandpiper can all be observed.

The alert paddler may view large goldfish, carp and bullhead meandering among the arrowhead, green algae and cattails which are common in calm backwaters. Faster, more oxygenated waters offer habitat for native brook trout and for stocked brown and rainbow trout. Black bass and pickerel dwell in a variety of habitats along the river.

Reptiles such as the common snapping turtle, painted turtle and an occasional spotted or wood turtle may be seen sunning themselves on rocks or logs; sometimes a garter or common water snake may be observed gliding through the water. Amphibians also share the watercourse: green frogs, leopard frogs and bullfrogs are in abundance. Red backed salamanders inhabit the land while dusky and two-lined salamanders live under stones along the banks.

A river is the focal point of a watershed as life congregates near water so essential to existence. The Housatonic is a vital and dynamic natural resource to our region. Whether a novice paddler or experienced naturalist, each trip will offer a chance to appreciate the diversity in the Housatonic valley.



## STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES!



Purple Loosestrife

There are several invasive plant species that are thriving in and along the Housatonic River. These include the common reed (phragmites), garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, and Japanese knotweed along the river's edge while milfoil can be found in the river. Zebra mussels are an invasive animal species now found in the Housatonic River. For a comprehensive list of invasive plant species in Massachusetts, visit <http://www.massnature.com/Plants/Invasives/invasiveplants.htm>.

### ZEBRA MUSSELS (*DREISSENA POLYMORPHA*)

were discovered in Laurel Lake in July 2009. As of 2011, zebra mussels were also found in the Housatonic River from the Route 20 bridge in Lee south to Glendale. Zebra mussels and other invasive species can be unwittingly transported by recreationists on their boats, fishing gear, clothing and even shoes and pets.

Once zebra mussels become established in a water body, they are impossible to eradicate with current technology. Boaters must make sure their boats are clean before launching in any of Massachusetts' water bodies. See the recommendations below to ensure your boat is free of zebra mussels.

When paddling the Housatonic River, a clean boat certification form is required for all watercraft using the state boat ramps.

Failure to comply can result in a fine. Forms are available at: [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/press/zebra\\_mussels\\_clean\\_boat\\_certification\\_form.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/press/zebra_mussels_clean_boat_certification_form.pdf).

Keep your watercraft and recreational equipment dry for at least one week during hot, dry weather and up to four weeks during cool, wet weather, before launching into a freshwater lake or pond OR thoroughly clean boats, fishing and recreational equipment according to the table below.



Phragmites

DISINFECTANT	CONCENTRATION	CONTACT TIME
Steam/Scalding hot wash	140 degrees F	10 seconds
Chlorine/Bleach Solution	1 oz per gallon of water	10 minutes
Lysol	1% solution	10 minutes
Vinegar	as sold – 100%	20 minutes
Freezing	< 32 degrees F	24 hours



Recommendations in the table on page 10 are taken from MA DCR Zebra Mussels brochure, 2010

Note: All decontamination procedures should be done away from water bodies and storm drains draining to watercourses.

To report a zebra mussel sighting, or for more information, contact Massachusetts DCR Lakes and Ponds program at 617-626-1250 or visit [www.mass.gov/lakesandponds](http://www.mass.gov/lakesandponds).



Zebra Mussel  
USGS PHOTO

**DIDYMO (DIDYMOSPHENIA GEMINATE)**, an invasive algae, is a potential threat to the Housatonic Watershed. Didymo – sometimes called “rock snot” due to its slimy appearance – is a highly invasive algae that attaches to plants, rocks and other hard surfaces in rivers and streams. Didymo can produce thick mats that cover the stream bed, making fishing, swimming or paddling undesirable or even impossible. Once didymo has spread, there’s no practical way to remove it from a river.

Didymo is most frequently found in cold, relatively shallow streams and rivers having a rocky bottom, characteristics that are also typical of good trout habitat. During blooms, didymo can form thick mats of material that feel like wet wool and are typically gray, white and/or brown, but never green. These mats form on the bottoms of rivers and streams and can potentially smother aquatic plants, aquatic insects and mollusks, impact fish habitat and alter aquatic food chains.

As of 2011, Didymo has not been reported in Massachusetts. However, it has been identified nearby in Vermont’s White River and Battenkill River, and in portions of the Connecticut River in both Vermont and New Hampshire. In 2011 Didymo was confirmed in the West Branch of the Farmington River. If you think you have found Didymo, please take a photo and report it to: [www.mass.gov/czm/invasives/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/czm/invasives/index.htm) or call 617-626-1218.



Didymo  
MICHIGAN  
TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY PHOTO

## BOATING SAFETY

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Before beginning a paddling trip, be sure you know the fundamentals of boating safety. For additional information about boating safely, including their top ten paddling tips, visit the American Canoe Association's website: [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org).

### USE OF PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs)

Massachusetts law requires that each person on board a canoe or kayak from September 15 to May 15 must wear an approved Type I, II, or III PFD U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (also known as PFDs) at all times. Outside of these dates, every paddler must have an approved and easily accessible PFD on the boat. Children 12 years and younger must wear a PFD at all times and at any time of the year. All PFDs must be:

- U.S. Coast Guard–approved, which means they are marked clearly with the USCG approval number.
- In good and serviceable condition.
- Readily accessible, meaning you are able to put the PFD on quickly in an emergency.
- The proper size for the intended wearer. Sizing for the PFD is based on body weight and chest size. (Source: <http://www.boat-ed.com/ma/handbook/pfds.htm>)

According to the American Canoe Association, 85 percent of canoe fatalities and 48 percent of kayak fatalities were because the person was not wearing a PFD. Even though the law does not require you to wear your PFD during warmer months, it is highly recommended that you do. PFDs not only provide additional

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Canoeists  
negotiating  
rapids in  
Stockbridge,  
Mass.

HENRY S. DZIEKAN III  
PHOTO

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flotation in case of capsizing or unexpected swim, they also provide an essential layer of warmth in cold water and protection for your body against rocks or other boats.

## THE INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

**Flatwater** – There is little or no current. The river’s surface is smooth and unbroken. Paddling upstream is easy.

**Class I** – Moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.

**Class II** – Easy rapids with waves up to three feet and wide, clear channels that are obvious without scouting. Some maneuvering required.

**Class III** – Rapids with high, irregular waves often capable of swamping an open canoe. Narrow passages that often require complex maneuvering. May require scouting from shore.

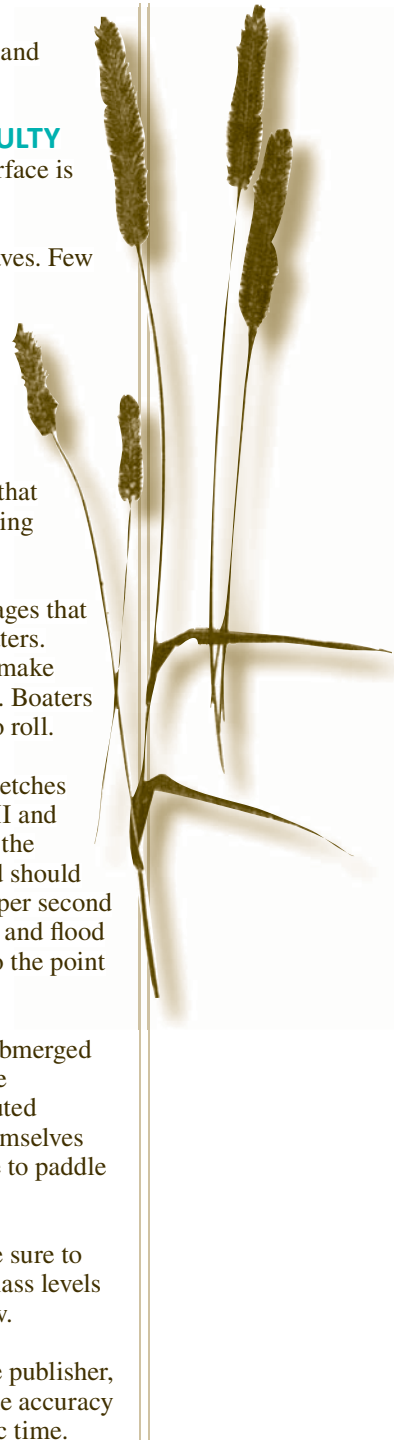
**Class IV** – Long, difficult rapids with constricted passages that often require precise maneuvering in very turbulent waters. Scouting from shore is often necessary and conditions make rescue difficult. Generally not possible for open canoes. Boaters in covered canoes and kayaks should be able to Eskimo roll.

The Housatonic River in Berkshire County has long stretches of flatwater intermixed with short stretches of Class I, II and even III. For each river section described in this guide, the level of difficulty is indicated for average river flow and should be respected. The level of flow, measured in cubic feet per second (cfs), can greatly change river conditions: Higher flows and flood conditions can greatly increase the level of difficulty, to the point of being dangerous.

At flood conditions, the river becomes silt-laden and submerged obstacles are not visible. Water quality can also become unhealthy due to overflowing sewage systems and polluted stormwater runoff. All paddlers must determine for themselves whether they are adequately skilled and physically able to paddle each section.

If you still choose to paddle during these conditions, be sure to wear life vests and travel with experienced paddlers. Class levels in the descriptions increase at higher levels of river flow.

Due to changing weather, flow and river conditions, the publisher, authors and sponsors cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of the river section descriptions provided at any specific time.



## FLOW INFORMATION

Real time stream flow data is provided by the USGS at the following website: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ma/nwis/rt>. At this website you can select one of the two gages to learn the current flow in the Housatonic River: USGS 01197500 Housatonic River near Great Barrington or USGS 01197000 East Branch Housatonic River at Coltsville, Massachusetts.

A suggested minimum flow for paddling the Housatonic River would be 150cfs. Keep in mind that stream gages can malfunction for any number of reasons, paddlers are advised to always “scout” river conditions carefully upon arrival as a safety precaution.

## HIGH WATER CAUTION

At or above 300 cfs (at the Coltsville gage) or 1000cfs (at the Great Barrington gage) extreme caution and great consideration is advised. Extra debris may be in the water and obstacles normally evident may be hidden. At these higher levels, only skilled paddlers should consider paddling and all paddlers should wear PFDs.

The above cfs flow recommendations are intended to be a broad guideline for minimum or maximum flow conditions. If you are paddling the river often, consider keeping notes or a log book on conditions to learn the river and plan future trips to match your skill level or interest.

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Woods Pond in  
Lenoxdale, Mass.  
EPA PHOTO

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# INTRODUCTION

The Housatonic River's three main branches rise out of three ponds in Berkshire County: the East Branch of the Housatonic begins at Muddy Pond in Hinsdale and Washington, the West Branch begins at Pontoosuc Lake in Lanesborough and Pittsfield, and the Southwest Branch of the Housatonic begins at Richmond Pond, Richmond.

The three branches converge in Pittsfield to form the Housatonic's main stem. The Housatonic River flows mostly southward for 149 miles through a rolling valley nestled between the Taconic Mountain Range of eastern New York State and Berkshire County, Massachusetts. It continues to meander through Connecticut and empties into Long Island Sound at Milford Point.

In its descent to the Sound, the main stem of the Housatonic River drops 959 feet. The watershed, or the land area which drains into the river, encompasses almost 2,000 square miles of land, parts of which are found in all three states: Massachusetts, New York and Connecticut.

This edition of the Housatonic River paddle guide divides the River in Massachusetts into 14 navigable sections beginning with the East Branch in Hinsdale and ending in Connecticut at the Great Falls. One section of the West Branch in Pittsfield is also included.

Each section includes a map, directions and GPS coordinates to the accesses and a brief description of the section. Accesses are described as official or informal, primitive or developed, and fair, good or excellent. These terms are defined below.

An *official* access is one that is recognized and managed either by the Massachusetts Office of Fishing and Boating or the local city or town. *Informal* accesses are commonly used, but are mostly on private property and do not have river access signage. The accesses are rated excellent, good, or fair depending on the ease of use.

*Primitive* or *developed* refers to the degree of construction of the access. A primitive access has not been improved in any way whereas a developed access has been engineered to facilitate launching. Four new accesses were installed in 2010 with funding provided by the Trustees of the Natural Resources Damages Fund.

## Be responsible river stewards!

Pick up some trash on every trip and become an advocate for the Housatonic River.

### Strainer

is a downed tree blocking whole or part of the channel. Due to potentially strong currents at strainers, exercise great caution.

### River Right River Left

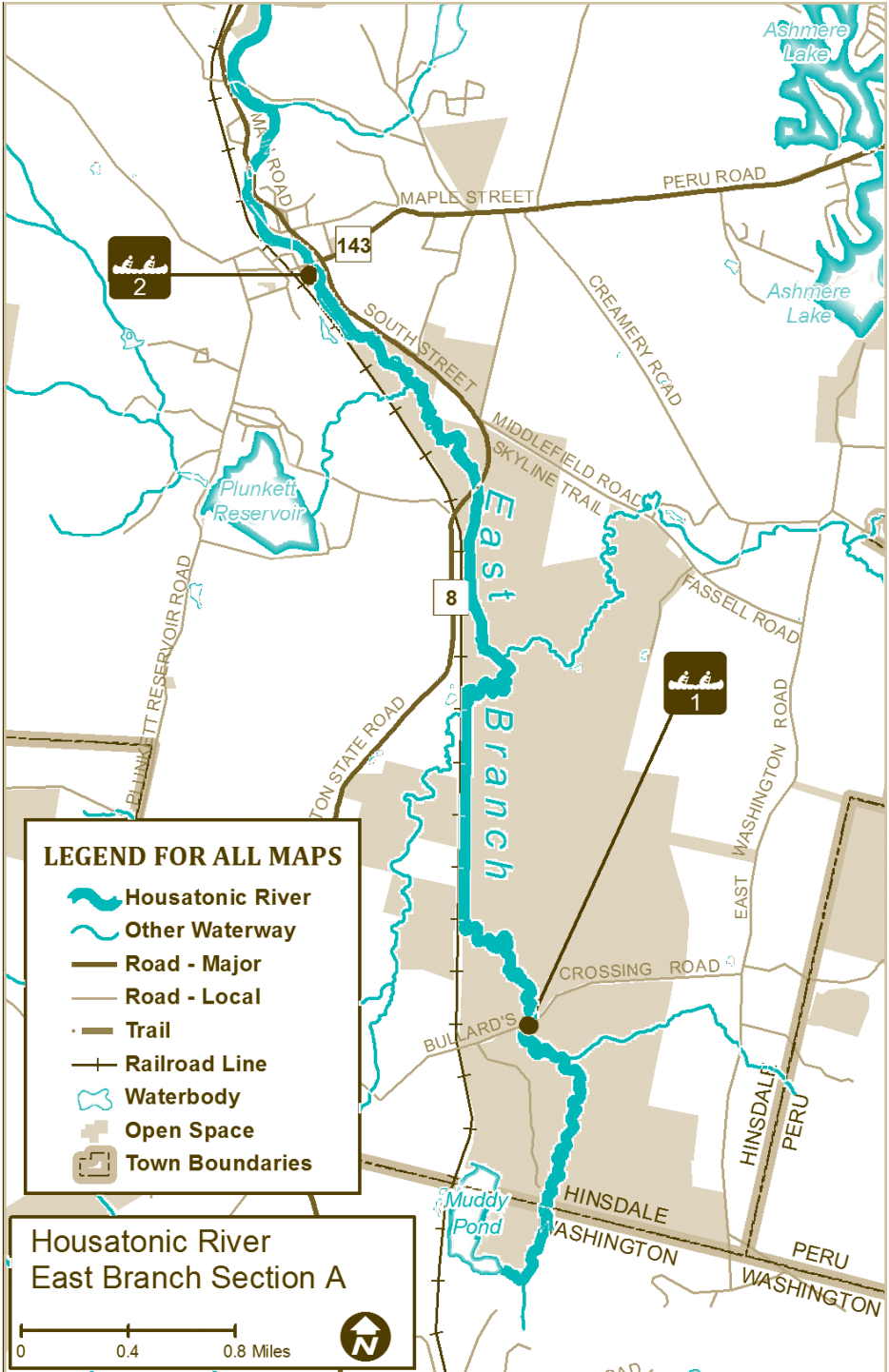
In this guide these terms refer to your left or right as you face downstream.

### Riffles

occur where a drop in elevation causes water to move more quickly. The water in a riffle can be a bit choppy.

### Rapids

occur where the river current is very fast and turbulent, producing white water.



**LEGEND FOR ALL MAPS**

- Housatonic River
- Other Waterway
- Road - Major
- Road - Local
- Trail
- Railroad Line
- Waterbody
- Open Space
- Town Boundaries

Housatonic River  
East Branch Section A

0 0.4 0.8 Miles

## EAST BRANCH SECTION A

Bullard's Crossing Road to  
Hinsdale Center, Hinsdale

**Distance:** 6.4 miles

**Time:** 4–5 hours

**Towns:** Washington and Hinsdale

**Tributaries:** Bilodeau, Cady, Bennett and Frissell brooks

**USGS Maps:** Pittsfield East

**Difficulty:** Flatwater, many beaver dams.

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 1 – Bullard's Crossing Bridge, Hinsdale (N42.39687; W73.10803)**

**Informal access (good, primitive);  
limited road-side parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTES 143 AND 8 IN HINSDALE CENTER:

Travel south on Route 8 for 0.9 miles. Bear left onto the Middlefield/Skyline Trail and continue for 0.5 miles. Take the right fork onto Fassell Road. Continue for 0.4 miles. Take a right onto East Washington Road. Drive 1.4 miles south on East Washington Road. Take a right onto Bullard's Crossing Road, a dirt road. Continue 0.9 miles on Bullard's Crossing Road to the East Branch river crossing. Put in on the downstream side of Bullard's Crossing Road (the right side). Please park on the side of the road to prevent blocking access to others.

**Note:** Bullard's Crossing Road is a town-maintained dirt road, at times, four-wheel drive may be necessary to reach the access. Also note that the river access on Bullard's Crossing Road can only be reached from East Washington Road. In 2003, the bridge over the railroad was removed making access from Route 8 impossible.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 2 – Maple Street, Hinsdale (N42.43764; W73.12418)**  
**Informal access (good, primitive); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTES 143 AND 8 IN THE CENTER OF HINSDALE

Drive west on Maple Street past Ozzie's Steak and Egg Restaurant, 26 Maple Street. Take a left into the parking area

### Hinsdale Flats Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

was designated in 1992 and encompasses 14,500 acres of both the Westfield and Housatonic River watersheds. The excellent water quality of the East Branch and its tributaries, the wetlands and floodplains of the Hinsdale Flats, and the surrounding uplands support an outstanding variety of natural communities and wildlife, including six state-listed rare species.

Be aware that the Hinsdale Flats Wildlife Management Area, managed by the Massachusetts' Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, is open to hunting! Wear hunter's orange during open season. For more information, check <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw>.



### Look out for the Wood Turtle!

A medium-sized turtle, it has a mostly black head with orange color on its legs and neck and a brown, sculpted upper shell or plastron. The Hinsdale Flats provides good habitat for this turtle. Be sure to leave it alone. In Massachusetts, the wood turtle is listed as a species of special concern at risk of becoming threatened.

Wood turtle  
L. T. SHEARS PHOTO

behind the restaurant. Park at the end of the parking area near the river and the canoe access parking sign. Inform Ozzie's staff that you are leaving a car there while paddling. The owners of Ozzie's Restaurant have kindly granted permission for the public to access the river. Please use it respectfully. Visit their website at [www.ozziessteakandeggs.com](http://www.ozziessteakandeggs.com).

### DESCRIPTION

This section offers a unique paddling experience of the upper section of the East Branch of the Housatonic River. Rising from Muddy Pond in Washington, Massachusetts, one of the sources of the Housatonic River, the East Branch meanders through the Hinsdale Flats Wildlife Management Area affording the possibility of excellent wildlife sightings, especially beaver which are abundant along this length.

The river is narrow along this whole section (about six feet or less). Expect to encounter many beaver dams – 26 in 2010! If the river is high, you may be able to paddle right over some of these dams especially if you are using a kayak. Otherwise, expect to get out of your boat each time you negotiate a beaver dam. Avoid stepping in sediment (river mud) behind beaver dams. They could be much deeper than you expect. These mini portages increase the time required for this paddle trip and can make it quite strenuous. Please do not break down or disturb any of the beaver dams. It is against the law.

Paddle north from Bullard's Crossing Road. You will not encounter another road for almost four miles. The narrow river channel meanders through the seasonally flooded bottomland dominated by grasses and shrubs. You must be careful to follow the main channel. After 2.5 miles, the river suddenly becomes straight and follows the railroad tracks for almost a mile with a flooded forest stretching out to your right. Here the river was dredged and straightened to accommodate the railroad tracks.



### Check Out The Old Mill Trail!

Wander back in time as you take a walk along the river's edge. The ruins of a nineteenth century textile mill hint at the river's influence on this community. Round trip distance is three miles. The first half of the trail is wheelchair accessible. The trailhead is located on Old Dalton Road just off of Route 8 in Hinsdale (north of the take-out in Hinsdale).



As you approach the Route 8 Bridge, the river moves away from the railroad and begins its natural meandering once again. As the river bends back towards the northwest, look in the distance for Mount Greylock, the highest point in Massachusetts. In four miles you reach the Route 8 bridge, where shrubbery and trees appear on the shoreline. Expect to encounter overhanging limbs and an occasional strainer.

Look for entrances to bank beaver lodges and don't be surprised if a beaver swims by you! From the Route 8 bridge to downtown is another two miles and may take from one to 1.5 hours to paddle. Along this stretch, you are never far from Route 8. As you come into the center of Hinsdale, houses are along the river's edge with stairs leading to the water. Exit the river (river left) before the Maple Street bridge. Look for a low bank leading to a grassy lawn. Carry your boat to the parking lot behind Ozzie's Restaurant. Please do not drive on the lawn. Consider ending your trip with a visit to Ozzie's which offers outside dining looking out to the East Branch.

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) have recognized the following wildlife inhabiting the Wildlife Management Area: deer, turkeys, ruffed grouse, woodcock, waterfowl, black bear, moose, snowshoe hare, beaver, otter, mink and muskrat. American bitterns and Wilson's snipe are two regular nesters eagerly sought by birders. Many butterfly species have been recorded here. Eastern brook trout are in all of the brooks. In addition, DFW stocks Bennett Brook and the Housatonic River with trout and the upland areas with ring-necked pheasants.

### MUDDY POND – An Alternative Paddle Trip

(about three miles round trip; about three hours):

In high water it is possible to launch on the south side of Bullard's Crossing Road and paddle upstream to the 12-acre Muddy Pond and the official beginning of the East Branch of the Housatonic River. There are more beaver dams to encounter. The river is narrow and can be difficult to navigate. Access to Muddy Pond from the town of Washington's Upper Valley Road is only possible by crossing railroad tracks and accessing the pond via private, railroad property.

**NOTE:** The section of the Housatonic River between Access Point 2 (Hinsdale) and Access Point 3 (Dalton) is not navigable or accessible due to its rocky and shallow nature. Blowdowns are likely to be encountered. Access is very limited and no official accesses are available.



#### Bank Beavers

live on a river and make their home in a riverbank burrow with an underwater entrance. Beavers that live in quiet streams, lakes, and ponds build lodges and dams. By building dams and flooding areas, beavers create important and necessary wetland habitat for a variety of wildlife, including moose, otter, and mink.

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#### Beaver

PEARSON SCOTT  
FORESMAN  
ILLUSTRATION

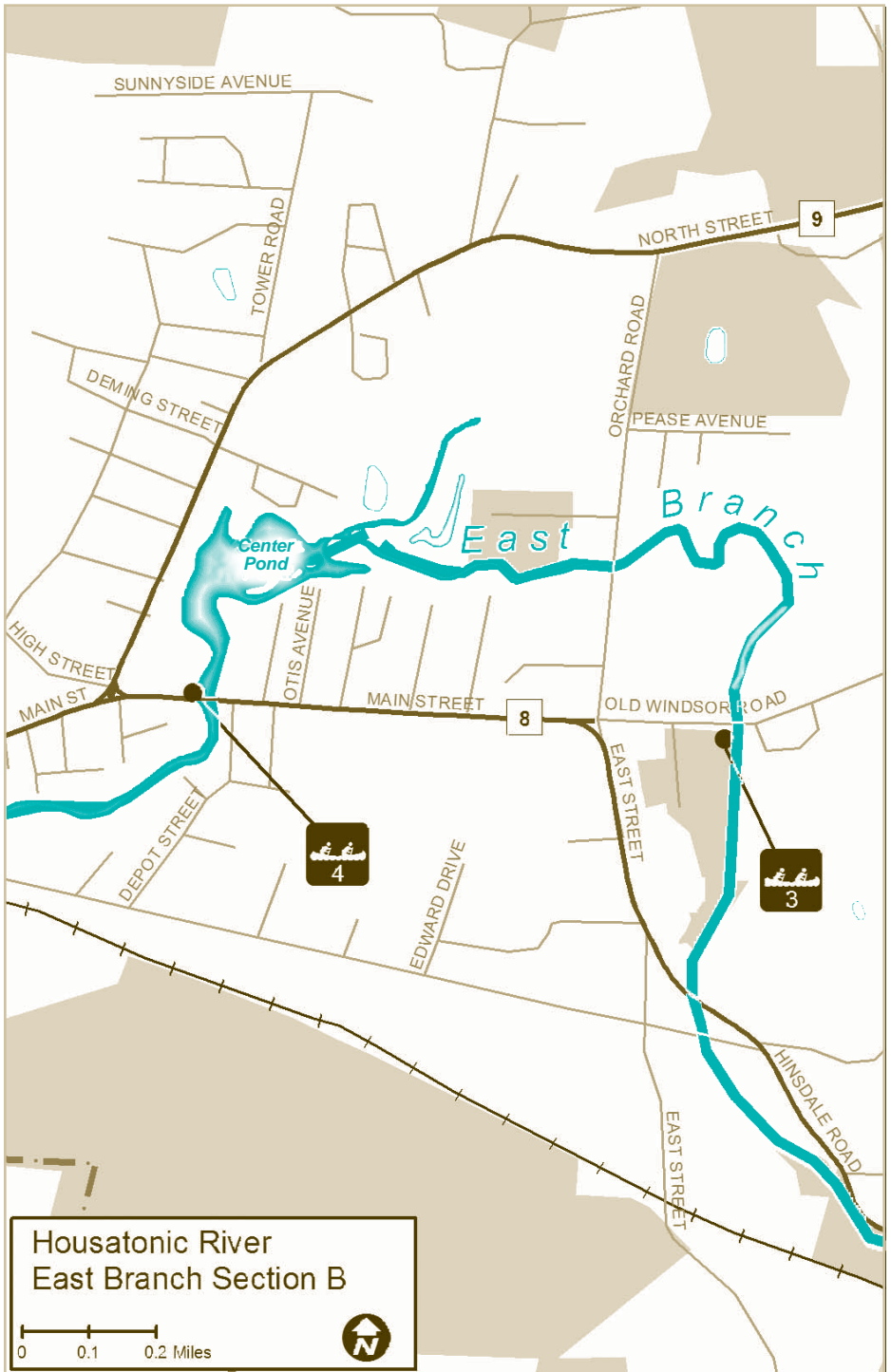
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#### Muddy Pond

is the source of the East Branch of the Housatonic River and marks the highest point of the Housatonic Railroad. To make the grade, an extra engine was added to trains to ascend to the Hinsdale Flats. This extra engine was detached at a staging area at Muddy Pond. At least one train car is rumored to be buried at the bottom of Muddy Pond.

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Housatonic River  
East Branch Section B

0 0.1 0.2 Miles



## EAST BRANCH SECTION B

Old Windsor Road to Center Pond, Dalton.

**Distance:** 1.6 miles

**Time:** 1–1.5 hours

**Towns:** Dalton

**Tributaries:** Cleveland and Wahconah Falls brook

**USGS Maps:** Pittsfield East

**Difficulty:** Flatwater and Class I, blowdowns (strainers)

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 3 – Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MA DFW) Western District Office, 88 Old Windsor Road, Dalton (N42.47401; W73.14236)**

**Informal access (good, primitive); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTES 8 AND 9 IN DALTON

Head east on Route 8 S for 0.7 miles. Take the left fork onto Old Windsor Road. Continue on Old Windsor Road past the MA DFW District Office. Turn right into the dirt road (gated), just before the bridge over the Housatonic. Follow the path to the river. Park so that you are not blocking access to a gate.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 4 – Center Pond – Route 8 bridge Dalton (N42.47422; W73.15703)**

**Informal access (fair, primitive); roadside parking.**

**NOTE:** Access out of Center Pond is on Route 8 between a bridge bulkhead and private property fence. The closest roadside parking is on Depot Street. This section is not currently maintained.

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE DISTRICT OFFICE

Head west towards Route 8 on Old Windsor Road. At end of the street, go straight onto Route 8 and travel west for 0.6 miles. Turn left into Depot Street and park along the road.

### DESCRIPTION

Note that this section is not maintained. Downed trees are likely and may block the entire channel and require portaging. Paddle this section at high water only (150 cfs +).

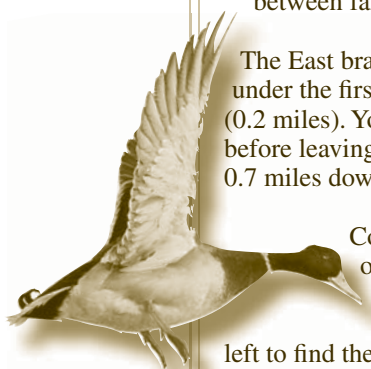


Class I water greets you as you enter and paddle under Old Windsor Road (note the sewer pipes). Immediately beyond the bridge you enter the Wahconah Country Club property. Please be courteous to golfers by remaining quiet and be wary of flying golf balls. There are many meanders and the river passes between fairways and enclosed wooded areas.

The East branch calms quickly to flatwater. Soon after passing under the first bridge, notice Cleveland Brook entering river right (0.2 miles). You will pass under two more pedestrian bridges before leaving the golf course and passing under Orchard Road 0.7 miles downstream.

Continue for another 0.5 miles to the confluence of Wahconah Falls Brook and the East Branch. In another 0.2 miles, you reach Center Pond. Take time to paddle the pond or follow the bank on river left to find the channel of the East Branch that bends south for another 0.2 miles to the Route 8 bridge almost opposite Depot Street. After entering the channel again, you will paddle past an island which you might like to circumnavigate.

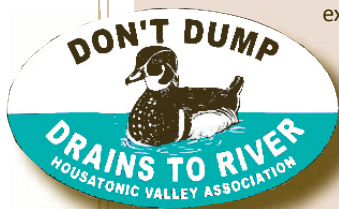
**Do not paddle under the Route 8 Bridge** to avoid going over Center Pond Dam which is located right after the bridge. Exit the river, river right, before the bridge, between the bridge bulkhead and fence. Carry your boat along Main Street and across Route 8 to Depot Street (with care).



### Storm Drains lead to the River!

When the rain pours, stormwater runs off of impervious surfaces (parking lots, sidewalks, driveways, etc.) picking up contaminants such as motor oil, animal waste, excess fertilizer and pesticides, road salt and more. To prevent flooding, stormwater drains away via storm drains which lead straight to the nearest water body, which could be a river, stream, or even pond or lake. You may encounter drainage pipes leading into the river. Stormwater is the greatest contributor to the degradation of the water quality of our nation's water bodies.


Visit EPA's Stormwater Web site for more information: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/>. Also check out <http://www.hvatoday.org/show.cfm?page=water/stormdrainmain.htm>.





Housatonic River  
 East Branch Section C

0 0.4 0.8 Miles





## EAST Branch Section C

Hubbard Avenue to Fred Garner Park,  
Pomeroy Avenue, Pittsfield

**Distance:** 5.5 miles

**Time:** 3–4 hours

**Towns:** Pittsfield

**Tributaries:** Barton, Brattle and Unkamet brooks

**USGS Maps:** Pittsfield East

**Difficulty:** Flatwater, Class I, and Class II beyond Elm Street bridge (many downed trees to maneuver around)

### PUT-IN

**Access Point 5 – Hubbard Avenue, Pittsfield (N42.46942; W73.19679)**

**Informal access (fair, primitive); off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE CENTER OF PITTSFIELD

Head east on Route 9 towards Dalton for 3.2 miles first on East Street and then on Merrill Road. At the Route 9 and Route 8 intersection with traffic lights, turn right onto Dalton Avenue still heading east on Route 9 towards Dalton. Continue for 0.4 miles. Take a right at the lights onto Hubbard Ave. You will go over the Housatonic. At 0.1 mile, turn right into the large shopping plaza and turn right again to find Taco Bell Restaurant. Access to the river is at the bridge adjacent to Taco Bell's drive thru.

### TAKE-OUT

**Access Point 6 – Fred Garner Park, Pomeroy Avenue, Pittsfield. (N42.43555; W73.24950)**

**Official access (good, developed); plenty of off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ACCESS POINT 5 (HUBBARD AVENUE) TO ACCESS POINT 6 (FRED GARNER PARK)

From the shopping plaza, turn right at the lights onto Hubbard Ave. Continue for 1.3 miles to the traffic lights (intersection of Hubbard and Dalton Division Road). Go straight at these traffic lights. Continue on Dalton Division Road for 1.6 miles. Turn right onto Williams Street (heading west). Continue on Williams Street for two miles. Go straight at the traffic lights. Continue on Williams Street for another 0.6 miles. Turn left onto High Street – continue to the end. Turn right onto Pomeroy Ave. Cross over the Housatonic River. Turn left into the entrance of Fred Garner Park.



**NOTE:** There are gates at the park's entrance, which are locked after hours. This access is managed by the Massachusetts Office of Fishing and Boating Access. Complete a Clean Boat Certification Form and display in parked vehicle(s). Failure to comply can result in a fine.

## DESCRIPTION

This section through downtown Pittsfield takes you by the two-mile PCB-remediated stretch. It is generally not maintained and downed trees pose a serious safety concern. Only experienced paddlers should attempt it. Frequent scouting stops should be made to determine how to proceed. This section must be paddled in high water (150 cfs +).

As you put in at the Hubbard Avenue Bridge, the river heads west, but soon bends south and the channel divides at 0.2 miles. The left channel may be clearer of debris but carries less current. Strainers pose significant safety concerns in the next 0.1 miles and may need to be portaged around. They should be scouted. After initially being sandwiched between two shopping plazas, you quickly paddle into a more wild and buffered stretch where development is not so visible.

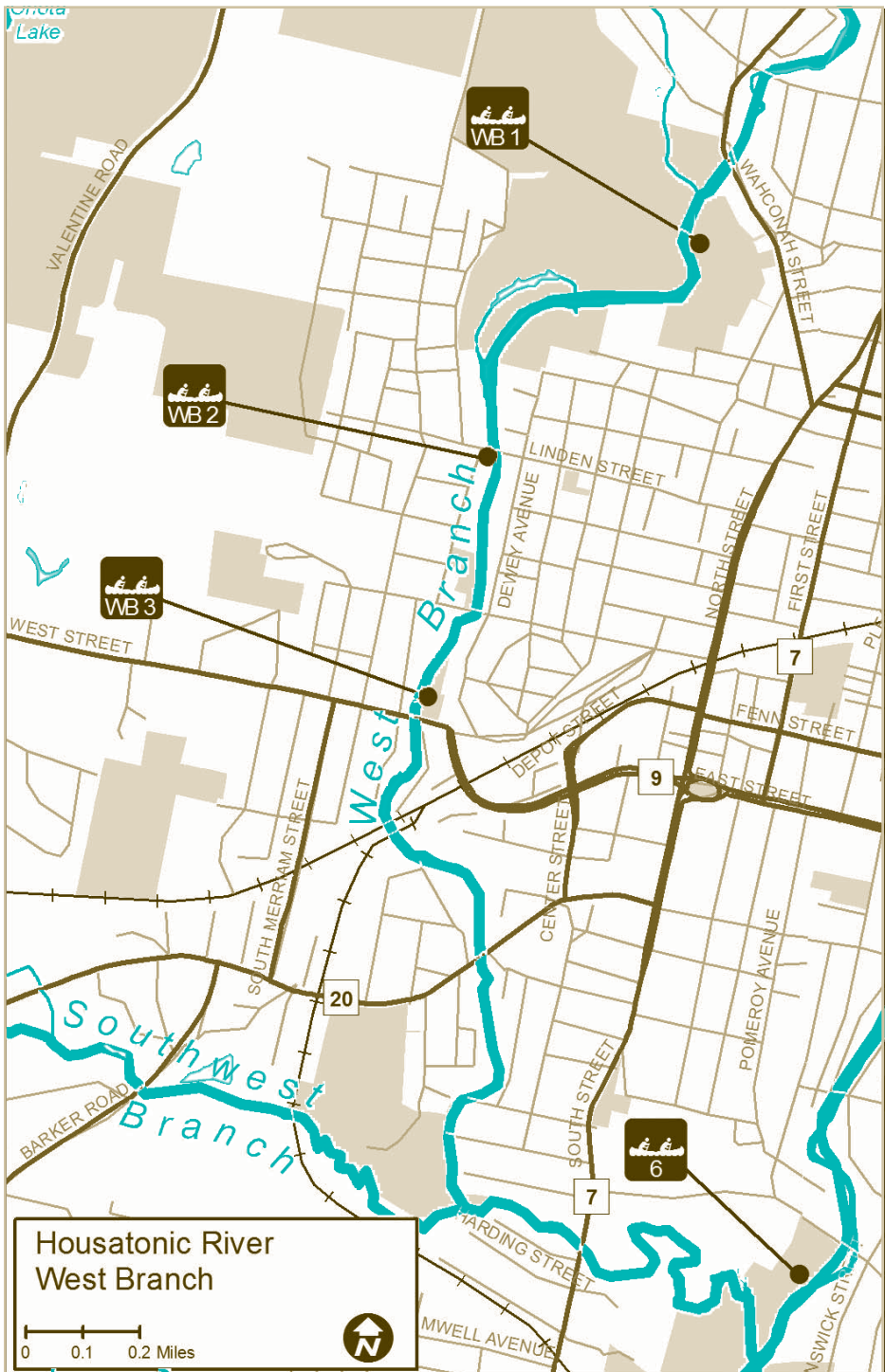
At 1.2 miles you will see an armored wall holding back a tall hill. Meet the former Pittsfield landfill! Unkamet Brook enters river right just before the railroad bridge which you pass under at 1.6 miles and then the East Street bridge at two miles. Soon after the East Street bridge the city begins to encroach upon the river with houses, a pedestrian bridge and industry. The Brattle Brook Tributary is river left at 2.6 miles.

At 3.7 miles, you pass under Newell Street which is the beginning of the PCB-remediated section of the East Branch. Notice the rip-rapped banks and recent plantings that have been caged to prevent beavers from destroying them. This section of river was straightened in the 1940s by the Army Corps of Engineers.

The next bridge is Lyman Street (4.3 miles) and less than half a mile later, Elm Street bridge (4.7 miles). Due to the channel being constricted by Elm Street bridge, there is often a standing wave just downstream of the bridge. Pull out at the bridge, river right, to scout. A short way below Elm Street bridge beware of numerous boulders placed to improve habitat and provide resting places for aquatic species in this quickwater stretch. Depending on water velocity, it could be class II or III rapids. Another one-half mile brings you to Dawes Avenue bridge. Continue under Pomeroy Avenue bridge just a quarter of a mile further. Once you pass Pomeroy Avenue bridge start looking for the take-out, river right, just 0.1 miles downstream.

White Tail Deer  
JERRY SEGRAVES PHOTO





Housatonic River  
West Branch

0 0.1 0.2 Miles



## West Branch Section

Wahconah Park to Dorothy Amos  
Park, Pittsfield

**Distance:** 1 mile

**Time:** 1 hour

**Towns:** Pittsfield

**Tributaries:** Peck's Brook (north of the access)

**USGS Maps:** Pittsfield West

**Difficulty:** Flatwater



### PUT-IN



**Access Point WB1 – Wahconah Park Access, 105 Wahconah Street, Pittsfield (N42.46186; W73.25399)**

**Official access (excellent, developed); plenty of off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM PITTSFIELD CENTER

Travel north on North Street through Pittsfield center. Turn left onto Wahconah Street (Berkshire Medical Center on the corner). Travel 0.3 miles on Wahconah Street and take a left into the historic, city-owned Wahconah Park. From the parking area, look for the River Access sign on the outfield fence and follow the path along the fence. This access, behind the ballpark, was installed in 2010 by HVA and ESS consultants with a grant from the Natural Resource Damages (NRD) Fund Trustees. Unload your boat near the access and park your car in the park's parking area. The park and access is managed by the City of Pittsfield, Parks and Recreation Department ([http://www.pittsfield-ma.org/visitors/parks\\_and\\_recreation.htm](http://www.pittsfield-ma.org/visitors/parks_and_recreation.htm) or call 413- 499-9344 for more information).

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point WB3 – Dorothy Amos Park, West Street, Pittsfield (N42.45128; W73.26246)**

**Official access (fair, primitive); limited road-side parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 7 AND PITTSFIELD CENTER

Travel west on West Street. Go straight at the traffic lights and pass Big Y on your right. Continue on West Street to the next traffic light intersection. Turn left onto West Street and continue for a few hundred feet. Dorothy Amos Park is on your right. Parking is allowed along West Street. Follow the fence along the river. The access is a few hundred feet into the park through the pedestrian gate – look for a river access sign on the fence.



**Wahconah Park** is one of the oldest and most historic baseball stadiums in the country.

Constructed in 1919, it has been home to professional baseball for nearly 100 years and remains one of the last wooden grandstand pro ballparks in the country. Lou Gehrig played ball here and once hit a home run into the Housatonic River behind the right field fence.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is on the West Branch of the Housatonic. The West Branch begins at Pontoosuc Lake further north and flows south to join the Southwest Branch at Clapp Park and the East Branch at Fred Garner Park. Most of the West Branch is navigable only in the spring or at high water. At low water, paddling south from the Wahconah Park access may still be possible because the river opens up to a wide channel.

**Please pick up trash** that you find at the access. Volunteers annually help HVA and Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) to keep this area clean. Please call HVA's Berkshire office (413-394-9796) to report an unusual amount of litter.

NRD funds and the commitment of the City of Pittsfield has resulted in three accesses to the West Branch in Pittsfield: Wahconah Park, Linden Street, and Dorothy Amos Park.

Paddling down and back from the access is one option for a short trip. Even in this urban area, the shoreline is undeveloped and you may encounter deer, muskrats, beavers, turtles and a variety of water fowl. Look for bald eagles overhead. They have nested at Onota Lake and might be soaring by.

The first opportunity to take out is 0.6 miles downstream at Linden Street (river left). After another 0.7 miles, look for Dorothy Amos Park on river left and take out here. Just beyond the Park is the West Street bridge. Please obey the sign and do not paddle past the West Street bridge. A short way below it is the Mill Street dam which is very dangerous for paddling.

## ALTERNATIVE ACCESS



**Access WB2 – Linden Street, Pittsfield (N42.45694; W73.26062)**  
**Official access (fair, primitive); off-road parking in city park.**

## DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE 7 AND PITTSFIELD CENTER

Travel west on West Street. Go straight at the traffic lights and pass Big Y on your right. Continue on West Street to the next traffic light. At this intersection, turn right onto Center Street and continue for a few hundred feet. Turn left onto Dewey Avenue. Continue for 0.5 miles. Turn left onto Linden Street and continue for a few hundred feet. The access is via the open area just before the bridge and across from the gas station. This property is owned by the City of Pittsfield. Pull onto the grass for loading and unloading. Move your vehicle to the official city parking lot on the corner of Linden and Dewey Street (N42.45632; W73.25937). Access to the river is adjacent to the bridge down a short, fairly steep path. Use with care. The access is managed by the City of Pittsfield, Department of Recreation.







Housatonic River  
Main Stem Section A

0 0.3 0.6 Miles



## Fred Garner Park

was rededicated in 2008 following the completion of the PCB remediation of the two-mile section of the East Branch north of the park. The park is named for a Pittsfield resident who was an avid conservationist.



### ACEC

The Upper Housatonic River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) encompasses the 13-mile corridor of the Housatonic River from southern Pittsfield to northern Lee and sections of the supporting watersheds that drain into the river from the east and west.

## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION A

Fred Garner Park, Pomeroy Avenue, Pittsfield to Decker Landing, New Lenox Road, Lenox.

**Distance:** 6 miles

**Time:** 3–4 hours

**Towns:** Pittsfield and Lenox

**Tributaries:** Sackett and Sykes brooks

**USGS Maps:** Pittsfield East

**Difficulty:** A mix of flatwater and Class I (many downed trees to negotiate)

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 6 – Fred Garner Park, Pomeroy Avenue, Pittsfield (N42.43555; W73.24950)**

**Official access (excellent, developed); plenty of off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 7 AND HOLMES ROAD IN LENOX.

Travel 2.4 miles east along Holmes Road. Turn left onto Pomeroy Avenue and continue for 0.7 miles. Turn left into Fred Garner Park (just after going over the Housatonic River). The boat access is located on the left as you drive into the parking area. Notice the large information board. This access was improved in 2008 upon the completion of the PCB-remediation of the two-mile stretch of the East Branch of the river above Fred Garner Park.

**NOTE:** The Park's gates are sometimes closed and locked to deter illegal dumping.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 7 – Decker Landing, New Lenox Road, Lenox. (N42.39369; W73.24222)**

**Official access (excellent, primitive); off-road parking for several cars.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ACCESS POINT 6 (FRED GARNER PARK) TO ACCESS POINT 7 (DECKER LANDING)

Take a right out of Fred Garner Park onto Pomeroy Avenue. Travel 0.7 miles to the end of Pomeroy Avenue. Turn right onto Holmes Road and continue for 1.6 miles. Take a left onto Chapman Street which turns into East Street. Continue on East Street for 0.2 miles. Take a left onto New Lenox Road. Continue for 0.7 miles. Turn right into the boat access

area. This turn is just before the bridge over the Housatonic and is not easily seen.

## DESCRIPTION

While paddling this section of the Housatonic River, you may find it hard to remember that you are in the City of Pittsfield. There are some very secluded and beautiful parts as the river is bounded on one or both sides by the George L. Darey Housatonic Valley Wildlife Management Area. (Take note – hunting is allowed on these lands.) As a result, you might also be surprised at the wildlife you encounter. A black bear was seen swimming across the river in 2010!

This stretch includes the beginning of the Housatonic River’s main stem. Here the river is relatively narrow (about 25 feet wide) and you are likely going to negotiate many downed trees before exiting the river in Lenox. As you leave Fred Garner Park boat access, notice that this stretch of the river has riprap (rock) banks which are evidence of the remediation completed in 2007. Following the remediation, several large boulders were placed in the water upstream, and for a short way downstream of the launch site, to improve the habitat for fish and other aquatic species.

In a short distance, the West Branch joins the East Branch to form the main stem. After about a mile of paddling downstream, you will pass under Pomeroy Avenue and then, shortly afterwards, pass under Holmes Road. After the Holmes Road bridge, the land on river left is Canoe Meadows Sanctuary owned by Massachusetts Audubon Society. At low water levels, the river can be very shallow in places. Notice the outflow, river right, from the Pittsfield Sewage Treatment Plant at about four miles.

After about five miles you will pass the Electrical Power Research Institute’s Lenox facility (see sidebar). At this point you are about one mile from the take-out at Decker Landing. Shortly, you will paddle under New Lenox Road bridge. About 0.1 mile, look for Decker Landing, river right.

## Clean Our River!

Many tires and other bulky items are still visible along this stretch. What isn’t visible is the PCB contamination! This section marks the start of what has become known as the “Rest of the River.” From here through Woods Pond, paddlers are advised to minimize contact with river sediments due to PCB contamination. See page 7 for more information.”

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## Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary

was at one time a Mahican landing site and later a part of the estate of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes who is known for the quote, “There’s no tonic like the Housatonic.”

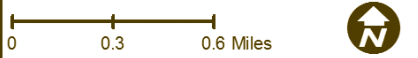
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## Electrical Power Research Institute

The electrical lines and power station you see, river left, in Lenox, is a research station owned and operated by a non-profit company, EPRI, the Electrical Power Research Institute. This site is one of its principal locations. Additional EPRI facilities are located in Palo Alto, Calif.; Charlotte, N.C. and Knoxville, Tenn. EPRI works to address challenges in electricity, including reliability, efficiency, health, safety and the environment. Visit their website for more information: <http://my.epri.com>.



Housatonic River  
Main Stem Section B



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION B

Decker Landing, New Lenox Road, Lenox to Woods Pond Bridge, Crystal Street, Lenoxdale

**Distance:** 4.6 miles

**Time:** 2–3 hours

**Towns:** Lenox

**Tributaries:** Roaring and Yokun brooks

**USGS Maps:** Pittsfield East and East Lee

**Difficulty:** Flatwater, easy paddling

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 7 – Decker Landing Canoe Access, New Lenox Road, Lenox (N42.39369; W73.24222)**

**Official access (excellent, primitive); off-road parking for several cars.**

### DIRECTIONS TO DECKER LANDING FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 7 AND NEW LENOX ROAD IN LENOX

Head east on New Lenox Road for 0.8 miles. Go straight at the intersection of New Lenox Road and East Street. Continue on New Lenox Road for 0.7 miles (over the railroad tracks). Turn right into the boat access area. Entrance to the boat access is located before the bridge over the Housatonic and is not easily seen.

**NOTE:** The Decker Landing launch is very popular and can be busy on summer weekends. Be courteous as you park and launch. In the event that the launch parking is full, drop your boat off at the access, then park in the overflow lot adjacent to Decker Landing.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 8 – Woods Pond Bridge, Crystal Street, Lenoxdale (N42.34967, W73.24385)**

**Official access (excellent, developed); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS POINT 8 (WOODS POND BRIDGE) FROM ACCESS POINT 7 (DECKER LANDING)

Turn left out of the Decker Landing boat access area onto New Lenox Road. Continue on New Lenox Road for 0.7 miles. Take a left onto East Street. Continue south on East Street for 2.9 miles. Turn left onto Housatonic Street and travel 0.9 miles. At the intersection of Crystal and Housatonic Streets, go straight over the

### Lenox Station

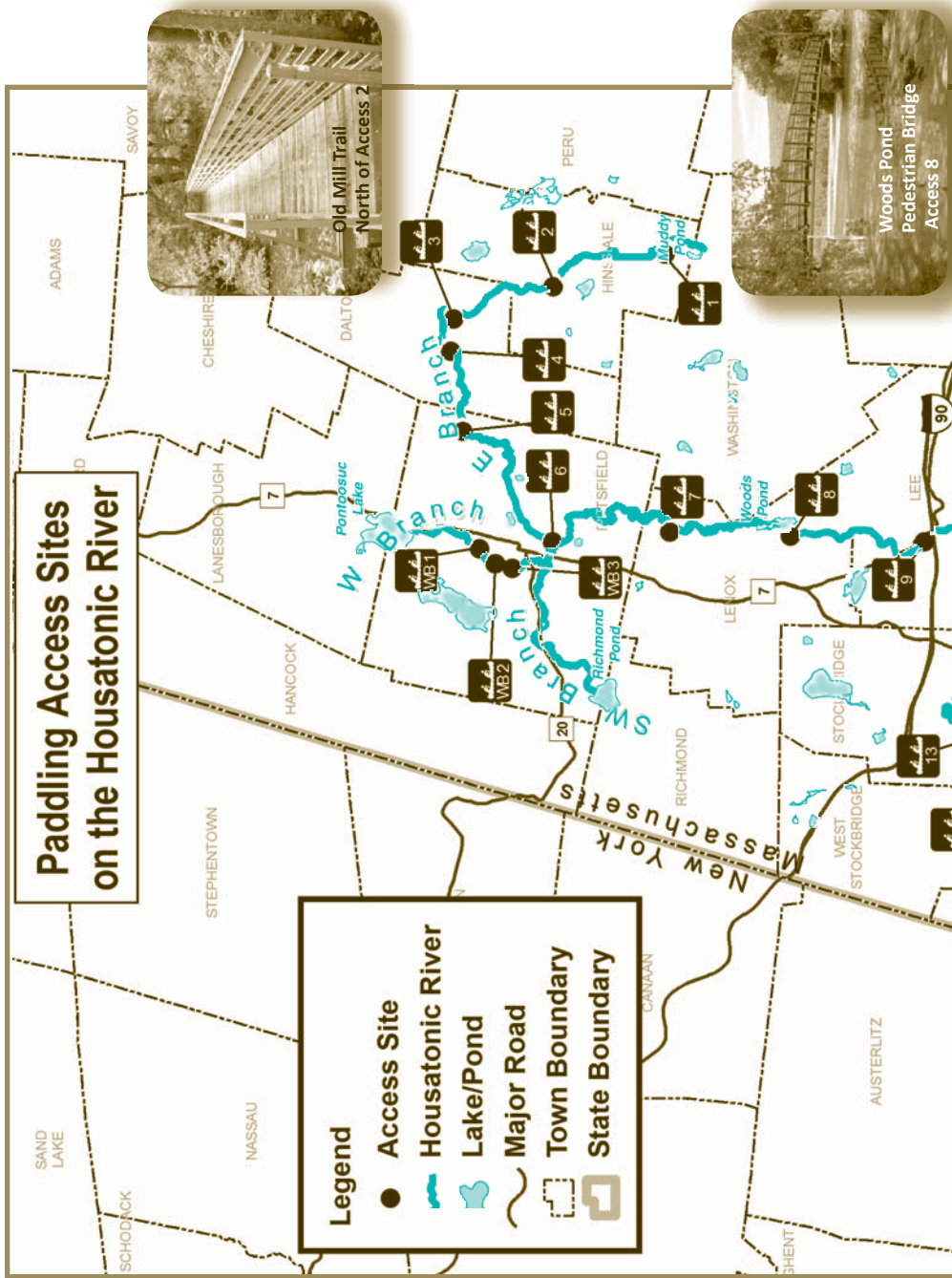
After paddling, consider visiting the renovated Lenox Station (1902), home to the Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum (located on Willow Creek Road). During the summer and fall, enjoy train excursions departing Lenox for a 45-minute round trip to Lee or a 90-minute round trip to Stockbridge. Visit [www.berkshirescenicrailroad.org](http://www.berkshirescenicrailroad.org) for more information.



Upstream of New Lenox Road in Lenoxdale  
EPA PHOTO



# Padding Access Sites on the Housatonic River



## Legend

- Access Site
- ~ Housatonic River
- ☁ Lake/Pond
- ~ Major Road
- ⬜ Town Boundary
- ⬜ State Boundary







### Wood Duck

Look for the very colorful Wood Duck that nests in tree cavities. To provide more nesting areas, many nest boxes that mimic tree cavities have been installed in wetlands. Soon after hatching, the ducklings jump down from the nest tree (or box!) and make their way to water and the protection of the parent. Ducklings have been known to jump from heights of 290 feet without injury. At two or three days old, they are able to swim and find food.

railroad tracks. Park between the railroad tracks and the pond and stay to the right of the pedestrian bridge. *Please, do not park on the property owner's lawn or driveway.*

The access is the downstream side of the pedestrian bridge. Installed in 2010 by HVA and ESS, the floating dock greatly improves access to this river stretch. Funding for the access was provided through the Natural Resources Damages Fund.

### DESCRIPTION

From Decker Landing to Woods Pond, the river passes through the George L. Darey Housatonic Valley Wildlife Management Area, which is managed by the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife. In the east, the river is also bounded by October Mountain State Forest providing excellent mountainside views even as you launch. This is one of the most beautiful sections of the river and, particularly in the autumn, is very popular with paddlers. Expect it to be busy on summer weekends.

The river flows slowly and meanders through an extensive floodplain bustling with wildlife; it is especially recommended to bird watchers. Expect to see wood ducks and other marshland species. Look for evidence of beaver activity, too.

Be aware that the river sediment of this stretch is PCB-contaminated. Minimize contact with river sediment and wash off any sediment from your body, clothing, equipment or boat.

Due to the lack of current, it is possible to paddle downstream and back from Decker Landing. A trip lasting about an hour would include paddling downstream, paddling around the island taking the left, narrow channel and continuing back to Decker Landing.

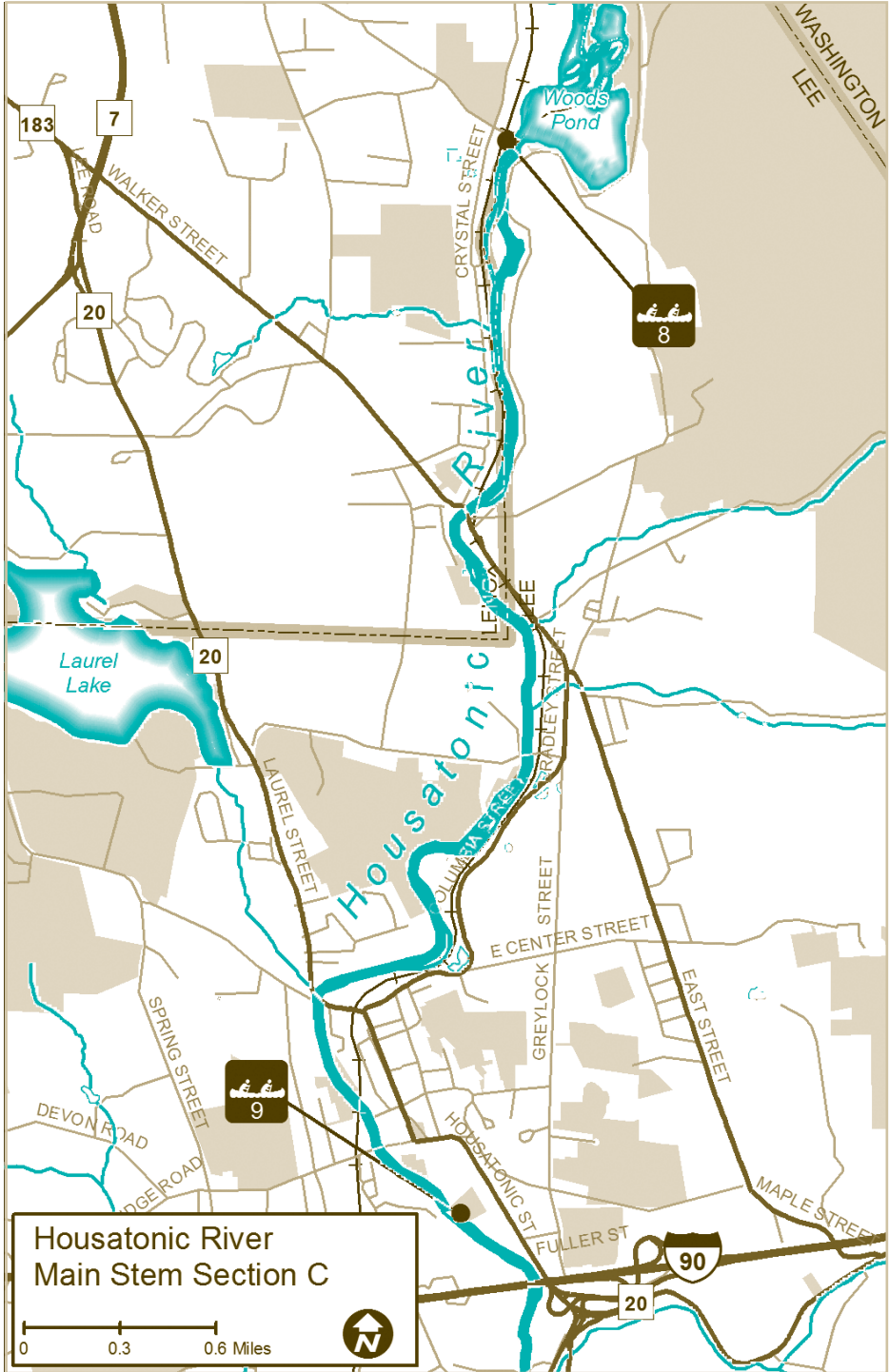
Wood Duck  
B.S. THURNER HOF  
PHOTO

Brook Trout  
BY DUANE RAEVER USFWS

### Native Brook Trout

survive in only the coldest and cleanest water. They serve as indicators of the health of the rivers and streams they inhabit. As such, brook trout often act as the "canary in the coal mine" to signal the excellent health of a waterway or alert us to potential water quality problems. Brook trout populations have been declining in Massachusetts over the past 50 years, largely due to pressures associated with urbanization and other development. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is actively working with federal and state partners, as well as conservation organizations, such as Trout Unlimited, to restore the native brook trout throughout its historic Eastern range.





Housatonic River  
Main Stem Section C



## Columbia Mill Dam

is owned by Switzer-Mauduit which closed their papermaking operations in Lee in 2008. The dam has been determined to be "structurally unsound." The Massachusetts Department of Ecological Restoration and HVA are assisting with engineering studies. The ultimate goal is to remove the dam.

## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION C

Woods Pond Bridge, Crystal Street,  
Lenoxdale to Lee Athletic Field Access, Lee

**Distance:** 4.3 miles

**Time:** 1.5 hours

**Towns:** Lenox and Lee

**Tributaries:** Washington Mountain and Coddington brooks

**USGS Maps:** East Lee

**Difficulty:** Predominantly Class II and Class III; some flatwater

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 8 – Woods Pond Bridge River Access, Crystal Street, Lenoxdale (N42.34967; W73.24385)**

**Official car-top boat access (excellent, developed); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS TO WOODS POND ACCESS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTES 7 & 20 AND HOUSATONIC STREET IN LENOX

Head east on Housatonic Street for 1.4 miles to the intersection of Crystal Street and Housatonic Street in Lenoxdale. At the intersection of Crystal and Housatonic streets, go straight and continue over the railroad tracks. Park between the railroad tracks and the pond and stay to the right of the pedestrian bridge.

*Please do not park on the property owner's lawn or driveway.*

### TAKE-OUT

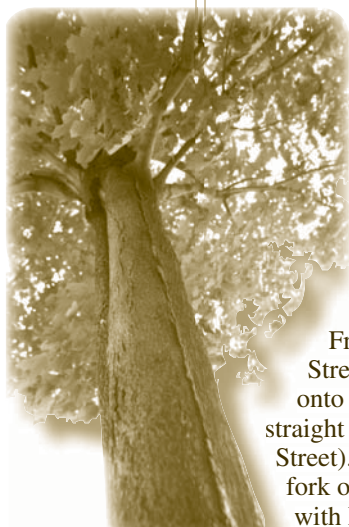


**Access Point 9 – Lee Athletic Field Access, Housatonic Street, Lee (N42.30067; W73.24519)**

**Official access (excellent, developed); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ACCESS POINT 8 (WOODS POND ACCESS) TO ACCESS POINT 9 (LEE ATHLETIC FIELD)

From Woods Pond, turn left to head south on Crystal Street. Continue for 1.2 miles into Lenoxdale. Turn left onto Mill Street (go over the Housatonic River). Continue straight for a total of 2.4 miles (Mill Street turns into Bradley Street). Just after the Golden Hill Nursery, take the left fork onto Greylock Street. Go straight at the intersection with East Center Street. Go straight at the four-way stop





intersection with Maple Street. Turn right onto Fuller Street (straight is a dead end). Continue to the end of Fuller Street. Turn right onto Housatonic Street (Route 20). Travel for 0.1 miles. Turn left into the Lee Athletic Field (small white sign). Carry your boat across the field to the access.

## DESCRIPTION

Paddle 0.2 miles to Woods Pond Dam. Portage on right side. Class II rapids begin below dam, which gradually build to Class III at railroad bridge (1.2 miles) and Crystal Street bridge; also downstream. Note the remains of an old wooden dam with spikes (affectionately referred to as dragon's teeth) visible between the railroad and Crystal Street bridge. Do not paddle at low water (below 150 cfs).

There is an island just around the bend at the bridge, go river left. While there are short sections of flatwater, this stretch is mostly rapids. Flatwater begins as you approach Columbia Mill Dam in Lee. Dam is located at 1.3 miles from the railroad bridge. There is rather steep portage around the right side of the dam through an overgrown area. Put in below the dam – 1.7 miles downstream is a low dam at Eagle Mill. Short portage on the right. Pass under Route 20 bridge soon after portage. Expect Class II to III rapids for the next 0.4 miles to Lee Athletic Field access site. Access is river left at the back of the Lee Athletic Field.

## Lenox Iron Works

in Lenoxdale was originally known as Lenox Furnace which was founded in 1825 by Silas Pierce. Another former industry here was Lenox glass works. Remnants of these industries may be found in the river.

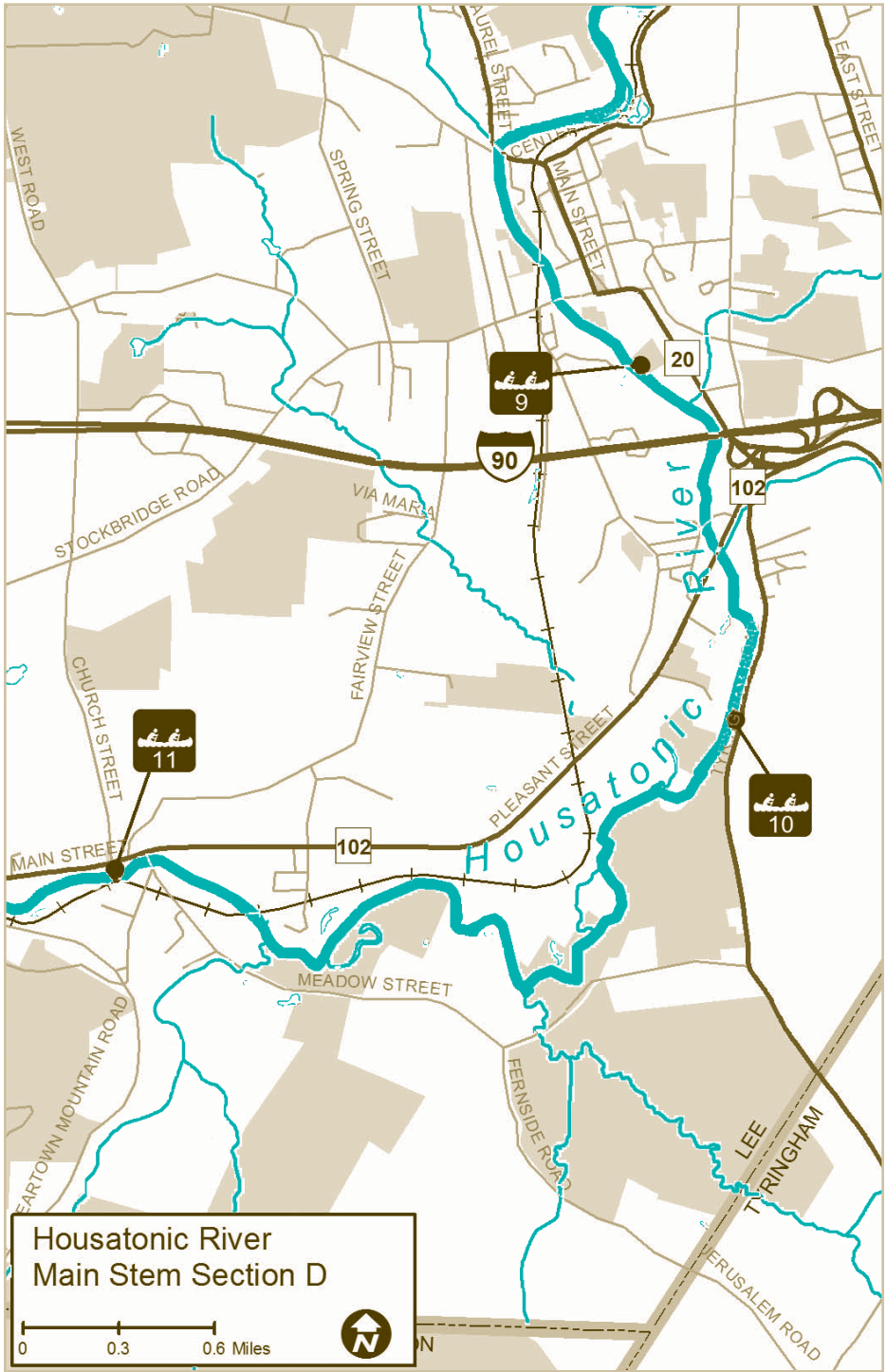


## Woods Pond Pedestrian Bridge

(1997) replaces an earlier vehicular bridge which collapsed in the 1950s. This footbridge provides a scenic entryway into October Mountain State Forest, Lee. HVA coordinated efforts to install this bridge.

## Woods Pond

is a 100-acre mill pond formed by a dam that once powered industry in Lenoxdale. The dam, owned by General Electric, was recently rebuilt to reinforce its effectiveness as a barrier to downstream migration of PCB- contaminated sediment. While boating on the water is safe, boaters should limit contact with river sediments. Fishing is on a catch-and-release basis only.



Housatonic River  
Main Stem Section D

0 0.3 0.6 Miles



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION D

Lee Athletic Field, Housatonic Street, Lee to HVA Office, 1383 Pleasant Street (Route 102), South Lee

**Distance:** 4.7 miles

**Time:** 2–3 hours

**Towns:** Lee

**Tributaries:** Goose Pond, Hop, and Beartown brooks

**USGS Maps:** East Lee and Stockbridge

**Difficulty:** Class I, II and Flatwater

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 9 – Lee Athletic Field Access, Housatonic Street, Lee (N42.30067; W73.24519)**

**Official access (excellent, developed); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 20 AND ROUTE 102 IN LEE AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE

Head north on Route 20 along Housatonic Street for 0.5 miles. Turn left at the “Lee Athletic Field” sign and park outside the gate (N42.30140; W73.24433). Be prepared to carry your boat across the athletic fields to the access which is at the rear of the athletic field. This access was installed in 2010 with funding provided by the Natural Resources Damages Fund. An access sign is expected to be installed in the near future, permitting for that sign is currently in process. Please be courteous if any recreational event is in progress on the field.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 11 – Housatonic Valley Association (Berkshire office), 1383 Pleasant Street (Route 102), South Lee (N42.28500, W73.23927)**

**Informal access (good, primitive); limited road-side parking.**

### DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS POINT 11 (HVA BERKSHIRE OFFICE) FROM ACCESS POINT 9 (LEE ATHLETIC FIELD)

From the Lee Athletic Field, turn right onto Housatonic Street (Route 20) and travel 0.5 miles. Turn right onto Route 102 (Pleasant Street) and travel west for 2.6 miles. HVA’s Berkshire office is located on the left hand (south) side almost directly opposite the South Lee Fire Station. Notice the HVA sign on the building. Limited parking is available along the road. The access is located in the rear. Use the driveway on the left side of the building. Cross the lawn to the river. Access is muddy and can be



#### Lee marble

is said to be the hardest and finest quality marble in the world. It was used in the construction of many of Lee’s downtown buildings as well as others around the nation including the Capitol building, the Empire State Building, the Massachusetts Statehouse and Boston Public Library. Even a portion of the Washington Monument is made of Lee marble.

## Willow Mill

Downstream from the take-out, at the Willow Mill Dam, is the only operating paper mill in Lee, which is owned by Onyx Specialty Papers, Inc. Willow Mill was the first paper mill built in Lee in 1806 by Samuel Church. By 1857 there were 25 paper mills in Lee. It was the Smith Paper Company of Lee which discovered how to manufacture paper solely from wood pulp in 1867, and through the 1870s was the largest producer of paper in the country.

slippery. This access is privately owned. Call HVA's Berkshire office at 413-394-9796 for use of this access.

## DESCRIPTION

The combination of some clear quickwater and beautiful views of Beartown State Forest make this an interesting and enjoyable paddle. Expect to negotiate several downed trees, some of which block a good portion of the river channel. As you approach the take-out, the river becomes sluggish due to the Willow Mill Dam. At low flow conditions, river may be very shallow. All of this section is a catch-and-release fishing area managed by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Be on the alert, there may be fishermen in the river!

Soon after launching you will float under the Massachusetts Turnpike. Within another one-half mile you will encounter two more bridges; the Old Pleasant Street and Route 102 bridges. In the vicinity of these bridges, especially the turnpike bridge, you might notice pipes emptying into the river. These are stormwater pipes that direct stormwater runoff directly into the river. Right after the last of the three bridges, Goose Pond Brook empties into the Housatonic, river left.

As you leave the downtown area of Lee, you enter into a scenic valley of former farmland. The river meanders through the floodplain below river banks that are several feet high in places. Evidence of bank beavers (large den holes and slides into the river) and bank swallows (much smaller nesting holes in the banks) are easily seen. While these high banks make it difficult to observe the immediate surrounding countryside, they also help to obscure views



USGS PHOTO

## Zebra Mussels

were first found in Massachusetts in Laurel Lake, Lee in 2009 and were introduced into the Housatonic River via the Laurel Lake outflow that feeds into the Housatonic River. In 2011, an adult zebra mussel was found at Glendale Dam. Boats must be decontaminated after paddling in the Housatonic! Instructions are on page 10.

of the industrialized section of Route 102 which parallels the river. The paddler is treated to magnificent views of Beartown Mountain, part of Beartown State Forest. This river stretch allows great opportunity to see a variety of wildlife: blue herons, muskrats, beavers, deer, bald eagles and more.

Almost three miles downstream, Hop Brook enters, river left. Enjoy the peacefulness of the river as you continue to paddle through forest interspersed with thick glades of tall ferns and grasses. Little human disturbance is visible from the stream

channel. The river becomes deeper and slower here as you paddle closer to the dam. Further downstream Beartown Brook spills into the river, river left. In another few hundred feet, pass under a railroad bridge. Continue along a quiet straight stretch for almost one-half mile before passing under the Meadow Street bridge. Look for the take-out about 0.1 miles beyond the Meadow Street bridge, river right. Look for the red outbuilding and rack of canoes, pull up onto the bank at the back of this property. Willow Mill Dam is located 0.5 miles further downstream.

### ALTERNATIVE ACCESS

**Access Point 10 – BNRC Fishing Access, Tyringham Road, Lee (N42.28500; W73.23946)**  
**Informal access (fair, primitive); limited roadside parking.**

### DIRECTIONS

From the intersection of Route 20 and Route 102 in Lee (Massachusetts Pike entrance), go west on Route 102 for less than 0.1 miles. Take a left onto Tyringham Road and continue for 0.7 miles. Park in the pull-off on the right opposite the electrical lines. There is a path to the river which may be overgrown. This land is owned by Berkshire Natural Resource Council which allows fishermen and paddlers to use the access responsibly. A map for the Housatonic fishing access is available at [www.bnrc.net](http://www.bnrc.net). This access is about one-half mile downstream from the Route 102 bridge and approximately three miles upstream from HVA's office access site.



### Beaver or Muskrat?

While they are related (both are rodents), the muskrat is much smaller than the beaver. Still it can be difficult to distinguish between the two when they are swimming in the river. For the most part, if it is a beaver, only the head will be visible above the water. If it is a muskrat, usually both the head and the back of the muskrat are visible as it swims more at the surface. Both make their home in the water and are active in winter. Unlike beavers, muskrats don't store food and must find vegetation to feed on throughout the year.

### Muskrat

HENRI SIVONEN PHOTO

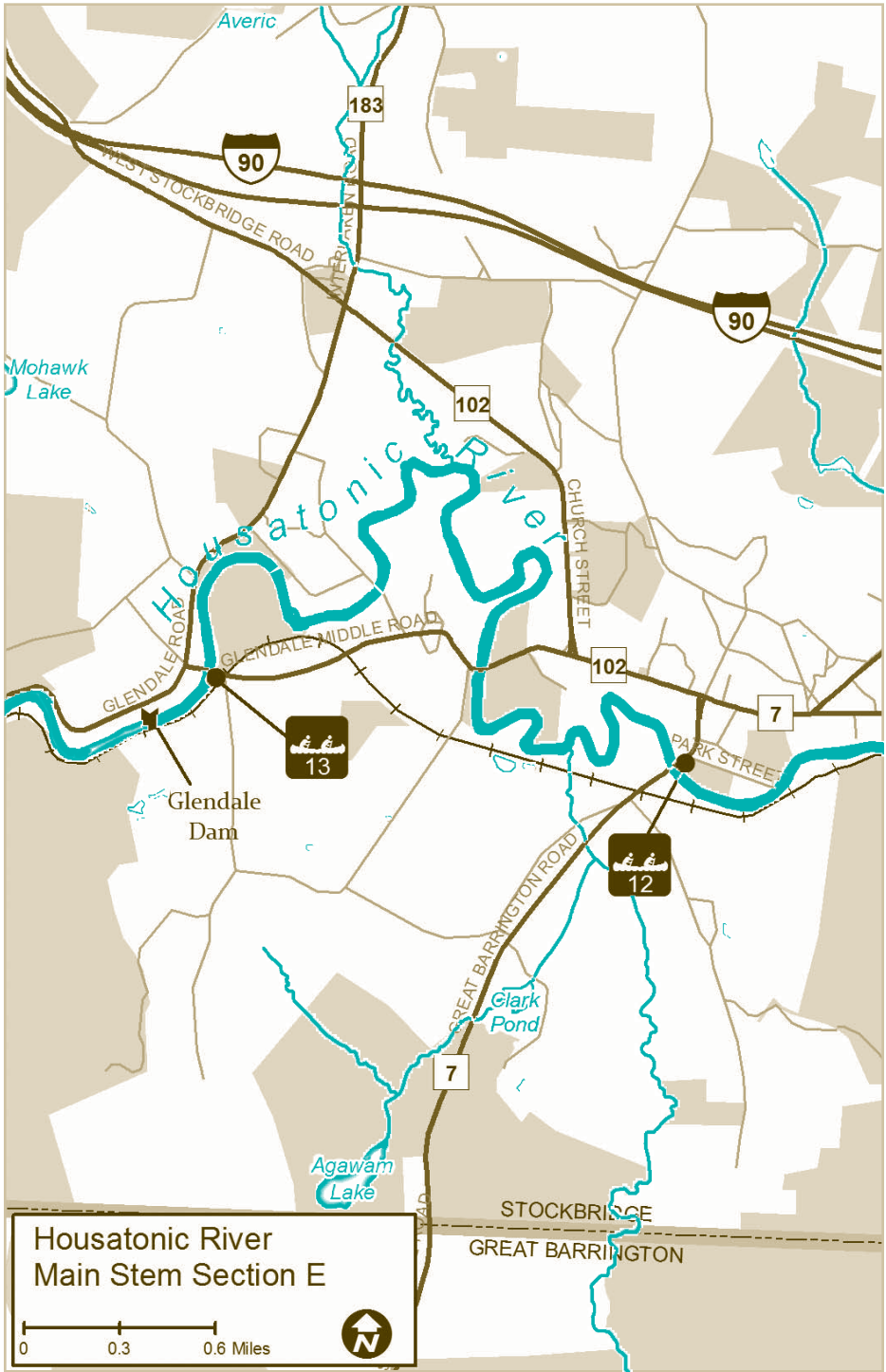
**River right, above the Willow Mill Dam, you may catch a glimpse of the back of the Merrell Tavern – built as a home in 1805 by Major General Joseph Whiton. From 1815 on, it served as a coaching tavern run by the Merrell family. It is listed on the National Register and is operated as an inn today.**

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife stocks the tributaries and the Housatonic River with trout in Lee. The stretch from the Route 20 bridge downstream to the Willow Mill Dam in South Lee is a designated catch-and-release area and only artificial lures may be used. For more information, visit: <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw>.



Brook Trout  
BY DUANE RAVER/USFWS





## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION E

Park Street, Stockbridge to  
Glendale Bridge, Glendale

**Distance:** 4.5 miles

**Time:** 3 hours

**Towns:** Stockbridge

**Tributaries:** Konkapot and Larrywaug brooks

**USGS Maps:** Stockbridge

**Difficulty:** Flatwater

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 12 – Park Street Canoe Access, Park Street, Stockbridge (N42.27909; W73.31369)**  
**Official access (fair, primitive); off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM STOCKBRIDGE CENTER (MAIN STREET/ROUTE 102 & ROUTE 7)

Head south on Route 7 (past the Red Lion Inn) towards Great Barrington. Continue on Route 7 south for 0.2 miles. Turn left onto Park Street and almost immediately turn right into the skate board park, parking area. It is a short walk to the access area – look for the information board. Take care launching as it can be muddy and slick and may be covered with a plant called stinging nettle. This access is managed by the Massachusetts Office of Fishing and Boating Access.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 13 – Glendale Middle Road Bridge (N42.28275; W73.34215)**

**Informal access (fair, primitive); very limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS POINT 13 (GLENDALE MIDDLE ROAD BRIDGE) FROM ACCESS POINT 12 (PARK STREET, STOCKBRIDGE)

Turn left out of the skate board parking area onto Park Street. Take a right onto Route 7 and head north for 0.2 miles. Take a left onto Route 102 W (Main Street) and travel west for 0.4 miles. Continue straight onto Glendale Middle Road and travel 1.2 miles. Park at pull off between the railroad tracks and Castle Hill Road. Walk across the railroad tracks to locate the short path to the river.

### Stinging Nettle

UWE H. FRIESE PHOTO



### STINGING NETTLE

Watch out for stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and the closely related *Urtica urens*. The fine hairs of its leaves and stems contain chemicals that are released when the plant touches your skin. The hairs, or spines, are also painful to the touch. Applying water to the affected area lessens the sting, as does the moisture from the jewelweed plant.



### Jewelweed

D. GORDON E.  
ROBERTSON PHOTO

## Stockbridge

was first settled in 1734 as a mission for the Mohican Tribe known as the Stockbridge Indians. The Stockbridge Indian Monument, erected by the Laurel Hill Association in 1876, commemorates the tribe's burial ground and is located on the south side of Glendale Middle Road between the Congregational Church and the Golf Course in Stockbridge.

**Note:** The land used for this access is owned by the Housatonic Railroad. Take care crossing the railroad tracks.

As part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process, Littleville Power Company will install two new river accesses – one above and one below the Glendale Dam and a portage trail around the dam. Construction is expected to begin in 2012. The access above the Glendale Dam will be the preferred official take-out access for this section instead of Access Point 13.

Please call HVA at 413-394-9796 for updates.

## DESCRIPTION

Here the Housatonic River flows generally in a westerly direction with meanders heading north and south. The gentle relief of the valley produces flatwater conditions with mostly slow-moving water and short stretches of some quickwater and many wide looping meanders. Some negotiating is required around fallen trees or strainers. In a couple of places, bank erosion reveals old local household trash dumps.

The golf course of the Stockbridge Golf Club occupies much of the north bank (river right) and parts of the south bank (river left) for the first two miles of this section. Konkapot Brook enters river left at 0.7 miles. As you paddle through the golf course imagine yourself back in the early 1700s. This area, known as Stockbridge Plains, was the site of the original Indian town of the Stockbridge Mission Station in 1736 led by Sachem Konkapot.

Look for stray golf balls in the river and on the river banks and, on occasion, overhead! Be careful of the four low footbridges connecting the golf course green, especially when water levels are high!

Please be considerate; keep noise to a minimum as you paddle through the golf course area. Be alert to wildlife sightings. Otters have been seen and Baltimore oriole songs abound in the spring.

## Baltimore Orioles

In spring, look for a flash of bright orange and the lilting song of the Baltimore oriole flitting around in the tall trees next to the river. These migratory birds prefer tall trees in open areas and are seen along many stretches of the Housatonic.



Baltimore Oriole  
LAURA GOOCH PHOTO

Larrywaug Brook (which drains Stockbridge Bowl and Lake Averic) enters river right just beyond the sewage treatment facility outfall. Although very narrow and winding, it is possible to paddle part way up the brook and enjoy its clear cold waters.

Heading in a southwesterly direction now, the riverbanks are mostly forested. Look up, river right, for a glimpse of the former Linden estate, home of the Norman Rockwell Museum administrative offices.

Shortly afterwards, you will pass under Butler Bridge (1882), an historic bridge open only to pedestrian traffic. Beyond the bridge, you will encounter an island at a bend in the river. The forested land, river left, is Bowker's Woods, with public trails, owned by the Laurel Hill Association. Another three-quarter mile of paddling in the slow, flatwater produced by the Glendale dam, brings you to the informal take-out immediately downstream of Glendale Middle Road bridge, river left.

### Phragmites

Notice the tall reed-like stalks with distinctive feathery seed heads. These belong to an invasive species known as phragmites or common reed (*phragmites australis*). Stands of phragmites are very dense. They crowd out the native plants, such as cattails, and alter the habitat for many wetland species. Eradication is very difficult.



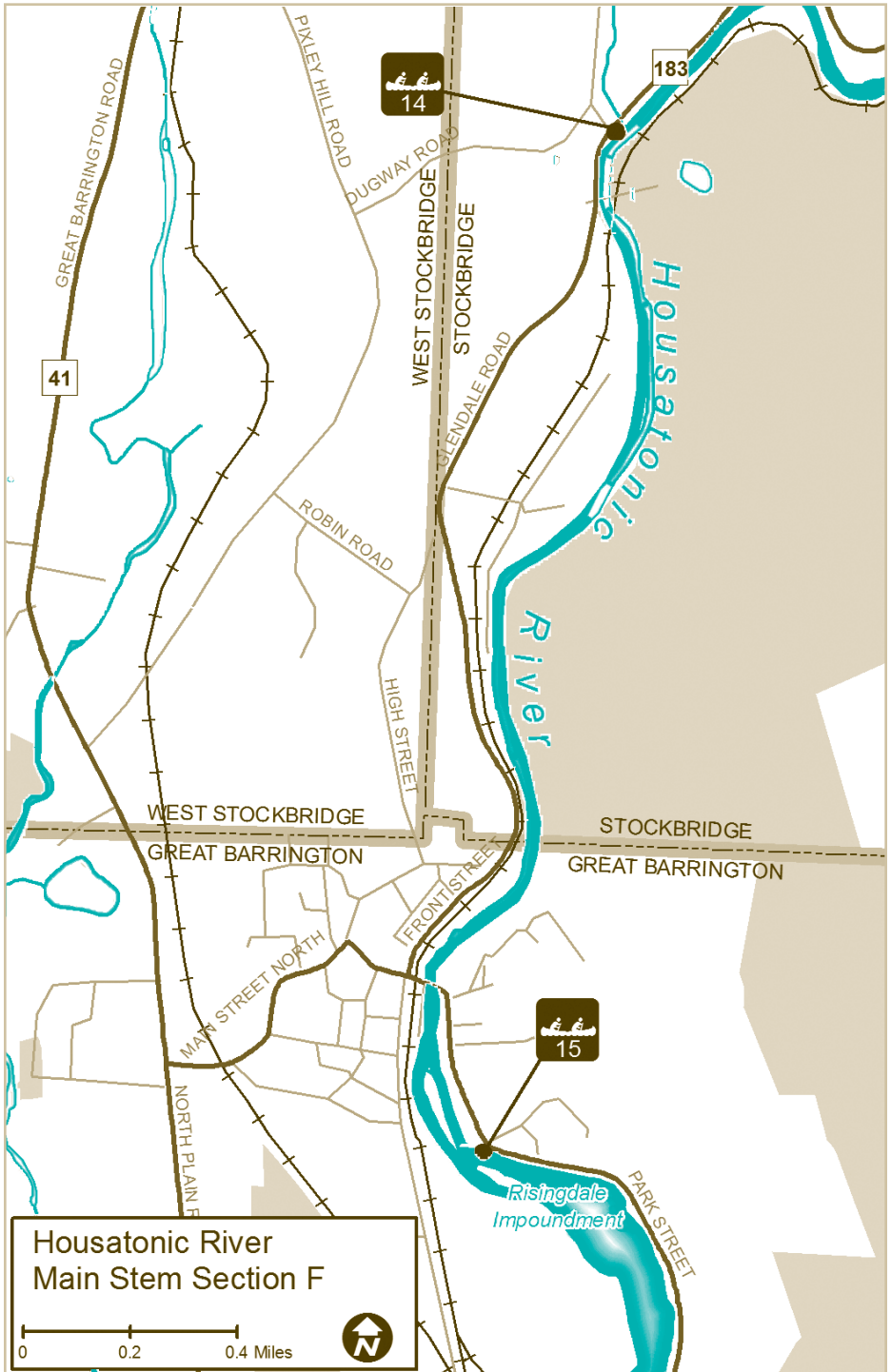
### Beware of Strainers!

A strainer is the term used for a fallen tree which is blocking all or part of the river channel to the passage of boats, but the current still sweeps under. A strainer can create a dangerous situation for paddlers.



Strainer

WALTER SIEGMUND  
PHOTO



Housatonic River  
Main Stem Section F

0 0.2 0.4 Miles





## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION F

Below Glendale Dam, Glendale to Rising Pond Dam, Housatonic

**Distance:** 2.9 miles

**Time:** 1 hour

**Towns:** Glendale and Housatonic (villages of Stockbridge and Great Barrington, respectively)

**Tributaries:** Mohawk Brook

**USGS Maps:** Stockbridge, Great Barrington

**Difficulty:** Class III

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 14 – Glendale Rd, Route 183, Glendale (N42.27797; W73.35953)**

**Informal access (good, primitive); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM STOCKBRIDGE CENTER (MAIN STREET /ROUTE 102)

Head west on Route 102 through Stockbridge for 0.4 miles. At the intersection of Route 102 and Glendale Middle Road, go straight. Continue on Glendale Middle Road for 1.3 miles go over the Housatonic. Turn left onto Route 183/Glendale Road. Head south on Glendale Road for 1.1 miles. Turn left into pullout along Route 183 opposite the entrance to Dugway Road.

As part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process, Littleville Power Company will install two new river access; one above and one below the Glendale Dam and a portage trail around the dam. Construction is expected to begin in 2012. The new access below the Glendale Dam will provide an alternative and official put-in access for this section instead of Access Point 14. Please call HVA at 413-394-9796 for updates.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 15 – Rising Pond, Housatonic (N42.25002; W73.36345)**

**Informal access (good, primitive); limited roadside parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ACCESS POINT 14 (GLENDALE ROAD) TO ACCESS POINT 15 (RISING POND)

Continue south on Glendale Road (Route 183) for 1.8 miles into the village of Housatonic. Turn left onto Park Street, go



Alger's Furnace, the site of the Stockbridge Iron Works, opened in 1853 by C.C. Alger. The water power was later leased to the Great Barrington Light Company as a hydro-electric power station. It provided power to the first high voltage alternating current transmission line in the world in 1894.

over the Housatonic and continue for 0.4 miles. Park on the road adjacent to the pumping station which is just after the Berkshire Mountain Bakery. Access is across the lawn below the pumping station.

**Monument Mills**  
The Housatonic Manufacturing Company began to harness the Housatonic's power as early as 1824. Monument Mills was founded in 1850 and became a major textile producer.

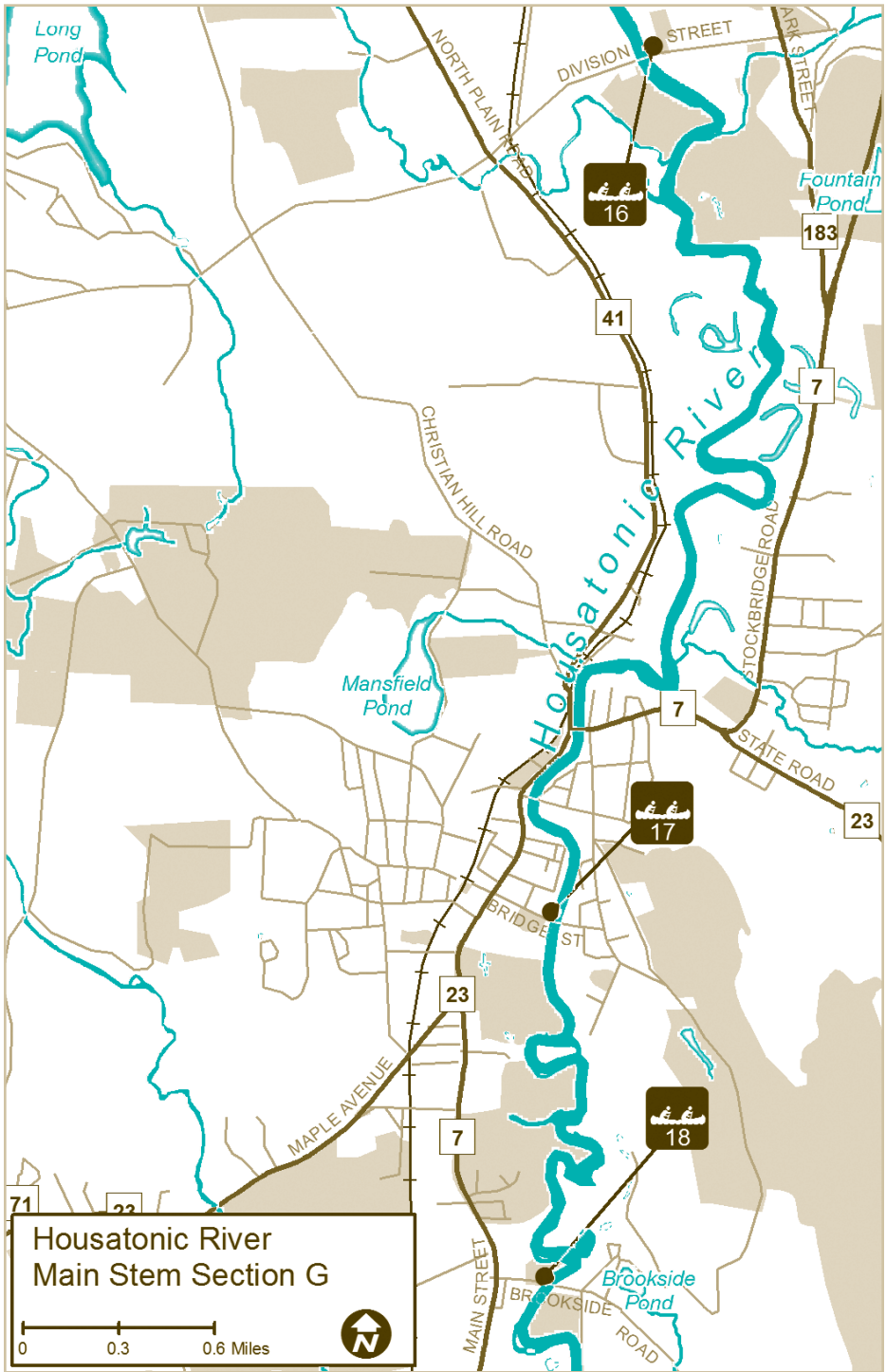
## DESCRIPTION

This very technical section should only be attempted by experienced paddlers. The first two miles are heavily laced with Class III rapids, particularly under the train trestle. A dangerous “thank-you-ma’am” (a rough spot characterized by a ridge or rapid change in elevation over a short distance) is located at an old mill structure.

Expect very rough water through the center of Housatonic as the river passes through the Monument Mills area. Beautiful views of Monument Mountain can be seen to the east. There is a breached dam near the Monument Mills complex in Housatonic. Beware of the underwater remains of an old wooden dam with spikes visible (dragon’s teeth). Once you pass under Glendale Road bridge (Route 183) the water becomes quiet and flat due to a dam 0.7 miles downstream. The take-out is 0.4 miles after this bridge. Follow the bank, river left as you enter Rising Pond and look for the lawn below the pumping station that provides an easy take-out.

**Rising Paper Company** is a Romanesque Revival factory building built in 1873 as the Cone Centennial Mill and left unfinished. It was purchased by D. B. Rising in 1896. Listed on the National Register, it is now owned by Hazen Paper Company of Holyoke, Massachusetts.





## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION G

Division Street, Great Barrington to Bridge Street, Great Barrington

**Distance:** 3.5 miles

**Time:** 2–3 hours

**Towns:** Great Barrington

**Tributaries:** Williams River

**USGS Maps:** Great Barrington

**Difficulty:** Flatwater, Class I, Class II, Class III at the breached dam

### PUT-IN

**Access Point 16 – Division Street, off Route 183, Great Barrington (N42.23199; W73.35406)**  
**Informal access (good, primitive); limited off-road parking (USGS gauging station).**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 183 AND ROUTE 7 IN GREAT BARRINGTON

Travel north on Route 183 (Old Stockbridge Road) for 0.4 miles. Turn left onto Division Street at Taft Farms and continue for 0.9 miles. Just before the bridge, turn right into a small parking area. Please be courteous and do not park to block access to the river. Both fishermen and paddlers use this access. Follow the path which may be overgrown to the river's edge under the bridge. Access is upstream of the bridge on the river's east side.

### TAKE-OUT

**Access Point 17 – Former Searles School, Bridge Street, Great Barrington (N42.19265; W73.35897)**  
**Official access (fair, primitive); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS POINT 17 (FORMER SEARLES SCHOOL) FROM ACCESS POINT 16 (DIVISION STREET)

Head west on Division Street (over the Housatonic) for 0.6 miles. Turn left onto Route 41 (North Plain Road) and continue south for 2.6 miles. Go straight at the traffic light onto Main Street, Great Barrington. (Route 41 merges with Routes 7/23). Continue on Main Street for 0.6 miles. Turn left



#### W.E.B. Du Bois

Founder of the modern civil rights movement, W.E.B. Du Bois was born in Great Barrington. His birth site is identified by an historical marker at the east end of Church Street. Another marker, a large granite stone, marks the W.E.B. Du Bois River Garden at the Housatonic River Walk and acknowledges Du Bois' lifelong love of the Housatonic River and Berkshire environment.

onto Bridge Street. Travel 0.2 miles. Turn left into the former Searles School parking area. Park along the wooden guardrail fence adjacent to the river. Great Barrington Land Conservancy holds an easement on this property. The Housatonic River Walk runs along this access site. Use the river access at your own risk.

### The route 7 & 23 bridge

known as Great Bridge, first spanned the Housatonic in 1737 and has been replaced at least five times, most recently in 1907.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is for the more experienced paddlers because of the Class II rapids before the take-out in Great Barrington. If experience allows, this is a worthwhile trip offering excellent views of the west side of Monument Mountain and the Taconic Range.

For most of this trip, expect to encounter a mix of quickwater and riffles interspersed with patches of quiet water. The stretch of predominantly Class II rapids occurs right after you pass under the routes 7 & 23 bridge, beginning with a low breached dam (Class III). Scout the rapids from the routes 7 & 23 bridge or from the Housatonic River Walk. There isn't any place to take out before this short stretch of rapids.

Just downstream of the Division Street launch site is the first set of many riffles. Then, just one-half mile into the trip, notice the clear outflow of Williams River, an excellent trout stream, merging with the Housatonic, river right.

Beyond this confluence is a marshy backwater, also river right. Look for painted turtles, wading birds and carp. As you continue, the river snakes around a couple of large gravel bars. Stop and enjoy views of Monument Mountain. Along this stretch, the river runs through grassy riparian plains, fields and shady forests. Be aware of occasional strainers blocking sections of the channel.

At 1.8 miles, you will pass under electric transmission lines. After another

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Housatonic  
River Walk  
RACHEL FLETCHER  
PHOTO

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### Visit Housatonic River Walk, a National Recreation Trail

Extraordinary volunteer effort removed 400 tons of debris from the river and its banks to develop this one-half mile greenway trail, Housatonic River Walk, that respects nature and reveals the river's beauty. Volunteer efforts continue to maintain and restore the trail. Visit [www.gbriverwalk.org](http://www.gbriverwalk.org).





### Main Street Lights

In 1886 William Stanley demonstrated the first complete system of high voltage alternating current transmission and used it to light a stretch of Main Street, Great Barrington. Stanley's transformer design became the prototype for all future transformers and his AC distribution system formed the basis of modern electrical power distribution.

two miles of meadows and forest, residential and commercial properties become more evident.

Once you pass under the routes 7 & 23 bridge, be prepared for turbulent conditions and standing waves which are partly a result of the breached dam. Far left is generally the safest passage over this dam. As you paddle behind Great Barrington's Main Street look up, river right, to see the Housatonic River Walk paralleling the river above you. The take-out is river right, a short way before the Bridge Street bridge. Take care exiting your canoe or kayak, because the steep bank can make this take-out challenging.

### ALTERNATIVE TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 18 – Brookside Road Access, Great Barrington (N42.17641; W73.35996)**  
**Official access (fair, primitive); off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF MAIN STREET AND STATE ROAD IN GREAT BARRINGTON

Head south on Main Street (routes 7 & 23) through the center of Great Barrington for 0.9 miles. Continue straight at the traffic lights on South Main Street (Route 7) for another 0.9 miles. Turn left onto

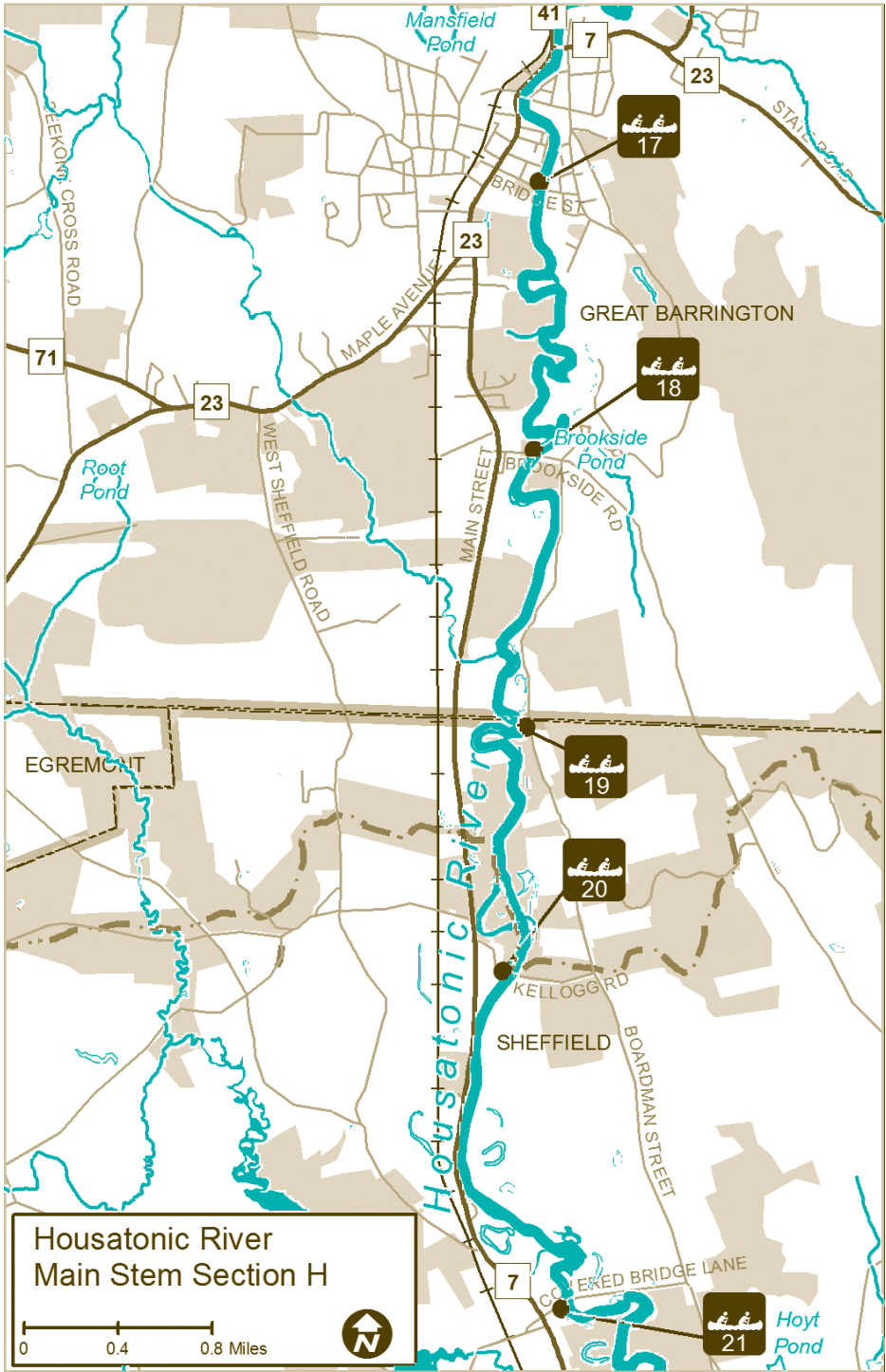
Brookside Road and continue for 0.2 miles. Turn left into the boat access parking area (just before the bridge). Follow the trail to the river – approximately 25 yards.

If you choose to use this take-out for this trip, it will extend the distance from the put-in on Division Street by two miles. This two-mile long reach is a lovely mix of quickwater, riffles and smooth runs of quiet water and passes through the remainder of downtown Great Barrington and then meanders through riparian woods, pastures and wetlands. Toward the end of this stretch the river passes behind the historic agricultural fairgrounds.



### Fairgrounds

The old fairgrounds is believed to be the site of Major Talcott's fight with the Indians in 1676 during the French and Indian War, the earliest historical reference to Berkshire County.



Housatonic River  
Main Stem Section H

0 0.4 0.8 Miles



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION H

Bridge Street, Great Barrington to Sheffield Covered Bridge, Sheffield

**Distance:** 6.6 miles

**Time:** 4 hours

**Towns:** Great Barrington and Sheffield

**Tributaries:** Green River, Hubbard Brook

**USGS Maps:** Great Barrington, Ashley Falls

**Difficulty:** Flatwater and Class I

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 17 – Former Searles School, Bridge Street, Great Barrington (N42.19265; W73.35897)**  
**Official access (fair, primitive); limited off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS

From the intersection of Route 41 and routes 7 & 23 in Great Barrington, head south on Main Street for 0.6 miles. Turn left onto Bridge Street. Travel 0.2 miles. Turn left into the former Searles School parking area. Park along the wooden guardrail adjacent to the river. Great Barrington Land Conservancy holds an easement on this property. The Housatonic River Walk runs along this access site. Use the river access at your own risk.

### Silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*),

named for the silvery underside of its leaves, a native maple, also known as River or Swamp maple, is common along rivers as it can withstand extensive flooding.



PHOTO BY  
DARKONE

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 21 – Sheffield Covered Bridge, Covered Bridge Lane, Sheffield (N42.19265; W73.3481)**  
**Official access (excellent, developed); off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS POINT 21 (SHEFFIELD COVERED BRIDGE) FROM ACCESS POINT 17 (BRIDGE STREET)

Turn right out of the parking area onto Bridge Street. Travel 0.2 miles. Turn left at the lights onto Route 7 south. Continue on Route 7 south for 5.1 miles towards Sheffield.

Look for Salisbury Bank on the left and take the next left onto Covered Bridge Lane – look for a Covered Bridge sign at this corner. Continue on Covered Bridge Lane for about 0.1 miles and just before the Covered Bridge, turn right into the parking area for the Covered Bridge Riverside Park. Natural Resources Damages Fund allowed this access to be improved in 2010.

### DESCRIPTION

This section meanders southward with Route 7 parallel to it much of the way. Quickwater and riffles and a few strainers greet you in the first couple of miles with the remainder of the stretch being flatwater and an occasional strainer to negotiate. Enjoy beautiful scenery and quiet backwaters with plenty of opportunities for wildlife sightings.

Paddle under the Bridge Street bridge and behind the main street of Great Barrington where Searles Castle (1887) is located, as well as a golf course and the former agricultural fairgrounds (abandoned in the late 1990s). Established in 1842, this once thriving annual fall fair drew upward of 10,000. Look up the hillside, river left, for evidence of the 1995 tornado that swept through the fairgrounds, river right, and up the slope across the river. Many buildings were damaged, but they and the 19-acre grounds were restored and reopened briefly in the late 1990s for several fair seasons.

Early town historical records show this floodplain area along the Housatonic River was inhabited by a branch of the Mahican Indians known as the Housatonic tribe. The Massachusetts Historical Commission considers it a significant archeological area. When the town of Sheffield was founded, they named the land Indiantown or the North Parish; those lands later became Great Barrington when it was incorporated.

At 1.8 miles, the Brookside Road access is river right, just before the Brookside Road bridge. Leaving Great Barrington behind, paddle through a variety of landscapes including wetlands, pastures and bottomland forest with silver maples predominating. Japanese knotweed, an invasive species, crowds the river banks in many parts of this section. This invasive species is very difficult to eradicate once established. A mile below the Brookside bridge, the Green River, a major tributary of the Housatonic River, enters river right. Paddle up into the tributary and enjoy the clear cold waters which are home to native brook trout. This makes a nice spot to enjoy lunch or a quick dip.



H. ZELL PHOTO

### Japanese Knotweed

has the appearance of bamboo and can grow to 10 feet high. Now recognized as an invasive species, it was brought to the U.S. in the 1800s from Asia for ornamental and erosion-control purposes. Its growth crowds out native plant species and affects the habitat of river inhabitants. Just a piece of the plant carried and deposited downriver can establish a new patch of knotweed.

Look for white blazes, river right, as you approach the next bridge, Kellogg Road bridge. The white blazes mark the Appalachian Trail (AT), a National Scenic Trail as it travels northward from Springer Mountain in Georgia to the top of Mt. Katahdin in Maine – 2,180 miles. The AT follows the Housatonic River for about one-half mile before crossing the Kellogg Road bridge. As you continue to paddle southward, enjoy views of the Taconic Range including Mount Everett and Mount Riga in the west and southwest.

At the Kellogg Road bridge, two miles remain to the take-out at the Covered Bridge. In the final approach, the river reaches its closest point to Route 7 and continues to follow it for about three-quarters of a mile.

Paddle under the Covered Bridge and head, river right, to the take-out with granite steps leading up to the parking area. This access is now part of Sheffield's Covered Bridge Riverside Park which is managed by a committee of town volunteers.

### ADDITIONAL ACCESS POINTS



**Access Point 18 – Brookside Road, Great Barrington (N42.17641; W73.35996)**

**Official boat access (fair, primitive); off-road parking.**

**Access Point 19 – At press time, Robbs Landing was being discussed as another river access site. It is not currently being used but may be in the future.**



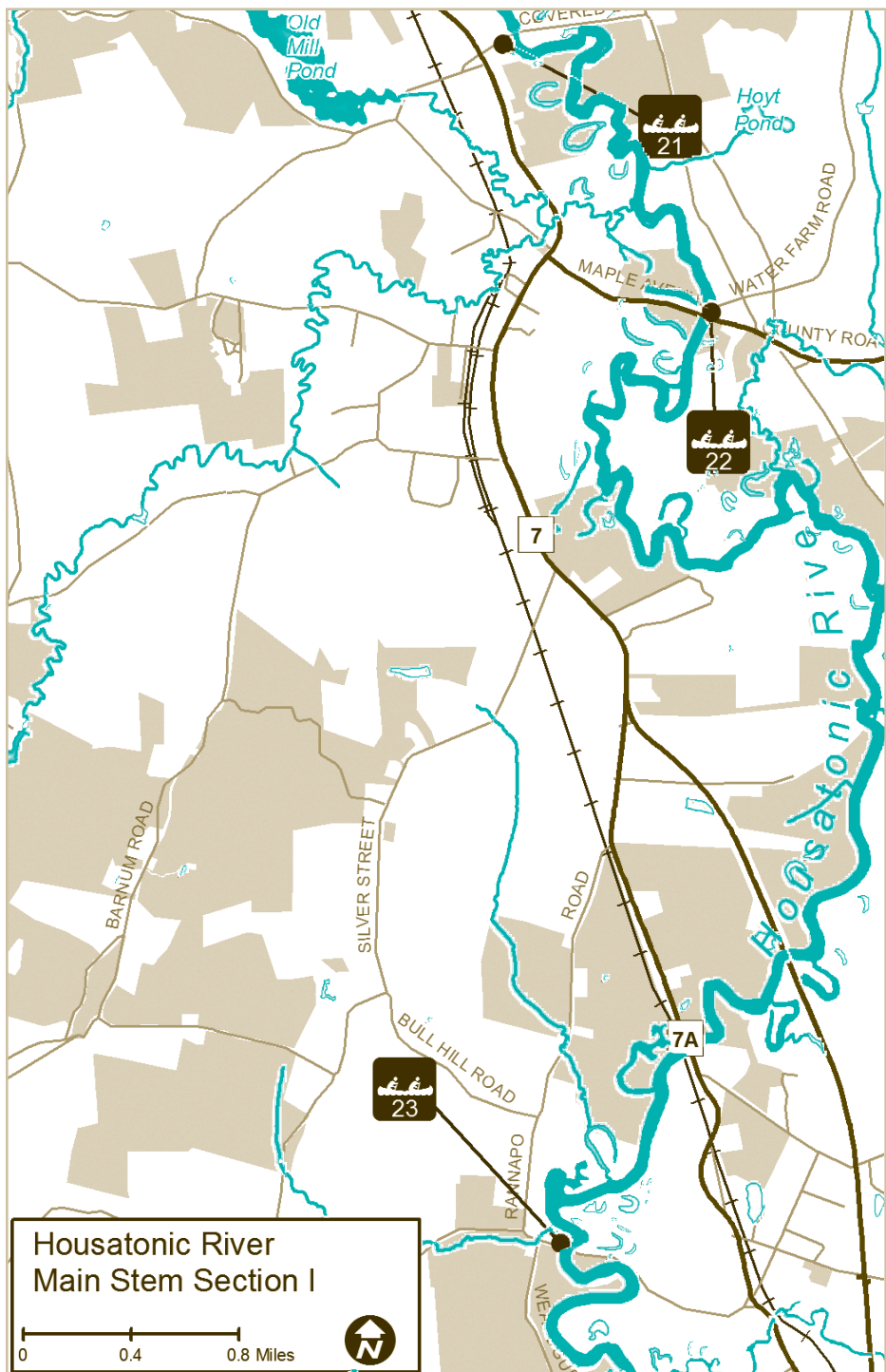
### The Sheffield Covered Bridge (1999)

The original bridge built in 1837 was destroyed by fire in 1994. Rebuilt in 1999, the bridge is a close reproduction of the historic original. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 41 WITH ROUTES 7 & 23 IN GREAT BARRINGTON

Head south on Main Street (routes 7 & 23 south) for 1.9 miles. Turn left onto Brookside Road and continue for 0.2 miles. Turn left into the boat access parking area (just before the bridge). Follow the trail to the river – approximately 25 yards. This access is managed by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.





Housatonic River  
Main Stem Section I

0 0.4 0.8 Miles



## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION I

Sheffield Covered Bridge, Sheffield to  
Rannapo Road, Ashley Falls

**Distance:** 9.5 miles

**Time:** 4–5 hours

**Towns:** Sheffield, Ashley Falls

**Tributaries:** Hubbard and Schenob brooks, Ironwork Brook

**USGS Maps:** Ashley Falls

**Difficulty:** Flatwater

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 21 – Sheffield Covered Bridge, Covered Bridge Lane, Sheffield (N42.12351; W73.35481)**

**Official access (developed, excellent);  
off-road parking for a few vehicles.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM SHEFFIELD TOWN CENTER

Travel approximately one mile north on Route 7. Turn right onto Covered Bridge Lane (look for Covered Bridge sign and Salisbury Bank at intersection). Travel 0.1 miles along Covered Bridge Lane. Turn right before the covered bridge into the Covered Bridge Riverside Park area. Access is on the west bank of the river downstream of the Covered Bridge. The access site at the Covered Bridge was improved in 2010 with Natural Resource Damages Funds. The improved access, which consists of several wide granite steps and large rocks, provides good footing, greatly facilitating launching.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 23 – Rannapo Road, Ashley Falls (N42.05869; W73.34895)**

**Informal access (good, primitive);  
limited road-side parking**

### Who made those holes in the riverbank?

Most of the holes are probably made by colonies of bank swallows. The belted kingfisher also nests in burrows that they dig into sandy banks with fused toes that act like a shovel. The male bank swallow will use his feet, wings and conical bill to dig a burrow into the bank and create a nest chamber. The female bank swallow constructs the nest using straw, grasses, leaves and rootlets.

### DIRECTIONS FROM ACCESS POINT 21 (COVERED BRIDGE) TO ACCESS POINT 23 (RANNAPO ROAD)

At the intersection of Covered Bridge Lane and Route 7, take a left onto Route 7 and head south for 2.6 miles. Take the right fork onto Route 7A (Ashley Falls Road). Continue

on Route 7A for 0.6 miles. Take a right onto Rannapo Road and continue for about two miles (Note: Weatogue Road on your right). To park, pull off onto the side of the road, just after Weatogue Road. Access is down a steep path and is a small stream channel that joins the Housatonic River.

## DESCRIPTION

This section begins at the historic Sheffield Covered Bridge and the town riverside park, developed by the Sheffield Land Trust. Through Sheffield the Housatonic River meanders to the Connecticut border with a placid current. Route 7 continues alongside the river, river right, and the traffic noise grows and fades throughout this stretch. Along this section you will travel through farmland and riparian forest where silver maples dominate. Other trees are box-elder, cottonwood, ash and basswood. Look also for some stately sycamores with bark that resembles camouflage.

Periodically, you will pass a few houses or a farm. As you paddle south, enjoy beautiful views of Mount Everett to the southwest. This section offers excellent birding and good scenery. On the gravel bars that form on the inside section of the bends, notice sandpipers and plovers. On the steeper outside bends, look for holes in the banks. These were made by bank swallows. You may see otter, muskrat, beaver and deer. Raptors in the area include bald eagle, red tailed hawk, northern harrier, and turkey vultures. Water birds are also common and include great blue heron, green winged teal, mallards and Canada geese.

At 1.7 miles the combined flows of the Schenob and Hubbard brooks enter river right. The Schenob Brook flows from Twin Lakes in Lakeville, Connecticut, through many miles of fragile wetland habitat on its way to the Housatonic. Much of the Schenob Brook Drainage Basin is part of the Schenob Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

At 2.3 miles, pass under the Maple Street bridge. Right before the bridge is an informal take-out, river left, (Access Point 19). When you have gone almost three miles, you will encounter an oxbow that is forming and you can paddle back into the ponded water.

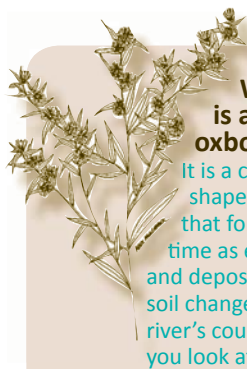
The Route 7 bridge is 7.5 miles and the Route 7A bridge almost one mile later – this is the final bridge you pass under before the take-out at Rannapo Road. Just one more mile to go and the Rannapo Road take-out is river right. As you begin to approach the bridge, notice the lawn of a private residence, river right, with

### Colonel John Ashley House

The historic Colonel John Ashley House (1735) was moved in 1931 about a one-quarter mile west from its original site along the river. Today the house is operated as a museum by The Trustees of Reservations and is listed on the National Register. Visit [www.thetrustees.org](http://www.thetrustees.org)



Screech Owl  
SCOTT FORESMAN  
ILLUSTRATION



### What is an oxbow?

It is a crescent-shaped lake that forms over time as erosion and deposition of soil changes the river's course. If you look at aerial

views of the Housatonic River you will see countless oxbows along its length.

a stately, yellow house up above the river. This is the historic home of General John Ashley (1766). The son of Colonel Ashley and a Major General of the State Militia, General John Ashley commanded the federal troops at the last battle of Shay's Rebellion. Immediately before the Rannapo Road bridge, look for a small channel, river right. Paddle up the channel to a level take-out. A small pathway leads up to the road.

### ALTERNATIVE ACCESS POINTS



**Access Point 22 – Maple Ave/Water Farm Road, Sheffield (N42.10949; W73.33929)**

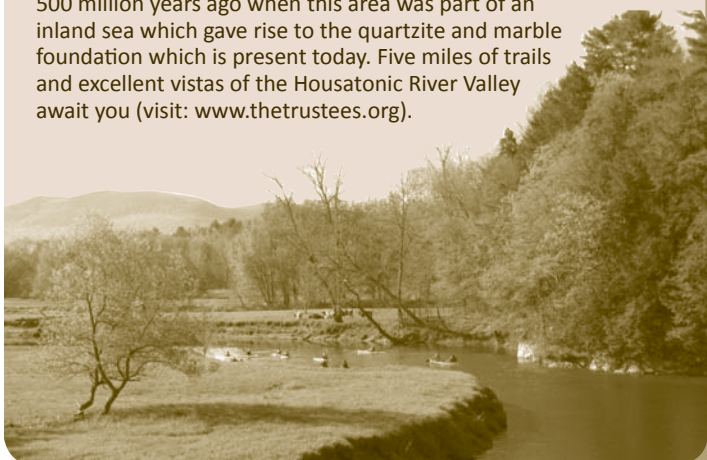
**Informal access (fair, primitive); limited road-side parking.**

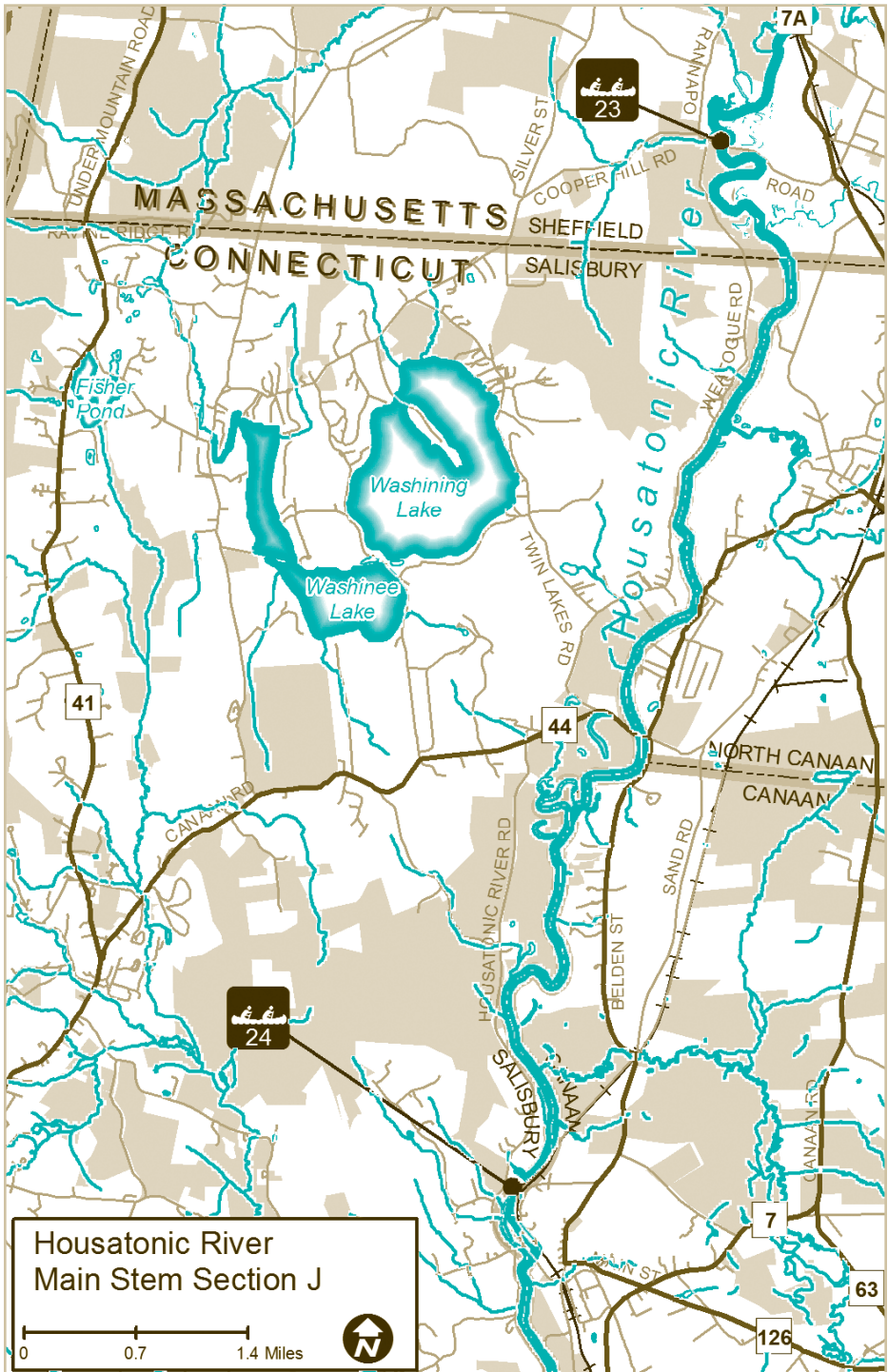
### DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS POINT 22 (MAPLE AVE/ WATER FARM RD) FROM ACCESS POINT 21 (COVERED BRIDGE)

Travel 0.1 miles west on Covered Bridge Lane to Route 7. Take a left onto Route 7 and head south for 0.8 miles. Take a left onto Maple Avenue. Continue for 0.7 miles. Turn left onto Water Farm Road just after the bridge crosses the Housatonic River. Almost immediately after turning onto Water Farm Road, there is a pull-off area on the left hand side for parking. Access is upstream of the bridge on the river's east side. Path to the river is about 20 yards and may be overgrown. Beware of poison ivy.

### Bartholomew's Cobble


began as coral reefs, shells, and sand as many as 500 million years ago when this area was part of an inland sea which gave rise to the quartzite and marble foundation which is present today. Five miles of trails and excellent vistas of the Housatonic River Valley await you (visit: [www.thetrustees.org](http://www.thetrustees.org)).





Housatonic River  
Main Stem Section J

0 0.7 1.4 Miles





## HOUSATONIC RIVER SECTION J

Rannapo Road, Ashley Falls, Mass. to the Great Falls, Falls Village, Conn.

**Distance:** 8.6 miles

**Time:** 4–5 hours

**Towns:** Ashley Falls, Mass.

**Tributaries:** Konkapot, Blackberry, and Hollenbeck brooks

**USGS Maps:** Ashley Falls, South Canaan

**Difficulty:** Flatwater, Class II rapids at the breached Canaan dam, portage trail available.

### PUT-IN



**Access Point 23 – Rannapo Road, Ashley Falls, Mass.**  
(N42.05869; W73.34895)

**Informal Access (good, primitive); limited road-side parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM THE NORTHERN INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 7 AND ROUTE 7A (ASHLEY FALLS ROAD) IN MASSACHUSETTS

Travel south on Route 7A for 3.2 miles towards Ashley Falls. Take a right onto Rannapo Road and continue for about two miles. Go past Weatogue Road on your right. Just after Weatogue Road, there is a pull-off on the left side of the road for parking. The access is down a steep path which levels out. Launch into the small stream channel.

### TAKE-OUT



**Access Point 24 – Great Falls Dam, Salisbury, Conn. (N41.96384; W73.37174)**  
**Official access (primitive, excellent); off-road parking.**

### DIRECTIONS FROM ACCESS POINT 23 (RANNAPO ROAD) TO ACCESS POINT 24 (GREAT FALLS DAM)

Head west on Rannapo Road for about 500 feet toward Weatogue Road. Take a left onto Weatogue Road. Follow Weatogue Road for 3.5 miles. At the intersection of Twin Lakes Road and Weatogue Road, bear left onto Twin Lakes Road and continue on Twin Lakes Road for 0.8 miles until the



### Bald Eagles

Don't be surprised to spot a bald eagle! Once federally listed as endangered, bald eagles were removed from the federal endangered species list in 2007. In Massachusetts, bald eagles remain a state-listed endangered species and in Connecticut they are listed as threatened.

Bald Eagle  
GARY ROTHSTEIN PHOTO

intersection with Route 44. Take a sharp right onto US 44 W/ Canaan Road and continue on Route 44 W for 0.5 miles. Take the first left onto Housatonic River Road. Follow Housatonic River Road for three miles. Turn left into the gated parking area upstream of the dam at Great Falls. The access is managed by FirstLight Power Resources. At this access, enjoy riverside trails including an interpretive trail, views of Great Falls and picnic area.

## DESCRIPTION

In this section the Housatonic is predominantly flatwater flowing in wide meandering bends. After launching, paddle down the channel and, upon entering the Housatonic River, turn right to continue downstream under the Rannapo Road Bridge. At 3.4 miles downstream you will encounter a dam, river left, with a short stretch of rapids, river right. A short portage will safely take you around the dam. For some this is considered the most beautiful stretch of the Housatonic. Initially, river left, and later on both sides, cow pastures extend into the floodplain.

On river right, paddle past the floodplain forest and ledges of Bartholomew's Cobble, a property of The Trustees of Reservations. You may even see a hiker on the trails that follow the river. The alkaline (sweet) soils and marble bedrock of the Cobble support a great diversity of flora – especially spring wildflowers and ferns (among the most diverse in North America – making this a National Natural Landmark).

At 1.3 miles, Konkapot River enters river left. Just downstream of this confluence, you paddle into Connecticut. The high banks on the inside of the meanders show evidence of bank swallow nest entrances.

As you enter Connecticut, you may see a small plane fly overhead. Canaan Airport is adjacent to the river, river left.


As you proceed downstream, river left becomes more forested. At 2.4 miles the Blackberry River enters river left and soon after the confluence you will paddle past an old railroad bridge abutment in the middle of the river. Cars pass along Weatogue Road which parallels the river for more than a half mile.

As the river moves away from Weatogue Road, you approach an old dam, river left, and rapids that run river right around an island. The portage around the

### The Salisbury Association Land Trust

works to protect important places in and around Salisbury. With several other conservation partners, including HVA, more than five linear miles of riverfront have been protected.





dam is a small trail, about two-hundred feet long, river left, a few hundred yards upstream of the dam. If there is a wooden dock, skip the temptation to use it! It is not very stable and is marked private. Access to the trail behind the dock is a steep and sandy bank.

At the dam, you are about five miles from Great Falls. As you continue to paddle below the dam, the forested edge, river left, gives way to houses. At about five miles into your trip (2.5 hours) you will pass under Dutcher's Bridge (Route 44).

Hollenbeck River, an excellent cold water trout stream, enters river left. You are just less than one mile north of the take-out at Great Falls. The take-out is river right onto a grassy area and multiple areas are possible. Be aware of the dam and falls below. This recreational area and access, as well as the hydroelectric station is owned and managed by FirstLight Power Resources ([www.firstlightpower.com](http://www.firstlightpower.com)).

### **Ames Iron Works**

After taking out, consider taking a short, interpretive walk along the river to learn about Ames Iron Works (established 1832) which once existed at this site and Amesville (now Falls Village), a village which grew across the river in response to the ironworks.



### **Dutcher's Bridge**

is the local name for the Housatonic River crossing where Route 44 passes between North Canaan and Salisbury, Conn. The Dutcher family settled in the Salisbury Area from New York in the 1720s, decades before the Town was incorporated.

This Paddle Guide and the individual section maps are available at [www.hvatoday.org/BerkshirePaddleGuide.htm](http://www.hvatoday.org/BerkshirePaddleGuide.htm).

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## FEDERAL, STATE, AND CITY AGENCIES

Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game – Office of Fishing and Boating Access, 617-727-1843, <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/pab/index.htm>

City of Pittsfield, Parks and Recreation Department, 413-499-9344, [http://www.pittsfield-ma.org/visitors/parks\\_and\\_recreation.htm](http://www.pittsfield-ma.org/visitors/parks_and_recreation.htm)

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/>, Western District Office: 413-684-1646

Housatonic River Restoration – Natural Resource Damages Trustees, Massachusetts Sub Council, 617-626-1000, <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/>

Environmental Protection Agency – Restoration of the Housatonic River, [www.epa.gov/region01/ge](http://www.epa.gov/region01/ge), contact Jim Murphy, Community Involvement Coordinator, [murphy.jim@epa.gov](mailto:murphy.jim@epa.gov), 617-918-1028

## COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Great Barrington Land Conservancy, [www.greatbarringtonlandconservancy.org](http://www.greatbarringtonlandconservancy.org)

Lee Land Trust, 413-243-2097

Laurel Hill Association, [www.laurelhillassociation.org](http://www.laurelhillassociation.org)

Sheffield Land Trust, [www.sheffieldland.org](http://www.sheffieldland.org)

Stockbridge Land Trust, 413-298-0061

## PARTNERS PROTECTING THE HOUSATONIC RIVER

Berkshire Natural Resource Council, [www.bnrc.net](http://www.bnrc.net)

Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT), [www.thebeatnews.org](http://www.thebeatnews.org)

Housatonic River Walk, [www.gbriverwalk.org](http://www.gbriverwalk.org)

Housatonic River Initiative, <http://housatonic-river.com>

Massachusetts Audubon Society, [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org)

The Nature Conservancy, [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

The Trustees of Reservations, [www.thetrustees.org](http://www.thetrustees.org)

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area,

[www.upperhousatonicheritage.org](http://www.upperhousatonicheritage.org)

Taconic Chapter, Trout Unlimited, [www.ma-ri-tu-council.org](http://www.ma-ri-tu-council.org)

## ABOUT THE HOUSATONIC VALLEY ASSOCIATION

HVA, a tri-state nonprofit citizen's environmental group founded in 1941, works to conserve the natural character and environmental health in the 83 communities of the 2,000-square-mile Housatonic River watershed from its source in the Pittsfield, Massachusetts area to Long Island Sound by protecting and restoring land and water for this and future generations. HVA monitors water quality, adds sections to the Housatonic RiverBelt Greenway linking preserved space along the river corridor with hiking and biking trails, provides hands-on education to thousands of students, uses computer mapping to help towns measure the impact and benefits of land use and development, and works to combat climate change by promoting low impact development. HVA also sponsors the Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative in protecting more land across northwest Connecticut.



### Keep in touch

Always let someone know the itinerary of your paddle trip.

Take a cell phone for emergency use but refrain from social use of the phone on the river to respect the solitude of others.



## OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS



**SUN EXPOSURE PROTECTION** – Exposure to the sun causes wrinkles and age spots and is the number one cause of skin cancer. Avoid direct exposure to the sun between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when the ultraviolet (UV) rays are most intense. Also be sure to drink lots of water. **USE SUNSCREEN** with SPF 30 and apply on clean, dry skin about 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply throughout the day even if overcast – 80 per cent of UV rays are still present on cloudy days. **COVER YOUR BODY** with long sleeves and pants in light colors. Wear a hat to protect the neck and cheeks or use an umbrella. **USE SUNGLASSES** to protect eyes from UV rays.

**CHECK FOR TICKS** – When spending time in wooded or grassy areas, wear long sleeved shirts, pants, socks and shoes. Check yourself and pets all over for ticks immediately afterwards. Deer ticks are small and may look like a freckle or speck of dirt. **REMOVE TICKS IMMEDIATELY** with tweezers or special tools – available at stores that sell outdoor/camping supplies – to carefully extract the tick. Try to get the whole tick without squeezing out the blood that may be infected with harmful bacteria. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the deer tick (black-legged tick species) can transmit Lyme disease. **LYME DISEASE SYMPTOMS** may not appear for months after the tick bite. Common symptoms are joint aches, fever and general malaise. Some people experience the notorious bulls-eye rash, but this does not always occur.



Deer Tick  
STUART MEEKER PHOTO

**WATCH OUT FOR POISON IVY** – Avoid poison ivy, normally found in wooded areas, exposed rocky areas and open fields. It has clusters of three leaves, alternate leaf arrangement and no thorns. Leaf color ranges from light green (young leaves) to dark green (mature leaves), turning bright red in fall; some sources say leaves are reddish when expanding, turn green through maturity, then back to red, orange, or yellow in the fall. The mature leaves are somewhat shiny. Each leaf has a few or no teeth along its edge, and the leaf surface is smooth. Poison ivy can cause severe itching that develops into reddish colored inflammation or non-colored bumps and then blistering. Treat the lesions with Calamine lotion.

See page 45 for information on stinging nettle.



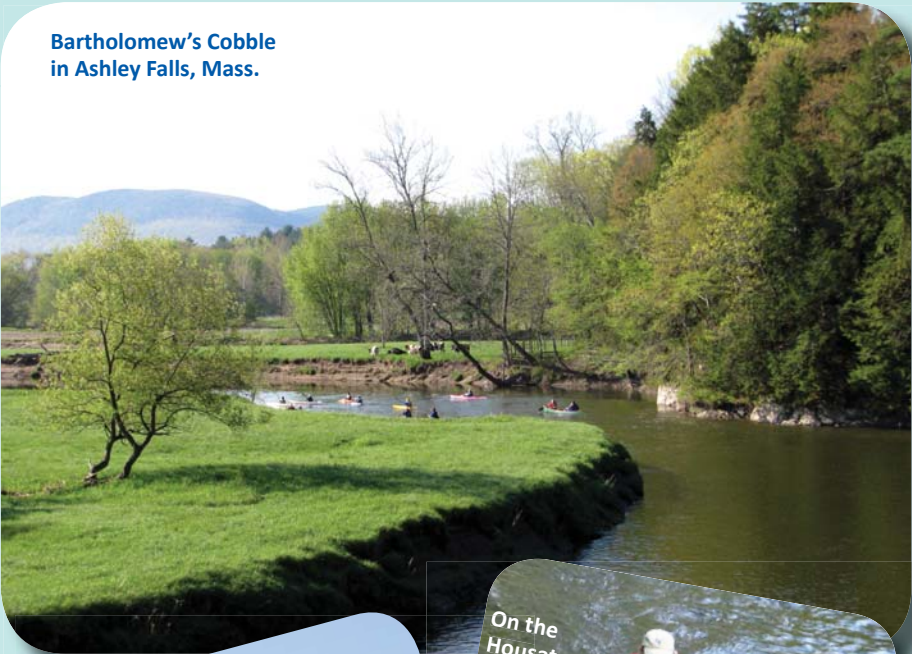
Poison Ivy  
STILFELER PHOTO

**FIRST AID KIT** – Be familiar with the contents of your kit and how to use it.

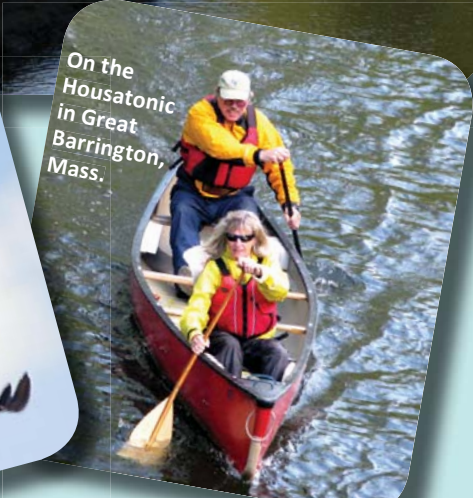
**PROPER FOOTWEAR** – Wear something that can get wet and secures to your foot in case you need to get out of the boat, especially at beaver dams.



**Bartholomew's Cobble  
in Ashley Falls, Mass.**



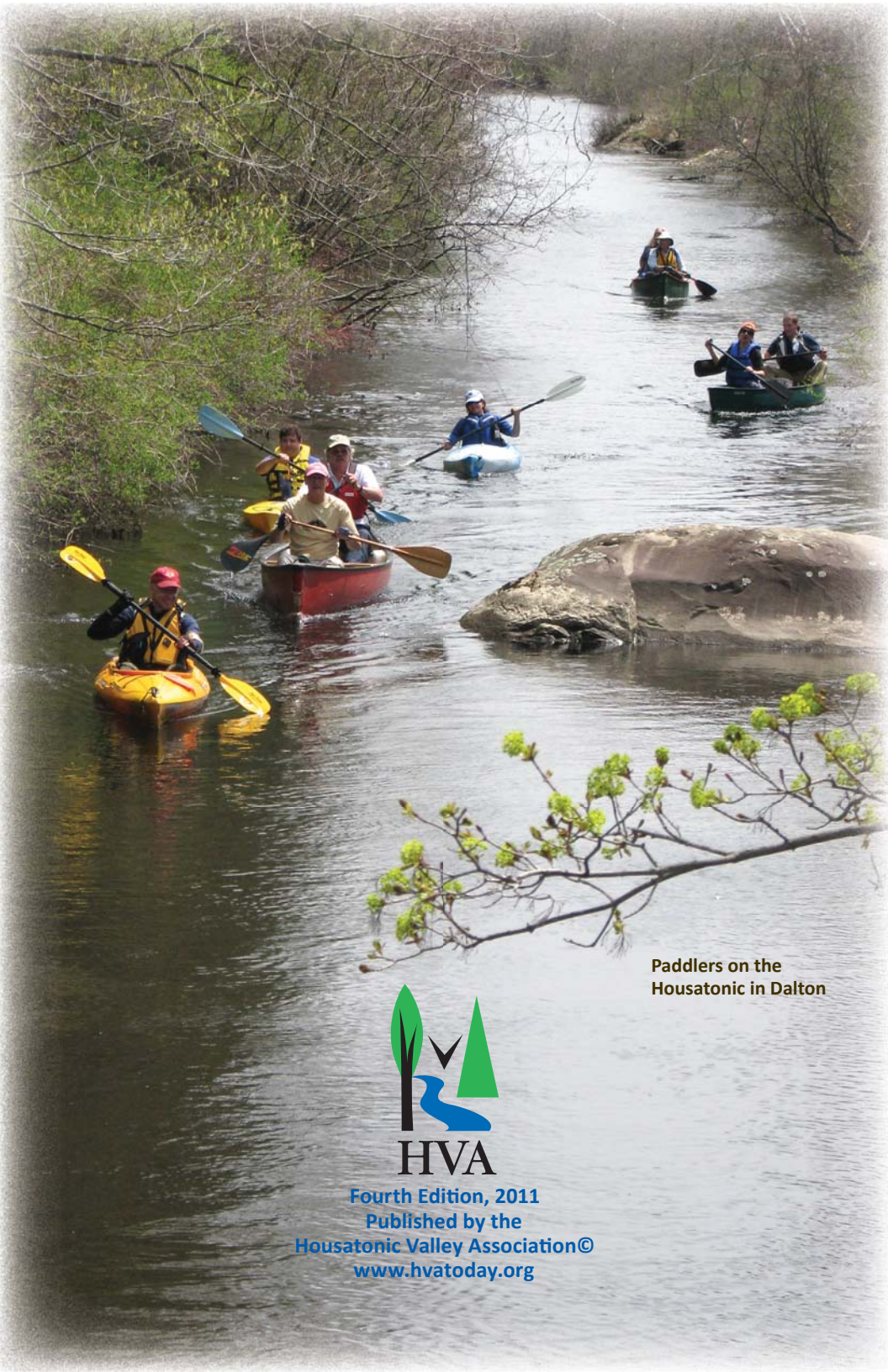
**On the  
Housatonic  
in Great  
Barrington,  
Mass.**



**Bald Eagle**  
GARY RÖTHSTEIN PHOTO



**Wildlife Management Area  
in the Berkshires**



Paddlers on the  
Housatonic in Dalton



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