



# MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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**CONTACT:**

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

## **Environmental Officials to Showcase Completed Restoration Projects, Discuss Round 4 Funding for Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program**

*Public Invited to an Open House on May 1 at Lenox Town Hall to Review Projects*

BOSTON – State and federal environmental officials will host an open house next month to showcase restoration projects funded as a part of the first three rounds of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program. The open house will also include a discussion of the anticipated fourth and final round of funding for restoration projects to compensate for natural resources that were injured or lost as a result of the release of hazardous materials from the General Electric facility in Pittsfield into the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River watershed.

The Massachusetts SubCouncil of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees will host the open house on Tuesday, May 1, 2018, at 5 p.m. at the Lenox Town Hall, 6 Walker St. The open house will showcase the 20 restoration projects funded in Rounds 1-3, and discussion of the timeline for Round 4 of the restoration program.

The restoration program was funded through a \$15 million natural resource damages (NRD) settlement as a part of the GE/Housatonic River Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration case. The settlement, originally filed as a consent decree in 2000, provided funding to compensate Massachusetts and Connecticut for natural resource damages caused by the release of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from GE's facility. PCB pollution affected aquatic wildlife and habitats, as well as waterfowl and predators that consume contaminated organisms.

In Round 1, approximately \$4 million was awarded for 10 restoration projects addressing habitat connectivity, rare species recovery, habitat enhancement and protection, floodplain restoration, recreational access, and environmental literacy. In Round 2, more than \$1 million was awarded to four projects addressing invasive species control, stream connectivity and floodplain habitat restoration, and educational programming. In [Round 3](#), \$2.4 million was awarded for six land protection and habitat conservation projects, conserving of more than 650 acres of wetland, stream, riparian and upland habitat.



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Approximately \$1 million is available for the fourth and final round of funding for restoration projects in the Massachusetts Housatonic River watershed. It is anticipated that Round 4 will solicit project proposals in all four priority restoration categories: Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat; Wildlife Resources and Habitat; Recreational Uses; and Environmental Education and Outreach. More information on the priority restoration categories, as described in the Restoration Project Selection Procedure, can be found [here](#).

The Massachusetts SubCouncil is responsible for administering the Commonwealth's portion of the settlement and is composed of Trustees from the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), represented by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Information about the Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program in Massachusetts is available [here](#).

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

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