



Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration Massachusetts SubCouncil *Round 1 Results of Review Team's Evaluation of Proposals and Ideas*

Public Information Meeting
September 21, 2006
Lenox Town Hall
Lenox, Massachusetts





Review Process

- Stage 1
 - Threshold Criteria
- Stage 2
 - Evaluation Criteria
 - Independent Review
 - Consensus Based Review
 - Evaluation Summary Memos
- Stage 3
 - NEPA and MEPA Compliance



Evaluation Criteria

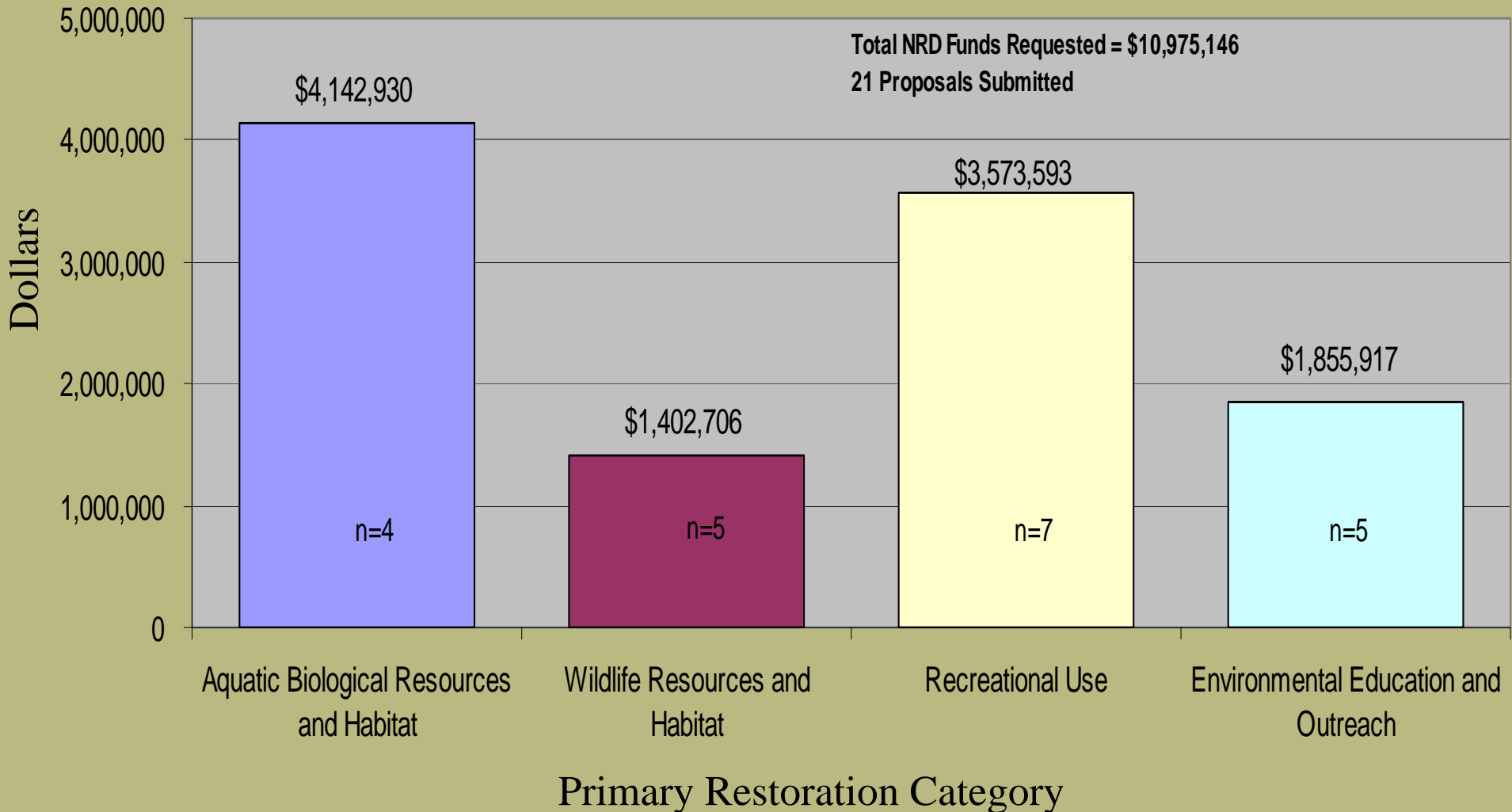
- Relevance and Applicability of Project
 - 7 Criteria (maximum of 85 points)
- Technical Merit
 - 6 Criteria (maximum of 65 points)
- Project Budget
 - 6 Criteria (maximum of 60 points)
- Socioeconomic Merit
 - 7 Criteria (maximum of 75 points)



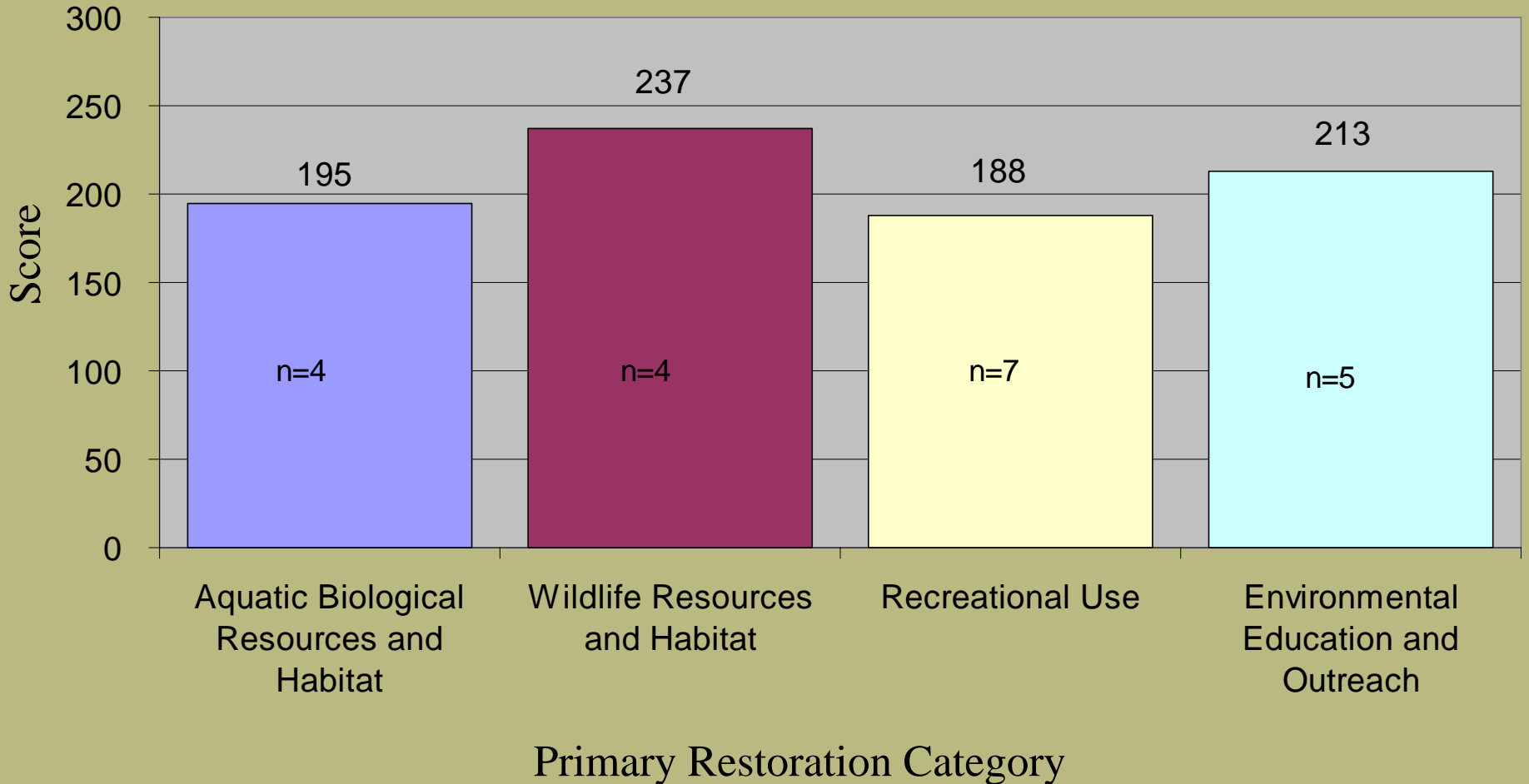
Reviewer Affiliations

- *Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)*
- *Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG)*
- *Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW)*
- *Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture (DFA)*
- *Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)*
- *United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)*
- *Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.*

Proposal Summary Information – NRD Funds Requested by Category



Evaluation Summary Information – Average Score by Category





Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat

Proposal No. 7 – *West Branch of the Housatonic Revitalization Project*, City of Pittsfield

- Develop greenway from Wahconah Park to Clapp Park.
- Remove Mill Street Dam.

\$2,057,000



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 7

- Two components should be separated into two distinct proposals.
- Dam removal preferable to “rock ramp” alternative.
- Concerns include:
 - Dam owner liability and cooperation with the proposed work?
 - A lack of discussion of the current condition of the dam and associated liability.
 - Determination of a potentially responsible party as related to potentially-contaminated sediments.



Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat

- Proposal No. 9 – *Proposal to Perform Aquatic Habitat Restoration of the Housatonic River*, ENSR Corporation
- Collect and assess data from Housatonic River.
 - Implement projects to improve communities of fish and related aquatic biota.

\$1,308,980



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 9

- Potential benefits but uncertainty associated with such benefits.
- Schedule and budget for the second phase of work (implementation) does not appear realistic.
- Does not appear to be sufficient consideration for contingency actions, particularly with regard to permitting work.



Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat

Proposal No. 11 – *Housatonic Watershed Fisheries Assessment*, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

- Survey fisheries resources in watershed.
- Monitor brown trout movement with radiotelemetry.

\$220,000



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 11

- Lack of discussion of coordination and integration with other groups, such as Trout Unlimited.
- Contingency actions not well addressed.
- Increased public outreach is recommended.



Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat

Proposal No. 18 – *Rare Species Recovery on the Housatonic River*, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

- Identify and protect rare species.
- Identify and prioritize sites for restoration.
- Provide conservation planning materials.

\$556,950



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 18

- “Project was well thought out.”
- Lack of outside funding and public outreach.
- Apparent lack of coordination with NGOs such as TNC and Audubon Society.



Wildlife Resources and Habitat

Proposal No. 2 – *Rising Pond Land Acquisition*, Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Inc.

- Acquire and protect 161 acres of land adjacent to the Housatonic River.

\$261,750



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 2

- Tangible, long-term benefits through land acquisition.
- Plan for long-term maintenance not addressed well.
- Considered high quality application.



Wildlife Resources and Habitat

Proposal No. 10 – *Proposal to Perform Bartholomew's Cobble Restoration*, ENSR Corporation

- Develop a plan to protect rare species habitat from sediment laden runoff near Half River oxbow.

\$18,700



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 10

- Planning project only – future funding would be required.
- Applicant team seems technically capable.
- Concern as to whether the Trustees of Reservations would have sufficient involvement with the project.
- Desire for inclusion of other members of Housatonic River watershed community in proposal.



Wildlife Resources and Habitat

Proposal No. 15 – *Clapp Park to Wild Acres Greenway Project*, City of Pittsfield

- Acquire 2 parcels of land on Southwest Branch of Housatonic River for protection from development and contribute to the eventual formation of a public-use greenway.

\$250,000



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 15

- Concern about feasibility of trail crossing railroad tracks.
- Consensus that acquired land would be protected from future development and future degradation.
- Adverse impact could result from creating trails in undisturbed areas.
- Lack of detail concerning final linkage between Clapp Park and Wild Acres.



Wildlife Resources and Habitat

Proposal No. 19 – *Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project*, Project Native

- Restore native habitat at Kampososa Bog.
- Place 100 acres of floodplain forest and buffer zone under conservation easements.

\$522,456



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 19

- General concern about applicant's apparent lack of experience on projects of this scale.
- Management and stewardship may be required beyond project timeframe.
- Potential conflict with private nurseries.
- Anticipated that project would be slow to start up.



Recreational Use

Proposal No. 1 – *Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk*,
Great Barrington Land Conservancy

- Reclaim 2.63 acres of riparian area.
- Provide environmental education.
- Conduct compost tea soil amendment studies.

\$133,308



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 1

- Expensive project but applicant's previous endeavors warrant expenditure.
- Desire for greater dissemination of knowledge and benefits to others in Housatonic River watershed.
- Increasing length of existing river walk or width of buffer zone would be beneficial.



Recreational Use

- Proposal No. 5 – *Lee River Walk*, The Lee Land Trust
- Provide recreational and educational pathway along riverbank in Lee.

\$62,000



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 5

- Project would provide valuable socioeconomic benefits.
- Proposal is lacking in detail.
- Potential for diverse partnerships not addressed.
- Concern about property owners support of project.



Recreational Use

Proposal No. 6 – *Proposal for a Beaded Necklace Housatonic River Greenway*, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

- Provide master planning, feasibility study, conceptual design, and development of a detailed implementation plan for a combined bikeway/greenway.

\$665,000



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 6

- No guarantee that projects “on the ground” will be developed, funded and implemented .
- Project budget is high for a planning study.
- Possibly 4 years before work is performed.
- Application was well prepared.



Recreational Use

Proposal No. 8 – *Proposal to Provide Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts*, ESS Group, Inc.

- Evaluate 37 potential river access sites on the Housatonic River and construct 6-8 new access sites.

\$460,000



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 8

- Proposed project may be beyond needs for additional access.
- Project should be scaled back.
- Significant public outreach regarding site selection.
- Housatonic Valley Association's role in project unclear.



Recreational Use

Proposal No. 16 – *Old Mill Trail*, Housatonic Valley Association

- Construct low-impact pedestrian trail adjacent to river between Dalton and Hinsdale.

\$244,047



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 16

- Project budget appeared high.
- Need assurances that trails and bridges will be maintained.
- Potential for adverse environmental impact through increased human use.
- Concern for crossing of Rt. 8.



Recreational Use

Proposal No. 20 – *The Rehabilitation of Forest Roads and Trails in the Housatonic River Watershed*,
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and
Recreation

- Selectively close, abandon, and reconstruct specific roads and trails to improve regional aquatic biological resources.

\$2,000,000



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 20

- Concept is good, but proposal is lacking in detail – especially in budget.
- Project is expensive.
- Concern about lack of partnerships, outreach, and long-term maintenance plan.
- Project does not provide opportunities for community involvement.
- Need for project evident, but recommended that applicant re-submit in Round 2 after enhancing proposal.



Recreational Use

Proposal No. 21 – *Hazard and Debris Removal from the Housatonic River (Project Idea)*, Gloria Wesley

- Remove hazards and debris in river from Fred Garner Park to Woods Pond for one year.
- Organize “Housatonic River Cleanup Sessions”.



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 21

- Benefits associated with woody debris, but other proposals for river access are dependent upon clear passage.
- Additional community involvement would be beneficial.
- Proposals for debris removal should include stakeholder input, debris removal management plan, and trash management goals.



Environmental Education and Outreach

Proposal No. 3 – *Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River*, Massachusetts Audubon Society

- Provide a comprehensive river education experience to all students in the Housatonic watershed.
- Offer a free summer canoe program.

\$874,842



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 3

- Concern regarding sustainability after completion of funding.
- Consensus that proposal inadequately addressed Natural Recovery Period criterion.
- Would have scored higher if other sources of funding identified.



Environmental Education and Outreach

Proposal No. 4 – *Housatonic River Museum*, City of Pittsfield

- Develop a museum for exploring the natural science of the Housatonic River watershed and examining the historical and ongoing relationship between humankind and the river.

\$298,100



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 4

- Linkage between museum implementation and resource recovery was poorly developed.
- Tangible “on the ground” restoration results would be difficult to quantify.
- Concern about probability of acquiring the additional \$2 million to complete the museum.



Environmental Education and Outreach

Proposal No. 12 – *The River Institute*, Housatonic River Initiative

- provide an on-going forum for higher education research, training, public and secondary education, and information dissemination relating to natural resource protection and awareness.

\$217,880



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 12

- No consensus on whether additional environmental testing needed beyond that already performed by DEP and EPA.
- High socioeconomic and educational value.
- Natural Recovery Period criterion poorly addressed.



Environmental Education and Outreach

Proposal No. 13 – *Berkshire Conservation Agent Program*,
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

- Provide technical assistance, training, and education to municipal Conservation Commissions.

\$248,555



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 13

- Concerns about sustainability of project after completion of funding.
- Concerns that majority of work to be accomplished by one person.
- Consensus that program would be beneficial to communities that chose to adopt it.
- Concern that proposal may be viewed as a no-bid four-year contract.



Environmental Education and Outreach

Proposal No. 14 – *Less Toxic Landscapes: A Healthier Housatonic River*, Center for Ecological Technology

- Utilize workshops, trainings, media, retail displays and social marketing techniques to address the water pollution caused by outdoor pesticide use.

\$216,540



Evaluation Summary: Proposal No. 14

- Concern whether best methodology for reaching chemical applicators.
- Acceptance by public is critical, but not guaranteed.
- Concern that chemical input to river would not be directly measured.
- Potential isolated pockets of acceptance, but community level acceptance questioned.

Ranking by Category - Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat

Proposal	Title	Score
18	Rare Species Recovery on the Housatonic River	205
11	Housatonic Watershed Fisheries Assessment	204
7	West Branch of the Housatonic Revitalization Project	196
9	Proposal to Perform Aquatic Habitat Restoration of the Housatonic River	174

Ranking by Category - Wildlife Resources and Habitat

Proposal	Title	Score
2	Rising Pond Land Acquisition	263
19	Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project	246
15	Clapp Park to Wild Acres Greenway Project	237
10	Proposal to Perform Bartholomew's Cobble Restoration	203

Ranking by Category - Recreational Use

Proposal	Title	Score
1	Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk	258
16	Old Mill Trail	227
8	Proposal to Provide Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts	208
20	The Rehabilitation of Forest Roads and Trails in the Housatonic River Watershed	173
6	Proposal for a Beaded Necklace Housatonic River Greenway	163
5	Lee River Walk	157
21	Hazard and Debris Removal from the Housatonic River (Project Idea)	143

Ranking by Category – Environmental Education and Outreach

Proposal	Title	Score
3	Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River	239
13	Berkshire Conservation Agent Program	229
14	Less Toxic Landscapes: A Healthier Housatonic River	223
4	Housatonic River Museum	207
12	The River Institute	193




Public Comment Period

Public Comment on Results of Review Team's
Evaluation of Proposals and Ideas accepted until
October 13, 2006.

Review Team Evaluation Comments
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tchadwell@woodlotalt.com

(Subject line: Review Team Evaluation Comments)



Project Schedule – subject to change

- Sept 21: Results of Review Team Evaluation
- Oct 6: Public Comments Due on Applications
- Oct: MA SubCouncil Determines Preliminary List of Proposed Alternatives
- Nov: Public Meeting – Preliminary Selection of Proposed Alternatives
 - Public Comment
- Dec: MA SubCouncil Determines Proposed Alternatives
- Jan: NEPA Evaluation
- Jan: MA SubCouncil Determines Preliminary Preferred Alternatives
- Feb: Release of DRAFT Restoration Plan (30-day review period)
- Mar: Public Meeting – DRAFT Restoration Plan Comments
- Mar: Release of FINAL Restoration Plan
- Apr: Public Meeting – Implementation of Restoration Plan
- May: Begin Funding Disbursement for Restoration Projects