

# Patrick-Murray Administration Celebrates 20th Anniversary of Massachusetts Environmental Trust

BOSTON - Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Ian Bowles will join public officials, business stakeholders, environmental advocacy groups and watershed organizations at a statewide water quality conference tomorrow (11/10) to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET).

The "Conference on the Water Resources of Massachusetts" will be held at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester from 8 a.m. to 4: 30 p.m. The event will cover emerging environmental needs and problems that could benefit from MET grant funding, including climate change preparedness, contaminants, watershed-scale restoration and improvement, and other topics.

"I'm honored to celebrate MET's 20-year effort to restore the Commonwealth's water resources," said Secretary Bowles. "Through its partnerships with watershed organizations, environmental advocacy groups and concerned citizens, MET will continue to deliver these great benefits to our environment and our citizens in the years to come."

"We at the Trust are grateful to our grantees and the many partnering organization and individuals who have made this grant-making possible, including the more than 40,000 motorists that have purchased our Right Whale, Leaping Brook Trout and Blackstone Valley Mill license plates," said MET Chairman James R. Gomes. "As we look back on the Trusts' past, we also look forward to addressing the future threats to our environment."

The MET came about in 1988, as a result of a 1986 federal court order on the cleanup of Boston Harbor, which assessed the Commonwealth \$2 million in financial penalties. Then Secretary for Environmental Affairs Jamie Hoyte created a new state trust that would disburse this money as grants to improve the condition of the harbor. Today, Boston Harbor is one of the cleanest urban harbors in the nation. MET was established as a state Trust by Chapter 236, Section 7 of the Acts of 1988, and through the years its mission was expanded to encompass restoring and safeguarding all of the Commonwealth's water resources.

MET is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Since its creation as part of the Boston Harbor cleanup, the Trust has awarded over \$17 million in small grants to municipalities and nonprofit organizations for environmental education, research and stewardship activities statewide.

Grant funding comes through two sources: environmental enforcement actions and sales of MET's three environmentally-themed license plates, which together generate close to \$1 million annually for the Trust. Proceeds from the new Land and Water license plate will go towards a new MET grant program that will provide funding to land trusts and other conservation organizations to purchase and preserve land for watershed protection.

Throughout its existence, MET has played a role in critical environmental programs that have benefited the entire Commonwealth. It has worked to restore critical wetlands and aquatic and marine habitat, contributed scientific research to improve human and animal health through the prevention of water pollution, and provided emergency funding to monitor and rescue entangled right whales in Cape Cod Bay. In addition, MET created citizen-led water quality monitoring programs in nearly every Massachusetts watershed, and provided funding to community foundations to create environmental grant-making endowments and education programs to encourage responsible environmental stewardship.

Five years ago, MET provided financial support to establish a panel of marine experts to investigate ocean management, which led to the eventual enactment of the Massachusetts Oceans Act of 2008. The Act directed EEA to craft the first-in-the-nation Ocean Management Plan, which will take effect on January 1, 2010.

[For more information about the Conference on the Water Resources of Massachusetts, click here.](#)

