

From: Marjorie Cohan
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The Berkshire Bike Path Council shares the interest of the Trustees of the Housatonic Watershed in supporting projects that provide a lasting effect so that long into the future the communities will benefit from the restoration funds. We believe projects that encourage minimal environmental impact yet provide access have the potential to develop "river keepers". The community desperately needs generations of citizens who care about the river and watershed. In spite of the good intentions of the Trustees we are concerned about the lack of citizen response and involvement in the restoration funding process. We are concerned that many citizens, especially Pittsfield residents, are unaware of this tremendous resource.

The Beaded Necklace project appears to provide an opportunity for each community to develop a "bead project" that supports involvement and access. The process and the plan are the product. Possibly more people will get involved if the project has an immediate relevance to them. The process may begin to have people appreciate the area and take ownership of their section. The plan would also provide a way to connect these projects and serve as a master plan for long term development. Yes, the local towns can and should do planning but bringing those plans together takes careful coordination. We share the concern that funds to implement the plan should be identified, but the Beaded Necklace project does propose to develop an "in depth implementation plan....identifying funding."

There are about seven projects that support access and recreation. Some have more lasting effects than others. We would encourage serious consideration of access and recreation proposals, which increase community commitment to the watershed. Their long term effect is as important as preservation and research. While some of these projects do need to provide additional details they may well be good candidates for the next funding round.

Thank you for bringing together a talented group of proposal review members.

Marjorie Cohan