

Open House Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages Fund

Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program

Date/Time: May 1, 2018 / 5:00 PM Open House, 6:30 PM Presentation
Place: Lenox Town Hall Auditorium, Lenox, Massachusetts
Attendees: Thomas Potter (MassDEP), State Trustee Representative, MA SubCouncil;
David Cameron (MassDEP), Trustee Representative Alternative, MA SubCouncil;
Karen Pelto (MassDEP), NRD Program Coordinator;
Cathy Kiley (MassDEP); NRD Contract Administrator;
Molly Sperduto (USFWS), Federal Trustee Representative, MA SubCouncil;
Lauren Bennett (USFWS);
Robin MacEwan (Stantec); and
Attendees (see Attendance Sheet, attached)
Distribution: Program Website (www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org)

These meeting notes summarize the proceedings, including the responses provided during the question-and-answer period of a presentation provided by the Massachusetts SubCouncil of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees (MA SubCouncil) following the Open House.

Open House

Between approximately 5:00 – 6:30 PM, project proponents and partners showcased projects funded through Rounds 1, 2 and 3 of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program (Restoration Program).

MA SubCouncil Presentation

At approximately 6:30 PM, the MA SubCouncil formally welcomed attendees and invited attendees to introduce themselves. The MA SubCouncil then gave a presentation that provided an overview of the Restoration Program, summarized the results of Rounds 1, 2 and 3 of the Restoration Program, and provided an overview of the anticipated approach and timeline for Round 4 of the Restoration Program.

The meeting agenda and PowerPoint presentation slides from the MA SubCouncil's presentation are available on the program website at: <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/library.htm>.

Additional resources referenced during the meeting, including the Restoration Project Selection Procedure (RPSP) are also available on the program website at: <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/library.htm>.

Open Forum¹

An Open Forum / Q&A session followed the MA SubCouncil's presentation. Questions posed by the audience, and answers provided by the MA SubCouncil, are summarized below.

¹ Questions and responses presented in these meeting notes are paraphrased and summarized; they do not represent direct quotes. Additional information has been added to certain responses presented here for the purpose of further clarification.

Question 1: Does any one of the four Restoration Priority Categories identified in the RPSP have a higher value or priority than another?

MA SubCouncil Response: No; no one category is anticipated to have a higher value or priority than another, and evaluation and scoring for all proposals will follow the approach described in the RPSP. The MA SubCouncil anticipates that Round 4 will accept proposals for projects in all four Restoration Priority Categories. This approach is similar to Round 1 of the Restoration Program; whereas, Round 2 was focused exclusively on the first two categories ("Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat" and "Wildlife Resource and Habitat") and Round 3 was focused on land acquisition projects.

Question 2: How were the statistics presented in the "Summary of Restoration Benefits" slide of tonight's presentation developed, and will these statistics be used to determine priorities for Round 4?

MA SubCouncil Response: The quantification of restoration benefits presented in tonight's presentation is a summary of information provided to the MA SubCouncil by project proponents for projects funded as a part of Rounds 1, 2, and 3 of the Restoration Program. These numbers are considered a work-in-progress and may be updated as additional information is provided to the MA SubCouncil by project proponents. The Restoration Program did not identify specific, quantified targets for restoration (e.g., a minimum number of acreage to be restored) and focuses instead on the goal of funding projects that serve a wide geographic area and fall within the four Restoration Priority Categories identified by the MA SubCouncil during the planning phases of the Restoration Program. The MA SubCouncil has not identified a Restoration Priority Category that appears underrepresented and does not anticipate identifying a priority category for Round 4.

Question 3: What is the estimated timeline for completion of Round 4?

MA SubCouncil Response: The timeline for completion of Round 4 depends on variables including the types of projects funded. Selected projects will be contracted with a base timeframe (e.g., 3 years) with an opportunity to extend contracts if/as needed to respond to changing circumstances.

Question 4: Would you consider a proposal for a 5-year project?

MA SubCouncil Response: Project proposals will be evaluated and scored based on how they meet the evaluation criteria identified in the RPSP, and there are no criteria that would preclude eligibility of a 5-year project.

The MA SubCouncil is responsible for ensuring projects are completed as proposed and are obligated to play an oversight role. Nation-wide, there's an increasing emphasis on monitoring of NRD Restoration Projects. The MA SubCouncil anticipates that there will be a greater emphasis on incorporating monitoring and documentation of benefits into Round 4 project proposals.

Question 5: Will Round 4 prioritize activity-based projects proposed to take place on land acquired using Restoration Program funds, and are land acquisition project eligible for Round 4 funding?

MA SubCouncil Response: A project that restores land acquired with Restoration Program funding may enhance the value of the project and the associated compensatory restoration

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potential. It is possible that this could be viewed positively and may be reflected in the scoring for related evaluation criteria.

All four Restoration Priority Categories are being considered in Round 4, and land acquisition project will be eligible for Round 4 funding.

Question 6: Does leveraging other funding make a project more competitive?

MA SubCouncil Response: *Leveraging of other funding is not required; however, this is addressed in the evaluation criteria and factors into the overall scoring potential of the project. The RPSP is available on the program website and provides detailed information on each evaluation criterion and related scoring.*

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:35 PM.

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of the items discussed. If discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact Thomas Potter at 617-292-5628.

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

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Attachment: Attendance Sheet

**Massachusetts SubCouncil, Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees
General Electric/Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration**

OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, May 1, 2018
5:00 PM
Lenox Library
6 Walker Street
Lenox, Massachusetts

ATTENDANCE SHEET

Name	Organization
Robin MacEwan	Stantec
Cathy Kiley	MassDEP
Kate Buttolph	Mass Audubon
Dale Abrams	Mass Audubon
Dennis Regan	HVA
Alison Dixon	HVA
Mackenzie Greer	BNRC
Jim McGrath	City of Pittsfield
Alex Hackman	DFG Div of Ecological Restoration
Lauren Bennett	USFWS
Julie Richburg	The Trustees

Name	Organization
David Cameron	MassDEP
Gianina Burnett	Stantec
Thomas Potter	MassDEP
Karen Pelto	MassDEP
Molly Sperduto	USFWS
Lauren Gaherty	BRPC
Becky Cushing	Mass Audubon
Elia Del Molino	BEAT
Melissa Lenker	ESS Group
Matt Ladewig	ESS Group
Narain Schroeder	BNRC
Jon Regosin	Mass Wildlife / NHESP
Jenny Hansell	BNRC
Gayle Tardif -Raser	Mass Audubon
Gail Cersia	Berkshire Wetland Services