



MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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State and Federal Officials Solicit Habitat Restoration Projects in the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River Watershed

BOSTON – Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Maeve Vallely Bartlett today announced that EEA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are soliciting proposals to improve habitat for native coldwater fish in the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord rivers watershed using \$300,000 from the Nyanza Chemical Superfund site settlement.

Proposals could range from reducing erosion and planting appropriate riparian vegetation to improving in-stream habitat. Project funds were allocated as part of the 2012 final restoration plan and environmental assessment (Final RP/EA) for the Nyanza Superfund site that has already authorized 12 projects benefiting the wildlife, people and landscape of the Sudbury River Watershed.

“The Commonwealth continues to invest in habitat restoration to improve the resiliency of critical habitats and address past contamination issues,” said Secretary Bartlett. “These funds will continue those efforts by restoring coldwater fisheries in the Sudbury River Watershed.”

“The Nyanza natural resource damages settlement has already supported projects with wide-ranging benefits to wildlife and people, including healthier wetlands for waterfowl to increased opportunities for enjoying the outdoors at the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge,” said Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director Wendi Weber. “We now encourage local organizations and towns to propose projects that focus on improving stream habitats, ultimately benefiting our coldwater fisheries, the wildlife that depend upon them and the people that enjoy these resources.”

“We expect some great projects to be funded through this effort, which will help us recover and improve access to important wetland and river habitat along the Sudbury River Watershed,” said NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator John Bullard. “This will benefit fish populations, like river herring, American eel and American shad, and provide recreational opportunities and economic benefits to the 15 communities in this watershed.”

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In 1998, the three agencies – composing the Nyanza Natural Resources Damages Trustee Council – reached a \$3 million settlement with parties for natural resources harmed by mercury and other contaminants from the Nyanza site in Ashland. Since that time, interest earned on the settlement funds has increased the total amount of funding available for restoration activities to approximately \$3.7 million. A copy of the Final RP/EA that was released in August 2012 by the Trustee Council following public review and comment is available at:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/cleanup/sites/nyrp.pdf>

Details regarding project eligibility and instructions for submitting a grant application are provided in the Grant Announcement and Application package that is available on the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Natural Resources Damages (NRD) Program web site at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/cleanup/sites/nrd/habnrdgr.pdf>

Hard copies of application materials are available at the Ashland Public Library.

An applicant conference will be held on Tuesday, August 5, 2014, from 7-9 p.m., at the Memorial Building, 150 Concord Street, Framingham. At this meeting, the Nyanza NRD Trustee Council will review the grant announcement and application and will address attendees' questions regarding the grant application process.

Written questions will be accepted by MassDEP until Tuesday, August 19, 2014, and proposals will be accepted by MassDEP until 4:30 p.m. on September 19, 2014. Additional information concerning possible projects proposals and the application process can be obtained by contacting MassDEP NRD Program Coordinator Karen I. Pelto at 617-292-5785 or at karen.pelto@state.ma.us

The Nyanza NRD Trustee Council representatives are: Rose Knox and Karen Pelto – MassDEP; Molly B. Sperduto – USFWS New England Field Office; and Eric W. Hutchins – NOAA Restoration Center.

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