

BERKSHIRE WOODS AND WATERS

Special events planned for HVA's 75th anniversary

Earlier this year, I mentioned in this column that there were some important anniversaries being celebrated this year.



Gene Chague

Woods
+ Water

The Division of Fish & Wildlife is celebrating its 150th and the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery is celebrating its 100th. There will be more to come on them in future columns.

Well, there is another big celebration being celebrated this year, and that is the Housatonic Valley Association's (HVA) 75th anniversary.

HVA is dedicated to protecting the entire Housatonic River Watershed, which includes 2,000 square miles of land, stretching from Western Massachusetts through Western Connecticut and Eastern New York to Long Island Sound.

HVA monitors water quality throughout the watershed, conducts educational programs, works to link preserved space with the Housatonic River Greenway of hiking and biking trails and uses computer mapping to help towns measure the impact and benefits of land use

and development. HVA's offices are in Cornwall Bridge, Conn., South Lee, Mass. and Wassaic, N.Y.

In celebration, HVA is organizing a 10-day, 149-mile, Source to Sound Housatonic River adventure, starting at Muddy Pond in Washington, Mass. on Earth Day, which is Friday, April 22.

It will end at Stratford Point in the Long Island Sound on Sunday, May 1. In our area, paddlers will maneuver beaver ponds in the Housatonic Flats, challenging rapids below the Glendale Dam, meandering flood plains of Sheffield and continue on into Connecticut.

The paddlers are led by three expert paddlers: David Sinish, an experienced kayak/canoe instructor, Dennis Regan, HVA's Berkshire Director and Schuyler Thomson, owner of Thomson Canoe Works in Norfolk, Conn. Many partner organizations from the surrounding watershed will join HVA for this historic river adventure.

On day two, Saturday, April 23 in Pittsfield, HVA and Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) will host the first Earth Day River Festival at the Fred Garner Park starting at 11 a.m. with a park cleanup. Gloves and

bags will be provided. Several events, including exploring a restored vernal pool, learning about river bottom critters, and much more will take place. Food will be available to purchase or participants may bring a picnic lunch.

On day three, Sunday, April 24 from 1 to 3 p.m., a river festival will take place at the Lee Athletic Field at Housatonic Street featuring kid-friendly, river-oriented activities (on land) that include fly fishing demonstrations (I hope some volunteer fly fishers help me with this. I don't want to pass on my bad fly casting habits).

HVA's 75th Anniversary Gala will be on Thursday, April 28 at 6:30 p.m. at Bull's Bridge Inn, 333 Kent Road, Rte 7, Kent, Conn. It will feature dinner and entertainment.

Trip sponsors include the NRD Trustees, Connecticut DEEP, Massachusetts EOEEA, USFWS, NOAA, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Berkshire Bank Foundation, Kimberly Clark and many others.

For more information, go to hvatoday.org, call 860-672-6678 or email conn@hvatoday.org.