

**General Electric/Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration
Round 2 Applicant Conference (Habitat Restoration)**

February 25, 2009

Prepared for: Massachusetts SubCouncil
Prepared by: Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
Location: Lenox Town Hall, Lenox, MA
Time: 5:40 pm – 6:20 pm

Public meeting began at 5:40 pm.

I. Opening Statement by Dale Young, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and Introductions

1. Introduction of members of Massachusetts SubCouncil (MA SubCouncil):
 - a. Dale Young, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (State Trustee representative).
 - b. Veronica Varela, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Federal Trustee representative).
 - c. Rachel Fletcher (ex officio member).
2. Introduction of Project Consultant:
Todd Chadwell, Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

**II. Slideshow Presentation Round 2 Application Process (Habitat Restoration) by Todd Chadwell, Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
(available at <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/library.htm>)**

1. Project Background
2. Summary of Round 1 Status and Highlights
3. Overview of Round 2 Process
4. Guidance on Accessing Request for Responses from Comm-PASS
5. Summary of Habitat Restoration Priority Categories
6. Review of Round 2 Habitat Restoration Proposal Evaluation Criteria
7. Eligibility of Applicants, Projects, and Project Locations
8. Review of Suggested References
9. Summary of Round 2 Habitat Restoration Timeline
10. Summary of Round 2 Land Protection Timeline

III. Questions and Comments from Public

1. Noted that questions and responses from Applicant Conference would be posted with others submitted prior to March 11, 2009 deadline on the Comm-PASS website on March 25, 2009.
2. Questions received informal responses provided (see attached Questions and Answers).

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.



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Questions and Answers

The following list of questions and associated answers regarding the Round 2 Request for Responses (Habitat Restoration) was generated at the Round 2 Applicant Conference on February 25, 2009. This document also serves as a continuation of the meeting minutes from that night. All answers are subject to change and will be posted in final form on the Commonwealth's Procurement Access and Solicitation System (Comm-PASS) on March 25, 2009.

1. Q: Will the MA SubCouncil consider how PCB clean-up activities will impact restoration projects?

A: Yes, this is one of the MA SubCouncil's threshold criteria for project evaluation, i.e., we will consider if the project will be impacted/negatively affected by anticipated clean-up actions. If the project may be impacted, but otherwise meets our criteria, we may hold funds in reserve for future consideration.

2. Q: Due to Round 1 being a 2-year process, some projects were no longer valid when funds were disbursed. Does the MA SubCouncil have a list of projects on-going in the area by others outside of the NRD process to build-upon?

A: The MA SubCouncil has not generated a comprehensive list.

3. Q: For proposals that would be located in the floodplain but may be subject to remediation, would the likelihood of project implementation be greater if the project was

located farther upland and farther from the River, but still in the watershed? How would projects that are farther away from the mainstem (and PCB contaminated areas) be scored?

A: There is not always a linear relationship between distance to the River and score. Projects could be located several miles from the mainstem, as long as the projects provide benefit to those resources in the watershed.

4. Q: Explain the phrase “directly benefits injured natural resources.”

A: Projects do not need to be located directly in the PCB-impacted areas but should restore, enhance, or protect natural resources of the kind that may have been adversely affected by PCBs in the Housatonic River Watershed.

5. Q: Recreation and education are noted to be of secondary importance for Round 2 projects. Can we quantify the recommended maximum percent of funds allocated for education/recreation use for each project?

A: We would recommend no more than 50 percent of a proposal’s budget be for the education/recreation component. The general ballpark of 75/25 (25% for education and/or recreation) seems appropriate.

6. Q: Were there targeted funding amounts for each of the 4 restoration priority categories in Round 1? What was the funding breakdown for Round 1? For land acquisition & habitat restoration?

A: We did not have a target funding amount for the 4 restoration priority categories in Round 1. [Slideshow from 09/25/08 public meeting displayed to demonstrate funding breakdown (summarized in table below)].

Table 1. Funding Breakdown for Round 1 Projects

Restoration Category	Funding	Land Acquisition Value of Funded Projects
Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat	\$1,306,950	\$0
Wildlife Resources and Habitat	\$1,034,206 (\$261,750 on hold)	\$511,750 (\$261,750 on hold)
Recreational Use	\$792,355	\$0
Environmental Education and Outreach	\$866,489	\$0

7. Q: What is meant by land acquisition?
- A: We are looking for protection in perpetuity, i.e., through fee title (fee simple acquisition) or a conservation restriction (CR).
8. Q: Must land be protected as a pre-requisite for a habitat restoration project?
- A: We will expect a fee title (fee simple acquisition for the purposes of conservation) or CR be implemented as a means to protect habitat restoration projects in perpetuity.
9. Q: Are there any Minority, Women, and Disadvantaged Enterprise (MWDE) requirements?
- A: There are no MWDE requirements for this grant.
10. Q: Are there requirements for how costs are reimbursed if the approved project is one component of a larger project?
- A: Contract awardees must be able to demonstrate which part of the project is using NRD funds.

11. Q: Any general recommendations based on Round 1?

A: A longer proposal is not necessarily better.

12. Q: Is there a cap on funds for design vs. implementation? What about planning-only projects?

A: No set ratio, but we would evaluate closely the planning and implementation funding requests. Our goal is to fund on-the-ground projects. We recognize the need for design/planning costs, but projects that are “planning-only” will not rate very well.

13. Q: Is there a cap on \$/project or target number of projects to fund in Round 2?

A: No.

14. Q: What is the targeted funding amount for Round 3?

A: Approximately \$1.5 million.