



HOUSATONIC RIVER WALK

Why Do We Need to Raise \$40,000 Each Year?

Housatonic River Walk is a riverside greenway in the downtown center of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, along what was south Berkshire County's most severely abused riverbank. After more than a century of neglect, River Walk has restored the Housatonic River to the fabric of the community by providing a laboratory to learn about natural resource protection and environmental stewardship. Since 1988, 3000 community volunteers have reclaimed a riverbank once abandoned to the river's PCB contamination and general neglect. They have recreated native habitat, secured public access, removed 400+ tons of debris, and provided a half-mile of artfully crafted riverside walking trail and canoe access, for more than 12,000 visitors each year. There is much more to do.

Our budgetary needs for the 2017 season are typical. As always, these costs are offset more than 50% by in-kind volunteer labor and services.

1. **Riparian habitat restoration** (2.63 acres). Native plants are propagated each year from seeds, cuttings, and divisions from River Walk and planted along the riverbank and within the Du Bois rain garden/river park. Simultaneously, riverbanks are weeded for exotic invasives such as garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, bittersweet, grapevine, Norway maple seedlings, and multiflora rose. More than 150 different native species have been planted along the River Walk. In time, the native habitat will be self-sustaining.

Cost: \$9,205 (plus \$5,057 in kind) for 500 native plantings and exotic invasive weeding

2. **Riverbank stabilization.** River Walk's downstream trail suffers severe scouring and erosion. Downslope riverbank reinforcement at vulnerable locations has proven effective against the worst ravages of recent storm events and flooding. Additional sections are required to prevent the trail from eroding and falling into the river. The choice to reinforce with bio-logs and native vegetation enhances riparian habitat development.

Cost: \$6,619 (plus \$3,100 in kind) to manage 625 linear feet, create a new 130' section, and 800 native plantings

3. **Trail improvements and maintenance.** River Walk's popular half-mile trail of hand-crafted stone cribbing and permeable stone dust surfaces, along with its W.E.B. Du Bois and William Stanley interpretive signage, stone seating areas, and other trail amenities require ongoing improvement, repair and weekly custodial attention. River bottom cleanups, memorial bench and wattle fence refurbish planned for 2017.

Cost: \$8,350 (plus \$4,070 in kind) for weekly maintenance and special projects

4. **Environmental education.** Through a partnership with Greenagers, our local youth organization that fosters service and stewardship, River Walk provides a laboratory for teenagers and young adults to learn about natural resource protection and acquire professional training in horticulture and environmental stewardship. Greenagers now serve as River Walk’s community stewards, continuing its ongoing native habitat reclamation, bio-engineered erosion mitigation, and trailway development. Working alongside professionals, they are responsible for the day to day care and maintenance of the site, for trail improvements, and for reclamation activities necessary to restore River Walk’s once devastated and abused riverbanks to native conditions—planting native flora, controlling invasive species, and mitigating erosion through organic methods of stabilization.

Educational outreach activities include volunteer service days, tours, and PowerPoint presentations. Greenagers and other young people receive 4+ Middle School Kinetic Learning programs, 1 Greenagers Orientation, riverbottom cleanup, as well as 24 hours of hands-on training in the field. Three apprentices selected from regional high schools train and work on site weekly from Spring through Fall. Teams of Greenagers, both paid and volunteer, accomplish special projects. Special volunteer workdays are held for the general public and student groups. Ten+ special workdays and a dozen or more tours and lectures are planned for 2017.

Cost: \$7842 (plus \$8744 in kind) to staff various programs

5. **Project administration, outreach, and general services** include accounting, insurance, project oversight, trash removal, pet waste management, printing, postage, website, newsletters, photo-documentation, etc.

Cost: \$5,130 (plus \$9,423 in kind) for general services and outreach

Total: \$37,146 + \$30,394 in kind service

RIVER WALK 2017 Budget	Contracted	Greenagers	Materials Services	TOTAL Cash	TOTAL In Kind	
RIPARIAN HABITAT	\$5,600	\$1,955	\$1,700	\$9,205	\$5,057	
STABILIZATION	\$1,120	\$2,880	\$2,619	\$6,619	\$3,100	
TRAILWAY	\$800	\$6,500	\$1,050	\$8,350	\$4,070	
EDUCATION	\$2,320	\$5,272	\$250	\$7,842	\$8,744	
OUTREACH/GENERAL	\$400	\$0	\$4,730	\$5,130	\$9,423	
TOTAL	\$10,240	\$16,607	\$10,349	\$37,146	\$30,394	\$67,540

NOTE: Budget does not include River Walk enhancements financed by The Berkshire Hotel for 3-year Downstream River Water Area Improvement Plan (The Berkshire Mitigation Plan), in fulfillment of its Notice of Intent permit. (Approximately \$37,000)

For more information, please contact:

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