

Ebb & Flow

Ronald S. Amidon, Commissioner
Beth Lambert, Director
Hunt Durey, Deputy Director

Dear friends and colleagues,

The climate of Massachusetts is changing, affecting the rivers, wetlands, and watersheds we love and the natural resources we all depend upon. The good news, however, is that we have the ability to work together to help people and nature adapt to these changes.

To help the state prepare, the DER is ramping up its technical and financial assistance for river and wetland restoration projects that help nature and communities adapt to the changing climate. We're also working with other state agencies to carry out high priority actions in the State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan.

As you'll see in our [2018 annual report](#), we invested significant time over the last year to gear up to expand our services. In 2018, we designated twelve new Priority Ecological Restoration Projects and launched two new programs, all of which restore habitat and increase climate resilience. The new Priority Projects include dam removals, streamflow restoration, coastal wetland restoration, and urban river revitalization efforts. Our new programs restore wetlands on former cranberry farm lands and help watershed groups and communities protect and restore water quality.

In 2019, we'll expand our assistance to help communities remove dams, upgrade culverts, and advance other restoration and climate adaptation projects. Communities and landowners across the Commonwealth are requesting our help. They lack the capacity and know-how to get these projects done. Our technical and project management assistance bridges the gap between community desire to do this work and getting good projects designed, permitted, funded, and constructed.

We are taking action now to restore and protect nature and our communities for future generations.

Sincerely,

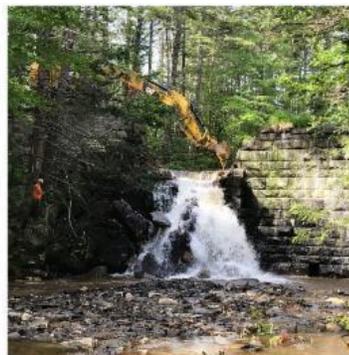
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P.S. The [pre-RFR is open for our grant program](#) for MA municipalities interested in replacing an undersized, perched, and/or degraded culvert located in an area of high ecological value.

2018 Annual Report Adaptation in Action

Helping Nature and People Prepare for Our Changing Climate

[Read the full Annual Report](#) for more information on DER's work including highlights below:



New Program Restores Wetlands, Help Farmers

Over the past decade, DER has helped to restore wetlands and streams across 277 acres of retired cranberry farmland. With restoration comes improved habitat for fish and wildlife, flood storage, and water filtration - all of which are important as our climate continues to change. DER is excited to expand this work with our new Cranberry Bog Program.

Working Towards Clean Water

Over the last fifty years, we have made significant strides in improving the Commonwealth's water quality but there is more still to do. Extreme weather patterns and warming brought on by climate change add to the challenge and the need to restore water quality for people and ecosystems. DER's recently launched Water Quality Restoration pilot program seeks to help watershed groups move from data collection to water quality restoration.

Climate Change and Stream Flow Restoration

Streamflow is a primary driver of healthy streams, influencing water quality, temperature, and the availability of habitat and food for aquatic species. Climate change and water management can disrupt natural streamflow patterns. In 2018, we focused our streamflow restoration work on dam management and water conservation.

On-the-Ground Restoration Benefits Habitat & Communities

In 2018, DER advanced more than 45 ecological restoration projects and accepted 12 new Priority Projects. Projects restore habitat for keystone species, protect public safety, and help communities deal with aging infrastructure. All of these efforts make our natural areas and communities stronger as we face a changing climate.

Making Culvert Upgrades Business as Usual

Massachusetts has more than 30,000 culverts and bridges. When well-designed and maintained, these structures provide near-seamless connections for streams and roadways, minimizing impacts on fish and wildlife populations. Unfortunately, more than half of the culverts in Massachusetts are undersized or improperly installed. DER is working to assist towns with their efforts to bring aging culverts up to improved design standards.

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