



MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 28, 2014

CONTACT:

Ed Coletta (MassDEP) 617-292-5737
Megan Racey (USFWS) 413-253-8558

State and Federal Environmental Officials Solicit Proposals for Land Acquisition to Conserve Habitat in the Housatonic River Watershed

BOSTON – Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr. today announced that his office and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – together comprising the Massachusetts SubCouncil of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees – are soliciting a third round of proposals to restore wildlife habitat through land acquisition in the Berkshires as part of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program. Selected projects will be financed through a Natural Resource Damage (NRD) Assessment and Restoration settlement with General Electric (GE).

“The Commonwealth has conserved more than 100,000 acres under Governor Patrick’s leadership,” said EEA Secretary Sullivan. “These funds will continue those efforts by protecting the Housatonic River watershed, which is highly valued for its native biodiversity, distinct habitats and natural beauty.”

“This funding allows us to focus on protecting water, land and habitat in Massachusetts, all of which will benefit the future of a healthy Housatonic River,” said USFWS New England Field Office Supervisor Tom Chapman. “From its headwaters in the Berkshires south to Connecticut, the Housatonic supports an abundant amount of wildlife and many special species for the people of the Commonwealth, and this settlement funds the work of residents and officials to ensure that for our future.”

The settlement, originally filed as a consent decree in 2000, provided more than \$15 million to compensate Massachusetts and Connecticut for natural resource damages caused by release of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from GE’s Pittsfield facility. PCB pollution affected aquatic wildlife and habitats, as well as waterfowl and predators that consume contaminated organisms. Massachusetts was awarded \$7.75 million of the settlement total.

In Round 1 of the restoration program, the MA SubCouncil awarded \$4 million for projects ranging from invasive species control and restoring river flow to implementing an environmental literacy program. In Round 2, the SubCouncil awarded \$1.3 million to five projects addressing habitat continuity restoration, wildlife resource protection, riparian buffer and floodplain forest restoration, invasive species control and educational programming.

(more)



MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

In Round 3, the SubCouncil is seeking proposals for land acquisition and habitat conservation projects. The estimated total value of funding for Round 3 projects is \$2 million.

Details regarding project eligibility and instructions for submitting a grant application are provided in the Grant Announcement and Application package that is available on the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) NRD Program web site at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/nrd/nrd-restoration-funding-opportunities.html>.

Hard copies of application materials are available at the Lenox Library and other public libraries in the Housatonic River watershed in Massachusetts, including the Great Barrington Mason Library, Lee Library, Berkshire Athenaeum, Bushell-Sage Library and Stockbridge Library.

An applicant conference will be held on Tuesday, June 17, 2014, from 5:30 to 8 p.m., at Lenox Library, Sedgwick Reading Room, 18 Main Street in Lenox. At this meeting, the SubCouncil will review the Grant Announcement and Application and will address attendees' questions regarding the grant application process.

Written questions will be accepted by MassDEP until Tuesday, June 24, 2014, and proposals will be accepted by MassDEP until 4:30 p.m. on September 30, 2014.

The MA SubCouncil representatives who administer settlement funds for Massachusetts are MassDEP NRD Coordinator Karen Pelto and USFWS NRD/Environmental Contaminants Biologist Kenneth Munney.

Information about the Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program in Massachusetts is available online at: www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Karen Pelto at 617-292-5785 or by e-mail at karen.pelto@state.ma.us.

###