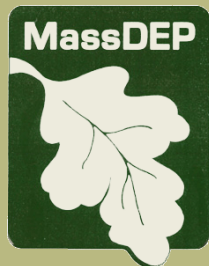




Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration Massachusetts SubCouncil



Draft Round 3 Restoration Plan & Supplemental Environmental Assessment (RP/SEA)



For Land Protection & Habitat Conservation

Public Information Meeting

August 23, 2012

Lenox Town Hall

Lenox, Massachusetts



Massachusetts SubCouncil, Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees
One Winter Street, 8th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02108



*Massachusetts SubCouncil
of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees*

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Background - Restoration Funding

- **MA SubCouncil is responsible for** disbursing funds from the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages (NRD) settlement.
- **Funds are used for compensatory restoration projects** that will restore, rehabilitate, replace, or acquire the equivalent of natural resources and/or their services that were injured or lost as a result of the release of hazardous materials, including PCBs, into the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River watershed.



Status of Round 1 Projects

- \$3.9 million awarded to 10 restoration projects
- 8 projects have been completed and have:
 - Restored 23 acres of wetland, floodplain, and riparian habitat
 - Acquired 149 acres of riparian, wetland and upland habitat
 - Created 2 miles of riverfront trails and 4 canoe access sites
 - Enhanced the protection of rare species throughout the watershed
 - Created HELP watershed curriculum and provided river-based education to over 5,000 students
 - Introduced over 800 people to the River through 48 public canoe trips
 - Provided technical assistance to 20 Conservation Commissions that led to protection of over 90 river miles, 10,000 wetland acres, and 9,500 upland acres.



Status of Round 2 Projects

- \$900,000 awarded for funding of 3 restoration projects
- Round 2 projects are:
 - Assessing and restoring fish and wildlife habitat continuity
 - Restoring riparian buffer and floodplain forest habitat
 - Controlling invasive species on over 300 acres of land



What is the Round 3 RP/SEA?

The Round 3 RP/SEA:

- Is a plan that presents the Trustees' proposed approach for identifying and funding Round 3 projects for compensatory restoration of the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River.
- Provides formal NEPA documentation.
- Is subject to public comment prior to finalization.
- Differs from Rounds 1 and 2.



Round 3 Overview

- Focus on **Land Acquisition to Conserve Habitat**
- **\$2 million** targeted for disbursement
- **Round 3 Restoration Priority Categories:**
 - Projects must address at least one of two habitat restoration categories:
 - *Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat*
 - *Wildlife Resources and Habitat*
 - Projects could additionally address the following secondary categories:
 - *Recreational Uses*
 - *Environmental Education and Outreach*



Eligibility

Who? Eligible applicants:

All private entities; local, state, federal and tribal governments; academic institutions; non-profit and commercial organizations.

What? Eligible projects:

Any project that would benefit injured natural resources and/or services in the Housatonic River watershed in Massachusetts through land acquisition to conserve habitat.

Where? Eligible project locations:

Projects may be conducted at any location, but they must directly benefit the injured natural resources and/or services in the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River watershed.



Round 3 Process

- **Issue Draft RP/SEA**
 - Public Meeting and 47-day Public Comment Period
- **Issue Final RP/SEA**
 - Public Meeting
- **Request For Responses (RFR) & Proposal Review**
 - Phase 1 (select proposals to advance to Phase 2)
 - Phase 2 (additional due diligence and final selection of projects)
- **Fund** selected projects
- *Optional:* Issue RFR for second sub-round of funding



Round 3 Proposal Review Process

- **Phase 1**

- 6 months to prepare proposals
- Evaluation and selection of proposals to advance to Phase 2
 - Stage 1: Six “Threshold Criteria”
 - Stage 2: Four categories of “Evaluation Criteria”

- **Phase 2**

- 6 months to perform due diligence including:
 - Title search
 - Appraisal
 - Physical inspection and historic research
- Due diligence funded on a per parcel basis
- Final selection of proposals for funding



Threshold Criteria (TC)

TC No. 1: Does the application contain the information necessary to proceed with an evaluation as described in the Restoration Project Selection Procedure (RPSP)?

TC No. 2: Does the proposed project restore, rehabilitate, replace, and/or acquire the equivalent of natural resources or natural resource services that were injured by the release of PCBs or other hazardous substances?



Threshold Criteria (continued)

TC No. 3: Is the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, an action that is presently required under other federal, state, or local law?

TC No. 4: Is the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, inconsistent with any federal, state, or local law, regulation, or policy?



Threshold Criteria (continued)

TC No. 5: Will the proposed project, in terms of its cost, be consistent with the stated goals of the MA SubCouncil to retain sufficient funds to 1) accomplish restoration over at least three rounds of proposal solicitations and 2) serve a wide geographic area that benefits the restoration priority categories?

TC No. 6: Will the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, be inconsistent with any ongoing or anticipated remedial actions (i.e., primary restoration) in the Housatonic River watershed?



Evaluation Criteria

<i>Category</i>	<i># of criteria</i>	<i>Max. points</i>
Relevance and Applicability	7	85
Technical Merit	6	65
Project Budget	6	60
Socioeconomic Merit	7	35
TOTAL	26	245

NOTE: Scoring for each criterion is a scale of High, Medium, or Low. Scores for criteria are weighted (i.e., some criteria have more points than others).



*Round 3 Timeline **

- **09/25/08** – Public Meeting to Discuss Round 2 Process
- **10/21/08** – Round 2 Land Acquisition Focus Group Public Meeting
- **02/25/09** – Round 2 Applicant Conference
- **08/02/12** – Draft Round 3 RP/SEA Released / Begin Public Comment Period
- **08/23/12** – Draft Round 3 RP/SEA Public Meeting

* As a result of the initial inclusion of Land Protection in Round 2, portions of the planning for Round 3 were conducted during the early planning phases of Round 2.



Anticipated Round 3 Timeline

2012

9/17/12 – Draft Round 3 RP/SEA Public Comment Deadline

2013

- Final Round 3 RP/SEA & FONSI Released
- RFR and Phase 1 Project Proposal Submittal Deadline
- Proposals Selected to Advance to Phase 2

2014

- Phase 2 Project Due Diligence Deadline
- Proposals selected for Round 3 funding
- *Optional: Second sub-round of funding*



Suggested References

- Restoration Planning Strategy (RPS)
- Restoration Project Selection Procedure (RPSP)
 - Evaluation of proposed projects
 - Project selection procedure
- Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA)
 - Conceptual restoration activities
- References can be downloaded at:

www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org



Public Comment Period

- Public Comment on Draft RP/SEA accepted until September 17th, 2012, at 5:00pm.
- Submit comments to:
 - Housatonic Draft Round 3 RP/SEA**
 - c/o Stantec Consulting Inc.**
 - 30 Park Drive**
 - Topsham, ME 04086**
 - robin.macewan@stantec.com**
 - (Subject line: Housatonic Draft Round 3 RP/SEA)**

Note: All public comments will be available for public review