

# Local group petitions for special designation for Housatonic River

By Michael Kelley

LEE— A group of environmentally minded individuals from the Berkshire County League of Sportsmen, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Green Berkshires and the Massachusetts Audubon Society, are teaming up to bring an added sense of protection to the Housatonic River.

The group, Save the Housatonic, is in the midst of nominating a stretch of the river as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), a designation bestowed by the state because

of an area's quality, uniqueness and significance of its natural and cultural resources.

The purpose behind designating the area an ACEC is to protect the natural resources of the river, which Green Berkshires President Eleanor Tillinghast said houses 31 rare species and includes breeding ground for 30 fish species.

The section of the river being nominated is a 12.9 mile, 12,280 acre stretch running through Pittsfield, Lenox, Washington and Lee from the east and west branches of the river in Pitts-

field to Golden Hill Road in Lenox.

The ACEC, Tillinghast said, includes both public and private, developed and undeveloped and residential and commercial properties and does not limit development within its boundaries or supercede local regulations.

Since its inception in 1975, 28 ACECs have been named covering 73 communities in Massachusetts. There are three ACECs in South County including Kamposoa Bog in Stockbridge, Karner Brook in Egremont and Schenob Brook in Mt. Washington.