



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Hudson & Its Watershed: The Making of a Map

Beacon, NY-- The Beacon Institute for Rivers & Estuaries is pleased to present ***The Hudson & Its Watershed: the Making of a Map***, an exhibit featuring a hand-drawn, 4' x 6' map by Redstone Studio's Connie Brown. The public is invited to attend an opening reception on Saturday, March 10 from 5 - 7pm in the Institute's gallery at 199 Main Street, Beacon.

From its headwaters at Lake Tear of the Clouds in the Adirondacks to its mouth at New York Harbor, the Hudson River's watershed covers 13,400 square miles and encompasses parts of New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Connecticut. Twelve million people live within its boundaries, yet very few are familiar with its geographic magnitude.

As part of its interdisciplinary approach to river and estuarine research and education, The Beacon Institute commissioned the map to commemorate the Hudson River Watershed's rich biological and cultural heritage and to feature it in the Institute's education programs.

The exhibit will provide visitors the opportunity to step into the mapmaking process, a process ripe with technical and creative challenges and steeped in historical tradition. *The Hudson & Its Watershed: The Making of a Map* offers wonderful examples of the difficulties of defining the watershed's boundaries.

Drawing from existing maps from the US Geological Survey, the Center for International Earth Science Information Network, and the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Duncan Milne, a collaborator, spent countless hours tracing the branches of the watershed, from the widest reaches of the Hudson River to the smallest streams.

"We think of maps as collections of finite facts, but really they are a series of best judgments and often guesses," says Milne. "Ultimately, the map is more human than we imagine. Even with the best information and technology, someone has to discern the final path, extent and interconnectedness of the smallest streams."

Decisions of design and ornamentation were inspired by the sixteenth and seventeenth century maps of Jean de Beins, John White, John Farrar and Willem Blaeu. This "cartographic plunder" is a long standing tradition in mapmaking. According to Brown, "In past centuries, the mapmaker – unless he was also a surveyor or a navigator – was dependent upon the work of his predecessors, improving upon their maps if he'd been apprised of new discoveries or refinements. Furthermore, mapmakers freely borrowed each other's ornamentation and ornamentation from other kinds of art."

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“You can’t spend hundreds of hours mapping a place without learning about it and loving it,” says Brown. “In the gestation and birth of a map like this, I nurture a maternal solicitude for the map’s subject – here, a famous, beautiful and vulnerable river system whose health and continued majesty is in our hands.”

The exhibit is an integral part of The Beacon Institute’s education program and will eventually become a permanent display in its Learning Laboratory at Building One, the Institute’s “green” education center now under construction at historic Denning’s Point on the Hudson.

For more information, please call The Beacon Institute at 845-838-1600, or visit our website at www.thebeaconinstitute.org.

Gallery hours are Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (extended hours until 8 p.m. on the 2nd Saturday of each month) and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

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About the Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries

Headquartered on the Hudson River in the City of Beacon, in Dutchess County, New York, the Beacon Institute's mission is to create a global center for interdisciplinary research, policy-making and education regarding rivers, estuaries and their connection with society. The Beacon Institute is committed to developing a cadre of scientists, engineers, educators and policy experts whose collaborative work will focus on some of the most important and endangered bodies of water in the world. It also aims to make the Hudson Valley a global center for the development of advanced monitoring and observation technologies for rivers and estuaries.