

**General Electric/Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration
Public Meeting Presenting Round 2 Informational Meeting**

September 25, 2008

Prepared for: Massachusetts SubCouncil
Prepared by: Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (formerly Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.)
Location: Lenox Town Hall, Lenox, MA
Time: 5:42 pm – 6:29 pm

Public meeting began at 5:42 pm.

I. Opening Statement by John Lortie, Stantec Consulting Services Inc., and Introductions

1. Introduction of voting 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).
2. Introduction of Consultant Team:
John Lortie, Todd Chadwell, and Michael Chelminski, Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
3. Overview of Restoration Funding Process
4. Proposed approach to Round 2 Land Acquisition solicitation process is to improve flexibility of funding through a rolling submittal and review process. Details of process are not fully developed and are pending review of Commonwealth contracting rules.

II. Slideshow Presentation Round 2 Public Information Meeting by Todd Chadwell, Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

(available at <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/library.htm>)

1. Summary of Round 1 process and selected projects.
2. Summary of Proposed Round 2 Highlights
3. Summary of Proposed Round 3 Funding
4. Review of Round 1 Land Acquisition Criteria
5. Summary of Proposed Round 2 Land Acquisition Considerations
6. Summary of Round 2 Land Acquisition Timeline
7. Summary of Round 2 “Other Restoration” Process and Timeline

III. Questions and Comments from Public

1. Public comment about whether landowners would be approached by the Trustees or if landowners would approach the Trustees. Trustees Response: Applicants will develop a proposal and submit it to the Trustees.
2. Public comment regarding the Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS), developed by the University of Massachusetts. CAPS is a computer software program designed to assess the ecological integrity and biodiversity values based on natural community-specific models, in order to help prioritize lands for conservation



action based on their assessed ecological value. The Trustees commented that they will look into incorporating CAPS or other GIS tools into the land acquisition process.

3. Public question about whether the Natural Resource Damages Assessment (NRDA) funds would be used for PCB cleanup. Trustee Response: No, this funding is for the NRDA and therefore for compensatory restoration projects. The cleanup is being handled by EPA and DEP in accordance with processes presented in the Consent Decree.
4. Public question asking for an explanation of “focus areas.” Trustee Response: The term “focus areas” is being used to characterize areas with multiple characteristics that would make acquisition desirable.
5. Public comment suggesting that the Trustees consider publishing the criteria to be used for the land acquisition projects rather than identifying focus areas. Trustees Response: We will take this into consideration. The purpose of publishing the focus areas in the Round 2 Restoration Plan would be to provide as much transparency as possible regarding the attributes of the land parcels likely to be protected, short of publishing the specific parcel locations themselves.
6. Public comment regarding the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program’s (NHESP) current effort to identify parcels with rare species and that the information will not be ready in time to be used for the Round 2 selection process. The Trustees responded that they will consider the impact of performing Round 2 project solicitations before results from Round 1 projects have been evaluated.
7. Project Native questioned how the rolling submittal process would be affected if their proposal combined both restoration and acquisition elements. Which Request for Responses would be applicable to a proposal that contained both land acquisition and natural resource restoration activities? The Trustees responded that they had not considered this possibility for Round 2 and would evaluate how to handle such a proposal.
8. Public question regarding whether funds from Round 2 could be pushed into Round 3. Trustee Response: Pushing funds from Round 2 to Round 3 is possible.
9. Public question regarding whether preference would be given to fee or conservation easements. Trustee Response: Preference will not be given for fees vs. conservation easements.
10. Public comment regarding whether the Round 1 “Education” category was dropped as a category from Round 2 and how that decision was made. Trustee Response: Education category has not been dropped entirely. A natural resource restoration or land acquisition project that contained a supporting environmental education element would be acceptable for Round 2.
11. Public question about whether there will be more target areas within the terrestrial and aquatic habitat restoration category as this is a broad category. Trustee Response: We will use the same criteria. Projects with a nexus to injured resources will score higher.
12. Public question about verifying meeting date for October. Trustee Response: We want to make sure the date works for most (if not, all) stakeholders. We will formally announce the date of the meeting at a later time.

Meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.