



# Massachusetts SubCouncil Trustee Update

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EPA Housatonic River Citizens Coordinating  
Council

***November 18, 2015 Meeting***

Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages Fund





# ***Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program***

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## **GE/Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages (NRD) Settlement**

- Consent Decree in 2000
- \$15 million in damages as compensation for resource damages
  - Approx. \$7.5 million targeted for projects in Massachusetts

## **Massachusetts SubCouncil of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees**

- Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), represented by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
- Department of the Interior (DOI): U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)



# ***Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program***

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## **Massachusetts SubCouncil Voting Members**

### **Karen Pelto**

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### **Molly Sperduto**

#### **Trustee Representative for the DOI / USFWS**

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## ***Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program***

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**The MA SubCouncil is responsible for** disbursing funds from the Massachusetts portion of the 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.

**Two previous rounds and the first subround of Round 3** of restoration projects have been funded as a part of this Restoration Program.





## *Status of Round 1 Projects*

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- 9 of 10 projects have been completed and have:
  - Restored 23 acres of wetland, floodplain, and riparian habitat in Sheffield, Stockbridge, and Great Barrington
    - *Led by Project Native*
  - Protected 174 acres of riparian, wetland and upland buffer habitat in Pittsfield, Great Barrington, and West Stockbridge
    - *Led by the City of Pittsfield and Berkshire Natural Resources Council*
  - Removed 29 tons of steel, 29 tons of solid waste, 88 cubic yards of concrete, and 5 tons of tires from oxbow in Great Barrington
    - *Led by Berkshire Natural Resources Council with assistance from MassDEP's Technical and Financial Services Division of the Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup*
  - Created 2 miles of riverfront trails and 4 canoe access sites in Dalton, Pittsfield, Lee, Great Barrington, and Sheffield
    - *Led by the Housatonic Valley Authority*



## *Status of Round 1 Projects*

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- 9 of 10 projects have been completed and have:
  - Enhanced the protection of rare species throughout the watershed
    - *Led by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program*
  - 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
    - *Led by MassAudubon*
  - 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
    - *Led by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission*
  - Mill Street/Tel Electric Dam Removal is in final engineering design and EENF will be filed in Dec 2015 or Jan 2016
    - *Led by Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration in partnership with the City of Pittsfield*





# *Gallery of Round 1 Projects*



Waypoint #5 Brownson cleanup







## *Status of Round 2 Projects*

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- Round 2 projects are currently:
  - Finalizing permits and design to replace the first of two culverts on a coldwater tributary in Pittsfield following surveys of 475 stream crossings by roads in 11 towns
    - *Led by Housatonic Valley Association and Berkshire Environmental Action Team*







## *Status of Round 2 Projects*

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- Round 2 projects are currently:
  - Monitoring nearly 2,000 trees that were planted in August 2013 to restore 10 acres of floodplain forest and controlling invasive species on 85 acres at Bartholemew's Cobble
    - *Led by The Trustees of Reservations*





## *Status of Round 2 Projects*

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- Round 2 projects are currently:
  - Controlling invasive species on 266 acres of protected land in Stockbridge and Sheffield, including planting native trees along the river in Stockbridge as follow-up
    - *Led by Native Habitat Restoration*



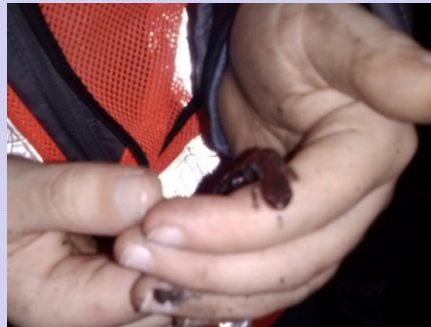




## *Status of Round 2 Projects*

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- One Round 2 project has been completed and:
  - Over 400 students at 3 high schools, 1 middle school afterschool program, and 5 elementary schools experienced river ecology in the field and classroom
  - More than 100 participants in six public programs learned about Sackett Brook's ecology and the Gravesleigh Dam removal in Pittsfield
    - *Led by MassAudubon*







## *Round 3 Overview*

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- Focus on **Land Acquisition to Conserve Habitat**
  - Based on feedback from applicants, agencies, and non-profit organizations that participated in Round 1 (Land Acquisition Focus Group)
  - **\$2 million** targeted for disbursement
- **May 2013:** Final Round 3 Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment released
- **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*



## *Status of Round 3, first subround Projects*

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- **3 projects selected in first subround (\$1,147,000):**
  - **Hinsdale:** 90 acres of wetland and upland habitat within Hinsdale Flats ACEC, supports rare species habitat.
  - **Egremont:** 23 acres of coldwater fisheries, riparian, floodplain, and upland habitat along a tributary to the Housatonic that also supports rare species habitat.
    - *Led by MassWildlife*
  - **Great Barrington:** 218 acres of wetland, stream, riparian, and upland habitat along Thomas & Palmer Brook, a tributary to the Housatonic.
    - *Led by Berkshire Natural Resources Council*



# ***Round 3 Grant Announcement & Application***

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## **Second Subround proposals (Phase 1) due April 6, 2016**

- \$853,000 available
- Applicants Conference December 10, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. in Lenox at the Library
- Written questions accepted until January 8, 2015

## **Grant Announcement and Application available at:**

- Program website at: [www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org](http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org)
- MassDEP NRD website at:  
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/nrd/nrd-restoration-funding-opportunities.html>
- Commonwealth's Procurement website(COMMBUYS) available at:  
[www.commbuys.com.html](http://www.commbuys.com.html)
- Via email to known interested parties





## *Round 3 second subround GAA Timeline*

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PROCUREMENT EVENT	DATE
Grant Announcement Posted on MassDEP website and COMMBUYS	October 7, 2015
Applicant's Conference	December 10 2015; 5:30 pm
Deadline for submission of written questions to MassDEP Grant Contact person (see Section 2D)	January 8, 2015; 5:00pm
Official answers posted on MassDEP website and COMMBUYS	January 22, 2016; 5:00pm
Grant Application due date (Phase I)	<b>April 6, 2016 at 4:30 pm</b>
Announcement of awards for projects selected for Phase 2 on MassDEP Website	June 30, 2016 (estimated)
Contract Start Date Phase 2 – Due Diligence Analysis	July 1, 2016 (estimated)
Phase 2 Due Diligence Analysis due date	January 2, 2017 (estimated)
Announcement of final funding awards (after Phase 2 Review)	April 1, 2017 (estimated)



## *Trustee Oversight*

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- 2000 Consent Decree prescribes Restoration Work to be completed by GE as part of Removal Actions
- Natural Resource Trustees are charged with ensuring the installation and overseeing the performance of Restoration Work
- In 2015, the Trustees and/or their expert Stantec participated in field visits and reviewed monitoring reports for the following Natural Resource Restoration/Enhancement (NRR/E) measures:
  - East Street Area 2-South: May and June Cypress Spurge Observations and Proposed Response
  - Silver Lake: May and August Inspection
  - Lyman Street Area and Newell Street Area II: August **Final** Inspection
  - Hill 78 OPCA: May, June, and August Cypress Spurge Observations
  - 1 ½ Mile Reach: July Qualitative Re-Vegetation Monitoring Inspection



## ***Resources:*** ***Restoration Program Resources***

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**Resources specific to the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program include:**

- Restoration Planning Strategy (RPS)
- Restoration Project Selection Procedure (RPSP)
- Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA)
- Round 3 RP/SEA
- Round 2 RP/SEA
- Round 1 RP/SEA

**References are available at the Restoration Program Website:**

[www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org](http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org)