

# Patrick Administration Announces \$148,000 for Ecological Restoration Projects

## Projects enhance habitat, adapt to climate change and spur job creation

BOSTON – Wednesday, September 11, 2013 – Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan today announced \$148,000 in grants for river and wetland restoration projects in six communities across the Commonwealth. The funding will support high priority projects in Lancaster, North Adams, Pittsfield, Plymouth, Truro and Wellfleet - and contribute to the state's growing restoration economy.

"Ecological restoration projects not only improve natural habitats important to local communities, but also spur job creation and stimulate local economic activity," said Secretary Sullivan. "These projects can decrease flooding, improve water quality, increase property values and enhance adaptation to climate change."

Selected projects will provide significant social, environmental and economic return on investment to the Commonwealth and the communities they affect.

All grants are funded by the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Division of Ecological Restoration (DER). Projects accepted into this program are eligible to receive both direct grants and contracted technical services funded by DER.

"In partnership with local communities, landowners and many other partners, public and private funds are invested in these projects to restore degraded habitats that benefit numerous fish and wildlife species," said Commissioner Mary Griffin.

"This funding from the Department of Fish and Game will greatly aid the process of removing the Off-Billington Street Dam," said Senate President Therese Murray. "Its final removal will yield many benefits, including a much-needed restoration of the ecological balance in the area as well as significant improvements to water management."

There are over 70 DER Priority Projects across the state:

- Wekepeke Brook Restoration — Town of Lancaster, \$30,000 — This project involves the removal of the Bartlett Dam, owned by the Town of Lancaster, for the purposes of improving the ecological health of Wekepeke Brook, decommissioning obsolete infrastructure and eliminating future liability for the Town. DER funding will support dam removal activities that are expected to begin in the fall of 2013.
- Herring River Estuary Restoration — Friends of Herring River, Wellfleet and Truro, \$50,000 — DER is working with numerous partners to restore tidal exchange to approximately 1,000 acres of degraded estuarine habitats along the Herring River that have been blocked from tidal flow for over 100 years. The project will also improve diadromous fish access to hundreds of acres of spawning ponds. DER funding will support critical tasks associated with preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement and Report, development of project engineering designs and coordination of multiple project development activities.

- Pecks Brook & West Branch Housatonic River Flow Restoration — Housatonic Valley Association, Pittsfield, \$3,000 — DER is working with multiple partners to restore natural stream flows and improve aquatic habitat in three rivers in the Housatonic River watershed: Pecks Brook, Larrywaug Brook, and the West Branch of the Housatonic River that are all Coldwater Fishery Resources. DER funding will be used to conduct a baseline river habitat assessment at the Onota Lake dam on Pecks Brook. This assessment will help partners develop dam management plan guidelines that consider the needs of both lake uses and downstream habitat protection.
- Hoosic River Flood Chute Naturalization Project — Hoosic River Revival, North Adams, \$25,000 — This project seeks to improve water quality and the ecological and social functions of the impaired Hoosic River in North Adams through restoration of in-stream, riparian habitat and a healthy connection of the river to its flood plain as part of a comprehensive approach for revitalizing the downtown riverfront in this Environmental Justice community. In 2012, the Hoosic River Revival completed a feasibility study of revitalization and restoration alternatives for both branches of the Hoosic River. DER funding will be used to advance engineering design of a pilot project identified in the feasibility study findings.
- Town Brook Restoration Project/Off Billington Street Dam Removal — Town of Plymouth, \$40,000 — Town Brook is a 1.5-mile stream that originates at the 269-acre Billington Sea and flows into historic Plymouth Harbor. The Off Billington Street Dam/Town Brook Dam is an 8.4 foot tall dam constructed of earth fill with masonry walls. The project will restore and enhance self-sustaining populations of anadromous fish through removal of the dam, dispense with a potential public safety hazard, and provide significant social and recreational benefits through its contributions to the Town Brook Greenway and the continuation of the Pilgrim Trail. DER funding will support project implementation which is expected to begin in the fall of 2013.

The mission of the Division of Ecological Restoration is to restore and protect the Commonwealth's rivers, wetlands and watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment. The Division was created in 2009 with the merger of the Riverways and Wetlands Restoration Programs.

The [Department of Fish and Game](#) (DFG) is responsible for promoting the conservation and enjoyment of the Commonwealth's natural resources. DFG carries out this mission through land protection and wildlife habitat management, management of inland and marine fish and wildlife species, and ecological restoration of fresh water, salt water, and terrestrial habitats. DFG promotes enjoyment of the Massachusetts environment through outdoor skills workshops, fishing festivals and other educational programs, and by enhancing access to the Commonwealth's rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.