Dear Paddler:

Come PLAY with us!!! Spring is in the air (depending on the day…) and flowers actually are popping up all over. So, cheers for the great outdoors! And three cheers for messing about in boats!

Whether you’re a dedicated, hotshot whitewater paddler, a gently rolling down the river “quickwater” paddler, or “currently” thinking about delving into the sport, we look forward to you joining us on a river (or a pond for some preliminary instruction to get you going). And, FYI, we are still offering our wonderful fall paddling, hiking (and eating) weekend in No. Landgrove, VT at the charming “Inn Hoch” farmhouse the weekend of the fall West River release. *

We -- like the New England spring -- are getting started a little later this year, but have a number of trips scheduled and are planning more, plus working to put together several paddle learning opportunities locally. All we need is you to join us! (Okay, I'll spell it out. Like most ventures, we need a critical mass of folks to sign up for each of the two classes we’re planning.)

If you’ve been paddling awhile, why not consider becoming a trip leader for the Berkshire Chapter! We’ll provide the free training, plus you’ll have opportunities to get CPR training and other important skills at no cost to you. (Plus volunteering for the AMC rounds out a resume rather nicely.)

Need a boat- We have a barn full of them! And the prices for rental can’t be beat! Whitewater kayaks, sea kayaks, flatwater boats and several sit-on-tops. Call Al below to check on rental availability.
We'd love to hear from you. Please contact us:

**Quietwater:** Sabine Prather - sabineprather@gmail.com

**Whitewater:** Connie Peterson - cpacpsumer@aol.com

**Boat Rentals & Rafting Info:** Al Howcroft - 413-256-1301

Be sure to **check out the enclosed articles.** There's new info about dam releases and combined efforts with MA Fish and Wildlife for invasive species removal. Hope to see you on a river!!!

---

**Connie & Sabine**  
Sabine Prather BK Quietwater Coordinator  
Connie Peterson. BK Paddling Chair

- **Contact Connie @ West River Fall Farmhouse Weekend (usually held 3rd wknd in Sept).**
- **NEWS ALERT!!!** Be sure to see the open positions in the Berkshire Chapter Ex Committee.

---

**Paddling and Pulling for Nature**

Volunteers and summer youth crews have been a tremendous help to the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and its partners in the initiative to monitor and remove invasive water chestnut at more than 25 sites in MA and CT in the Connecticut River watershed. Collectively, we are keeping this plant from overtaking ponds and coves and have seen some dramatic results!

Unfortunately, due to federal budget cuts, the refuge is forced to scale back the project and may have to drop some sites unless additional help can be found. Thus, we are reaching out to local volunteers for help in various ways. We can use help with monitoring the ponds where we know water chestnut exists, observations of ponds without known populations, and participation in scheduled events in July and August. Groups can even adopt a pond in their area and focus on keeping the plant in check there. The saying goes "many hands make for light work" and this is definitely the case with this project! We fear that without additional help we might lose the dramatic gains we've made over the past 15 years.

The refuge will be holding two training sessions in late June (Saturday, June 27 and Monday, June 29, with a raindate of June 30). This training will be geared toward (and is required for) those who are interested in adopting a pond or cove. (Training will be provided for all participants at all events organized by the refuge and its partners.)

If you are interested in helping, please contact Cynthia Boettner at the Conte Refuge and let her know what role(s) you might like to play, and whether summer weekdays or weekends work best for you.

cynthia_boettner@fws.gov; 413-548-8002 ext. 115.

---

**Quick Quiz:**

Where was the invasive Water Chestnut first observed in North America?

A) Abita Springs, Louisiana  
B) Shelby, North Carolina  
C) Concord, Massachusetts

(Answer on Page 8)
2015 BERKSHIRE CANOE AND KAYAK TRIPS

Join us for great fun and play in the (H2O) outdoors! We have lots of choices -- Quietwater (flatwater), Whitewater, and Whitewater rafting, plus occasionally some Sea Kayaking. We also plan to offer an on the lake boating-skills session for newcomers in May, and possibly a whitewater one-day training in June. We’re a tad slow getting our trips scheduled this year, so we’re asking interested folks to keep checking our website for trip new listings and also to contact our paddling leaders if you would like more info. And we’re bar none, the best deal around for renting boats: whitewater kayaks, sea kayaks and flatwater boats.

**Whitewater Trips**

**NOTE: Registration is required for all whitewater trips.**

Helmets, skirts and whitewater worthy boats are also required on these trips (for safety reasons) For a list of WW kayak criteria, see http://amcberkshire.org/river-ratings-revised.

--Date: 5/09/15 Millers or Quaboag River. Class 2-3. Leader Jack Gill, 413-238-5816

--Date: May 9 or 10**th** Messing around in Boats for “Newbees” (or refresher class for anyone). Contact Connie (see above)

--Date: May 17 Tariffville, CT Class II+. Leader Jack Gill 413-238-5816

*Exact Dates will depend on getting minimum of 6 (maximum of 10) sign-ups.

Join us on a local pond for messong about in boats! We’ll provide kayaks and canoes of various types for you to try out and we’ll teach any newcomers some of the basic paddle strokes for both flatwater and whitewater (as you wish!). Refreshments provided. Contact Connie Peterson for more info @ cpacpsummer@aol.com. Put “BK paddle” in the email subject line. J

**Quiextracted text...so far**

Sat., June 20, 9 AM to noon-ish. Warner Pond Hadley, MA. Family friendly. video13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

Sat., July 18, 9 AM to noon-ish. Swift River, Belchertown, MA. Family friendly. treble13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

Sat., Aug 15, Tanglewood/Stockbridge Bowl Lake. Morning BSO “Shed” rehearsal at 10:30; picnic lunch on lawn; afternoon lake paddle. video13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

Sat., Sept 19, 9:30 AM to noon-ish. Farmington River starting at Curtis Park, Simsbury. treble13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

Sat., Oct 10, 9 AM to noon-ish. Ox Bow/Mill, Easthampton, MA. Family friendly. video13@comcast.net by Thurs. prior for details.

2015 BERKSHIRE WHITEWATER RAFTING TRIPS

Why not treat your family (or yourself!) to some exciting summer fun?! What could be more thrilling than whitewater rafting on the Monroe Bridge section of the Deerfield, one of Massachusetts’ most interesting rivers. Make a day of it, and after rafting you could visit charming Shelburne Falls and see their beautiful “Bridge of Flowers” in full bloom, eat at a local restaurant and check out the famous Glacial Pot Holes in town along the river. And the (almost) best part is - that thanks to the BK AMC - you can raft it for under ¼ of the cost of the pricey commercial outfitters. (You get the best of both worlds, great fun and a great price!!)

All the information is below. If you have any further questions, just give our experienced raft leader, Al Howcroft, a call at (413) 256-1301.
PS. Al has mostly likely paddled more exciting rivers than anyone you can think of! He's been leading trips in New England and out West for the UMass Outing Club, the AMC and private trips for over 30 years. (And, does he have stories to tell?)

Just the Facts (Ma'am)

River: The Dryway Section on the Deerfield River (also called "Monroe Bridge")
Requirements: Minimum age is 15 yrs. No rafting experience is necessary, but good swimming skills are required in the event of an upset.

Cost: $14 per member; $20 nonmember.

Summer 2015 Dates:

**Sunday, July 5.** Rafting on the Dryway Section (Monroe Bridge) of the Deerfield River, Class 4. Trip limit is 14. Call Leader Al Howcroft 413-256-1301 to register.

**Sat., Aug 8.** Rafting on the Dryway Section of the Deerfield River, Class 4. Trip limit is 14. Call Leader Al Howcroft 413-256-1301 to register.

**Sun., Sept. 13,** Rafting on the Dryway Section of the Deerfield River, Class 4. Trip limit is 14. Call Leader Al Howcroft 413-256-1301 to register.

And, the Envelope Please...

We would like to thank all the folks who help/volunteer for our committee throughout the year. As you know - most certainly - we can’t do it without you!!!

Thank You EVERYONE who lends a hand in our committee, and especially to -- the following wonderful folks!

Al Howcroft – Equipment Guru & Raft Guide
Charlie Murray – River Leader++
Charlie Camp – Advisor Emeritus
Jack Gill – Trip Scheduler & Trip Leader++
Ken Langley – Treasurer, Esq
Norm Sims – Flow Rep & "Informant"
Tad Jackson – Incoming Treasurer
Sabine Prather – Quietwater Guru
Chez Rich & Candy: Our Mtg Abode!

And, a heartfelt thanks to Ken Langley, our longtime “keeper of the books!” In addition to his many years as treasurer, we appreciate his contributions to committee meetings, and our paddling community. Ken’s acumen & on-point humor, both in meetings & on the river were a joy. Ken you’re the best!

Thank you from all of us!!!
Many of our Western Massachusetts rivers have remarkable beauty. For some it’s the wilderness setting and the stunning forests which surround the river. For a select few, it is the remains of an architectural past under which our boats pass. Back in the 1800’s century, stone cutters were brought in to build monumental bridges for the railroads, so they could travel up river valleys passing back and forth over the river as dictated by the geography. These granite block arches were built to last and many of them are still in use today, with only minor repairs being needed over the centuries to keep them current. Two of the rivers on which our chapter runs trips are particularly blessed with these architectural gems - the Quaboag River in Warren, MA and the West Branch of the Westfield in Becket and Chester, MA.

Here are some photos of the stone arches from past Berkshire Chapter whitewater trips. If they inspire you, think of joining a trip to the rivers in question, to get a view for yourself.

Jack Gill
## BERSHIRE CHAPTER CANOE AND KAYAK INVENTORY

### Whitewater Canoes

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<tr>
<th>ID#</th>
<th>Model</th>
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<th>Kind</th>
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<th>Len</th>
<th>$/day AMC</th>
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<th>$/wk AMC</th>
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<tr>
<td>BK-3</td>
<td>M.E.</td>
<td>Mad River</td>
<td>Tan/Solo</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>With triple saddle</td>
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<td>BK-8</td>
<td>Starburst</td>
<td>Blue Hole</td>
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<td>Green</td>
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<td>$10</td>
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<tr>
<td>BK-9</td>
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### Sea Kayaks

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<tr>
<td>BSK-1</td>
<td>Heron</td>
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<td>Solo</td>
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<td>16' 2&quot;</td>
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<td>$60</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td>Fix foot brace ????</td>
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<td>BSK-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSK-3</td>
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<td>Aquaterra</td>
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<td>Red</td>
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<td>$20</td>
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<td>$80</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSK-4</td>
<td>LuckshaV</td>
<td>Necky</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>Lime</td>
<td>17'6&quot;</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$60</td>
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### Quietwater Boats

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<th>$/day</th>
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<td>Camper</td>
<td>Old Town</td>
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<td>$45</td>
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<tr>
<td>BK-10</td>
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<td>Aquaterra</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>Blue</td>
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<td>$15</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$45</td>
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<td>BK-20</td>
<td>Keowee2</td>
<td>Aquaterra</td>
<td>Tandem or Solo</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>13'</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>Open Kayak- QW only</td>
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### Whitewater Kayaks

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<th>ID#</th>
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<td>SPARC</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>Orange</td>
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<td>Max Wt. = 155 Lbs</td>
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<td>ARC</td>
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<td>Solo</td>
<td>Gray/purple</td>
<td>9'</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>Wt. 150-210 Lb</td>
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<tr>
<td>BK-15</td>
<td>Torrent</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>Sit on top kayak</td>
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<tr>
<td>BK-16</td>
<td>Torrent</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>Gray</td>
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<td>$10</td>
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<td>$30</td>
<td>$45</td>
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<td>BK-21</td>
<td>Nomad</td>
<td>Dagger</td>
<td>Solo</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>7' 6&quot;</td>
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<td>Creek Boat (New 2006)</td>
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<td>$15</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>Wt. 150-210 Lbs</td>
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2 RAFTS: AMC Trips (Registration & Rent Members $5, Non-Members $15). Private Trips Rent $25/raft.

### Equipment

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Clear-soft</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>54&quot;</td>
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<td>51&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Medium</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Ex-Large</td>
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*a SPECIAL THANK YOU to Andy & Jackie Cowl's for being the Keepers of the Boats!!!*
A Tale from the “Northern Forest Canoe Trail”

(Mid-May, 2014)

- Al Howcroft

I’m all about paddling New England Rivers, so after reading countless accounts about the NFCT, plus contributing money toward its future, the time arrived! Let’s do a trip! Yes! This coming Spring!

I already purchased the whole series of maps (13) covering all 740 miles of the “Trail”. Searching all my options for a 5-day trip, I zero in on the “Upper Ammonoosuc River in northern New Hampshire. I’ve never paddled it but the map shows three rustic campsites along the route from Upper Milan to the CT River, spaced a night/day apart! Seems a perfect fit!

I e-mail to my current paddling enthusiasts and quickly fill up my trip with five people from coastal Maine, three people from the Boston area, two people from western MA and one person from southern VT. The trip parameters are set! A meeting place in NH agreed upon! All systems are “go”!

We all meet in Bethlehem, NH at the UMOC Cabin on a beautiful, sunny spring day. At the cabin we discuss logistics and expectations for the following four days. The local rivers are soaring high, so we expect great H2O levels on the Upper Ammo.

Things go well until we leave a car at our take-out in Guildhall, VT on the CT River, four days downstream from our put-in at West Milan, NH. It begins to rain! Fifty driving miles towards our put-in, it rains even harder! At the put-in, the river is high. Hoping that the rain will stop soon, I realize that the Upper, Upper Ammo would be a fun, non-gear run down to the NFCT put-in. (Check out the AMC Whitewater Guide!) In the pouring rain, we drive up to York Pond Road eight miles to where it crosses the river. (There is a very nice campsite here!) Looking downstream, we see continuous Class II-II+ drops near the approach to the NFCT put-in. The rain continues, the river slowly rises!

I certainly have some doubts, but accept my gung-ho friends’ positive vibes, and we spot vehicles for the non-gear eight mile run. I conduct a brief teach-in regarding strokes and safety, take the absolute beginner in my bow, and we shove off. It’s a big challenge as there are few eddies and the rain and wind relentless. Somehow we make it down to the Class IIIIs without any mishaps. (The two Class III rapids are close together and easily scouted from River Right). Successfully navigating these rapids, it’s only ½ mile to our gear. (Watch out for a wire above the river near the take-out!)

Man! It’s raining even harder! I’m mentally reviewing options, but the “croo” says let’s go for it! We load all our camping gear and shove off! It’s less than three miles to the first established campsite. It’s easy to locate, with a large campsite sign, but there is an eight foot vertical bank in front of it! We unload one canoe at a time. We find a picnic table, a rustic toilet, and flat space for no more than three tents! We have six tents! Sharing tent space is inevitable, and we grudgingly deal with it and set up a large rain tarp over the table for cooking and social interaction. The rain continues, so it’s an early to bed evening!

We awake to blue skies and wonderful sunshine! I declare a moratorium on paddling until all our gear is dry. Morale is exceptional. We finally launch on Day Two about noon with extremely positive expectations! We’re now paddling a rain-swollen river, so more care is taken and no mishaps occur. The last half-mile above the Stark covered bridge is continuous Class II+, but easily readable by experienced paddlers. A short day soon finds us at Campsite #2, River Right, about two miles below the bridge. Again, a sign, easily seen, marks the spot. This site is a little larger, with room for all six tents. No rain, food, and a great campfire. What else can you wish for?
Day Three is the big portage day. The book says three of them! The first can be lined on River Right with caution. The old dam is being removed, but remnants remain and the river is unrunnable. It is very easy to pull out just above the remains. Using said caution, we line all our boats down to an obvious re-launching point. It’s then a short half-mile of flatwater to Dam #2. A “portage” sign in River Left marks the trail. It’s only 50 yards or so on a paved road. Now, here’s a great event. There’s this guy with an SUV pulling a trailer, he lives just across the street from the aforementioned takeout! He’ll carry all your gear, boats and paddlers around both upcoming dams, to a re-launch site on River Right. Look for the vehicle/trailer! He asked for $30, but we gave him $60! Well worth the money! From the new launch site, it was a very short, ½ mile float downstream to Campsite #3 on River Left. Again, there is a sign but it’s not quite as obvious. Be vigilant! This campsite is huge! There is room for a dozen tents or more! The usual picnic table and rustic toilet are again provided. It’s our last night on the river and we make a spectacular bonfire. Unexpected guests arrive early evening, our shuttle driver and his wife, dropping by for a visit. Great stories about life in the North Country.

Next morning, we launch on a still-swollen river to more of blue skies. It’s about two miles to the junction with the CT River, then five miles in very fast current to our take-out. This take-out is on River Right, just above the highway bridge to Guildhall, VT. Do not go under the bridge! A broken dam immediately follows! (May be runnable with caution?) We quickly unload our boats and send our shuttle driver to the put-in to retrieve our vehicles. All done, it’s about noon. Before we make our separate paths home, we all meet in Lancaster, NH for a farewell lunch. Midway through lunch, a major thunderstorm lashes the restaurant. We nod our heads in thanks for good fortune!

Answer to quiz from Page 2…C. Near Concord Mass in 1859.
WHERE'S THE WATER? Info on Releases and Levels

Deerfield Releases - 2015

Fife Brook – Site code 255123
Brookfield Power

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

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>1-4, 8-11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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, & 1100 cfs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>23, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>14, 19(Fri), 20, 21, 26(Fri), 27, 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>3(Fri), 4, 5, 10(Fri), 11, 12, 19, 25, 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 21(Fri), 22, 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>5, 6, 12, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>10, 11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Call before you drive!

For flow information call Waterline’s free national telephone hotlines:

At the prompt, dial a six digit site code for the specific river each of interest.
#5 Bypass (Monroe Bridge, a.k.a. Dryway): Site code 255122
Fife Brook: Site code 255123

Also available at
http://www.h2oline.com/TRC.asp or http://www.h2oline.com/ML.asp
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 2015 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 onto 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, Tad Jackson, 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).

Th-th-th- tha-tha-tha-that's all, Folks!!!
Has your address changed?
Please notify staff at AMC, and follow up with the Chapter Paddling Committee!

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 Connie Peterson at cpacpsumer@aol.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
- Newsletter development by Sabine Prather
- Web & Newsletter production by Bob Bergstrom

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!