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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Designates Priority River and Wetland Restoration Projects

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Fish and Game

Division of Ecological Restoration

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Feedback

BOSTON – The Baker Polito Administration today announced that 12 river and wetland restoration projects across the Commonwealth will be designated Priority Projects through the Department of Fish and Game’s (DFG) Division of Ecological Restoration (DER). Upon receiving designation, Priority Projects are eligible for technical services, including data collection, engineering, design work, permitting, project management and grants.

“Ecological restoration is an important tool for local stakeholders working to protect and preserve rivers and wetlands across the Commonwealth,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “In addition to the assistance provided at the local level, the Priority Project Program assists the state in ensuring that environmental assets are able to adapt to the impacts of climate change.”

The new Priority Projects include dam removals, culvert replacements, urban river revitalization, salt marsh restoration, and streamflow restoration. Each project restores healthy habitat while also helping communities prevent storm damage, address aging infrastructure, and improve outdoor recreation.

“Communities and land owners are on the front lines of climate change, and Priority Projects are critical to ensure habitat restoration and climate adaptation,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “Through ongoing collaboration, the Commonwealth will continue to work with local and private partners to restore and protect critical environmental resources.

“The new dam removal, streamflow restoration, and salt marsh restoration projects expand habitat for Eastern brook trout, coastal waterfowl, and many other fish and wildlife species,” **said Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ronald Amidon**. “The projects also open up new opportunities for paddling, nature observation, and other kinds of outdoor recreation.”

Once completed, the projects will provide significant social, environmental and economic benefits to the Commonwealth and local communities. Currently, more than 45 active [ecological restoration projects](/eea/agencies/dfg/der/der-priority-projects-map.html) throughout the state are designated as Priority Projects.

The Priority Projects selected by the Baker-Polito Administration include:

Stony Brook Flow Restoration - Littleton

Through this project, DER will provide assistance to the Town of Littleton to engage stakeholders in a variety of modeling and data collection efforts regarding streamflow and restoration of streamflow. The project builds on previous collaboration between DER and the Town of Littleton.

Great Marsh Restoration Project - Newbury, Essex, and Ipswich

Through this project, the Trustees of Reservations will bring together multiple stakeholders to pilot innovative methods for restoring saltmarsh habitat in the face of sea level rise.

Schenob Brook Restoration/Becker Pond Dam Removal - Mount Washington

Through this project, and in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the dam will be removed. As a result, wild Eastern brook trout and other species threatened by the effects of climate change will benefit.

Osgood Brook Restoration/Bowen's Pond Dam Removal - Wendell

Through this project, the dam will be removed. As a result, wild Eastern brook trout and other species threatened by the effects of climate change will benefit.

Sucker Brook Restoration - Pepperell

Through this project, and in partnership with the Trout Unlimited Sqaun-a-Tissit Chapter and the Town of Pepperell, plans will be developed to remove a small dam and upgrade a stream crossing in the Keyes-Parker Conservation Area to benefit Eastern brook trout and other species.

Ware River Restoration/Wheelwright Dam Removal - Hardwick

Through this project, DER will partner with a private landowner and the East Quabbin Land Trust to explore options for removal of the dam on the mainstem of the Ware River on the Hardwick/New Braintree border. This project will reconnect over 100 miles of mainstem and tributary habitat.

Traphole Brook Restoration - Norwood and Walpole

Through this project, the Neponset River Watershed Association (NEPRWA), in collaboration with landowners and several regional environmental entities, will restore ecological functions to Traphole Brook, which is home to one of the few remaining wild Eastern brook trout populations in the greater Boston area.

Upper Child's River Restoration Project - Falmouth

Through this project, and in partnership with the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club, several stream barriers will be removed in an effort to re-naturalize the river's channel and floodplain through the former cranberry bogs to benefit a variety of species including wild Eastern brook trout and American eel.

Mill Brook Bogs Restoration - Freetown

Through this project, water controls and fill material associated with the former plantation and re-naturalize the stream channel through the wetland will be removed. Restoration of this site will complement conservation efforts in the adjacent Southeastern Massachusetts BioReserve.

Mattapoissett Bogs Restoration, Mattapoissett

Through this project, and in partnership with the Buzzards Bay Coalition and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, 57 acres of former cranberry plantation in Mattapoissett will be restored. The project will restore connectivity on Tripp's Mill Brook and improve habitat for rare species by restoring hydrology, controlling invasive plants, and introducing native plantings.

The Provisional Priority Projects selected by the Baker-Polito Administration include:

Stewart Bog Restoration – Rochester

Project will be in partnership with The Buzzards Bay Coalition.

Abbey Brook Revitalization – Chicopee

Project will be in partnership with the City of Chicopee.

“The Priority Projects Program is the primary vehicle by which the Division of Ecological Restoration pursues aquatic habitat restoration and river revitalization projects that present the greatest benefit to the Commonwealth – both ecologically and socially,” **said Division of Ecological Restoration Director Beth Lambert.** “On average these projects leverage significant federal and state funds, and projects are evaluated on their ecological benefit, cost, size, practicality, feasibility, opportunity for public education and recreation, available program resources, and partner support.”

“Maintaining viable fish stock is dependent on a number of factors, including dam removal,” **said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer), Senate Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.** “I appreciate the partnership between private landowners, local and state environmental groups and agencies to preserve critical habitat and the protection and conservation of species.”

“Water and wetland restoration projects are an important part of the work Massachusetts is doing to try and lessen the effects of climate change. As the Representative from the 4th Berkshires, I’m thrilled to hear that the Schenob Brook Restoration and Becker Pond Dam Removal in the town of Mount Washington in my district has been designated a DFG priority project, making it eligible for technical services as well as fundraising help from the Division of Ecological Restoration,” **said State Representative Smitty Pignatelli (D-Lenox), House Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.** “I’m grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration for emphasizing our need to restore healthy habitats while helping communities prevent storm damage and maintain their infrastructure.”

“With this funding from the Baker-Polito administration through the Department of Fish and Game, a hard look can be taken at the preservation and restoration of some our most

vital environmental areas,” **said State Representative Donald Berthiaume (R-Spencer)**.

“I’m looking forward to seeing improved trout habitat at this site once the Becker Pond Dam is fully removed,” **said State Senator Adam G. Hinds (D- Pittsfield)**. “This partnership between The Nature Conservancy, the Commonwealth and Mount Washington will help us be better stewards of our precious natural resources in the Berkshires.”

“This project will restore and preserve fifty-seven acres of a former cranberry plantation while providing a natural habitat for wildlife to flourish in coming years,” **said Senate Assistant Majority Leader Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford)**. “Protecting our environment and open space for future generations to utilize and enjoy is of paramount importance.”

“The Mattapoissett River Restoration project is essential in restoring the habitat, local wildlife and allowing underground water protections for Mattapoissett and neighboring residents,” **said State Representative William M. Straus (D-Mattapoissett)**. “The assistance that DER will be providing the Coalition and NRCS is a vital step in the right direction to the further protection of this ecological area.”

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DER restores and protects rivers, wetlands, and watersheds in Massachusetts for the benefit of people and the environment.

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