

**General Electric/Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration
Round 1 Evaluation of Proposals and Ideas**

September 21, 2006

Prepared for: Massachusetts SubCouncil
Prepared by: Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.
Location: Lenox Town Hall, Lenox, MA
Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Public meeting began at 5:30 pm.

I. Opening Statement by John Lortie, Woodlot Alternatives, Inc., and Introductions

1. Introduction of voting members of Massachusetts SubCouncil (MA SubCouncil):
 - a. Dale Young, Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (State Trustee representative).
 - b. Veronica Varela, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Federal Trustee representative).
2. Introduction of Consultant Team:
John Lortie, Todd Chadwell, and Michael Chelminski, Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.
3. Request for comments on previous meeting minutes (no comments).
4. Evaluation Summary Memos handed out to audience.

**II. Slideshow Presentation Round 1 Evaluation of Proposals and Ideas by Todd Chadwell, Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.
(available at <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/library.htm>)**

1. Discussion of three stages of Review Process.
2. Description of Evaluation Criteria.
3. Identification of Reviewer Affiliations.
4. Summary information presented on NRD funds requested and average proposal score, sorted by Primary Restoration Category.
5. Brief summary of individual proposals and highlights of Evaluation Summary Memos.
6. Proposals ranked by Review Team Consensus-Based Score within Primary Restoration Categories.
7. Announcement that Public Comment on Evaluation of Proposals and Ideas would be received until October 6, 2006. *After presentation, a 1-week extension on public comment was requested by meeting attendees. The new deadline for receiving public comment is October 13, 2006.
8. Timetable for disbursement of funds presented.

III. Questions and Comments from Public

1. Public question on relevance of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to project selection. Response that MA SubCouncil will fully consider all available information regarding potential environmental effects of implementing restoration projects. Information regarding NEPA compliance may be found in the Housatonic River

Restoration Planning Strategy and Housatonic River Watershed Natural Resource Damages Assessment Restoration Project Selection Procedure (available at <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/library.htm>).

2. Public question on whether letters of support may be submitted. Response that letters of support would be accepted as public comment until the October 13, 2006, deadline for receiving public comment.
3. Comment from Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) that Proposal No. 20 (Rehabilitation of Forest Roads and Trails in the Housatonic River Watershed) fits within a larger context and that there is a state-wide problem/public debate on DCR maintaining roads.
4. Question from the City of Pittsfield concerning whether the potential impact of development would be considered when evaluating a project for funding. Response provided that the threat of development is considered, particularly in regards to land acquisition.
5. Comment from public regarding Proposal No. 20, that taxes collected from public should go to maintaining roads and DCR should not use Natural Resource Damages (NRD) funds for this type of work.
6. Question from the public concerning whether there would be an opportunity for applicants to address deficiencies in proposals identified by reviewers. Response provided that Clarification Letters and Letters of Support would be accepted during the public comment period.
7. Question from the public whether there is a set division of funds between restoration categories. Response provided that it is the MA SubCouncil's goal to fund at least one proposal in each restoration category.
8. Question from public regarding how proposal evaluation scores would be used. Response provided that scores are purely advisory to the MA SubCouncil.
9. Comment from public that public comment is important to the process, but public comment is only being accepted for two weeks. Follow-up question on whether an extension on public comment would be granted. Response provided that extension would be considered, but previous extensions have delayed the funding process.
10. Question from public regarding how many letters containing public comment had been received thus far. Response that approximately 15 letters containing public comment had been received.
11. Question directed to public whether extension for public comment was desired. Show of hands indicated that approximately 8 out of 30 people wanted an extension.
12. Comment from public that target date for disbursement of funds had been extended into 2007 work season (May 2007). Response that the public meeting planned in November 2006 and associated period for public comment would be canceled to expedite the funding process.
13. Question from public regarding how letters of support submitted with the application would be considered compared to public comment submitted at a later date. Response given that public comments would be considered equally independent of the date they are received (as long as the public comment is received prior to the deadline for receiving public comment).

14. Question from public regarding what format (prose or scoring) would be best for supporting a particular project. Response provided that either format would be acceptable.
15. Question from public whether the period for public comment would be extended. Response provided that period for public comment would be extended one week (until Oct. 13, 2006).
16. Question from public whether public comment would be posted on line. Response provided that all public comment and letters of support would be posted on line.
17. Question from the public regarding whether Trustees may partially fund proposals. Response provided that Trustees may fully or partially fund proposals.
18. Question from the public whether Proposal No. 17 (Integrated Habitat Acquisition Strategy – Project Idea Proposal by MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife), was evaluated. Response provided that because this Project Idea suggested changes to the overall restoration planning strategy, and did not propose specific parcels to be considered for land acquisition, the proposal was not scored concurrently with other proposals and ideas.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.