The Housatonic River...
Housatonic River in Massachusetts to Kent, Connecticut

Recreational Opportunities

There are more than 70,000 acres of public recreation land in the watershed offering opportunities for boating, fishing, hiking, cycling, wildlife viewing, and other activities. Many trail systems are maintained by state and local agencies.

FISHING

Housatonic River is a popular destination for freshwater fishing. The river is known for its excellent smallmouth bass fishing, but also supports other species such as rainbow trout and brown trout. Fishing is available all year round, with the best fishing conditions varying by season. The river is also popular for fly fishing, with many anglers participating in the annual fly fishing tournaments held along the river.

SWIMMING

The Housatonic River is a popular destination for swimming and other water activities. In many places along the river, the water is warm and safe for swimming. However, it is important to note that the river can be unpredictable, and swimmers should exercise caution and be aware of the potential for strong currents, rip tides, and other hazards.

HIKING

The Housatonic River is a popular destination for hiking, with many trail systems available throughout the watershed. Many of these trails offer opportunities for birdwatching, nature study, and other outdoor activities. The best places to hike along the river are the state parks and wildlife management areas, as well as the many conservation areas located along the river.

BOATING

The Housatonic River is a popular destination for boating, with many launch sites available throughout the watershed. Boating is a popular activity along the river, and there are many opportunities for recreational boating, including canoeing, kayaking, and paddleboarding.

In general, the Housatonic River is considered clean enough for sport fishing and swimming. However, there are some areas where pollution may affect the water quality, and it is important for visitors to be aware of the potential for pollution.

Invasive Species in the Housatonic Watershed

Several invasive species have been identified in the watershed, including the round goby, zebra mussel, and phragmites. These species can have significant impacts on the ecosystem and can jeopardize the health of the river. It is important for visitors to be aware of the potential for invasive species and to follow best practices to help prevent their spread.

What is Polluted Runoff?

Polluted runoff comes from many sources, such as rain, street runoff, and agricultural runoff. Polluted runoff can have a significant impact on water quality, and it is important for visitors to be aware of the potential for pollution and to take steps to help prevent it.

In summary, the Housatonic River is a popular destination for recreation, and there are many opportunities for visitors to enjoy the river and its surrounding areas. However, it is important to be aware of the potential for pollution and to follow best practices to help protect the river and its ecosystem.

You can protect your river with a three-zone buffer system.

Streamside

From the water to the top of the bank. Protects the bank and offers habitat. The best buffer is a natural forest but single shrubs or trees can also be effective. A good guide to water quality is the color of the bank. A brownish color is a good indicator. A white color indicates that the water is clean.

Middle Zone

From the top of the bank to 25 feet. Protects the stream, offers water quality, and provides habitat. A good guide to water quality is the amount of algae. A brown color is indicative of nutrient-rich water, while a green color is indicative of clean water.

Outer Zone

Includes the yard, garden, or area between your home and the rest of the buffer. Faxes weeds, pays gardens, composts yard waste, and provides ornamental plantings.

PROTECTED PLACES

Massachusetts: Wildlife Management Areas

- Housatonic River (designated in 2009; 12,000 acres)
- Great Barrington (designated in 2009; 500 acres)
- Lee (designated in 2009; 300 acres)
- South Deerfield (designated in 2009; 1,500 acres)
- Pittsfield (designated in 2009; 1,500 acres)
- New Marlborough (designated in 2009; 1,500 acres)
- Adams (designated in 2009; 1,500 acres)

Connecticut: Wildlife Management Areas

- Connecticut River in Vermont and New Hampshire (designated in 1998; 2,500 acres)
- Connecticut River in Massachusetts (designated in 1998; 2,500 acres)

Invasive Species

Invasive species are a major concern in the Housatonic River watershed. They can have negative impacts on the ecosystem and can jeopardize the health of the river. It is important for visitors to be aware of the potential for invasive species and to follow best practices to help prevent their spread.

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

Please take good care before leaving your boat

Keep your equipment on land until you are ready to return home.

- Clean all plants and animals out of your boat and trailer before launching.
- Disassemble your gear and clean it before launching.
- Rinse your equipment and storage containers.
- Inspect all equipment for invasive species before launching.

Check out this website for more information on invasive species and best practices for preventing their spread.

Additional Resources

- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- Massachusetts Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Invasive Species:

- Zebra mussel (Dreissena polymorpha)
- Phragmites (Common reed)
- Round goby (Neogobius melanostomus)