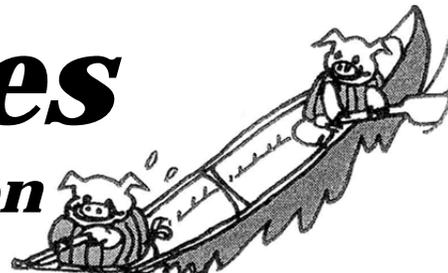


Berkshire AMC

Ferry Tales

Spring 2014 Edition



Newsletter of the Berkshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club Paddlers

Dear Paddlers:

♪ *The flowers that bloom in the spring, Tra La!* ♪
Yes—it's officially spring and you know what that means.
Yup—it's time for *messing about in boats!*

With more snow than usual in New England this winter, there should be some good boating available. And hopefully Mother Nature will bless us with regular Thursday and Friday *night* rainfall, followed by sunny ... perfect for paddling ... weekend weather.

Want to paddle a new river?

Last spring we traveled down to the *Shepaug* in CT and had a lovely time on a pretty "new" river (see page 4). If you see a Leader's Choice listed and you know of a *particularly interesting or pretty river* of the same class ... why not call the leader (well ahead of time) and suggest your choice. Of course, level is everything when paddling, so the River Gods will have to bless us with proper paddling levels. I hope we can create a wish list on the BK website of different and "new" rivers as *paddling food for thought*.

Math 101: True/False Quiz: *More leaders = more trips for paddling.*

Answer: TRUE! If you have good boating skills, are a responsible adult (*at least regarding safety issues*) and think you might want to look into being a Berkshire AMC paddling leader, please email the appropriate person listed below for more info. (**Note:- We're holding a new paddlers' leadership training in several weeks.**)

Quietwater: Sabine Prather: sabineprather@gmail.com

Whitewater: Connie Peterson: cpacpsummer@aol.com

Sea Kayaking: Mike Zabre: m.zabre@comcast.net

Rafting: Al Howcroft: alberth@housing.umass

Bookmark This: Be sure to *check* www.amcberkshire.org for trips that didn't make the deadline for *Ferry Tales* or *AMC Outdoors*.

AND NOW, THE "V" WORD!

(IF YOU GUESSED VOLUNTEER, YOU'RE RIGHT!)

So I won't beat around the bush: how about joining the paddling committee? We still have several open slots, and at \$5,000 a year stipend, these positions go like hotcakes! (Actually, the secretary takes home over \$10,000, plus a new boat).* FYI : we meet only several times a year for dinner (provided) meetings. If interested, contact Connie Peterson at cpacpsummer@aol.com.

A BIG Thank You to Our Local Heroes:

Much appreciation to Rich Hamilton who is retiring after many years of loyal service as our *secretary*. (Note: Position open!) And as you may know, Tad Jackson passed on her baton as *trip scheduler extraordinaire* to Jack Gill this winter. We are grateful to Ken Langley for continuing to (spend and ...) monitor our \$, and, of course, Muchas Gracias to Norma Roche for getting out our renowned *Ferry Tales*. Kudos to Norm Sims, our FLOW contact, for continuing to monitor river access and working hard for new paddling and related recreational activities.

We are blessed that Andy Cowsls is kind enough to house our fleet of paddling craft. And where would we be without our coordinators, Michael Zabre, Sabine Prather, and Al Howcroft, as well as *our many great river leaders*.

Three Cheers! We salute you all!

Connie Peterson, Chair

(413) 768-8989 cpacpsummer@aol.com

* Yes, of course I'm kidding about the financial remuneration. But we need YOU! Plus we have free food and fun at our several meetings a year.

Do You Boat the Connecticut River at the Turners Falls, Mass. Bypass Whitewater Reach?

AMC, New England FLOW, and AW Need Your Help

Tell us about your whitewater experiences from natural spill events on the Connecticut River this spring.

Your information will help in designing whitewater test runs in the bypass reach of the Turners Falls Dam as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing.

After your run, please make some notes on good stuff, problems, how you would rate the drops (i.e., Class 1-2-3, etc.), and any experiences you had. **Send an email to Norman Sims** (normansims1@gmail.com) telling me **what date** and at **what time** you paddled the river and how many people were with you. In reply, I will send you a brief questionnaire with about five questions. After you return that, I should have the information to tell you exactly what water level you were paddling on that day, as determined by the FirstLight power company.

The accumulated responses to this request will help us determine what flows to request for the study this summer. The tests will probably take place in late June, but the dates haven't been determined yet.

Thanks very much for your help!

Norman Sims, AMC normansims1@gmail.com

Tom Christopher, New England FLOW

How to determine if water is likely spilling into the bypass reach:

Check the USGS gauge at Montague City, Mass.:
<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/usa/nwis/uv?01170500>
and subtract the flows coming out of the Deerfield River at the USGA gage at:
http://waterdata.usgs.gov/usa/nwis/uv?site_no=01170000.

This is a rough estimate, but if it yields a number larger than 14,500 cfs (and even better if it's above 16,000 cfs), there is likely water spilling into the bypass reach. It starts to get interesting when the bypass reaches 2,000 cfs and higher. This is a large natural river bed that can accommodate thousands of cfs. Flows above 14,000 in the bypass reach are more than we can request for releases.

We are particularly interested in hearing about your experiences at flows from 2,000 to 14,000 cfs.



Far left channel, Double Drop, in Rock Dam at ~ 2,000 cfs.

Directions for Turners Falls Dam bypass reach

If you're coming from the east on Route 2, turn left toward Turners Falls on the Gill-Montague Bridge that spans the Connecticut River. This intersection is a short distance beyond the Barton Cove boat ramp. The street is called Main Road or Avenue A, and there is a stoplight and a gas station on your right at the intersection. Immediately after crossing the river, take your first right and then enter the Great Falls Discovery Center parking lot. If no big events are happening, this could be a good staging area.

From the south and west, take I-91 north to the exit just beyond Greenfield for Rte 2 EAST toward Boston, and follow Rte 2 about five miles to the second light. Turn right on the big bridge and then pick up the directions above.

Shuttle: Shuttle your vehicles down to the Poplar Street take-out in Turners Falls. When you exit the Great Falls Discovery Center parking lot, you have to go right on a one-way street. Circle back around to Avenue A, which is the same road you took across the bridge. Take a right on Avenue A for a couple miles until you see Deerfield Road on the left. (If you cross a bridge, you went too far.) Take Deerfield Road a short distance to a right hand turn on Poplar Street. Follow to its end, where there is a primitive take-out more-or-less underneath a bridge.

Please be very clean and respectful. This is a residential neighborhood. For heaven's sake, avoid littering, nudity, and drinking.

Put-in and Paddling:

You can carry your boats on the right past the Discovery Center, across a little iron bridge that crosses the power canal, and then bear LEFT and circle back around downhill toward the

right to the river's edge. It's a couple hundred yards carry and there's nothing steep.

On your right will be the Turners Falls Dam. Straight ahead and to the left, you'll see an island and the Opening Ledges. Depending on water level, these ledges may be paddled on either side of the island.

On the bypass run, which is about 2 1/2 miles or more, you'll find the Opening Ledges of interest. Below, depending on water levels, there may be some Class 1–2 features. At levels above 10,000 cfs, more features such as surfing waves appear in several places. At higher flow levels, be sure you're with a group experienced in big water rescue. Eventually, you encounter a small island on the right and a bigger island midstream. For paddlers with beginner skills, the two right channels may be the best choice. If you stay river left, you will come to the horizon line at Rock Dam. You don't have to run Rock Dam; just follow around the islands to the right.

Rock Dam is a volcanic ridge that runs from the left shore to the island, with two breaks on the far river left. At water levels

from about 2000 to 5000 cfs, this may be a Class 2 or Class 3 drop. At higher levels the whole ridge begins to wash out. Scouting is advised. Below Rock Dam, a large eddy forms behind the ridge at lower flows. If you have problems, head up the trails on river left, which lead to roadways.

The Poplar Street take-out is a ways downstream on river left under the bridge mentioned earlier.



2014 BERKSHIRE QUIETWATER CANOE AND KAYAK TRIPS

Saturday, May 17, 9 AM to noon-ish: Warner Pond, Hadley, MA. Family friendly. L Elbert Bowler. Contact treble13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

Friday, May 23–Monday, May 26: Seyon Lodge, Groton, VT. Paddle, bike, hike. L Sabine Prather, sabineprather@gmail.com.

Sunday, June 15: Hike and paddle in Stockbridge, MA. Laura's Tower and Ice Glen hike followed by paddle on the Housatonic. Ls Sabine Prather and Jim Helems, sabineprather@gmail.com, dogpals1@gmail.com

Saturday, July 19, 9 AM to noon-ish: Swift River, Belchertown, MA. Family friendly. Contact treble13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

Saturday, July 26: Quinebaug River, Brimfield, MA. Leisurely river paddle to a lake, then back to put-in; no shuttle of cars is necessary. Email by Thursday 8 PM. Contact sandpheap@gmail.com.

Saturday, August 9, 9 AM to noon-ish: Otis Reservoir, Becket, MA. Family friendly. Contact treble13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

Saturday, August 9: Tully Lake, Royalston, MA. Leisurely river, marsh and lake paddle. Email by Thursday 8 PM. Contact sandpheap@gmail.com.

Saturday, Sept. 13, 9 AM to noon-ish: Chicopee River, Chicopee/Wilbraham, MA. Family friendly. Contact treble13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

Saturday, October 11, 9 AM to noon-ish: Ox Bow/Mill River, Easthampton, MA. Family friendly. Contact treble13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

We hope to add more trips soon. Please watch the activities schedule at www.amcberkshire.org for other upcoming trips not listed here.

And **sign up for updates on the Quietwater listserv!** Sign up on the AMC Berkshire website, under Activities/Paddling/Quietwater, at the bottom of the page.

AMC Berkshire has canoes and kayaks for rent in South Amherst, so please consider coming even if you don't have a boat. Call the leader to see if you can be paired with someone in a canoe, or arrange to pick one up to put on your vehicle together. See you on the water!



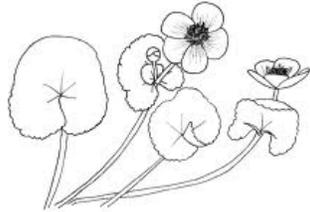
AMC paddlers at Groton Lake. Photo by Sabine Prather.

2014 BERKSHIRE SEA KAYAKING TRIPS

For info regarding possible sea kayaking trips or to be included in our sea kayaking e-mail group, contact Michael Zabre (665-5085; ww@valinet.com).

Spring is in the air!

One of the advantages of paddling in the spring and early summer is the flora and fauna along the riverbanks. My personal favorite wetlands' flower is *marsh marigolds*. I often see them on the Middle Branch and Knightville sections of the Westfield once it begins to warm up in late March or early April. (Timing, of course, depends on our *ever increasingly fickle* Mother Nature ...)



Another favorite of mine is *shadbush*; this small tree is usually the first to blossom along riverbanks. Look for its bent narrow profile and prolific small white blossoms as you paddle along the Millers or most of our wooded riversbanks this time of year.

If you prefer mobile critters, *spring peepers* are usually out by the first week in April—listen for their strange "chirps." *Field and tree swallows* should return in early April. Mass Audubon (my source for this article) also reports that several days after the *April 15th full moon*, we should be able to hear "the trill of *toads* from nearby swamps and marshes."

In May you'll have a good chance to see *trout lilies*, *trillium*,

and *columbine* if you stop at a riverbank and head into the woods for a quick pee! As summer progresses, I love to watch the *Cedar Waxwings* flit across Fife Brook as I paddle along. For some reason, most of them seem to "hangout" about half a mile upstream of Zoar Gap, though they often can be seen all along the river. One of my all out "faves" is the beautiful yellow and blue flags (iris) that bloom along riverbanks in mid and late summer. Tho sadly most of these species (yellow and blue flag) are "invasives." So, keep your eyes open as you paddle along—not only for rocks, holes, and out-of-control "tubers," but also for the lovely gifts Mother Nature provides us folks who are smart enough to enjoy "messing about in boats!"

Connie Peterson

Training opportunity!

Trip leaders,*AMC members, and pubic welcome!

Two SOLO Wilderness first aid trainings will be held at Noble View on

April 11 & 12 (Saturday & Sunday)

May 18 & 19 (Saturday & Sunday)

If interested contact Gary Forish for more info: forgary@comcast.net or 413-519-3351

*Trip leaders receive partial subsidy; others pay \$150.

More info at www.AMCberkshire.org.



Alan Peterson on *Oh Be Joyful Creek, CO*.
(Warning! DO NOT try this at home.)

Do you have tales of new rivers you've paddled in the last year or two? Why not send them in and we can post them on the BK website where they can inspire others to try paddling something different! For instance, Al Howcroft has led many an exciting raft trip out West. Ken Langley and Charlie Camp have paddled on a number of them. Charlie Murray, one of our new leaders, has been paddling up a storm these last several years, and can make some good suggestions to us ole time leaders.

Last spring a BK leaders' choice WW trip ferreted out the Shepaug River in CT (it was quite off the beaten track, and many expletives were directed at various GPS's as we took a Cook's Tour of SW CT). A motley crew of us paddled it and enjoyed some lovely scenery plus added a new class 2 river to our repertoire.

Connie Peterson

2014 BERKSHIRE WHITEWATER TRIPS

Here are our trips that have been planned to date. Other trips will be listed on the AMC website:

<http://activities.outdoors.org/search/> (Activity = Paddling-Whitewater; More options - Chapter/Posted By: Berkshire (Mass.) Chapter). We hope you'll come join us!

To receive our **weekly trip reminder email**, contact Jack Gill at jackgill@yahoo.com.

Unless otherwise stated, please register by the Wednesday before the trip. L may relocate trip as conditions warrant.

Sunday, March 23: Upper Ashuelot, Class 3., NH. Call L Ethan Foster (603-643-6445).

Saturday, March 29: Saxtons River, Class 2-3, VT. Call L Ethan Foster (603-643-6445).

Sunday, April 6: Westfield River, Porkbarrel Section, MA. Class 2-3. Call L Charles Murray (413-298-4598) (charlesedgarmurray@gmail.com).

Saturday, April 12: Westfield River, Knightville Section. Class 3, MA. Call L Charlie Murray (413-298-4598, charlesedgarmurray@gmail.com).

Sunday, April 20: Leader's Choice, Class 2-3, MA. L Connie Peterson (970-389-5395).

Sunday, April 27: Winhall or Londonderry Ledges or West River, Class 3, VT. Call L Jack Gill (413-238-5816).

Saturday, May 3: Leader's Choice, Class 3, MA. Possibly the Lower Millers or Quaboag among other choices. Call L Dave Windoloski (508-476-9854).

Saturday, May 24: Deerfield River, Fife Brook Section, Class 2, MA. Call L Mark Hathaway (413-498-2070).

Sunday, June 29: Deerfield River, Dryway (Monroe Bridge) Section, Class 4, MA. Register by Fri. evening before the trip. L Dennis Cleary (413-774-3510).

Sunday, August 10: Deerfield River, Dryway (Monroe Bridge) Section, Class 4, MA. Register by Fri evening before the trip. L Dennis Cleary (413-774-3510).

2014 BERKSHIRE WHITEWATER RAFTING TRIPS

Folks interested in rafting the most exciting piece of whitewater in the area will find the raft trips on the Monroe Bridge section of the Deerfield River an amazing bargain compared with commercial rates for this trip.

Rafting trips are very popular, so register early—but no later than the Wednesday before the trip. Minimum age is 14. No rafting experience is necessary, but strong swimming skills are required.

Sunday, July 6: Whitewater Rafting, Deerfield River, Dryway Section, MA. Class 4. L Al Howcroft (413-256-1301).

Sunday, August 31: Whitewater Rafting, Deerfield River, Dryway Section, MA. Class 4. L Al Howcroft (413-256-1301).

Sunday, September 7: Whitewater Rafting, Deerfield River, Dryway Section, MA. Class 4. L Al Howcroft (413-256-1301).

HOW TO RENT A BOAT

The Berkshire Chapter has a small fleet of quietwater and whitewater boats for rent to club members. Non-members may rent boats for scheduled club trips. All rentals include life jackets (PFDs), paddles, helmets, and spray skirts as needed. Note that helmets are now **required** on all whitewater trips for covered boats and on all whitewater trips above class 2 for open boats.

Rental Procedures: For the 2014 paddling season, Andrew's Greenhouse at 1178 South East Street in South Amherst will continue to store our boats in their barn. **Please note that people reserving or picking up boats should not depend on help from the staff at the greenhouse.** If you need help loading a boat, bring a friend to help you.

Reserving Rental Boats: If you are planning to use a rented boat for a scheduled club trip, you should **register with the trip leader** at least a week in advance to have first priority on the use of a rental boat. Then you or the trip leader should call **Al Howcroft (413-256-1301)** to reserve the boat for the scheduled date(s). To make late reservations or reserve a boat for a non-AMC scheduled trip you should also call Al Howcroft.

Picking up Your Rental Boat: When you pick up a boat and associated equipment at the barn, there is a clearly posted sign-out system you should follow. Please fill out the form completely including the AMC ID number on each item. Anyone who will need help loading the boat(s) or tying it safely on the vehicle should

bring an experienced helper. **We cannot expect the folks at the greenhouse to provide this help.** Boats should be returned promptly. If you need to return a boat late, check with Al Howcroft to see if someone else has signed out the boat for the next day.

Payment of Rental Fees: If you are paddling on a scheduled club trip, you may pay the rental fee to your trip leader along with the registration fee. Folks renting boats for non-AMC scheduled trips may pay the rental fee by leaving a check on the clipboard in the barn or mailing the check to our treasurer, Ken Langley, whose address is posted in the barn. Any lost or damaged AMC equipment should be reported to your trip leader or to Al Howcroft (413-256-1301).

WHERE'S THE WATER? *Info on Releases and Levels*

Fife Brook – Site code 255123

Brookfield Power

105 scheduled releases. Releases from Fife Brook Dam start between 9:30 am & 12 noon, with a flow of at least 700 cfs, for a 3-hour duration.

April	5, 9-11, 13, 16-20, 23-27
May	3-4, 10-11, 16-18, 21-25, 28-31
June	1, 14-15, 18-22, 25-29
July	3-6, 10-13, 16-20, 23-27, 31
August	1-4, 8-11, 15-18, 22-25, 31
September	1, 3-7, 10-14, 17-20
October	1-5, 8-12

Monroe Bridge (#5 Bypass) – Site code 255122

TransCanada Hydro Northeast, Inc

32 scheduled releases. Friday releases are for 4 hours beginning at 11 a.m. Saturday releases last 5 hours and begin at 10 a.m. Sunday releases are 4 hours beginning at 10 a.m. Flows alternate among 900, 1000, and 1100 cfs.

May	24, 25
June	20(Fri), 21, 22, 27(Fri), 28, 29
July	4(Fri), 5, 6, 11(Fri), 12, 13, 20, 26
August	2, 3, 8 (Fri), 10, 16, 22(Fri), 23, 30, 31
September	1(Mon), 6, 7, 13, 14
October	11, 12

Updates to these Deerfield River schedules are available on the Waterline Website:

Fife Brook:

<http://www.h2oline.com/255123.asp>

Monroe Bridge/Dryway:

<http://www.h2oline.com/255122.asp>

AMC Boston posts release information for a number of **other rivers in the region:**
<http://amcbostonpaddlers.org/releases>

Current flow information for many rivers from USGS can be found at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/rt>. Choose your state, then click on the site of the river on the map.

Want **automatic e-mail notification** from USGS when your favorite river reaches a certain height?

- Look for "Water Alert" under the Gage Height or Discharge/CFS graph.
- If you want to select by Gage Height, choose the "Water Alert" link under the Gage Height graph.
- If you want to select by CFS, choose the "Water Alert" link under the Discharge graph.
- Click on the Water Alert link and follow the instructions. You will need to respond to a confirmation e-mail sent by USGS within 48 hours or your request will not be honored.

Here is an example for Knightville. Look for the two "Water Alert" links.
http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ma/nwis/uv/?site_no=01179500&PARAMeter_cd=00065,00060.

BERSHIRE CHAPTER CANOE AND KAYAK INVENTORY

Whitewater Canoes

ID#	Model	Maker	Kind	Color	Len	\$/day AMC	\$/day	\$/wk AMC	\$/wk k	Comments
BK-3	ME	Mad River	Tan/Solo	Red	15'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	With triple saddle
BK-8	Starburst	Blue Hole	Tandem	Green	17'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	New 2001
BK-9	Tripper	Old Town	Tandem	Blue	17'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	QW or Class 2 WW only

Sea Kayaks

ID#	Model	Maker	Kind	Color	Len	\$/day AMC	\$/day	\$/wk AMC	\$/wk	Comments
BSK-1	Heron	Old Town	Solo	Red	16' 2"	\$15	\$20	\$60	\$80	Fix foot brace ???
BSK-2	Shadow	Perception	Solo	Red	17'	\$15	\$20	\$60	\$80	Check the bottom ?
BSK-3	Spectrum	Aquaterra	Solo	Red	16'	\$15	\$20	\$60	\$80	
BSK-4	LockshaV	Necky	Solo	Lime	17'6"	\$15	\$20	\$60	\$80	New 2007 With a Rudder

Quietwater Boats

ID#	Model	Maker	Kind	Color	Len	\$/day AMC	\$/day	\$/wk AMC	\$/wk	Comments
BK-17	Camper	Old Town	Tandem	Blue	16'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	QW ONLY
BK-18	Camper	Old Town	Tandem	Green	16'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	QW ONLY
BK-19	Keowee	Aquaterra	Solo	Blue	9'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	Open Kayak- QW only
BK-20	Keowee2	Aquaterra 2	Tandem or Solo	Blue	13'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	Open Kayak- QW only

Whitewater Kayaks

ID#	Model	Maker	Kind	Color	Len	\$/day AMC	\$/day	\$/wk AMC	\$/wk	Comments
BK-12	SPARC	Perception	Solo	Orange	9'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	Max Wt. = 165 Lbs
BK-13	ARC	Perception	Solo	Gray/purple	9'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	Wt.150-210 Lb Fix drain plug
BK-15	Torrent	Perception	Solo	Yellow	10'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	Sit on top kayak
BK-16	Torrent	Perception	Solo	Gray	10'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	Sit on top kayak
BK-21	Nomad	Dagger	Solo	Red	7' 6"	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	Creek Boat (New 2006)
BK-22	ARC	Perception	Solo	Red	9'	\$10	\$15	\$30	\$45	Wt. 150-210 Lbs

2 RAFTS : AMC Trips (Registration & Rent Members \$5, Non- Members \$15), Private Trips Rent \$25/raft

EQUIPMENT	Number	Description	Paddles	Number	Description
Pumps	1		Raft Guide	3	72"
First Aid Kits	2	Orange--hard	Canoe paddles	12	57"
	1	Blue--soft		6	54"
	4	Clear--soft		1	51"
Throw Ropes	6				
PFDs	22	Extra sport	Kayak Paddles	7	Regular
	12	Sterns		2	Split
Helmets	2	Small			
	2	Medium			
	11	Large			
	2	Ex-Large			

Planning a paddling and camping adventure in the great north country? Our files offer extensive information about possible trips in Maine, Quebec, and Ontario. For more info, contact Mark Hathaway (markh@rodneyhunt.com).

Berkshire AMC

Ferry Tales

42 Laurel Park
Northampton, MA 01060



Has your address changed?

Please notify Norma Roche (nroche@crocker.com)



Submissions for next issue: If you are interested in contributing articles, poetry, experiences, photographs and/or information about your paddling experiences to next year's **Ferry Tales**, please send your ideas to editor Norma Roche, 42 Laurel Park, Northampton, MA 01060, nroche@crocker.com. *Thank you!*

Special THANKS:

- Trip schedules by *Jack Gill* and *Sabine Prather*
- All of the trip leaders
- Members of the Canoe and Kayak Committee
- Boat storage space provided by *Andy Cowles*

Don't forget to check out our website for the very latest information on all aspects of what the Berkshire Chapter has to offer! Go to

www.AMCberkshire.org

often! You can get the current information on paddling trips, including any new listings that come up!