

**GENERAL ELECTRIC/HOUSATONIC RIVER  
NATURAL RESOURCE RESTORATION**

**MASSACHUSETTS HOUSATONIC RIVER WATERSHED  
RESTORATION PROGRAM**

**FINAL ROUND 1 RESTORATION PLAN AND  
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**October 12, 2007**



**PREPARED BY:  
STANTEC CONSULTING (FORMERLY  
WOODLOT ALTERNATIVES, INC.)**

**FOR:  
MASSACHUSETTS SUBCOUNCIL,  
HOUSATONIC RIVER NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEES**



**Stantec**

**WOODLOT**  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS



**U.S. Department of the Interior Approval  
of the  
Final Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment**

**General Electric/Housatonic River  
Natural Resource Restoration**

**Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program – Round 1**

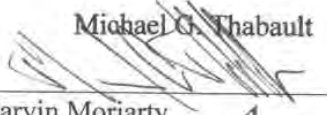
In accordance with U.S. Department of the Interior policy regarding documentation for natural resource damage assessment and restoration projects (521 DM 3), the Authorized Official for the Department must demonstrate approval of draft and final Restoration Plans and their associated National Environmental Policy Act documentation, with concurrence from the Department’s Office of the Solicitor.

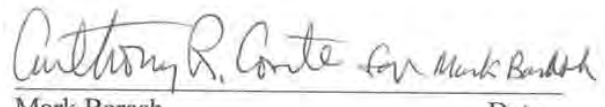
The Authorized Official for the Housatonic River case is the Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Northeast Region.

The Round 1 Final Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment (RP/SEA) is hereby approved.

Approved:

Concurred:

*Michael G. Thabault*  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Marvin Moriarty  
Regional Director  
Northeast Region  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
*Acting*  
*10/2/07*  
Date

*Anthony R. Conte for Mark Barash*  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Barash  
Senior Attorney  
Northeast Region  
Office of the Solicitor  
Date

UNITED STATES FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT

Within the spirit and intent of the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other statutes, orders and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and have determined that the action of the Final Round 1 Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program:

\_\_\_\_\_ is a categorical exclusion as provided by 516 DM 6 Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1. No further documentation will therefore be made.

XX is found not to have significant environmental effects as determined by the attached Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact.

\_\_\_\_\_ is found to have significant effects, and therefore further consideration of this action will require a notice of intent to be published in the Federal Register announcing the decision to prepare an EIS.

\_\_\_\_\_ is not approved because of unacceptable environmental damage, or violation of Fish and Wildlife Service mandates, policy, regulations, or procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_ is an emergency action within the context of 40 CFR 1506.11. Only those actions necessary to control the immediate impacts of the emergency will be taken. Other related actions remain subject to NEPA review.

Other supporting documents (list):

Final Round 1 Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program

Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Region 5 NRDAR Coordinator

9/26/07  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Region 5 NEPA Coordinator

9/26/07  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael G. Thabault  
Regional Director/DOI Authorized Official *Acting*

10/2/07  
Date

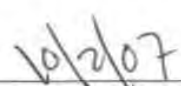
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT****FINAL ROUND 1 RESTORATION PLAN/SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSATONIC RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROGRAM**

The U.S. Department of the Interior and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have completed a Final Round 1 Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment (RP/SEA) that explains the decisions of the Trustee SubCouncil for Massachusetts to provide \$4 million to ten restoration projects within the Housatonic River watershed in Massachusetts. The Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program is a multi-year, multi-phased restoration program that will restore, replace, and/or acquire the equivalent of the natural resources injured, destroyed, or lost as a result of contamination in the Housatonic River watershed originating from the General Electric facility in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Round 1 is the first of at least three funding rounds. The ten restoration projects selected in Round 1 will protect and/or improve fish and wildlife habitat, enhance recreational uses of river natural resources, and provide environmental education to generate environmental stewards for the Housatonic River watershed in Massachusetts.

The public was notified on June 21, 2007 of the availability of the Draft RP/SEA for review and comment via an announcement on the SubCouncil's website (<http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/news.htm>). This public notice also announced a July 9, 2007, public meeting of the SubCouncil to discuss the draft document, respond to questions from the public, and receive public comment. In addition, the public notice was published in two local newspapers, the Berkshire Eagle and the North Adams Transcript, and a copy of the notice was sent to the 34 media outlets listed in Appendix B of the RP/SEA. The Draft RP/SEA was available to the public on June 22, 2007. The July 9, 2007 meeting was held at the Lenox Town Hall in Lenox, Massachusetts. Written public comments were accepted until July 22, 2007. Trustee responses to the public comments received are presented in Section 10 of the Final RP/SEA. The comments received did not cause the SubCouncil to change any decisions regarding the projects funded, nor did the comments cause any significant revisions to the RP/SEA (aside from adding Section 10).

Based on a review and evaluation of the information contained in the Final RP/SEA, I have determined that the proposed actions do not constitute a major federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102 (2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Accordingly, the preparation of an environmental impact statement on the proposed actions is not required at this time.

  
Michael G. Thabault  
Acting  
Regional Director/DOI Authorized Official

  
Date

**Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs**

**Approval of**

Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program – **Round 1**  
***Final Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment***  
***General Electric/Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration***

In accordance with Trustee protocol regarding documentation for Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration projects, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) is providing its approval of the Round 1 Final Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment (RP/SEA).

The Final RP/SEA is being released after public review and 30-day comment period on the Draft RP/SEA. The MA SubCouncil hereby issues this Final RP/SEA after consideration of public comments received.

Approved:

Ian A. Bowles

9/19/07

Date

Secretary  
EOEEA

Concurred:

Kenneth L. Kimmell

9/13/07

Date

Recommending Approval:

Dale C. Young

9/11/07

Date

General Counsel  
EOEEA

NRD Program Director  
EOEEA

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Mr. Tim Gray, currently of Housatonic River Initiative (Ex-Officio delegate)

Mr. Dean Tagliaferro, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (non-voting Federal advisor)

**Lead Federal Agency for Supplemental Environmental Assessment:**

United States Fish & Wildlife Service

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- Appendix E – Public Comments on Draft RP/SEA
- Appendix F – Minutes from July 9, 2007, Public Meeting

**ACRONYMS**

ACOE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
BCAP	Berkshire Conservation Agent Program
BRPC	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
CD	Consent Decree
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMR	Code of Massachusetts Regulations
CTDEP	Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
CWA	Clean Water Act
DOI	Department of the Interior
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EOEEA	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
FWCA	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
GE	General Electric
HRR	Housatonic River Restoration, Inc.
HVA	Housatonic Valley Association
MADEP	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
MEPA	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
MA SubCouncil	Massachusetts SubCouncil
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
M.G.L.	Massachusetts General Laws
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRD	Natural Resource Damages

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NRDAR	Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program
PAB	Public Access Board
PCBs	Polychlorinated biphenyls
PEA	Programmatic Environmental Assessment
PEDA	Pittsfield Economic Development Authority
Restoration Program	Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program
RP	Restoration Plan
RPEC	Restoration Project Evaluation Criteria
RPS	Restoration Planning Strategy
RPSP	Restoration Project Selection Procedure
SEA	Supplemental Environmental Assessment
Trustee Council	Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees
U.S.C.	United States Code
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USGS	U.S. Geological Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Woodlot	Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESTORATION PLAN / SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This final Restoration Plan / Supplemental Environmental Assessment (RP/SEA) was prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) (collectively, the “MA SubCouncil”<sup>1</sup>), to restore injured natural resources and resource services<sup>2</sup> resulting from the release of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other hazardous substances from General Electric’s (GE’s) facility in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. This final RP/SEA presents the MA SubCouncil’s preferred restoration projects for Round 1 of a compensatory restoration program in the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River watershed (hereinafter referred to as the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program or simply Restoration Program). Compensatory restoration projects are projects that restore, rehabilitate, replace, and/or acquire the equivalent of injured natural resources and/or the services provided by those resources.

As part of its efforts to comply with public disclosure requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*, the MA SubCouncil completed a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the Restoration Program which evaluated potential strategies to accomplishing restoration. A “Blended Restoration Approach” was identified as the preferred alternative for the Restoration Program. The Blended Restoration Approach would achieve restoration in four restoration priority categories: Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat, Wildlife Resources and Habitat, Recreational Uses, and Environmental Education and Outreach. The PEA also evaluated the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts that might result from restoration projects implemented under the Blended Approach.

Subsequently, the MA SubCouncil issued the first solicitation (Round 1) for restoration project proposals and ideas from the public. The evaluation of these submissions, the projects preferred for implementation (i.e., the Round 1 Preferred Alternatives), and elaboration on the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the preferred projects are presented in this final RP/SEA. Collectively, this document and the PEA

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<sup>1</sup> The MA SubCouncil was established to consist of voting members from EOEEA and the USFWS and non-voting ex-officio members (see page i). However, for purposes of this document, when regarding activities directly relating to the evaluation of proposals and identifying the proposed Preferred Alternatives, the MA SubCouncil consisted of only the voting Trustee members. As Rachel Fletcher and Tim Gray were both affiliated with a submitted project proposal in Round 1, they did not participate in the development of the RP/SEA to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

<sup>2</sup> The term “services” in this document means the physical and biological functions performed by the resource including human uses of these functions. These services are the result of the physical, chemical, or biological quality of the resource. 43 CFR § 11.14(nn). “Services” includes provision of habitat, food, and other needs of biological resources, recreation, other products or services used by humans, flood control, ground water recharge, waste assimilation, and other such functions that may be provided by natural resources. 43 CFR § 11.71(e).

comprise the NEPA documentation for Round 1. The use of funding-round specific SEAs tiered from the PEA is consistent with the general tiering approach for Environmental Impact Statements described in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1502.20. Subsequent RP/SEAs will be prepared following subsequent funding solicitation rounds that will also be tiered within the framework and supporting documentation provided in the PEA.

### **1.1 TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER FEDERAL AND STATE LAW REGARDING RESTORATION PLANNING**

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), as amended, 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 9601 *et seq.*, the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. § 1251-1376, and the Massachusetts Oil and Hazardous Material Release Prevention and Response Act, Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) ch. 21E, provide a mechanism for state and federal governments to address natural resource damages (NRD). These acts provide that states, federally recognized tribes, and certain federal agencies, known as Natural Resource Trustees (Trustees), may assess damages to natural resources and may seek to recover those damages on behalf of the public. Trustees can bring claims against responsible parties for damages in order to restore, replace, or acquire the equivalent of natural resources that have been injured or lost by the release of hazardous substances. According to CERCLA and its associated natural resource damage assessment regulations (43 CFR Part 11), the MA SubCouncil must prepare an RP that describes how NRD funds collected from responsible parties will be used to address injured natural resources, specifically what restoration, rehabilitation, replacement, or acquisition of the equivalent resources will occur. No restoration projects, except emergency restoration, can be implemented before the RP and a public comment process is completed. This document is the final RP for Round 1 of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program.

The NEPA and its implementing regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, require that federal agencies fully consider the environmental impacts of their proposed decisions on major federal actions, that appropriate steps are taken to mitigate potential environmental impacts of those actions, and that such information is made available to the public. The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), M.G.L. ch. 30, sections 61 through 62H, inclusive, and the associated regulations, 301 CMR § 11.00, “provide meaningful opportunities for public review of the potential environmental impacts of Projects for which Agency Action is required, and to assist each Agency in using...all feasible means to avoid Damage to the Environment or, to the extent Damage to the Environment cannot be avoided, to minimize and mitigate Damage to the Environment to the maximum extent practicable” (301 CMR § 11.01). This document, in combination with the PEA, addresses the requirements of NEPA and programmatic MEPA issues for Round 1 of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program. After the Final Restoration Plan is completed, individual projects may be determined to trigger MEPA thresholds and will then be required to proceed through a MEPA review. Likewise, some projects may require additional NEPA analysis once the details of the restoration project are further defined (e.g., after the completion of the feasibility/planning portion of the

project). Such additional NEPA analysis will be completed before project implementation.

## **1.2 SUMMARY OF NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGES SETTLEMENT**

GE reached a comprehensive agreement dated October 7, 1999, concerning NRD and cleanup of its Pittsfield, Massachusetts, facility, certain off-site properties, and the Housatonic River. The agreement was reached with the following entities: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA); the U.S. Department of Justice; the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP), Office of the Attorney General, EOEEA; the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP), Office of the Attorney General; the Department of the Interior (DOI); the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce; the City of Pittsfield, Massachusetts; and the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA).

The comprehensive agreement was lodged with the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts, Springfield, Massachusetts, and approved on October 27, 2000. The full text of the comprehensive agreement is contained in a Consent Decree (CD) and is available on the USEPA/GE/Housatonic River cleanup website ([www.epa.gov/region01/ge/cleanupagreement.html](http://www.epa.gov/region01/ge/cleanupagreement.html)).

As part of the settlement, the Trustees recovered \$15 million from GE as NRD for use in natural resource restoration projects, approximately half of which (\$7.5 million) the Trustees targeted for restoration projects in Massachusetts. Further detail regarding the Settlement is provided in Chapter 1.0 of the PEA, Chapters 1.0 and 2.0 of the Restoration Planning Strategy (RPS) (Woodlot and IEc 2005a), and Chapter 1 of the RPSP.

## **1.3 SUMMARY OF SITE INJURIES AND PUBLIC LOSSES**

The GE Company owns and operates a 254-acre facility in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were used in the manufacture of electrical transformers from the late 1930s to the late 1970s (Roy F. Weston 1998). During this time period, hazardous substances were released from the GE facility to the Housatonic River and Silver Lake in Pittsfield. These hazardous substances include PCBs, dioxins, furans, volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, and inorganic constituents (e.g., metals). In addition, a number of former oxbows along the Housatonic River that were filled when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers straightened the Pittsfield reach of the Housatonic River to alleviate flooding were found to contain PCB-contaminated soils and fill. Further detail regarding the site injuries and public losses is provided in Chapter 3.0 of the PEA.

## 1.4 RESTORATION GOALS/PURPOSE OF RESTORATION

The Purpose and Need for the MA SubCouncil's Restoration Program were explained in the PEA. The overall purpose of the Restoration Program is to make the environment and the public whole for injuries to natural resources and services resulting from the release of hazardous substances. Restoration efforts are intended to return injured natural resources and services to baseline conditions and compensate for interim losses through implementation of restoration actions that restore, rehabilitate, or replace equivalent natural resources and/or services.

Consistent with the nature and scope of the natural resource injuries in the Housatonic River watershed, the potential restoration actions are also diverse. The MA SubCouncil identified four restoration priority categories: aquatic biological resources and habitat, wildlife resources and habitat, recreational uses of natural resources, and environmental education and outreach. In the PEA, the MA SubCouncil evaluated strategies for accomplishing restoration within the Restoration Program, including a "No Action" alternative, and identified a preferred strategy. The preferred strategy is to implement projects in all four restoration priority categories (Alternative 6, "Blended Restoration Approach," in the PEA).

The specific goals of the Round 1 restoration planning process were to solicit, evaluate, and identify preferred projects in all four restoration priority categories to accomplish the Blended Restoration Approach and to provide a total of \$3.5 million to \$4.0 million for project implementation. In addition, the programmatic goals and objectives of the MA SubCouncil, as first described in the RPSP and listed below, are also relevant to Round 1:

- Restore, enhance, protect, conserve, replace and/or acquire the equivalent of natural resources and services that were injured as a result of the release of hazardous substances, including PCBs, in the Housatonic River environment;
- Provide for sustainable and measurable benefits to injured natural resources and services;
- Avoid adverse impacts resulting from restoration projects;
- Integrate public participation in the restoration process;
- Implement a suite of projects that cumulatively:
  - Benefit each of the restoration priority categories and
  - Employ a variety of restoration project types;
- Conduct restoration projects in a phased manner so that projects with a potential to interact with yet-to-be-determined remedial activities are not excluded from funding until those potential interactions can be determined (i.e., the remedial actions are known).

## 1.5 COORDINATION AND SCOPING

### 1.5.1 Trustee Council Organization and Activities

The Trustees for the GE/Housatonic River case consist of: the EOEEA, the CTDEP, the DOI (acting through the USFWS), and NOAA. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)



among these parties was executed in January 2002. The MOA ensures the coordinated handling of activities relating to cleanup, remediation, and restoration activities in the Housatonic River environment. The MOA also provides a framework for intergovernmental coordination among the Trustees and for implementation of Trustee responsibilities under CERCLA and other applicable federal, state, and common laws.

The MOA provided for the establishment of the MA SubCouncil, which is responsible for authorizing the expenditure of NRD monies allocated to the geographic region of Massachusetts.

The MA SubCouncil currently consists of the following:

- Dale Young, EOEEA (voting member, state Trustee)
- Veronica Varela, USFWS (voting member, federal Trustee)
- Rachel Fletcher, currently of Housatonic River Restoration (ex-officio delegate)
- Tim Gray, currently of Housatonic River Initiative (ex-officio delegate)
- Dean Tagliaferro, USEPA (non-voting advisor)

(NOAA has chosen to not actively exercise its decision-making role on the MA SubCouncil pursuant to an October 2004 resolution to the MOA.)

The Ex-Officio Delegates and non-voting USEPA advisor were incorporated into the MA SubCouncil to share their relevant expertise in the restoration planning activities of the SubCouncil. In addition, the Ex-Officio Delegates provide initial insight from the perspective of local stakeholders, while the non-voting USEPA advisor facilitates coordination with remedial activities.

### **1.5.2 Public Notification**

Local public libraries, newspapers, radio, and television were used as outlets for public announcements related to the Restoration Program. Libraries where public documents were sent are listed in Appendix A. Newspaper, and radio and television stations used for public outreach are listed in Appendix B. In addition, the MA SubCouncil created a website ([www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org](http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org)) to provide public access to background information, MA SubCouncil member contact information, program activity updates, and draft documents for public review and comment.

### **1.5.3 Summary of Public Involvement**

The MA SubCouncil conducted several public meetings during the development of the Restoration Program to obtain public input on the strategy for restoration planning and the process and criteria by which potential restoration projects would be solicited and evaluated. The MA SubCouncil issued a Request for Responses on December 21, 2005, to solicit project proposals and ideas from the public for Round 1 of the Restoration Program. The SubCouncil received 21 submissions by the March 21, 2006, deadline.

Several public meetings were conducted after the submission deadline to obtain public comment on the intermediate decisions leading up to the preparation of this final document.

Public meetings occurred on the following dates:

- July 9, 2007– Discussed draft RP/SEA and solicited public comment on projects proposed for funding in the Draft RP/SEA.
- September 21, 2006 – Presented Round 1 Evaluations of Project Proposals, opening a formal public comment period.
- April 27, 2006 – Presented Threshold Criteria results, opening a formal public comment period.
- February 7, 2006 – Applicant Conference. Addressed public questions and comments on the Round 1 Request for Responses.
- December 13, 2005 – Notice of Availability, Draft Programmatic EA and opening of formal public comment period.
- November 1, 2005 – Update on Housatonic River NRD Restoration Program.
- May 11, 2005 – Presented the RPSP, opening a formal public comment period.
- December 16, 2004 – Obtained public input on the development of the Draft Restoration Project Evaluation Criteria (RPEC). (The RPSP was originally titled the RPEC.)
- October 25, 2004 – Presented the Draft Restoration Planning Strategy, opening a formal public comment period.

#### **1.5.4 Administrative Record**

One complete administrative record is available at Lenox Library (address in Appendix A).

## 2.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This chapter briefly describes the biological and socioeconomic environment in which restoration activities would be implemented. The purpose is to summarize the current conditions in the Housatonic River watershed and provide a foundation for assessing the impacts of the alternatives considered. A more detailed description of the affected environment was provided in the PEA. The majority of the content on the affected environment in the PEA was drawn from the reports listed below. Readers who are interested in greater detail on the biological and socioeconomic features of the Housatonic River watershed may wish to consult these sources.

- *Ecological Characterization of the Housatonic River* (Woodlot 2002a). This report represents the most recent, comprehensive study of the biological environment surrounding the Housatonic River and focuses on the river reach from Pittsfield to Lee, Massachusetts. It was prepared for the USEPA.
- *Ecological Characterization of the Housatonic River Downstream of Woods Pond* (Woodlot 2002b). This report characterizes the biological environment from Lee, Massachusetts, to southern Connecticut. It was also prepared for the USEPA.
- *Housatonic River 5-Year Watershed Action Plan* (EOEA 2003).

### 2.1 BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River watershed is located in the southwestern region of the Commonwealth in Berkshire County and is bordered by the watersheds of the Hudson River to the north, the Westfield River to the northeast, and the Farmington River to the southeast. The Housatonic River watershed exhibits diverse hydrology, including swift streams, a meandering river, productive aquifers, extensive wetlands, and 119 lakes and ponds. Because of the varied topography of Berkshire County, ponds, peatlands, and marshes are abundant. An estimated three percent of the county is considered to be occupied by palustrine communities (i.e., wetlands not associated with rivers, lakes, or tidal waterbodies).

Most of the undeveloped landscape in the Housatonic watershed is forested, except where disturbance or permanent flooding (i.e., river channel and backwater slough) inhibit tree growth. Portions of the watershed have been cleared for various purposes, primarily agriculture, residences, and various rights-of-way (e.g., roads, railroads, power lines).

The Housatonic River watershed features a prolific biological community with 117 rare plant and 33 rare animal species, as well as the occurrence of 18 significant natural communities. Analyses conducted for USEPA's ecological characterization identified 20 plants of state conservation concern that are known or thought to occur in the upper portion of the watershed, while a separate inventory developed for the Great Barrington Open Space Plan identified 23 additional species of concern. Approximately 173 species of bird, 42 species of mammal, 41 species of fish, 13 species of snake, and seven species of turtle are known to occur in the Massachusetts reach of the Housatonic River (Woodlot

and IEC 2005b).

While the GE facility is a significant source of pollution in the Housatonic River watershed, a variety of other water quality concerns have been identified including pesticide and fertilizer runoff from agricultural land, management of household hazardous waste, indirect discharges from septic systems and landfills, pesticide runoff from railroad beds, and abandoned industrial facilities (HRR 1999, 2003). In addition to river-based pollution, lakes and ponds in the Housatonic watershed face advancing eutrophication problems associated with nutrient loading.

In addition to factors affecting water quality, other ecological stressors affect terrestrial and riparian habitat in the watershed. Residential and commercial development continues to diminish the quality and abundance of wildlife habitat. While the population of Berkshire County has decreased in the last decade, the number of housing units has grown from about 64,300 to 66,600, with at least some of this trend attributable to construction of vacation and retirement homes. Likewise, invasive species such as purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and other non-native plants crowd out native plants that provide forage for waterfowl and other wildlife.

## 2.2 SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Eighteen towns and one city in Berkshire County are located wholly or partially in the Housatonic River watershed. With a population of 45,793, Pittsfield is the largest city, accounting for roughly one-third of the population in Berkshire County in 2000. Both Pittsfield and Berkshire County as a whole have seen a decrease in population over the last decade due to farm abandonment, loss of manufacturing jobs, and general migration to other population centers are cited as contributing factors. The economy of the Housatonic River watershed was once heavily dependent upon manufacturing and timber harvesting, and the loss of jobs in these sectors still appears to affect economic well being (i.e., the percent of families living below the poverty line in Pittsfield is significantly higher than in the County or in Massachusetts overall). The median income in the region is lower and the unemployment rate is somewhat higher than in Massachusetts as a whole.

The upper third of the Housatonic River watershed, including Pittsfield, is urbanized, while the remaining two-thirds of the watershed are rural in character and largely forested. Current land uses in the watershed include industrial, agricultural, residential, and recreation/wildlife management. In Pittsfield, Lenox, and Lee, the river is used primarily as a natural area, with much of the area contained in the Housatonic River Valley State Wildlife Management Area used primarily by outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

### 3.0 RESTORATION EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

CERCLA and NRD regulations require that restoration activities restore, rehabilitate, replace, or acquire the equivalent of the resources and services that were injured or lost, but do not address which restoration projects are preferred. Such decisions are left to the discretion of the Trustees. However, the DOI regulations recommend the following factors to be considered in the evaluation and selection of preferred alternatives (43 CFR 11.82).

- (1) Technical feasibility.
- (2) The relationship of the expected costs of the proposed actions to the expected benefits from the restoration, rehabilitation, replacement, and/or acquisition of equivalent resources.
- (3) Cost-effectiveness.
- (4) The results of any actual or planned response actions.
- (5) Potential for additional injury resulting from the proposed actions, including long-term and indirect impacts, to the injured resources or other resources.
- (6) The natural recovery period.
- (7) Ability of the resources to recover with or without alternative actions.
- (8) Potential effects of the action on human health and safety.
- (9) Consistency with relevant Federal, State, and tribal policies.
- (10) Compliance with applicable Federal, State, and tribal laws.

The MA SubCouncil previously developed a Restoration Project Selection Procedure (RPSP) and the PEA that described the process for soliciting, evaluating, and selecting individual restoration projects (Woodlot and IEC 2005b). The MA SubCouncil incorporated the ten factors described above into its Threshold and Evaluation Criteria. The RPSP and PEA established the format and content of submissions from parties requesting funds for restoration projects. Among the requirements, applicants were asked to complete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) checklists that help identify potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of their project. If non-negligible impacts were expected, the applicant was required to outline steps that would be taken to reduce the severity of the project's impacts.

The MA SubCouncil issued a Request for Responses on December 21, 2005, to solicit proposed projects and ideas (collectively "proposed projects") from the public for Round 1 of the Restoration Program. The SubCouncil received 21 proposed projects by the March 21, 2006, deadline. All proposed projects went through Stage One of the evaluation process. Those that satisfied Stage One went through Stage Two of the evaluation process. The MA SubCouncil released the 21 proposed projects for public review and comment on April 10, 2006, following the removal of non-public information (e.g., land appraisals). Public comments received with the proposed project applications are provided in Section 9.1. The MA SubCouncil encouraged the public to perform their own evaluations of the proposed projects using the Evaluation Criteria published in the RPSP.

### 3.1 STAGE ONE: THRESHOLD CRITERIA

The first step in evaluating proposed projects was to identify projects that met the minimum requirements for consideration as restoration projects. These “Threshold Criteria,” listed below, were consistent with the goals of the MA SubCouncil, federal regulations, and other applicable federal, state, and local regulations and laws. Threshold Criteria are described in detail in the RPSP.

1. Does the application contain the information necessary to proceed with an evaluation as described in the RPSP? (Answer must be “YES” to pass.)
2. Does the proposed project restore, rehabilitate, replace, and/or acquire the equivalent of natural resources or natural resource services that were injured by the release of PCBs or other hazardous substances? (Answer must be “YES” to pass.)
3. Is the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, an action that is presently required under other federal, state, or local law? (Answer must be “NO” to pass.)
4. Is the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, inconsistent with any federal, state, or local law, regulation, or policy? (Answer must be “NO” to pass.)
5. Will the proposed project, in terms of its cost, be consistent with the stated goals of the MA SubCouncil to retain sufficient funds to 1) accomplish restoration over at least three rounds of proposal solicitations and 2) serve a wide geographic area that benefits the restoration priority categories? (Answer must be “YES” to pass.)
6. Will the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, be inconsistent with any ongoing or anticipated remedial actions (i.e., primary restoration) in the Housatonic River watershed? (Answer must be “NO” to pass.)

The Trustee representatives of the MA SubCouncil were solely responsible for determining whether a proposed project met the Threshold Criteria. The MA SubCouncil developed a document summarizing the evaluation of Threshold Criteria which included a brief abstract of each proposed project and the predominant restoration priority category that each proposal fell into (Appendix C – Final Results of Round 1 Threshold Criteria Evaluation). A public information meeting was held after the release of this document at which the MA SubCouncil presented the results of the Stage One evaluation. Proposed projects that met all Threshold Criteria were termed “Project Applications” and were advanced to Stage Two of the evaluation process.

#### 3.1.1 Threshold Criteria Results and Public Comment

Three of the 21 applications received in response to the Round 1 solicitation did not meet the initial Threshold Criteria review. The reasons these applications did not pass are described below. The MA SubCouncil presented the Threshold Criteria results to the public and opened a two-week public comment period, ending May 12, 2006. Only Proposal 7 had public comment submitted that ultimately changed the Threshold Criteria result. This is also described below.

*3.1.1.1 Proposal No. 7 – West Branch of the Housatonic Revitalization Project  
(Proposed Project)*

Preliminary application of the Threshold Criteria to this proposed project submitted by the City of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, indicated that the dam removal component of the proposal passed Threshold Criteria, but that specific components of the Greenway component were “already required” under other federal, state, or local law (Threshold Criterion No. 3). Specifically, the “Stormwater Aspects” of the Greenway portion were apparently required for compliance with the City of Pittsfield’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Small MS4 Stormwater permit.

Upon receiving comments from the City of Pittsfield regarding the preliminary determination, the MA SubCouncil requested that the City of Pittsfield submit a revised budget that reflects the removal of budget items and costs for work associated with the City’s NPDES permit. The City was specifically requested to excise the costs associated with the portion of the Proposal’s Task 2 (Assessment of Existing Conditions): the entire portion titled “Stormwater Conditions.” In addition, the City was asked to adjust costs associated with portions of the other three tasks that may involve storm drainage related assessments and resubmit Tables 1 and 2 for the Greenway Component budget section, as well as a revised budget narrative reflecting the requested changes. After the City of Pittsfield provided the requested revisions excising the Stormwater Conditions, the MA SubCouncil determined that Proposal No. 7 passed Threshold Criteria.

*3.1.1.2 Proposal No. 17 – Integrated Habitat Acquisition Strategy (Proposed Project Idea)*

The MA SubCouncil determined that the intent of this Project Idea submitted by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife was to revise the overall restoration strategy adopted by the MA SubCouncil. Therefore, it was decided that because this Project Idea suggests changes to the overall restoration strategy and does not propose specific parcels to be considered for land acquisition, the proposal would not undergo evaluation by the Review Team with other proposals. The Evaluation Criteria were developed to provide the Review Teams with a means to rank the merits of specific actions yielding natural resource benefits, and were not intended to evaluate the merits of the previously-adopted restoration planning strategy. The MA SubCouncil indicated its intent to further discuss this idea with the applicant.

*3.1.1.3 Proposal No. 21 – Hazard and Debris Removal from the Housatonic River  
(Proposed Project)*

The MA SubCouncil determined that this proposed project did not pass Threshold Criteria. The proposal, submitted by a private citizen, did not contain sufficient information necessary to proceed with an evaluation (Threshold Criterion No. 1). However, based on the positive public comments received by the MA SubCouncil and the potential benefits associated with proposal’s objectives, the MA SubCouncil sees merit in the concept of removing navigational hazards and certain debris for the benefit of recreational uses of the river. The MA SubCouncil may solicit the submittal of a more fully developed project proposal based on this concept in a subsequent funding round.

### 3.1.2 Public Comments on Threshold Criteria Results

The MA SubCouncil presented the results of the preliminary Threshold Criteria evaluation at a public meeting on April 27, 2006. In accordance with the MA SubCouncil's objective to provide opportunity for public comment, as described in Section 4.2, of the RPSP, the MA SubCouncil initially indicated that public comment on results of Threshold Criteria evaluation would be accepted through May 5, 2006. Based on comments received during this public meeting, the MA SubCouncil extended the public comment period by one week to May 12, 2006. Public comments received by the MA SubCouncil on the Threshold Criteria results are presented in Section 9.2.

## 3.2 STAGE TWO: EVALUATION CRITERIA

At the completion of Stage One, the MA SubCouncil assigned Project Applications to members of the Review Team for review and evaluation. The Review Team consisted of staff from departments within EOOEA, USFWS, and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (Woodlot), with expertise relevant to the MA SubCouncil's four restoration priority categories.

Each Project Application was evaluated by at least three members of the Review Team, representing a range of technical expertise and relevant experience, and a Woodlot staff member. Reviewers did not evaluate Project Applications on which they were listed as the applicant or for which they had submitted letters of support. A rating system (i.e., scores associated with High, Medium, and Low) was used to apply the Evaluation Criteria to each Project Application. Each rating was associated with a number of points that varied depending on the question, allowing certain criteria to be weighted more heavily than others. Project Applications were evaluated and scored individually using the following categories of criteria. Detailed explanations of the Evaluation Criteria are provided in the RPSP.

- Relevance and Applicability of Project
  - Natural Recovery Period
  - Location of Project
  - Sustainable Benefits
  - Magnitude of Ecological Benefits
  - Human Health and Safety
  - Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories
  - Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions
- Technical Merit
  - Technical/Technological Feasibility
  - Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team
  - Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts
  - Measurable Results
  - Contingency Actions
  - Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team



- Project Budget
  - Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits
  - Implementation-oriented
  - Budget Justification and Understanding
  - Leveraging of Additional Resources
  - Coordination and Integration
  - Comparative Cost-effectiveness
- Socioeconomic Merit
  - Enhancement of Public's Relationship with Natural Resources
  - Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship
  - Community Involvement
  - Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts
  - Complementary with Community Goals
  - Public Outreach
  - Diverse Partnerships

Each reviewer independently applied the Evaluation Criteria to their assigned Project Applications and arrived at an individual score for each project. Then all reviewers for a Project Application met to discuss the project's merits and derive a single, consensus-based score for each Project Application. The review of each Project Application was recorded in an evaluation summary memo that was made available to the public and included the following: the consensus-based score for the project, the Review Teams' rationale for the final consensus-based score, individual scores provided by each reviewer, and the agency affiliation of each Review Team member assigned to the Project Application. The Evaluation Summary Memos for each project that underwent Stage Two review are presented in Appendix D.

### **3.2.1 Evaluation Criteria Results**

The Review Teams' consensus-based scores are summarized in Table 1. These scores were advisory to the MA SubCouncil. The MA SubCouncil identified the proposed Preferred Alternatives by considering the Review Team scores, public comment, independent analysis of the proposals, and the goals of Round 1 (e.g., implementing a suite of projects that cumulatively benefit each of the four restoration priority categories).

### **3.2.2 Public Comments on Project Applications and Evaluation Criteria Results**

The results of the Review Team evaluations were announced at a public meeting on September 21, 2006. During this meeting the MA SubCouncil announced a public comment period, and asked that the public focus comments on the Project Applications rather than reactions to the Review Team scores. In addition, the MA SubCouncil encouraged the public to submit their own evaluation scores as public comment. This would allow the MA SubCouncil to consider the public's sentiment on the merits of the projects in the same format as the input provided by the Review Team. However, regardless of the format of the public comment, the public comment process allowed the MA SubCouncil to consider public feedback at the same time it was considering the Review Teams' results. In response to public requests received during the September 21, 2006, meeting, the period for submitting public comment was increased from two to three

weeks, ending on October 13, 2006. The comments received are presented in Section 9.3.

**Table 1: Review Team Consensus-Based Scores  
(Rank-Order by Restoration Priority Category)**

<b>Restoration Priority Category</b>	<b>Proposal Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Consensus Evaluation Score</b>
<b>Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat</b>	18	<i>Rare Species Recovery on the Housatonic River</i>	205
	11	<i>Housatonic Watershed Fisheries Assessment</i>	204
	7	<i>West Branch of the Housatonic River Revitalization Project- Greenway and Dam Removal</i>	196
	9	<i>Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project</i>	174
<b>Wildlife Resources and Habitat</b>	2	<i>Rising Pond Land Acquisition Project</i>	263
	19	<i>Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project</i>	246
	15	<i>Clapp Park to Wild Acres Greenway</i>	237
	10	<i>Bartholomew's Cobble Restoration</i>	203
<b>Recreation Uses</b>	1	<i>Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk</i>	258
	16	<i>Old Mill Trail</i>	227
	8	<i>Enhanced Public Access to Housatonic River in MA</i>	208
	20	<i>Rehabilitation of Forest Roads and Trails in Housatonic Watershed</i>	173
	6	<i>Beaded Necklace Housatonic River Greenway</i>	163
	5	<i>Lee Riverwalk</i>	157
	21	<i>Hazard and Debris Removal from the Housatonic River</i>	143
<b>Environmental Education and Outreach</b>	3	<i>Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River</i>	239
	13	<i>Berkshire Conservation Agent Program</i>	229
	14	<i>Less Toxic Landscapes</i>	223
	4	<i>Housatonic River Museum</i>	207
	12	<i>The River Institute</i>	193

#### 4.0 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

Consistent with the nature and scope of the natural resource injuries in the Housatonic River watershed, the potential restoration actions are also diverse. The alternatives considered in this RP/SEA reflect a broad array of possible restoration approaches. The “No Action” (or “Natural Recovery”) alternative was evaluated in the PEA and was not identified as the preferred alternative (see the PEA for additional information). The PEA identified a “Blended Restoration Approach” (Alternative 6) as the preferred strategy to achieve compensatory restoration. The “Blended Restoration Approach” implements projects in all four restoration priority categories. Therefore, this RP/SEA evaluates the suite of restoration Project Applications received through the Round 1 public solicitation. The Preferred Alternatives for Round 1 represent a blend of a subset of these Project

Applications.

The results of Evaluation Criteria scoring were used by the MA SubCouncil to provide an initial ranking of Project Applications. The diversity and magnitude of potential benefits associated with particular Project Applications as well as the funding required for groups of Project Applications from the four Restoration Priority Categories were then evaluated by the MA SubCouncil. After consideration of public comments on the Draft RP/SEA, the MA SubCouncil selected a set of Preferred Alternatives comprising a Blended Restoration Approach. The Preferred Alternatives presented in this final Restoration Plan incorporate a set of 10 Proposed Alternatives selected from the 21 proposed projects received in response to the Round 1 funding solicitation.

The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to modify the scope of the Preferred Alternatives and associated funding amounts at the time that funding agreements are established.

#### **4.1 AQUATIC BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND HABITAT**

The MA SubCouncil will provide a total of \$1,306,950 to two projects in the restoration priority category of Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat. Collectively, these projects will restore riverine continuity between the three miles of the West Branch of the Housatonic River upstream of the Mill Street Dam in Pittsfield and the downstream reach of West Branch and the main stem of the Housatonic River and will protect rare aquatic species in the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River and its major tributaries.

##### **4.1.1 Restoration Project 07: West Branch of Housatonic River Revitalization – Dam Removal Component**

Applicant(s): City of Pittsfield

Location: Mill Street Dam, West Branch of the Housatonic River, Pittsfield, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$1,957,000

Approved NRD allocation: \$750,000

###### *4.1.1.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

###### Project Description

The City of Pittsfield, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Riverways Program (Riverways) and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), has proposed to develop an ‘integrated river restoration plan’ for the downtown portion of the West Branch of the Housatonic River. The proposed plan is a multi-year, multi-phase project with two main focus areas: 1) development of a greenway plan for the West Branch of the Housatonic River corridor from Wahconah Park to Clapp Park; and 2) the removal of the Mill Street Dam which is located within the West Branch riverine corridor. Only the second portion of this plan, removal of the Mill Street Dam, described in this section is approved for NRD funding. The greenway portion of the plan will be addressed in Section 6.0; Non-Selected Project Applications.

The primary goal of the Mill Street Dam removal project is to improve natural stream

conditions, facilitate movement of resident aquatic species, recover water quality, and enhance public access along the West Branch of the Housatonic River. Removal of the Dam will reconnect approximately three miles of river upstream of the Dam with the downstream reach of the West Branch to its confluence with the East Branch of the Housatonic River. In addition, a recommendation from the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety that the Dam be removed or repaired for public health and safety hazard reasons provides impetus for removal of the Dam.

#### Timeframe

The Mill Street Dam removal project will occur over a period of six years. The anticipated schedule for the various components of the dam removal and associated remediation activities is as follows:

- Dam Removal Feasibility Study – Pre application
- Sediment Management Plan/sampling – Year 1
- Final Engineering – Year 2
- Permitting – Year 3
- Sediment Removal – Years 4-5
- Dam Removal – Years 4-5
- River Restoration – Years 4-5
- Construction Monitoring – Years 4-5
- Pre/Post Restoration Monitoring – Years 3-6

#### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

The project proposes to monitor one structural and one functional parameter to provide an objective evaluation of dam removal success. The evaluation method will be guided by a written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that will be pre-approved by the MA SubCouncil. A comparison of pre and post restoration hydrology under variable, seasonal flow conditions is proposed as the key structural parameter that will be monitored for multiple years. Hydraulic modeling, coupled with pre and post longitudinal and cross sectional profiles of the riverbed will be evaluated to monitor changes in bed features, bank features, geomorphic stability, and sediment transport. All of these aspects are critical to the re-development of habitat following dam removal.

The Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) will be the functional parameter used to measure project performance. The IBI is a tool that can be used to measure the structure and function of faunal assemblages across study sites to determine areas in need of remediation and ecosystem response to restoration. Fish assemblage data used in IBI models will be collected using electrofishing surveys. Data on ambient water quality, river flow, cover, substrate type and quality, and other relevant physical factors that may dynamically influence fish distribution and abundance will be recorded. A qualified sub-contractor will conduct the monitoring and evaluation with technical assistance from Riverways and the MA SubCouncil. Fish assemblage data will be sent to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and will be compared to potential target fish community data. Information and reports will be made available electronically to the public.

#### 4.1.1.2 *Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with aquatic restoration and wildlife restoration projects. A summary of impacts of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

##### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** Dam removal, riverbank restoration, and contaminated sediment removal will positively impact water quality in the West Branch. Dam removal will reduce water temperatures, establish natural dissolved oxygen levels, establish more natural base flows, and improve continuity of the riverine and riparian corridor for fish, invertebrates, amphibians, birds, and other wildlife. Removal of contaminated sediments, if necessary, will improve the health of the local ecosystem and positively impact the riverine environment by establishing continuity of aquatic and terrestrial habitat. River bank restoration plans incorporating native shrub and tree species will reduce bank erosion and associated effects on water quality. Riverbank plantings will enhance the canopy over the river, resulting in lower water temperatures and further benefiting ecological continuity in the riparian corridor.

**Adverse Impacts:** This project may have several short-term negative impacts to environmental parameters. Dam removal may increase potential for release of pollutants to ambient air from dust associated with the dam removal construction activities, as well as short-term emission releases from construction vehicles at the site. Short-term negative impacts to air quality from construction work will be mitigated through practices such as watering down access roads during hot, dry days and reducing idling times of vehicles.

The dam removal project may have significant short-term adverse impacts to surface water quality in the form of increased turbidity, erosion, and contaminated sediment escape during the construction phase. However, through the regulatory permitting process, measures will be outlined to control turbidity during construction and methods will be employed to reduce the chance of contaminated sediment discharges into the river. Also, temporary impacts will be offset by the long-term restoration of instream flow, resulting in benefits to aquatic species such as migratory fish and macroinvertebrates. Pre-construction activities will require adequate erosion control and minimization of sediments migrating into the river system. Dam removal activities may influence the population and diversity of aquatic wildlife species during the construction period. These populations will be monitored during the pre-construction phase and efforts will be made during construction to allow for animal migration away from temporary impact areas. Aquatic and terrestrial plant species will be impacted due to riverbank disruption and some plants may not survive impacts from construction activities.

Permits will be required describing how impacts will be mitigated. Necessary permits may include MEPA Review by Secretary of EOEEA, state water quality certification, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits for sediment removal.

### Socioeconomic Impacts

Benefits to Community: River restoration is a priority for the City of Pittsfield and its residents. This project will have a beneficial impact to the local sense of community and well-being. Public health and safety will be improved by eliminating the possibility of dam failure and flooding to downstream properties and public hazards during high flow periods. The dam removal will foster recreational usage of the river by improving fishing quality and increasing boating enjoyment by eliminating a navigational hazard and the need for portage around the Dam. Aesthetic quality will be improved by the inclusion of a river outlook platform at the former dam site and by eliminating the opportunity for graffiti on the Dam's exposed concrete wall. The restored dam site will provide learning opportunities for educators that may wish to use the site as a component of their environmental curriculum. Through the cooperative arrangement with Riverways, this restoration project will be well publicized and serve as a case study and opportunity for technology transfer to other communities who are exploring dam removal and river restoration.

Adverse Impacts: During construction, there will be minimal adverse impacts to the aesthetic quality of the Mill Street site.

#### *4.1.1.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

The City originally requested \$1,957,000 for activities associated with the dam removal, which assumes that 100 percent of the impounded sediments are removed and disposed of appropriately. The cost of the overall project relies heavily on, and varies significantly depending upon, how much of the impounded sediments will require excavation and how much will require disposal as hazardous substances. The MA SubCouncil has allocated \$750,000 for funding of this project. This amount will significantly advance the project to completion, or depending upon the sediment management strategy ultimately chosen, this amount could be sufficient to implement the entire project. However, if additional funds are needed to implement the project, the MA SubCouncil prefers that the Applicant find additional sponsors, grants, and/or partners. NRD funds will not be used to remove or remediate sediments that are contaminated to the extent that state or federal environmental cleanup agencies consider them to be hazardous to human health or the environment and worthy of regulatory action. The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.1.1.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Wildlife resources and habitat as well as recreational uses of natural resources were lost or injured due to degradation of the Housatonic River by PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. Dam removal will restore natural geomorphic processes, re-establish a natural sediment transport regime, and improve general biological functions of the Housatonic River.

### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from Kenneth Nash (dam owner), Anthony Maffuccio

(Pittsfield City Councilor), the Pittsfield Conservation Commission, the Berkshire Environmental Action Team, and the Riverways Program which identified the proposed dam removal project as “one of eleven statewide Priority Projects” in 2005. Non-supportive comments were received from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee.

#### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal with the revisions described above.

### **4.1.2 Restoration Project 18: Rare Species Recovery on the Housatonic River**

Applicant(s): Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife’s Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)

Location: Main-stem of Housatonic River and its major tributaries in Massachusetts

Requested NRD funding: \$556,950

Approved NRD allocation: \$556,950

#### *4.1.2.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

##### Project Description

The NHESP project will protect and aid in the recovery of rare species injured by PCB contamination in the Housatonic watershed. The project goals are to 1) identify and protect rare species and their habitats to ensure their survival and to protect potential sources for population recolonization, 2) identify and prioritize sites for active restoration and land acquisition projects to be proposed for subsequent NRD funding rounds, and 3) provide updated conservation planning materials for a subset of towns within the Housatonic watershed.

NHESP will perform presence/absence and abundance surveys of rare species and their habitat. Surveys and habitat delineations will target rare fish, amphibians, aquatic reptiles, benthic invertebrates, and other aquatic organisms including aquatic plants. NHESP will also survey and delineate habitat for avian, terrestrial reptilian, and mammalian species that are closely associated with the Housatonic main-stem or its major tributaries. Following surveys, NHESP will process data, prioritize sites for acquisition and restoration, and generate conservation planning maps and materials.

##### Timeframe

Natural resource surveys will be conducted during the 2007 and 2008 field seasons (spring through fall). These data will be processed and maps produced during the 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 winters. An updated conservation plan identifying potential land acquisition and/or restoration projects that focus on rare species and habitats will be completed and distributed to 19 towns in February 2009, in time for the proposed 2009 round of NRD funding.

The timeframe described above was created based on the anticipation that the MA

SubCouncil would have finalized the Restoration Plan and would have begun to distribute funding in December 2006. The proposed activities included a considerable amount of pre-survey planning during the spring of 2007 and it is possible that, given the anticipated delays in disbursing funds, the proposed activities may not begin until 2008. Based on a December 2006 NRD funding award date, NHESP projected the following schedule:

- Spring 2007: Data review and planning.
- Summer 2007: Field surveys for rare species/communities and invasive species.
- Spring 2008: Data review and planning.
- Summer 2008: Field surveys for rare species/communities and invasive species.

#### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

The success of this project will be determined by evaluating the quality and number of acres of habitat that were delineated as rare species habitat. Habitat quality will be recorded during surveys using standard forms such as Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection habitat evaluation forms for aquatic and riparian sites, and ecological field forms for natural communities. The functional parameter to be monitored will be utilization of habitat by rare species and the structural parameter will be acreage delineated as rare species habitat. NHESP will collect presence/absence data as well as abundance data.

#### *4.1.2.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with wildlife restoration, aquatic restoration, recreation and environmental education projects. A summary of impacts of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** This project will benefit the diversity and abundance of aquatic species, terrestrial wildlife species, and plant communities by gathering current data, increasing regulatory protection for rare species, and creating greater visibility in conservation planning. Surveys for rare species and delineation of their habitats will compliment other restoration projects that directly improve wildlife habitat by protecting populations of rare, native species in the watershed. Once rare species populations are identified and their habitat delineated they become, by law, protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Information gathered from the research will also guide future land acquisition by the State and other conservation organizations.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated.

#### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits to Community:** Recreational uses will be enhanced over time by the protection of rare species and their habitats and the subsequent increased opportunities for wildlife viewing. Land with rare species, land abutting rare species habitat, or land placed in a conservation restriction has the potential to increase property values. NHESP will



provide up-to-date and enhanced conservation planning materials to the communities and conservation organizations of the Housatonic watershed. This will encourage stewardship of injured natural resources by raising awareness of rare species and providing current data for planning, restoration, and protection. NHESP will involve citizen groups and non-profit conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and the Massachusetts Audubon Society in survey efforts, thus involving the public and raising awareness. Local partnerships and collaborations will benefit by using NHESP's data and conservation planning tools as a focal point for collaborative efforts.

**Adverse Impacts:** There may be minimal adverse impacts from decreased land values if rare species are found on a property, as development options may become limited by their regulation.

#### *4.1.2.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

As a condition for funding, the NHESP will work with the MA SubCouncil to develop quantified performance goals for the survey efforts and a monitoring program that will document, using measurable endpoints, the success of the survey efforts in providing new regulatory protections for newly identified rare species occurrences. The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.1.2.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Aquatic and riparian wildlife and their habitats were lost or injured due to PCB contamination of the Housatonic River. This project will identify previously undocumented or outdated occurrences of rare aquatic species and communities in the Housatonic watershed, thereby affording these natural resources regulatory protection. The proposed activities will also greatly enhance the conservation and restoration of these species and their habitats by identifying and prioritizing future conservation and restoration opportunities.

##### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from The Nature Conservancy and the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee. No negative comments were received.

##### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal.

## 4.2 WILDLIFE RESOURCES AND HABITAT

The MA SubCouncil will provide a total of \$1,034,206 to three projects in the restoration priority category of Wildlife Resources and Habitat. These projects will protect 267 acres and restore/enhance 101 acres of wildlife habitat along the Housatonic River.

### 4.2.1 Restoration Project 02: Rising Pond Land Acquisition

Applicant(s): Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Inc.

Location: Great Barrington, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$261,750

Approved NRD allocation: \$261,750

#### 4.2.1.1 *Summary of Proposed Action*

##### Project Description

The land acquisition project proposed by the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Inc. (BNRC) is intended to reduce encroachment from development and agriculture along the Housatonic River and lessen sources of groundwater and surface contamination. Using NRD funds, BNRC will acquire and permanently protect the wildlife habitat on three parcels of land currently owned by Neenah Paper Inc. (Neenah), totaling 161 acres (Rising Pond Land Acquisition).

After acquisition, BNRC will create a management plan and baseline document to verify the current condition of the parcels, and provide recommendations to improve the wildlife resources and opportunities for public access. The management plan will include a natural resource inventory, information about the presence/absence of rare and endangered plants and animals, vegetation community types, and potential threats from invasive plants or agricultural/industrial runoff.

Under current ownership, the property is not actively managed and is closed to the public. BNRC would provide public access to the parcels which would create recreational and educational opportunities. Areas appropriate for public access will be based on information provided in the management plan. BNRC will negotiate with Neenah to design and establish a well marked easement around the dam for recreational users. The Rising Pond Land Acquisition will provide permanent protection and management of valuable natural resources along the Housatonic River for conservation purposes.

##### Timeframe

The Applicant will proceed to obtain a title examination, a property inspection (including an environmental site assessment) and a survey, if appropriate. According to the proposal's original timelines, BNRC anticipates closing on the land transaction approximately seven months after the MA SubCouncil finalizes the Restoration Plan and begins to disburse funds. The management plan for the parcels should be completed approximately two months after completion of the land transaction.

##### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

The management plan created by BNRC will be used to ensure that locations of public

access sites and trails are located in areas that will minimize impact to sensitive natural resources and rare plants and animals. Photographic documentation will be used to verify, catalog, and record the observations from the site survey, environmental assessment, and natural resource inventory.

BNRC will provide annual monitoring of the floodplain area that will identify and address potential contamination from agricultural and residential uses. BNRC will seek partnerships with Federal, State, and local agencies and nonprofit organizations to provide on-going, long-term monitoring and maintenance of the parcels in perpetuity (the proposal did not request stewardship funds from the MA SubCouncil). BNRC will provide quarterly progress reports beginning at the onset of NRD funding that will monitor progress based on the timeline and milestones set forth in Part C (Land Acquisition Project Schedule/Milestones) of the proposal.

#### *4.2.1.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with wildlife restoration, aquatic restoration, and recreational access projects. A summary of impacts of preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

##### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** The Rising Pond Land Acquisition will protect and enhance over 161 acres of land, including 60 acres of floodplain and 80 acres that fall within the EOEEA BioMap “Core Habitat” and the NHESP “Estimated Habitat.” Also, portions of the parcels are exemplary freshwater habitats, identified as “Critical Supporting Watershed” in the EOEEA Living Waters conservation map. The protection of these parcels will contribute to the preservation of some of the Commonwealth’s highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation and protection of habitats for rare aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals.

This project will have beneficial ground and surface water impacts due to the protection of over 60 acres of floodplain including river oxbows and vernal pools directly upstream from the site of a DEP Interim Wellhead Protection Area. BNRC will seek partnerships with Federal, State, and local agencies and nonprofit organizations to identify, inventory, and manage for priority habitats and to actively remove invasive woody species that have a negative impact on biodiversity.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated. However, there is a possibility of minimal adverse impacts to riparian habitat due to potential clearing associated with trail construction. Such impacts will be mitigated by locating the trails away from habitat for rare species, and utilizing best management practices during trail construction.

##### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits to Community:** Opening the Rising Pond Land Acquisition area to the public and connecting the area to existing conservation land would increase the recreational use of the river and economically benefit local recreation and hospitality businesses. By

increasing public access sites for wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking, and recreational boating (canoe/kayak), this project will restore recreational activities and the economic opportunities resulting from them. In particular, creating a portage easement around the dam would increase the likelihood of recreational use of a scenic stretch of the river that was previously inaccessible. This project will provide jobs associated with the development of the management plan (e.g., surveying, environmental consultation, and natural resource inventory) and ongoing property maintenance jobs (e.g., removing invasive species and trail building).

Adverse Impacts: None anticipated.

#### *4.2.1.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

Funding will be provided contingent upon BNRC agreeing to the following:

- BNRC will develop and implement a management plan for the purchased properties within 6 months after the purchase is closed. Such management plan will include provisions for controlling recreational activities on the properties that are not consistent with the goals of protection of wildlife habitat. The MA SubCouncil retains the authority to approve or require modifications to the management plan.
- The MA SubCouncil retains the authority to approve or require modifications to the design and construction of the recreational features (e.g., trails) on the purchased properties.
- BNRC will work with the MA SubCouncil to develop a monitoring program that will document, using measurable endpoints, the success of the land acquisition project in providing wildlife habitat protection and increased recreational opportunities.

The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.2.1.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Wildlife resources and habitat as well as recreational uses of natural resources were lost or injured due to degradation of the Housatonic River by PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. The proposed activities lessen the effects of potential development and agriculture along the Housatonic River by protecting 161 acres of valuable wildlife habitat in the watershed. The proposed activities also provide new recreational opportunities associated with the River.

##### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee, Great Barrington Conservation Commission, The Nature Conservancy's Berkshire Taconic Landscape Program, the Housatonic the Beautiful Fund, Inc., and the Housatonic Valley Association. No negative public comments were received.

### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal with the revisions described above.

## **4.2.2 Restoration Project 15: Clapp Park to Wild Acres Greenway Project**

Applicant(s): City of Pittsfield

Location: Southwest Branch of the Housatonic River, Pittsfield, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$250,000

Approved NRD allocation: \$250,000

### *4.2.2.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

#### Project Description

The City of Pittsfield, through their Conservation Commission, will use NRD funds to acquire two land parcels located within the City of Pittsfield on the Southwest Branch of the Housatonic River. The goals of this project are the protection of aquatic and wooded riparian habitat along the Housatonic River and its tributaries, and promoting the public enjoyment of the river. The two parcels comprise approximately 31 acres and contain portions of the river and its associated floodplain, including mature forested and scrub-shrub habitat. Both parcels are near the City center, and contain some uplands that could be developed according to present zoning ordinances. The acquisition will permanently protect the parcels from development while contributing to the eventual formation of a public-use greenway extending from Clapp Park to the Wild Acres Conservation Area. By teaming with the Berkshire Museum, the City of Pittsfield will maintain the anticipated greenway as a natural area to promote recreational and educational opportunities along the river and its tributaries. Once all necessary acquisitions are completed, the City will create a path within the greenway. The NRD funding is specific to the acquisition of a portion of this overall project.

#### Timeframe

The City of Pittsfield proposed an 8-month timeframe to complete the acquisition of the two properties. Based on a December 2006 NRD funding award date, the City of Pittsfield projected the following schedule:

- February 2007: Select survey contractor, complete property survey, and select survey engineer firm to complete MCP Chapter 21E investigation.
- March 2007: Submit offer letters to Property Owner based on appraised value.
- April 2007: City to complete negotiations with Property Owner.
- July 2007: Complete the acquisition of land parcels.

Once the two parcels are successfully acquired, the City of Pittsfield will identify the remaining pieces necessary for completing the greenway property and will advance negotiations with those landowners for easements or acquisition. Depending on the

timing of the final land/easement acquisition, the City will work with State and Federal authorities for the identification of funds to complete the trail project through the greenway. Presuming successful land/easement acquisition, the completed greenway and trail network could be available for full use by 2010.

#### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

The goal of this project is to acquire the two subject properties for the purpose of habitat protection and public education/recreation, and once acquired, the City is committed to preparing a property deed that specifies the conservation and public education/recreation purpose of the properties. To that end, the City will develop language that protects the parcels from development. A copy of the completed and approved deed will be provided to the MA SubCouncil as documentation of project success.

In addition, the properties will be managed to support the protection of the on-site habitat. To this end, the City will develop management criteria that include patrolling the property for illegal dumping, off-road vehicle use, and other uses thought to be detrimental to the intended purpose. These property rules and regulations will be approved by the City Council and submitted to the MA SubCouncil with the property deeds as proof of project success.

#### *4.2.2.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with wildlife restoration and environmental education projects. A summary of impacts of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal

#### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** The acquisition of the two land parcels along the Housatonic River will beneficially impact several environmental parameters. Primarily, the acquisition will provide long-term, permanent protection of important upland and floodplain habitats that would otherwise be removed or degraded by development. The greenway between the two public parks will remain naturally vegetated, thereby reducing habitat fragmentation and providing a wildlife travel corridor along the river and two perennial tributaries of the river. Protection of the parcels from residential development will beneficially impact instream flow and surface water quality by maintaining the existing hydrology and reduced rates of surface runoff. Protection of the soils and vegetation by acquisition of the two parcels will maintain the current level of groundwater protection afforded by the properties.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated. However, there is a possibility of minimal adverse impacts to riparian habitat due to clearing of vegetation and introduction of invasive species associated with the creation of the 8-foot wide paved trail within the greenway from Clapp Park to the Wild Acres Conservation Area. Such impacts will be mitigated by avoiding sensitive habitats and utilizing best management practices during trail construction.

### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits to Community:** The residential areas that surround the two parcels will be beneficially impacted through the permanent protection of open space. The preservation of the two parcels in their natural condition also increases the aesthetic value of the area by affording the adjacent residents and the general public with a natural view, in close proximity to a densely developed section of Pittsfield. The acquisition of the two land parcels along the Housatonic River will contribute to the creation of a public greenway and development of science-based educational programs at the Wild Acres Conservation Area that will help restore general public recreational and educational opportunities in the City of Pittsfield and Berkshire County.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated.

#### *4.2.2.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

Funding will be provided contingent upon the City of Pittsfield agreeing to the following:

- The City will develop and implement a management plan for the purchased properties within 6 months after the purchase is closed. Such management plan will include provisions for controlling recreational activities on the properties that are not consistent with the goals of protection of wildlife habitat, such as paintball games.
- The Trustee SubCouncil retains the authority to approve or require modifications to the design and construction of the recreational features (e.g., trails) on the purchased properties. The proposed 8-foot wide paved path shall not be located along the banks of the river.
- The City will work with the MA SubCouncil to develop a monitoring program that will document, using measurable endpoints, the success of the land acquisition project in providing wildlife habitat protection and increased recreational opportunities.

The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.2.2.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Wildlife resources and habitat as well as recreational uses of natural resources were lost or injured due to degradation of the Housatonic River by PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. The proposed project will protect riparian habitat to compensate for that which was injured by PCB contamination. It will also offset lost recreational opportunities in association with the eventual greenway that will be developed through the acquired land parcels.

### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Pittsfield Conservation Commission, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, and the

Berkshire Museum endorsing the proposed land acquisition and overall greenway. Non-supportive comments were received from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee.

#### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal with the revisions described above.

### **4.2.3 Restoration Project 19: Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project**

Applicant(s): Project Native

Location: Sheffield Floodplain and Kampoosa Bog – Sheffield and Stockbridge, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$522,456

Approved NRD allocation: \$522,456

#### *4.2.3.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

##### Project Description

The Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project (HRFFRP) will restore and enhance the integrity of critically important floodplain forests along the Housatonic River through a collaborative, long-term, and sustainable initiative. A grassroots partnership involving several organizations and constituencies will accomplish this through a series of coordinated and phased restoration projects. The HRFFRP will provide compensatory restoration of injured natural resources through

- the acquisition of conservation restrictions for 75 acres of floodplain forest in Sheffield, and the removal of non-native invasive species and replanting, if necessary, with native vegetation yielding 75 acres of habitat restoration.
- replanting 6 acres of wetland habitat (already cleared of non-native invasive species) with native vegetation at Kampoosa Bog in Stockbridge.
- restoring approximately 20 acres of farmland abutting the Housatonic River to native floodplain forest habitats.

A major portion of the proposed activities involves the establishment of a seed bank, nursery, and plant propagation facility which will supply more than 60 wetland and floodplain perennials, shrubs, and trees derived from local genomes to be available for the proposed restoration activities. Finally, the HRFFRP includes a public outreach program and an environmental education program for Grades 4 and 8 at the Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

##### Timeframe

This project will take place over a 3-year period. Years 1 and 2 will include purchase of the conservation restrictions, preparation of restoration plans for the protected parcels, baseline data collection, removal of invasive species and debris clearing, native seed collection and propagation, and education outreach efforts. During Year 3, the monitoring program will be established and the full restoration plans for the Kampoosa Bog and Sheffield Floodplain Forest projects will be implemented. The HRFFRP is part



of a 10-year plan to restore the natural habitat of the entire Sheffield floodplain forest riparian corridor.

#### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

In each of the 3 floodplain forest community sites, monitoring plots will be established. Pre-treatment baseline data will be collected to determine percent cover of invasive species and the percent cover of native species. Data will be collected during treatment and post treatment on structural and functional parameters in order to evaluate the project's success. Structural parameters that will be measured include percent cover of invasive species in areas that will be treated for invasive species, response of native vegetation to removal of invasive species, and establishment of native vegetation. Functional parameters that will be measured are response of macroinvertebrate fauna and amphibians to replanting of floodplain forest species.

#### *4.2.3.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with wildlife restoration and environmental education projects. A summary of impacts of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** The removal of invasive, non-native species and restoration of native plants will improve the quality of soil and groundwater, will slow the rapid deterioration of the riverbank, and enhance the diversity and abundance of aquatic species. The protection and restoration of native plant communities will preserve the habitats of local terrestrial wildlife species and enhance their ability to thrive in the Housatonic Valley. The conservation of floodplain forests will conserve habitats used by 6 rare and endangered plant species and 4 rare and endangered animal species. The conservation of the Kamposoa bog will restore native habitats used by 25 rare and endangered plant and animal species. Seventy-five acres of the riparian habitat that will be restored are designated by BioMap as Core Habitat, and 10 acres (2,800 feet of river shoreline) are also riparian buffer areas for a Living Waters Critical Supporting Watershed.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated. However, there is a possibility of minimal, temporary, adverse impacts to floodplain habitat due to disruption of the soil associated with the removal of non-native invasive plants. Such impacts will be mitigated by utilizing best management practices during restoration activities.

#### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits to Community:** The outreach programs associated with the Project Native restoration and seed bank projects will bring together different socioeconomic groups and help unify them with a common goal and purpose of enhancing the natural communities in the Housatonic watershed. Land conservation and floodplain restoration will enhance the value of neighboring properties and preserve historic scenic vistas of the Sheffield floodplain. The HRFFRP will raise the general public's understanding of the natural

world, the threats posed by non-native invasive species, and the benefits of native habitats. The seed bank will allow Project Native to build upon existing, long-term collaborations and establish new partnerships with other environmental organizations, commercial plant sellers, schools, and other agencies. The HRFFRP will provide short-term commercial benefits by contracting the services of a local landscaping firm for invasive species control, an employee to help install the seed bank, and a team of landscapers to install restoration plantings in Kampossa Bog.

**Adverse Impacts:** Some participating farmers will lose some of the commercial value of their agricultural land through the establishment of the conservation restrictions. However, all participating farmers are taking part in this project by choice, and such losses will be compensated for through the conservation restriction transactions in conjunction with the Natural Resource Conservation Service Farm Conservation Planning and Wetland Reserve Program. Other than this, no negative socioeconomic impacts are anticipated.

#### *4.2.3.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

No adjustments to the submitted proposal were recommended by the Trustees. However, The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.2.3.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Natural communities of the Housatonic River were lost or injured due to degradation by PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. The proposed activities will restore degraded wildlife habitat in 95 acres of floodplain forest, re-establish native plants along the Housatonic River, and promote increased educational opportunities associated with the River.

##### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee, the Sheffield Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Program of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Ward's Nursery & Garden Center, Walter Cudnohufsky Associates Inc., Honey Sharp Garden Design, the Railroad Street Youth Project, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Flying Deer Nature Center, Berkshire Grown, and five local citizens. No negative public comments were received.

##### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal.

### 4.3 RECREATIONAL USES

The MA SubCouncil will provide a total of \$792,355 to three recreational use projects. The projects will, among other activities, install five new sites to access the river, construct 1.3 miles of trail, and restore 2.63 acres of wildlife habitat.

#### 4.3.1 Restoration Project 01: Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk

Applicant(s): Great Barrington Land Conservancy

Location: Great Barrington, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$133,308

Approved NRD allocation: \$133,308

##### 4.3.1.1 *Summary of Proposed Action*

###### Project Description

The Great Barrington Land Conservancy, partnering with Simon's Rock College of Bard and Flying Cloud Institute, will use NRD monies for biodiversity enhancement, riparian reclamation activities, trail amenities, and outreach programs as part of its Housatonic River Walk project. The three-year project incorporates a suite of restoration techniques to be implemented within 2.63 acres of riparian habitat as well as the management of 0.5 linear miles of trailway adjacent to the Housatonic River. Restoration efforts will improve degraded riparian conditions through compost tea soil amendments, native species planting, invasive species removal, and riparian woodland management. Additional proposed activities include native plant propagation, river bottom cleanup, enhanced trail amenities (e.g., signage, guide/journal stations, and bulletin boards), on-site environmental education and outreach, a revised and expanded River Walk website, and monitoring growth of native plants and species composition. The restoration of the riparian buffer will contribute to improvements in groundwater quality and surface water quality, wildlife habitat enhancement, and improvement of the aesthetic value of the river environment.

###### Timeframe

The proposed activities will take place over a three-year time period. Native species planting, invasive species removal, compost tea applications, and their associated monitoring programs will take place during all three project years. Progress reports will be submitted for the first two years of both the native plant and compost tea monitoring programs.

###### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

The success of the native planting and compost tea programs will be monitored to improve efforts to establish native ecosystems. The native plant monitoring program will measure the number of stems and percent cover for different assemblages of plant species. These data will be collected over three consecutive years and summarized in terms of annual return rate, average seed production rate, and average flowering rate among the three growing seasons to document increases in seed dispersal and propagation. Photo stations will document vegetation conditions three times per year. The compost tea program will be monitored using five paired quadrats in separate

locations. Control and treatment plots will be randomly established at each quadrat and plant growth will be measured and compared statistically twice each growing season over a three-year period.

#### *4.3.1.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with wildlife restoration, aquatic restoration, environmental education, and recreational access projects. A summary of impacts of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

##### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** Reclamation of 2.63 acres of riparian buffer, planting with more than 100 species of native plants, the use of non-toxic compost tea, and rigorous invasive species plant removal will contribute towards stabilizing the riverbank, improving surface and ground water quality, reducing erosion, and enhancing habitat for wildlife.

**Adverse Impacts:** Minimal, temporary, adverse impacts to water quality may be caused by increased foot traffic.

##### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits to Community:** The proposed actions positively impact the aesthetic quality of the affected areas of the Housatonic River by removing invasive species and planting native species. Augmentation of the established River Walk program will improve river-related recreation and tourism, which would in turn economically benefit local recreation and hospitality businesses. Educational opportunities would be enhanced by the River Walk's proposed educational outreach workshops and improved website. Residential areas abutting the River Walk will benefit from the increased aesthetic and ecological value of the River Walk, which could have a positive effect on property values. This project will have beneficial short-term economic impacts through its employment of local horticulturalists, arborists, consultants, and trails specialists, and purchasing of tools, materials, and equipment from local businesses. The use of interns and volunteers for the proposed activities will bolster environmental stewardship in the community and connect the citizenry to the Housatonic River's natural resources.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated.

#### *4.3.1.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

No adjustments to the submitted proposal were recommended by the Trustees. However, the MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of the agreement with the Applicant. The MA SubCouncil will discuss with the Applicant minor revisions concerning the native plant monitoring plan.

#### *4.3.1.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Riparian wildlife resources and habitat as well as recreational uses of natural resources were lost or injured due to degradation of the Housatonic River by PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. The proposed activities will restore degraded land within the riparian corridor as well as provide increased educational and recreation based opportunities.

#### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee, the Town of Great Barrington Board of Selectmen, Great Barrington Conservation Commission, and Pamela Weatherbee (private botanical consultant). No negative public comments were received.

#### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal.

### **4.3.2 Restoration Project 08: Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River**

Applicant(s): Housatonic Valley Association and ESS Group, Inc.

Location: River-wide, from Hinsdale to the southern MA border

Requested NRD funding: \$460,000

Approved NRD allocation: \$415,000

#### *4.3.2.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

##### Project Description

This public access project is designed to increase public awareness of the Housatonic River and encourage the public perception of it as a viable recreational asset. The river currently has limited public access, particularly locations accessible to the handicapped, the elderly, and small children, creating safety issues associated with unimproved access points. The benefits to the Housatonic River resulting from this project will be safe access points at approved locations. These access sites will be managed for issues such as litter, river bank or soil erosion, and invasive species which are common to unimproved access points.

The goal of this project is to provide several new sites for public access to the Housatonic River. The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) and ESS Group, Inc. (ESS) will perform an initial screening of 37 potential sites based on land availability and the physical, hydrological, and natural resources. Once the list has been refined, sites will be selected as new public access locations, conceptual designs will be developed for each site for review by watershed stakeholders, and necessary permits for construction will be obtained. The new access sites will be constructed under this project and will include a range of improvements that will provide a variety of access types including limited access (i.e., “primitive” access), canoe access, and full handicapped access. Educational information will be included at each access facility. A monitoring program will be designed to minimize the potential for invasive species to become established at new

access points.

### Timeframe

Anticipated schedule for the following technical tasks:

- August 2007: Investigate physical, hydrological, & natural resources at each potential site.
- September 2007: Selection of priority sites.
- October 2007: Meeting of watershed stakeholders to solicit input.
- January 2008: Conceptual and final engineering design for each of the selected sites.
- March 2008: Obtain necessary permits for construction and prepare construction bid documents.
- September 2008: Construction of each facility per bid documents and specifications, construction monitoring, revegetation of disturbed land with native vegetation, and follow-up monitoring.
- September 2008: Develop educational materials to be posted at each new access point.

The timeframe described above was created based on the anticipation that the MA SubCouncil would have finalized the Restoration Plan and would have begun to distribute funding in February 2007. Given the anticipated delays in disbursing funds, the proposed timeframe may need to be adjusted.

### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

The HVA/ESS Team will monitor the progress of the project by filing progress and project completion reports summarizing the success of the project, the number, type, and location of each facility created, the cost for each facility, and a summary of all data collected and effort expended in creating these new public access sites. Photographs of each site pre-and post-improvement will be included in the report. The report will also include the long-term vegetation monitoring and maintenance programs that have been designed along with their planned implementation schedule and designated responsible parties.

Project performance will be measured by counting the number of new and safe locations that create enhanced public access to the Housatonic River. Techniques that will be employed to ensure the success of the project include frequent solicitation of input from watershed stakeholders, town officials, and the general public. The project design is based on an iterative process that allows for public input before final site selection, after conceptual design, and after final design as part of the public permitting process. HVA/ESS will solicit written commitments from each town or from volunteer organizations to provide on-going, long-term monitoring and maintenance of new facilities. In addition to support at the town level, HVA will enlist the help of volunteers to ensure project sustainability each year in perpetuity.

#### 4.3.2.2 *Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with recreational projects. A summary of impacts of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

##### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** Recreational uses of the Housatonic River's natural resources were injured by PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. This project will restore river-related recreation opportunities by enhancing and creating additional river access sites for recreational boating (i.e., canoeing/kayaking), fishing, and wildlife viewing. This project will also provide recreational access that can be used by a broader public in that new access sites will be accessible for the disabled. A notable beneficial impact of the proposed access sites is that, by providing carefully located and designed access sites, human activity will be focused away from areas providing habitat for rare species.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated. However, there is a possibility of minimal adverse impacts to riparian habitat due to clearing and shaping of the riverbank in order to install access sites. Such impacts will be mitigated by minimizing the area of riverbank being altered, maintaining native vegetation, replanting disturbed areas with native vegetation, and managing to prevent the establishment of invasive exotic plant species.

##### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits:** The proposed activities will primarily provide beneficial impacts to social and economic parameters. For instance, river access sites carefully located to allow safe parking and to avoid swift waters and steep unstable riverbanks will improve public safety. Incorporating stakeholder input into the planning process will foster local partnerships and enhance a local sense of community and well-being. The system of access sites, and the resulting increase in the recreational use of the river, would economically benefit local recreation and hospitality businesses.

**Adverse Impacts:** There is the potential for minimal adverse impacts on aesthetics caused by the removal of vegetation from the riverbank in order to install the access sites. Such impacts will be mitigated as described above in the discussion of environmental impacts.

#### 4.3.2.3 *MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

The original Scope of Work for this project included the construction of "6-8" enhanced public access sites. The MA SubCouncil believes that a significant benefit can be achieved through the enhancement of 5 access sites. Based on this reduction of the Scope of Work, the MA SubCouncil approved an allocation of 90 percent of the requested funds, contingent upon the following adjustments to the proposed activities:

- the MA SubCouncil retains authority for final approval of the 5 access sites that will be constructed with NRD funds; and

- a detailed post-construction monitoring/contingency plan is developed for the affected riparian habitat at the access sites, which is approved by the MA SubCouncil and includes measurement endpoints and restoration goals for invasive species, planted native vegetation, and riverbank erosion.

The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.3.2.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resources/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Recreational uses of the Housatonic River's natural resources were injured by the PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. This project will restore river-related recreation opportunities by enhancing and creating additional river access sites for recreational boating (i.e., canoeing/kayaking), fishing, and wildlife viewing. This project will also provide recreational access that can be used by a broader public in that new access sites will be accessible for the disabled. Five access sites will be constructed river-wide.

##### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee, the Town of Hinsdale, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, the Sheffield Land Trust, The Laurel Hill Association (Stockbridge), and the Tri-Corner Community Development Corporation. No negative public comments were received.

##### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal with the revisions described above.

### **4.3.3 Restoration Project 16: Old Mill Trail**

Applicant(s): Housatonic Valley Association

Location: Dalton and Hinsdale, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$244,047

Approved NRD allocation: \$244,047

#### *4.3.3.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

##### Project Description

Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) will develop a low-impact trail along the East Branch of the Housatonic River linking the towns of Dalton and Hinsdale.

Environmentally sound access to the river is anticipated to provide increased recreational and educational opportunities to visitors.

The proposed trail will be approximately 2 miles long and constructed in two phases.



Phase I, begun in 2003, runs between Old Dalton Road in Hinsdale and Route 8. Approximately 2,000 feet of this trail section is already complete, and an additional 2,000 feet for Phase I will be constructed under this proposal. Phase I will also require the construction of a 65-foot pedestrian bridge to span the River, a 16-foot pedestrian bridge to cross an intermittent stream, and elevated boardwalks over sensitive wetlands. Phase II will run between Route 8 and East Street in Dalton. Phase II will require approximately 5,000 feet of trail construction and a 65-foot pedestrian bridge to cross the River. Educational kiosks will be installed on both sections of the trail. Information at kiosks will explain the significance of mills on the river and identify remnants of the mills, their products, and the effect of mills on river health.

Property at the proposed trail location is owned by Crane and Co., Inc., of Dalton, MA. A Conservation Restriction for the property was executed through Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game in 2006.

#### Timeframe

Anticipated schedule for the following tasks:

- Spring 2007: Planning, permitting, and commencement of Phase I trail construction.
- Summer 2007: Completion of Phase I trail construction.
- Fall 2007: Installation of Long Bridge 1 and official opening of Phase I.
- Spring 2008: Phase II trail construction begins.
- Fall 2009: Installation of Long Bridge 2 and opening of entire trail.

#### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

Performance criteria will be based on 100 percent completion of the trail and associated educational kiosks. Public use of trail will also be monitored on Phase I of the trail during 2008 and 2009. The towns of Dalton and Hinsdale will form a joint committee to oversee trail maintenance needs after completion of the trail. It is anticipated that volunteers directed by the joint committee will monitor and maintain the trail.

#### *4.3.3.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with recreational access projects. A summary of impacts of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** The Old Mill Trail will provide improved resource stewardship through a more informed citizenry positively interacting with the environment. Development of a low-impact pedestrian trail will reduce erosion associated with “bootleg” trails currently used to access the river.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated. However, there is a possibility of minimal adverse impacts to riparian habitat due to potential clearing associated with trail construction.

Such impacts will be mitigated by locating the trails away from habitat for rare species, and utilizing best management practices during trail construction.

#### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits to Community:** Development of a low-impact pedestrian trail connecting Dalton and Hinsdale communities will increase the recreational use of the river and economically benefit local recreation and hospitality businesses. By increasing public access sites for wildlife viewing and hiking, this project will restore recreational activities and the economic opportunities resulting from them.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated.

#### *4.3.3.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

The MA SubCouncil will retain the authority to provide input into the design and construction of the proposed trail. The MA SubCouncil supports the installation of education kiosks at the trail; however, the MA SubCouncil will work with the Applicant to adjust the content of the kiosks constructed with NRD funds with a significant focus on Housatonic River natural resources in addition to historical information as currently proposed. The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.3.3.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Recreational uses of natural resources were lost or injured due to degradation of the Housatonic River by PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. The proposed activities will provide new recreational opportunities through creating environmentally sound access to the Housatonic River. The project will also help to compensate for the past diminution in value of recreational uses of the River by providing new higher-value recreational opportunities in sections of the Housatonic River that have not been contaminated by hazardous substances released from the GE Pittsfield facility. The proposed activities also provide new educational opportunities associated with the River.

#### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee, the Town of Dalton Select Board, the Town of Hinsdale Select Board, and educators at Nessacus Middle School and Silvio O. Conte Community School. No negative public comments were received.

#### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal with the revisions described above.

## 4.4 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The MA SubCouncil will provide a total of \$866,489 to two environmental education and outreach projects. These projects will enhance the stewardship of the Housatonic River watershed in all towns within the Massachusetts portion of the watershed.

### 4.4.1 Restoration Project 03: Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program for the River (HELP)

Applicant(s): Massachusetts Audubon Society, Housatonic Valley Association

Location: MA portion of Housatonic River Watershed

Requested NRD funding: \$874,842

Approved NRD allocation: \$631,410

#### 4.4.1.1 Summary of Proposed Action

##### Project Description

The Massachusetts Audubon Society's (Mass Audubon's) Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries and the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) are collaborating to create the "Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River." The goal of the HELP is to build upon the participating organizations' strengths and experience to help restore and repair the relationship of Berkshire County's children, families, and the public to the Housatonic River and its watershed through a multi-year program of river-related environmental education and active involvement. The HELP will offer a comprehensive river education experience to all fourth and sixth grade students in the Housatonic watershed by providing multi-unit, experiential programs. An optional educational river program (Envirothon) will be available to interested high school students in the watershed. The long-term goal of these educational programs is to develop an emotional and physical connection between young students and the river in order to foster an understanding of why the river should be protected and how individuals can affect positive change.

In addition to classroom learning, students will participate in water quality testing, storm drain labeling, and a canoeing program for first-hand experience on the river. A Core Curriculum will be developed jointly by Mass Audubon and the HVA that will combine existing environmental education materials with new information specific to the Housatonic watershed, its students, and the community. A website will be created that will include a resource list, links to community groups, a calendar of community events including public canoe trips, and other topics of interest.

##### Timeframe

Anticipated schedule for the following tasks:

- August 2007: Curriculum development.
- December 2007: Hiring and training of instructors.
- February 2008: Begin classroom lessons.
- May 2008: Begin canoe trips for students.
- July 2008: Begin canoe trips for public.
- September 2008: Water quality fieldtrips for sixth grade students.

- October 2008: Begin classroom lessons.
- May 2009: Begin canoe trips for students.
- July 2008 - July 2010: Program repeats on same schedule.

#### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

The HELP will be monitored and evaluated by measuring the reach of the program in terms of the number of children and community members it serves. Each year of the project, the HELP will reach at least 70 percent of all fourth and sixth grade students (i.e., at least 1,400 students) living within the Housatonic watershed in Massachusetts, including public, private, and home school settings. Project performance will be evaluated by content and attitudinal evaluations for students two to three times per school year using techniques developed by a contracted evaluator. The HELP is aiming for 70 percent of the students to score 70 percent or greater on content assessments and for at least 50 percent of the students changing negative attitudes toward the River to positive attitudes as measured by attitudinal surveys. Project performance will also be evaluated through ongoing evaluations of the program's reach through statistics collected by the environmental instructors and evaluated by a Project Coordinator; and internal evaluations of the program three times per school year. Internal evaluation will occur in November, March, and June of each year of the program, and adjustments will be made on an ongoing basis as a result of these evaluations. There will be at least one major, complete review of the program at the end of each school year, with changes incorporated into a revised curriculum at the start of each school year.

#### *4.4.1.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with environmental education projects. A summary of impacts of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** Through education, children and adults in the watershed will be better informed about the importance of environmental stewardship, which will help avoid future adverse impacts to the river.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated.

#### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits to Community:** The HELP will have beneficial short-term economic impacts because it will employ three environmental education instructors, one to two people to assist with the canoe programs, and an educational assessment consultant. The program will play a major role in bringing people to the river to learn which will promote recreational use over the long-term. The HELP's educational programs will reach minority and low income populations living in Berkshire County and will help enrich their lives and establish a local sense of community and well being by bringing people together in a positive way. Much of the Housatonic is burdened with a large load of litter, demonstrating a lack of connection and respect for the river. The HELP should

promote an increased aesthetic value of the river by contributing to the development of a stewardship ethic which should result in a corresponding reduction in the amount of trash deposited in and around the river. The HELP will engender increased collaboration between the schools in the watershed and Mass Audubon's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries and the HVA, fostering cooperation between organizations in future endeavors that will benefit the community at large.

Adverse Impacts: None anticipated.

#### *4.4.1.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

The original Scope of Work for this project included 4 years of project implementation. Once established, the program would repeat the same activities for the final 3 years. The MA SubCouncil believes that substantial benefits can still be achieved through a shortened program. Thus, the Trustees approved funding for a 3-year program. The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.4.1.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Educational and recreational uses of natural resources were lost or injured due to degradation of the Housatonic River by PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. The proposed activities increase river-related environmental education to all fourth and sixth graders in the Housatonic River watershed in Massachusetts and seek to improve environmental stewardship leading to a healthier Housatonic River ecosystem. Secondly, the proposed canoe activities provide environmental education as well as recreational boating.

##### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from Berkshire Hills Regional Schools, Richmond Consolidated School, Wahconah Regional High School, Williams Elementary, Herberg Middle School, Morris School, The Montessori School of the Berkshires, and Monument Valley Regional Middle School, the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee, and citizens of the watershed commending Mass Audubon's commitment to environmental education and conservation and applauding the success of Mass Audubon's existing Housatonic River canoe trip program. No negative public comments were received.

##### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal with the revisions described above.

#### **4.4.2 Restoration Project 13: Berkshire Conservation Agent Program**

Applicant(s): Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Location: Municipalities within Berkshire County, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$248,555  
Approved NRD allocation: \$235,079

#### *4.4.2.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

##### Project Description

Through the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP), the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) will provide technical assistance, training, and education directly to municipal Conservation Commissions in Berkshire County. Commissions will receive technical assistance in the areas of field work, application review, permit preparation, monitoring, and enforcement activities related to administering projects proposed for Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) permits. In addition, Conservation Commissions will receive training, assistance, and support to expand their role and influence as resource protectors as well as to adopt local wetland bylaws, wildlife habitat management plans, and provisions of the Scenic Mountains Act.

Technical assistance will be provided to Commissions in their permitting, construction monitoring, and enforcement roles under the WPA by providing access to a professional Conservation Agent. Services to be provided by the Conservation Agent will include review of plans and applications for work in or near wetland areas (wetlands, riverfront, floodplain, bank, and land under water) and preparation of written reviews addressing project impacts and possible design changes. This program will increase the scope and capacity of Conservation Commissions through coordination of peer to peer networking of Commission members.

##### Timeframe

This project would take place over a four-year time period. It is anticipated that all proposed tasks will occur regularly during the four-year implementation period.

##### Monitoring Program and Performance Criteria

The Conservation Agent will keep records to monitor the performance of his/her technical assistance in the following areas: permitting under the WPA, construction monitoring, enforcement of wetlands violations, training workshops, activities of a county-wide Conservation Commission Association, grant writing, public outreach, conservation restrictions and easements, master and open space plans, land protection, and land and wildlife habitat management. Examples of recordkeeping include documenting the square footage of impacts to wetland areas, comparing the area of wetland resources illegally altered versus those that are restored, and counting the number of attendees at training workshops.

An addition, as indicators of project success, the following items identified by the Applicant will be monitored and documented, among others:

- the number of municipalities participating in the BCAP;
- the number of municipalities adopting the “consultant rule”;
- the consistency of membership in a county-wide Conservation Commission Group;
- the number of municipalities adopting wetland bylaws;
- the number of municipalities that establish conservation funds for the purposes of

- purchasing conservation land or conservation restrictions, accepting donations of land or funds, and developing municipal wildlife management plans;
- the number of Scenic Mountain Act (SMA) trainings provided to municipalities that have not adopted the SMA; and
  - the number of municipalities that adopt the SMA.

#### *4.4.2.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

The PEA evaluated the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with environmental education projects. A summary of the preferred alternatives is provided in Table 2. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

##### Environmental Impacts

**Benefits to Resources:** Permits issued by Conservation Commissions that are overseen by a Conservation Agent ensure that proposed work does not adversely impact natural resources protected under the WPA. Oversight of permit conditions and management of natural resources will result in environmental benefits including improved air and sediment quality due to erosion and dust control measures, instream flow improvements due to monitoring of downstream flows for lake drawdown or dam removal projects, and increased diversity and abundance of wildlife as a result of thorough habitat evaluations and well-planned restoration projects.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated.

##### Socioeconomic Impacts

**Benefits to Community:** With training and technical assistance from the BCAP, Conservation Commissions would be able to ensure that work in the floodplains follows wetland regulations resulting in protection of flood storage, reduction in storm damage to homes, and increased property values. Communities will benefit from Commissions that can protect their natural resources, issue protective and well conditioned permits, monitor construction activities, develop strong master plans, and manage and obtain lands for protection. An improved sense of community and area aesthetics will result from Commissions that protect natural resources and water quality. Human health and safety will be improved by Commission-required emergency permits such as beaver dam removal or emergency road repairs. Educational opportunities will be improved by Commissions which will develop better educational materials and workshops.

**Adverse Impacts:** None anticipated.

#### *4.4.2.3 MA SubCouncil Requested Adjustments to Proposal*

BRPC originally requested \$248,555 to perform activities detailed in the proposal for all municipalities in Berkshire County. However, there are six Berkshire County municipalities that are not located in the Housatonic watershed. The MA SubCouncil approved funding only the BCAP activities for municipalities located wholly or partially in the Housatonic watershed. In addition, for those municipalities that are partially located in the Housatonic watershed, the MA SubCouncil intends that NRD funding is

only used to support BCAP technical assistance on project-specific permit application reviews for projects located in or provide benefits to the Housatonic watershed. Given the reduced geographic scope of the BCAP to be supported with NRD funds, the MA SubCouncil allocated \$235,079 to this proposal. The MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of the agreement with the Applicant.

#### *4.4.2.4 Determination for Selection as a Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Wetlands, floodplains, riverfront, and aquatic habitat resources of the Housatonic River were lost or injured due to PCB contamination from the GE Pittsfield facility. The proposed activities involving municipalities and development projects in the Housatonic watershed would help prevent further degradation of those important natural resources through informed, ecologically sensitive management of the Housatonic River watershed.

##### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from Conservation Commissions of Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Lanesborough, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Ashford, Pittsfield, Richmond, Tyringham, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge, Cheshire, Lee, Sandisfield, Otis, and Becket; citizens of Clarksburg and West Stockbridge; the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions; the Clarksburg Board of Selectmen; and the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee. No negative public comments were received.

##### Review Team

Scores were favorable.

Considering the above and the merits of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil approved funding this proposal with the revisions described above.

## **4.5 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

Over the long term, the group of projects identified in this final RP will enhance the Housatonic River ecosystem. However, there may be some temporary direct impacts from the proposed projects such as:

- **Public Access/Recreation:** Public access and recreational opportunities in localized areas may be temporarily restricted during construction activities. Because the implementation time for these projects will be relatively short, the impact will be minimal.
- **Visual/Aesthetic:** There may be short-term visual impacts during implementation of some of the proposed projects which will cease once the MA SubCouncil completes those projects. Beneficial aesthetic impacts will be the ultimate result of selected projects which will extend to the users of the project areas.
- **Air and Noise Pollution:** Equipment and machinery used during construction and other restoration activities will generate noise which may temporarily disturb



wildlife and humans. It is not anticipated, however, that the proposed projects will cause significant noise impacts.

- **Water and Sediment Quality:** Although implementation of the preferred alternatives should result in no net significant impact to water quality, there may be temporary increases in sedimentation, contaminants, and turbidity related to certain projects. Avoidance and mitigation measures and best management practices required by the regulatory agencies will be employed to minimize any water quality and sedimentation impacts.
- **Other (e.g., transportation, land use, economic):** The proposed restoration projects will have no unfavorable social or economic impacts on nearby communities or neighborhoods. General land use patterns will not be affected by the preferred alternatives. No significant adverse effects are anticipated to soil, geologic conditions, energy resources, wetlands, or flood plains.

Some impacts are uncertain at this time and depend on the specific nature of the restoration project. For instance, placing land in conservation could have a positive impact on the value of adjacent residential development and a subsequent positive effect on property tax revenue. Alternatively, placing the land in conservation may preclude future development and decrease long-term tax revenue potential.

Environmental consequences of restoration actions are often not restricted to the project location. The Preferred Restoration Alternatives are expected to indirectly benefit a variety of species by improving habitats and recreational opportunities.

Table 2 presents a summary of impacts for the selected projects as determined by applicants in the project applications.

Table 2: Project Impacts – Preferred Alternatives

<i>Impact Category</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7(DR)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	Air quality	NE	NE	NE	MA	NE	B	NE	NE	B	NE
	Instream flow	NE	NE	NE	SA,B	NE	B	NE, B	NE	B	NE
	Surface water quality	B	B	NE	SA,B	NE	B	NE,B	NE	B	B
	sediment quality	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	B	NE	NE	B	B
	Soil quality	B	NE	NE	MA,	NE	B	NE	NE	B	B
	Groundwater quality	B	B	NE	B	NE	B	NE, B	NE	B	B
	Wetlands quality and services	B	B	NE	B	MA	B	NE	NE	B	B
	Diversity and abundance of aquatic species	B	B	NE	B	NE	B	NE	NE	B	B
	Diversity and abundance of terrestrial wildlife species	B	B	NE	B	NE	B	NE, B	NE	B	B
	Diversity of plant communities	B	B	NE	B	B	B	NE, B	NE	B	B
	Other: Flooding reduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Other: Diversity of rare species	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	B
<b>Social</b>	Impacts on minority or low income populations	MA,	B	B	NE	B	MA,	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impacts on local sense of community and well being	B	B	B	B	B	B	NE	B	B	B
	Impacts on aesthetics	B	B	B	MA,	MA	B	NE,	B	B	B
	Impacts on public health or safety	MA,	B	B	B	B	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impacts on recreational activity	B	B	B	MA,	B	B	NE,	B	MA,	NE
	Impacts to Native American Trust Resources	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impacts on non-Tribal cultural sites	B	NE	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	B	NE	NE
	Impacts on education	B	B	B	B	B	B	NE, B	B	B	B
	Impacts on local partnerships and collaborative efforts	B	B	B	B	B	B	NE, B	B	B	B
	Impacts on availability and quality of drinking water	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impact on subsistence activity	NE	B	NE	NE	B	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Nuisance impacts	MA,B	NE	NE	B	B	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
<b>Economic</b>	Short-term commercial economic impact of restoration action	B	B	B	B	B	B	NE	B	NE	B
	Impacts on property values	B	B	NE	B	B	B	NE, B	B	MA,	B
	Impacts on recreational expenditures and related business	B	B	B	B	B	B	NE	B	NE	NE
	Impacts on existing resource-based industries	B	B	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	B
	Impacts on commercial water users	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impacts on river-based commercial navigation	B	NE	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impact on wastewater dischargers	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	NE

Intensity Levels: “NE” – No Effect; “MA” – Minimal Adverse Impact; “SA” – Significant Adverse Impact; “B” – Beneficial Impact; “-” – No Response

#### **4.6 SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

The MA SubCouncil selected a variety of Preferred Restoration Alternatives to restore resources and/or services lost as a result of GE's release of PCBs and hazardous materials into the Housatonic River. To assess the cumulative impacts of these Alternatives, this section focuses on how restoration actions would combine with other factors, both positive and negative, to influence the environmental quality of the Housatonic River watershed. In the regulations implementing NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) defines cumulative impacts as the "impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions" 40 CFR § 1508.7.

The cumulative environmental consequences are anticipated to be largely beneficial since the MA SubCouncil proposes to implement projects that would achieve recovery of injured natural resources. Aquatic restoration, land conservation, improved control of point and non-point pollution sources, and other efforts included in the Preferred Alternatives would help counteract other pre-existing factors negatively affecting water quality and wildlife habitat.

The Preferred Restoration Alternatives selected as part of this final RP/SEA will complement and enhance pre-existing restoration initiatives on-going in the Housatonic River watershed. The discovery of PCB contamination as a result of GE activities has greatly heightened environmental awareness in the watershed. A variety of research and conservation efforts are complete or underway in the region and, if adequately funded through other sources, could continue to proceed independently of the Restoration Program that is addressed in this final RP/SEA. Although it is difficult to identify such efforts exhaustively, the EOEEA's 5-Year Watershed Action Plan (EOEA 2003) highlighted the following initiative, among others, that has taken place as a result of heightened environmental awareness:

- The Housatonic River Restoration Plan was developed based upon a collaborative process that included all conservation interests in the watershed (both public and private). Housatonic River Restoration, Inc., continues to work to implement the action items identified in that plan.

Restoration under the Preferred Alternatives will complement these and other conservation and regulatory efforts to increase cumulative benefits for the watershed. In addition, restoration efforts other than those described in this RP/SEA will continue to occur in the context of existing state and federal regulatory and conservation programs. Examples are described below. These efforts and the selected Preferred Alternatives will provide additive environmental benefits to the Housatonic River watershed.

- Wetland filling is regulated through permit programs operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Sections 10 and 404). In accordance with "no net loss of wetlands" policies, activities causing impacts may require mitigation that includes

- restoration activities.
- A variety of federal programs provide for the conservation of natural resources; for instance, the Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Program pays farmers to retire marginally productive cropland for the benefit of wildlife habitat. Other federal habitat conservation programs include the NRCS Conservation Reserve Program, the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, and the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.
  - Massachusetts implements wetland restoration and conservation programs with funds obtained from Section 104(b)(3) Wetlands Program Development Grants.
  - USEPA administers grants under Section 319 of the CWA to fund state non-point source control efforts. The grants cover technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, demonstration projects, and monitoring to assess success of specific projects.
  - Massachusetts implements various programs with funds obtained from Section 106 CWA Water Pollution Control Program Grants.
  - Numerous non-profit organizations (e.g., HVA and the Massachusetts Audubon Society) purchase and manage land in the Housatonic watershed for recreation and open space conservation.

The Preferred Alternatives will also help to minimize negative environmental and socioeconomic forces discussed in Section 2.0 (Affected Environment). Most notably, restoration will likely enhance residents' and visitors' enjoyment of the natural environment, through general aesthetic improvement and creation of recreational opportunities. Commercial activity associated with increased recreation will help to partially offset job losses in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and farming. Affected industries will likely include hotels, restaurants, guide services, and retail. Additionally, the public's understanding of health risks associated with environmental damage can be enhanced by public knowledge of and participation in restoration efforts. The MA SubCouncil will consider and strive to minimize negative cumulative impacts from projects implemented under the Restoration Program.

#### **4.7 SUMMARY OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

Table 3 presents the Preferred Alternatives.

**Table 3: Summary of Preferred Alternatives**

<b>Resource Priority Category</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Approved NRD Funding</b>
<b>Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat</b>	<i>West Branch of Housatonic River Revitalization – Dam Removal Component</i>	\$750,000
	<i>Rare Species Recovery on the Housatonic River</i>	\$556,950
<b>Wildlife Resources and Habitat</b>	<i>Rising Pond Land Acquisition</i>	\$261,750
	<i>Clapp Park to Wild Acres Greenway Project</i>	\$250,000
	<i>Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project</i>	\$522,456
<b>Recreational Uses</b>	<i>Great Barrington River Walk</i>	\$133,308
	<i>Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River</i>	\$415,000
	<i>Old Mill Trail</i>	\$244,047
<b>Environmental Education and Outreach</b>	<i>Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program for the River (HELP)</i>	\$631,410
	<i>Berkshire Conservation Agent Program</i>	\$235,079
<b>Approved Round 1 Funding</b>		<b>\$4,000,000</b>

## 5.0 NON-SELECTED PROJECT APPLICATIONS

Ten<sup>3</sup> Project Applications were not proposed for funding. These Project Applications were not selected based on the results of the Evaluation Criteria scoring as applied to each Project Application, the range of potential benefits associated with these projects relative to the Preferred Alternatives, and funding constraints imposed by the Round 1 funding range goal of \$3.5 million to \$4.0 million.

### 5.1 AQUATIC BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND HABITAT

#### 5.1.1 Project Application 07: West Branch of the Housatonic Revitalization Project – Greenway Restoration Plan Component

Applicant(s): City of Pittsfield

Location: Pittsfield, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$95,000

##### 5.1.1.1 Summary of Proposed Action

The Applicant (City of Pittsfield), in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game – Riverways Program, and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission proposed to develop an ‘integrated river restoration plan’ for the downtown portion of the West Branch of the Housatonic River. The proposed plan is a multi-year, multi-phase project with two main focus areas: 1) development of a greenway plan for the West Branch of the Housatonic River corridor from Wahconah Park to Clapp Park; and 2) the removal of the Mill Street Dam on the West Branch of the Housatonic River. Only the first portion of this plan, Greenway Restoration Plan, described in this section is discussed here. The dam removal portion of the plan is addressed in Section 4.0; Preferred Alternatives.

The City of Pittsfield proposed to restore a segment of the West Branch of the Housatonic River from Wahconah Park to Clapp Park to a more natural setting for use and enjoyment by the public. This would include a series of linked green spaces available for public use in a densely-populated urban area. The Greenway Restoration Plan would propose, among other things, a canoe run from Wahconah Park to Clapp Park and an improved trail network along the river. The project applicant indicated that improvements to the natural environment, including improved riparian habitat and water quality, and reduced flooding would contribute to ongoing neighborhood revitalization in the project area. The proposed work is largely related to planning, and would apparently require additional funding for future implementation of measures identified to construct the greenway.

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<sup>3</sup> This includes the “Greenway” component of Project Application 07.

### 5.1.1.2 *Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

No adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts were anticipated to result from the development of the Greenway Restoration Plan. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

### 5.1.1.3 *Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative*

#### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Factors that most influenced the determination for the Greenway Restoration Plan Component of this application included the apparent low level of likely benefits to injured resources (given that the proposed activities focus on project planning), a concern that the timing for plan development may be more beneficial if delayed until any changes associated with the proposed removal of the Mill Street Dam can be taken into account, and the apparent need for additional funding to implement measures identified for project implementation.

#### Public Comments

Letters of support directly addressing the Greenway Restoration Plan Component were received from the City of Pittsfield, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Riverways Program, a member of the general public, and the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. No negative comments were received.

#### Review Team

While the Consensus Review Team score for the overall West Branch Revitalization Project application was good, reviewers commented that this combined score reflected potential benefits associated with the Mill Street Dam Removal Component, and that the Greenway Restoration Plan Component would have scored lower as a stand-alone project application as a whole.

Some reviewers of the West Branch Revitalization Project application evaluated the Greenway Restoration Plan and Mill Street Dam Removal Components separately and generally assigned lower scores to the Greenway Restoration Plan Component. For consistency with other reviewers, a combined score was developed and assigned to the West Branch Revitalization Project application as a whole.

Considering the above and the details of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

## **5.1.2 Project Application 09: Aquatic Habitat Restoration of the Housatonic River**

Applicant(s): ENSR Corporation

Location: Berkshire County, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$1,308,980

### 5.1.2.1 *Summary of Proposed Action*

The Applicant (ENSR Corporation) proposed to mitigate impairment of aquatic biota by enhancing river habitat quality, diversity and connectivity within the Massachusetts

portion of the Housatonic River system. The project was comprised of four phases, including 1) data collection and mapping, 2) identification of impairments and associated remedial actions, 3) design and permitting of proposed remedial actions, and 4) implementation and post-construction monitoring. Potential restoration projects that could be constructed include altering stream channels to improve fish habitat, removing/altering flow obstructions to restore hydrology or fish passage, and altering stream banks to reduce erosion. Identified project benefits included those related to aquatic and biological resources, wildlife in riverine and riparian corridors, recreational resources, and education and outreach.

#### *5.1.2.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

No adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts were anticipated to result from the proposed planning activities. However, the construction of restoration actions, assuming appropriate design/engineering and best management practices, could produce minimal adverse environmental and socioeconomic impacts primarily associated with short-term effects during construction. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### *5.1.2.3 Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Although the exact restoration projects to be implemented through the Project Application are yet to be determined, the envisioned types of projects would provide benefits to aquatic resources. However, the potential magnitude of the benefits cannot be quantified at this time. Additionally, the apparently high percentage of costs associated with the identification of projects for implementation detracted from the benefits of the proposed project.

#### Public Comments

Letters of support were not received for this project application. Non-supportive comments were received from the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation which cited among other factors, the uncertainty of actual project implementation.

#### Review Team

The Review Team score for this project was the lowest of the four project applications in the Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat category. The basis for the assigned score was influenced by factors including cost and uncertainty of potential benefits.

Considering the above, the details of the proposal, and the limited NRD funding available, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

### **5.1.3 Project Application 11: Housatonic Watershed Fisheries Assessment**

Applicant(s): Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

Location: Housatonic River Watershed in Massachusetts

Requested NRD funding: \$220,000



#### 5.1.3.1 Summary of Proposed Action

The Applicant (Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife) proposed a two-year project to enhance fishery resources and recreational fishing opportunities on the Housatonic River watershed. The applicant would conduct surveys of fisheries resources and develop maps for conservation purposes. The applicant would also study the movements, key habitats, and movement barriers of brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), which are of particular recreational importance, by radio-telemetry, and develop and distribute maps of recreational fishing resources.

#### 5.1.3.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts

No adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts were anticipated to result from the proposed activities. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### 5.1.3.3 Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

The proposed activities primarily involve the performance of studies and the development of maps, which yield a relatively low magnitude of natural resource benefits compared to projects that implement restoration projects. Proposed activities included tracking of fish movements (primarily on brown trout) in the Housatonic River watershed. This species is not native to the Housatonic River watershed and poses a threat to indigenous brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) populations in the watershed, particularly if the information learned from the proposed studies is used to eliminate barriers to brown trout movement and to enhance/expand brown trout populations. Although enhancing brown trout populations could benefit recreational fishing, this benefit could occur at the expense of native fisheries. The ecological benefit of producing fisheries maps is also questionable.

##### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from the Taconic Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Massachusetts/Rhode Island Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the National Fish Habitat Board, and the Berkshire County League of Sportsmen. Several emailed “form letters” in support of the proposal were also received. Non-supportive comments were received from the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation which cited among other factors, the tolerance of brown trout to PCB contaminated environments and their resulting (low) value as an indicator species.

##### Review Team

The Consensus Review Team score for this project application was just below the average score.

Considering the above, the details of the proposal, and the limited NRD funding available, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

## 5.2 WILDLIFE RESOURCES AND HABITAT

### 5.2.1 Project Application 10: Bartholomew's Cobble Restoration

Applicant(s): ENSR Corporation

Location: Sheffield, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$18,700

#### 5.2.1.1 *Summary of Proposed Action*

The Applicant (ENSR Corporation) proposed to investigate potential sources of sediment, evaluate the feasibility of erosion and sediment control options, evaluate the potential range of ecological restoration options, and work with the Town of Sheffield to implement source control and ecological restoration. The Applicant identified sediment laden runoff from Weatogue Road (Sheffield, MA) as potentially impacting ecologically sensitive areas of Bartholomew's Cobble. The goal of the proposal would be to design a set of preventative and restorative measures which would reduce the ongoing erosion problem and thereby enhance rare species habitat along the Housatonic River. The Applicant proposed to seek additional funding following the work proposed here to design and implement the restorative measures.

#### 5.2.1.2 *Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

No adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts were anticipated to result from the proposed investigative and feasibility study activities. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### 5.2.1.3 *Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

The proposal did not provide assurances that the implementation of the restorative measures identified by the proposed feasibility study would indeed be implemented; thus, the level of restoration benefits anticipated from the proposal was relatively low compared to a project that included implementation.

##### Public Comments

No letters of support were submitted with the proposal, and no supportive comments on the proposal were received from the public. Non-supportive comments were received from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation Citizen Review Committee regarding the lack of assurances that implementation would occur.

##### Review Team

The Review Team score for this project was the lowest of the five project applications in the Wildlife Resources and Habitat category.

Considering the above and the details of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

## 5.3 RECREATIONAL USES

### 5.3.1 Project Application 05: Lee River Walk

Applicant(s): The Lee Land Trust

Location: Lee, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$62,000

#### 5.3.1.1 Summary of Proposed Action

The Applicant (the Lee Land Trust) proposed to utilize NRD funds to construct a 1,650-foot recreational pathway along the Housatonic River in Lee, MA. The proposed trail would be constructed of permeable materials and designed to allow access for persons with physical disabilities. The applicant also proposed to remove invasive species and debris adjacent to proposed trail.

#### 5.3.1.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts

Adverse environmental impacts were anticipated to be minimal (given appropriate design/engineering and best management practices during construction) and associated with constructing the trail in a floodplain. No adverse socioeconomic impacts were anticipated. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### 5.3.1.3 Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Completion of the Lee River Walk would likely increase recreation based opportunities associated with the Housatonic River. The level of detail presented in the project application limits a determination of whether the project could be completed successfully. For example, permissions and access agreements have yet to be secured from land owners that would be affected by the trail.

##### Public Comments

A letter of support was received from the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. No negative public comments were received.

##### Review Team

The Consensus Review Team score for this project application was relatively low. The basis for the assigned score was influenced by factors including a lack of detail within the project application and uncertainty of potential benefits.

Considering the above and the details of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

### 5.3.2 Project Application 06: Proposal for a Beaded Necklace Housatonic River Greenway

Applicant(s): Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Location: Berkshire County, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$665,000

### 5.3.2.1 *Summary of Proposed Action*

The Applicant (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.), in association with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and the Berkshire Bike Path Council, proposed to utilize NRD funding for the master planning, feasibility study, conceptual design, and development of a detailed implementation plan for a combined bikeway/greenway. Within the proposed 2-year Master Plan development period, project feasibility, phasing, budgets, and potential sources of funding for plan implementation would be identified. The proposed Master Plan would assess opportunities to connect existing and proposed cycling facilities, canoe launches, trails, open space, and other recreational sites within the Housatonic watershed through a combination on-road and off-road bikeway.

### 5.3.2.2 *Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

No adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts were anticipated to result from the development of the Master Plan. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

### 5.3.2.3 *Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative*

#### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

The proposal focuses on planning efforts and did not provide assurances that necessary funding for construction would be secured and the implementation of the restorative measures would occur. Thus, great uncertainty surrounds the benefits potentially yielded by the application's proposed activities. Additionally, the apparently high percentage of costs associated with the identification of projects for implementation detracted from the benefits of the proposed project.

#### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from John Olver (U.S. Congressman, MA), Andrea Nucifero (MA State Senate), Housatonic Valley Association, and Center for Ecological Technology. Non-supportive comments were received from the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, which cited among other factors, the relatively high cost and the uncertainty of actual project implementation.

#### Review Team

The Consensus Review Team score for this project application was relatively low. The basis for the assigned score was influenced by factors including cost and uncertainty of potential benefits.

Considering the above and the details of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

### **5.3.3 Project Application 20: Rehabilitation of Forest Roads and Trails in the Housatonic River Watershed**

Applicant(s): Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Location: Housatonic River Watershed, MA

Requested NRD funding: \$2,000,000

### *5.3.3.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

The Applicant (Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation [DCR]) proposed a two-year plan to close, abandon, or reconstruct specific roads and trails to improve regional aquatic biological resources and enhance safe and environmentally sound access opportunities for recreational use in the Housatonic River Watershed. The Massachusetts DCR manages 67,000 acres of land within the Housatonic River Watershed in Massachusetts. As described by the Applicant, years of neglect and overuse have left roads and trails within these lands in poor condition. Severe erosion has rendered many roads impassible, compromised public access opportunities, and degraded regional surface water quality and wildlife habitat.

### *5.3.3.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

Adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts associated with the construction phase of the proposed activities (e.g., public nuisance) were anticipated to be minimal and short-term. In addition, minor adverse impacts to current recreational uses might occur if road or trail closures hinder access. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

### *5.3.3.3 Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative*

#### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

The proposed activities have the potential to provide ecological and recreational benefits to the watershed by reducing erosion; however, the magnitude of such benefits is currently unknown. The magnitude and benefits of road and trail rehabilitation are similarly uncertain.

#### Public Comments

Letters of support were not received for this project application. Non-supportive comments were received from the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation which cited among other factors, the uncertainty of ecological benefits to the Housatonic River and the opinion that tax revenues should fund the proposed activities.

#### Review Team

The Review Team score for this project was the lowest of the seven project applications in the Recreational Use category. The basis for the assigned score was influenced by factors including cost and uncertainty of potential benefits. The likelihood of continued maintenance of rehabilitated roads and trails and associated long-term benefits were similarly uncertain. The Review Team was also concerned by the application's lack of partnerships and public outreach/involvement.

Considering the above and the details of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

## 5.4 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

### 5.4.1 Project Application 04: Housatonic River Museum

Applicant(s): City of Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Location: Pittsfield, Massachusetts

Requested NRD funding: \$298,100

#### 5.4.1.1 *Summary of Proposed Action*

The Applicant (City of Pittsfield) proposed to develop and construct exhibits for installation in the Housatonic River Museum (HRM), which the City is building through other means. The goal of the HRM is to provide opportunities to “explore the past, present and future of the Housatonic River watershed from a natural science perspective and to examine the historical and ongoing relationship between mankind and the river.” The purpose of the proposed exhibit is to provide the public with “an immersive, hands-on experience as they develop a greater understanding of the impact of human behavior on the sustainability of a healthy Housatonic River watershed.”

#### 5.4.1.2 *Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

No adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts were anticipated to result from the construction of the museum exhibits. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### 5.4.1.3 *Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

This proposal did not provide a clear connection between the requested funding and the injured resources. Although the Applicant explained the general value of museums to society, direct benefits to the Housatonic River as a result of funding the proposed exhibit were not demonstrated. In addition, the suggested capacity of exhibits to “embark on a physical exploration of the natural wonders found at the River’s edge” suggests that the exhibits would provide a surrogate for actual visits to the Housatonic River and its associated natural resources.

##### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from Andrea Nuciforo (MA State Senator), Housatonic Valley Association, the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition, Berkshire Community College, University of Massachusetts Water Resources Research Center, the Berkshire Athenaeum, Morningside Community School, Silvio O. Conte Community School, and various City of Pittsfield departments. Non-supportive comments were received from the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, because they did not think that the HRM, located in Pittsfield, would be a highly effective educational center for the whole of the Housatonic River watershed.

##### Review Team

The Consensus Review Team score for this project was relatively low in the Education category (ranked fourth out of five proposals). Multiple Review Team members questioned the nexus between the project and injured natural resources.

Considering the information presented above and the details of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project. Specific factors resulting in this recommendation include the relative lack of direct benefits to injured natural resources and the high percentage of uncommitted funding associated with the overall development of the HRM.

#### **5.4.2 Project Application 12: The River Institute**

Applicant(s): Housatonic River Initiative

Location: Berkshire County, Massachusetts

Requested NRD funding: \$217,880

##### *5.4.2.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

The Applicant (Housatonic River Initiative) proposed The River Institute (TRI) as a “multi-disciplinary organization dedicated to the restoration of the Housatonic River,” with a long-term goal of establishing a permanent facility along the Housatonic River in Berkshire County. As described by the Applicant, TRI would “provide an on-going forum for higher-education research, training, public and secondary education, and information dissemination relating to natural resource protection and awareness.” The major components of the proposed activities include supporting the Riverkeeper program, establishing a laboratory to monitor PCBs in various environmental media, conducting a State of the River Conference, organizing river forums, sponsoring summer youth programs, establishing the River Institute Center, Museum, and Library, and creating an online river atlas and blog.

##### *5.4.2.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

No adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts were anticipated. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

##### *5.4.2.3 Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative*

###### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

Information presented in this project application indicates the lack of a clear nexus between the ecological benefits provided by the proposed education and outreach projects and injured natural resources, particularly with respect to the laboratory, State of the River Conference, river forums, and some components of the River Institute Center. However, some components of the project application, such as the summer youth programs, are more apt to change public behavior in a manner that benefits Housatonic River natural resources. The lack of detail for each component of the proposal made it difficult to quantify the resulting benefits.

###### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from John Olver (U.S. Congressman, MA), Andrea Nucifero (MA State Senate), the University of Albany’s Institute of Health and the Environment, Environmental Stewardship Concepts, Simon’s Rock College of Bard, two members of the general public, the Berkshire Environmental Action Team, the Center for Ecological Technology, Citizens for PCB Removal, and the Housatonic Environmental Action League. Non-supportive comments were received from the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation which

commended the applicant for advocacy of “river cleanup” but recommended that a more focused proposal be submitted in a subsequent funding round.

#### Review Team

The Review Team score for this project was the lowest of the five project applications in the Education category. Multiple Review Team members expressed concerns related to the sustainability of benefits derived from this project.

Considering the information presented above and the details of the proposal, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

### **5.4.3 Project Application 14: Less Toxic Landscapes: A Healthier Housatonic River**

Applicant(s): Center for Ecological Technology (CET)

Location: MA portion of Housatonic River Watershed

Requested NRD funding: \$216,540

#### *5.4.3.1 Summary of Proposed Action*

The Applicant (CET) proposed to address water pollution in the Housatonic River Watershed caused by outdoor pesticide use by providing a three-year program of education to the public, garden centers, hardware stores, landscape contractors, facility managers, and municipalities. In order to affect behavior change, CET would relate the use of chemical pesticides with drinking water safety and human health, as well as to the health of the river and the species that depend upon it for their well-being.

#### *5.4.3.2 Environmental and Socioeconomic Impacts*

No adverse environmental or socioeconomic impacts were anticipated to result from the proposed environmental education and outreach activities. Additional details on environmental and socioeconomic impacts can be found in Part D of the proposal.

#### *5.4.3.3 Determination for Selection as Non-Preferred Alternative*

##### Nexus to Natural Resource/Service Injury and Restoration Benefits Gained

The proposed environmental education and outreach activities would potentially benefit natural resources in the Housatonic River watershed, through the beneficial alteration of human behaviors, particularly with respect to lawn and garden chemical use. However, the project application did not provide a direct means of measuring changes in chemical input to the River, and monitoring sales of chemicals in the area might not provide the best evaluation of project success.

#### Public Comments

Letters of support were received from Sprout, the City of Pittsfield’s Department of Public Works and Utilities, the Western Massachusetts Master Gardener Association, Berkshire Health Systems, Inc. (2 letters), MA Department of Environmental Protection, ESCO Energy Services Company, Aceti Associates, and the Citizens Review Committee established by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. No negative public comments were received.



Review Team

The Consensus Review Team score for this project application was good.

Considering the limited NRD funding available and the magnitude of potential benefits provided through this project compared to the other environmental education/outreach projects proposed to receive funding, the MA SubCouncil decided not to allocate NRD funds for this project.

**5.5 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS OF NON-SELECTED PROJECT APPLICATIONS**

Table 4 presents a summary of impacts for the non-selected project applications as determined by applicants in the project applications.

Table 4: Project Impacts – Non-Selected Project Applications

<i>Impact Category</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7(GP)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	Air quality	NE	NE	NE	MA	NE	B	NE	NE	B	NE
	Instream flow	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Surface water quality	NE	NE	NE	MA,	B	NE	B	NE	NE	B
	sediment quality	NE	NE	NE	MA,	B	B	B	B	B	B
	Soil quality	NE	NE	NE	MA,	NE	B	NE	B	B	B
	Groundwater quality	NE	MA	NE	MA,	NE	NE	NE	B	B	B
	Wetlands quality and services	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	B	B	B
	Diversity and abundance of aquatic species	NE	NE	NE	MA,	B	B	B	B	B	B
	Diversity and abundance of terrestrial wildlife species	NE	NE	NE	B	B	B	B	NE	B	B
	Diversity of plant communities	NE	NE	NE	B	B	B	NE	NE	B	NE
	Other: Flooding reduction	NE	NE	NE	B	B	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Other: Diversity of rare species	-	-	-	B	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Social</b>	Impacts on minority or low income populations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Impacts on local sense of community and well being	B	NE	NE	B	B	NE	NE	B	B	NE
	Impacts on aesthetics	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
	Impacts on public health or safety	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	NE	B
	Impacts on recreational activity	B	NE	B	B	NE	NE	NE	B	B	B
	Impacts to Native American Trust Resources	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	NE	B
	Impacts on non-Tribal cultural sites	NE	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impacts on education	B	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	-	NE	NE
	Impacts on local partnerships and collaborative efforts	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	NE
	Impacts on availability and quality of drinking water	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
	Impact on subsistence activity	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	B	B
Nuisance impacts	NE	NE	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	B	NE	NE	
<b>Economic</b>	Short-term commercial economic impact of restoration action	MA	NE	NE	B	MA	NE	NE	B	NE	MA
	Impacts on property values	B	B	NE	B	B	B	NE	B	NE	B
	Impacts on recreational expenditures and related business	B	NE	NE	B	B	B	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impacts on existing resource-based industries	B	NE	NE	B	B	B	B	B	NE	B
	Impacts on commercial water users	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	-	NE	NE
	Impacts on river-based commercial navigation	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE
	Impact on wastewater dischargers	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE

Intensity Levels: “NE” – No Effect; “MA” – Minimal Adverse Impact; “SA” – Significant Adverse Impact; “B” – Beneficial Impact; “-” – No Response

## 6.0 COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES

As discussed in Section 1.1, the two major federal laws guiding the restoration of the GE/Housatonic River Site are CERCLA and NEPA. CERCLA provides the basic framework for natural resource damage assessment and restoration, while NEPA sets forth a specific process of impact analysis and public review. The major state law governing the MA SubCouncil's NRD activities is M.G.L. ch. 21E, and for evaluating environmental impacts is MEPA. However, in developing and implementing the RP/SEA for the GE/Housatonic River Site, the MA SubCouncil must comply with other applicable laws, regulations, and policies at the federal, state and local levels. Section 6.2 below lists these potentially relevant laws and policies and discusses their applicability with respect to the restoration of the GE/Housatonic River Site.

In addition to laws and regulations, the MA SubCouncil must consider relevant environmental or economic programs or plans in developing and implementing the RP/SEA. The most important of these is the site clean up, but other efforts are ongoing or planned in or near the affected environment. By coordinating restoration with all relevant programs and plans, the MA SubCouncil can insure that the restoration does not duplicate other efforts, but enhances the overall effort to improve the environment of the Housatonic River.

The following list of laws, policies, and directives may not be exhaustive for each Preferred Alternative. By sponsoring the Preferred Alternatives, the MA SubCouncil has a responsibility to ensure that activities using NRD funds comply with all relevant laws, policies, and directives. As described in Paragraph 3.6 of the RPSP, however, project applicants receiving NRD funding will be responsible for obtaining all relevant permits and formally complying with any and all laws, policies, ordinances, or other local, Commonwealth, and Federal requirements applicable to the expenditure of the NRD funding. While the Round 1 NRD funding will be disbursed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, thereby automatically mandating compliance with certain Commonwealth requirements, projects applicants receiving NRD funding may also be responsible for compliance with certain federal requirements applicable to the expenditure of the NRD funding.

### 6.1 LAWS

#### 6.1.1 Federal Laws

##### **Clean Water Act (CWA) (a.k.a., Federal Water Pollution Control Act), 33 USC §1251 et seq.**

The CWA is the principle law governing pollution control and water quality of the Nation's waterways. Section 404 of the law authorizes a permit program for the disposal of dredged or fill material in the Nation's waters, administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). In general, restoration projects which move significant amounts of material into or out of waters or wetlands—for example, dam removal—require 404

permits. It is probable that some of the Housatonic River restoration projects in Massachusetts will require such permits. In such cases, the project proponent—for example, a municipality or local natural resources trust—must obtain the appropriate permits before implementing the regulated activities. In granting permits to applicants for dredge and fill, applicants may be required to undertake mitigation measures such as habitat restoration to compensate for losses resulting from the project.

Under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, restoration projects that entail discharge or fill to wetlands or waters within federal jurisdiction must obtain certification of compliance with state water quality standards. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection implements the 401 Water Quality Certification Program through 314 CMR 9.00. In general, restoration projects with minor wetlands impacts (i.e., a project covered by an ACOE Programmatic General Permit) are not required to obtain 401 Certification, while projects with potentially large or cumulative impacts to critical areas require certification.

**Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 USC §1531 et seq.**

The ESA establishes a policy that all federal departments and agencies seek to conserve endangered and threatened species and their habitats, and encourages such agencies to utilize their authorities to further these purposes. Under the Act, the Departments of Commerce and/or Interior publish lists of endangered and threatened species. Section 7 of the Act requires that federal agencies and departments consult with the Departments of Commerce and/or Interior to minimize the effects of federal actions on endangered and threatened species.

The bog turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*) and the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) are listed under the ESA as threatened species and exist in the Massachusetts section of the Housatonic River watershed.

The MA SubCouncil has preliminarily determined that the Preferred Alternatives would not have any adverse effects upon threatened or endangered species, as determined from information presented in the project proposals. The Applicants may be required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Program before implementing restoration projects.

**Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA), 16 USC §661 et seq.**

The FWCA requires that federal agencies consult with the USFWS, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and state wildlife agencies for activities that affect, control, or modify waters of any stream or bodies of water, in order to minimize the adverse impacts of such actions on fish and wildlife resources and habitat. The federal agencies required to consult include permitting agencies such as the ACOE. This consultation is generally incorporated into the process of complying with Section 404 (see Clean Water Act, above), NEPA or other federal permit, license, or review requirements.

**Rivers and Harbors Act, 33 USC §401 et seq.**

The Rivers and Harbors Act regulates development and use of the Nation's navigable

waterways. Section 10 of the Act prohibits unauthorized obstruction or alteration of navigable waters and invests the ACOE with authority to regulate discharges of fill and other materials into such waters. Restoration actions that require Section 404 permits (see Clean Water Act, above) are likely to also require permits under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, but a single permit generally serves for both; therefore, the MA SubCouncil can ensure compliance with the Rivers and Harbors Act through the same mechanisms.

**American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. 1996)**

Under this statute, information on American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiian religious and heritage issues must receive good-faith consideration during restoration planning and decision making. The MA SubCouncil has determined that there are no federally-recognized Native American Tribal Nations in the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River watershed.

**Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 3001-3013)**

This law protects Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony on federally owned or controlled lands, Indian tribal lands, and Native Hawaiian land. The Preferred Alternatives will not occur on lands that are owned or will be owned by the federal government or federally-recognized Indian tribes.

**Antiquities Act (16 U.S.C. 431-433) and Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), as amended (16 U.S.C. 470aa-470 mm)**

The Antiquities Act was enacted in 1906 to protect historic and prehistoric ruins, monuments, and objects of antiquity on federally owned or controlled lands. The ARPA protects resources that are determined to be archaeological interest, at least 100 years old, and located on lands owned by the federal or tribal governments. The Preferred Alternatives do not involve land that is or will be owned by the federal or tribal governments.

**National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470)**

Section 106 of this statute requires that federal agencies consider the effects of their actions on sites listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If federal actions will impact such sites, the federal agency must consult with the state and local Historic Preservation Officers. Identification of such sites has not yet been performed for the Preferred Alternatives. The MA SubCouncil will ensure that potentially affected historic sites are identified and appropriately treated and may request the Applicant to consult with state and local Historic Preservation Officers.

**Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940, as amended (16 U.S.C. 668-668d)**

This law prohibits the killing, capturing, collecting, molestation, or disturbance of bald and golden eagles, their nests, and critical habitat. The Preferred Alternatives are not anticipated to adversely affect bald and golden eagles, their nests, or critical habitat. For the Preferred Alternatives that may affect these natural resources, consultation under the Endangered Species Act will be necessary and will ensure that adverse impacts are

avoided.

**Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703-712 et seq.)**

Under this law, it is unlawful to kill, import, export, possess, buy, or sell any bird listed under the MBTA or its feathers, body parts, nests, and eggs. The Preferred Alternatives are not anticipated to cause these illegal activities.

**Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972 (86 Stat. 770, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2)**

The FACA applies to a formal group of private citizens brought together at the request of a federal agency to provide consensus advice or recommendations to the federal agency. Such a "FACA Committee" is required to be chartered with Congress. The USFWS is federal Trustee agency on the MA SubCouncil and did not request consensus advice from any group of private citizens.

### **6.1.2 State Laws**

**Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, MGL Ch. 131A**

MESA works in much the same way as the federal ESA (Section 6.2.1, above) to list and protect rare species and their habitats. Like the federal ESA, MESA defines specific species as "endangered" or "threatened" and considers a third category as well: "species of special concern." MESA protects more species than the ESA; listed species include federally-protected species as well as others of specific concern to Massachusetts. MESA is administered by the Massachusetts NHESP, which identifies rare species habitats and other high-priority natural areas. Compliance of the proposed restoration with MESA overlaps ESA compliance. Before implementing restoration projects, the Applicants will consult with NHESP to ensure that no aspects of the proposed activities would have a negative effect on species designated as endangered, threatened, or of special concern by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

**Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), MGL Ch. 30 §61 et seq.**

MEPA is the state equivalent of NEPA (Section 6.2.1, above). MEPA sets forth a process of environmental review and requires Commonwealth agencies to consider and minimize adverse environmental impacts of State actions on the environment. Like NEPA, MEPA requires public notification and comment before decisions are finalized. The document used to assess impacts is the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which must be approved by the MEPA office within the EOEEA before major State actions can proceed. The law applies to projects directly undertaken by State agencies as well as private projects seeking permits, funds, or lands from the State, but does not apply to private projects requiring local approval only. MEPA review is expressly required for projects that dredge, fill or alter more than one acre of wetlands.

Both NEPA and MEPA encourage consolidation of the two processes where possible to avoid duplication of effort. Therefore, this RP/SEA is also an EIR, conforming to the notice, comment, timing, content, and other relevant provisions of MEPA. Likewise, future restoration actions that require additional NEPA documentation will, where appropriate, incorporate the MEPA process into restoration decision-making. Since

MEPA is somewhat more inclusive than NEPA, some restoration actions which do not require NEPA review may require review under MEPA; in such cases, separate MEPA review will be undertaken by the MA SubCouncil.

### **Public Waterfront Act ("Chapter 91"), MGL Ch. 91**

Chapter 91 is designed to protect public rights in Massachusetts waterways, not unlike the federal Rivers and Harbors Act, above, which it predates. It ensures that public rights to fish, fowl, and navigation are not unreasonably restricted and that unsafe or hazardous structures are repaired or removed. Chapter 91 also protects the waterfront property owner's ability to approach his land from the water, and helps protect wetland resource areas by requiring compliance with the Wetlands Protection Act. It is administered by MADEP's Division of Wetlands and Waterways through a program of permits and licenses. Chapter 91 authorization is required for alterations of tidelands, great ponds, and some rivers and streams, as well as for dredging and construction of piers, wharves, floats, retaining walls, revetments, pilings, bridges, dams and some waterfront buildings. The Act requires public, municipal and agency notification before a project is authorized, and provides for public hearings, review by affected parties, and the imposition of conditions before authorization is granted. Certain Chapter 91 projects also require MEPA review (see above). In order to maintain restoration plan compliance with Chapter 91, the recipients of grant funding from the MA SubCouncil will seek the approval of the Division of Wetlands and Waterways before implementing restoration actions that fall within the law's scope and will ensure that the law's notification provisions are met where required.

### **Rivers Protection Act, St. 1996, C. 258**

The Rivers Protection Act, passed in 1996, modifies the Wetlands Protection Act (see below) to strengthen and expand existing protection of watercourses and the lands adjacent to them. The Act establishes a "riverfront area" that extends 200 ft (25 ft in certain urban areas) from the mean annual high water line on each side of perennially flowing rivers and streams. The Act requires projects in the riverfront area to meet two performance standards: no practicable alternatives, and no significant adverse effect. While regulations for implementing the Rivers Protection Act have not yet been written, the MA SubCouncil intends to follow such developments in order to ensure that restoration actions that fall within the law's scope are in full compliance with the Act.

### **Wetlands Protection Act, MGL Ch. 131 §40**

The Wetlands Protection Act restricts the removal, filling, dredging or alteration of fresh and salt water wetlands and coastal areas. Permit authority for the administration of the law is delegated to local conservation commissions with oversight and involvement of the MADEP. The Act requires landowners who plan work in a wetland to notify these entities as well as abutters and other nearby landowners, and provides for public hearings and the imposition of conditions before permission is granted. More direct State involvement is required where wetlands greater than 5000 square feet are affected. In order to maintain restoration plan compliance with the Wetlands Protection Act, recipients of grant funding from the MA SubCouncil will seek the approval of the local conservation commission and/or other appropriate authorities before implementing

restoration actions that fall within the law's scope, and will ensure that nearby landowners and other affected parties are notified, as appropriate, of planned restoration actions.

### **Other Potentially Applicable State Laws**

Massachusetts 401 Water Quality Certification Program, 314 CMR 9.00 (discussed under Clean Water Act, above).

### **6.1.3 Local Laws**

As appropriate, restoration actions will consider and comply with local zoning ordinances, comprehensive plans, shoreline plans, growth management plans, construction grading or fill permits, noise permits, wetlands bylaws and permits, and other relevant laws, regulations, bylaws, and ordinances.

## **6.2 POLICIES AND DIRECTIVES**

### **6.2.1 Federal Policies and Directives**

The following describes federal policies and Presidential Executive Orders that are relevant to the Preferred Alternatives.

#### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mitigation Policy (Fish and Wildlife Service Manual, 501 FW 2)**

It is the policy of the USFWS to seek to mitigate losses of fish, wildlife, and their habitats, and uses thereof, from land and water developments. This policy seeks to ensure "no net loss" of fish and wildlife habitat. The MA SubCouncil does not anticipate that the Preferred Alternatives will cause adverse impacts to wetlands, but if impacts may occur, this policy may apply.

#### **Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management**

This 1977 Executive Order directs federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse effects associated with the occupancy and modification of flood plains and to avoid direct or indirect support of development in flood plains wherever there is a practicable alternative. The Preferred Alternatives are consistent with this directive in that no development is being endorsed in floodplains other than low-impact recreational amenities that cannot be constructed elsewhere and still achieve the recreational goals of the project. For example, canoe ramps, by nature, must be constructed at the water's edge. Best management practices and environmentally-responsible engineering/design will minimize any short-term impacts. In addition, some of the Preferred Alternatives will conserve, protect, and enhance the wildlife habitat values in floodplain areas of the Housatonic River through the establishment of conservation restrictions that will prevent future development and the implementation of habitat restoration activities.

#### **Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands**

Issued by President Jimmy Carter in 1977, Executive Order 11990 instructs each federal agency to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse effects associated



with the destruction or modification of wetlands. It is not anticipated that any of the Preferred Alternatives will adversely affect wetlands. However, projects that will affect wetlands will need appropriate regulatory permits before construction can begin. Along with these regulatory processes, the MA SubCouncil will work with the Applicants to ensure that wetland impacts are avoided and/or minimized.

#### **Executive Order 12898 – Environmental Justice**

This Order directs federal agencies to assess whether their actions have disproportionately adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations. Based on a preliminary review of Environmental Justice population information obtained from MassGIS, there are adjacent Environmental Justice populations in Pittsfield. None of the Preferred Alternatives will adversely affect human health or the environment in minority or low-income populations. Rather, some of the Preferred Alternatives (e.g., Proposal 07 dam removal) will restore/enhance the environment, improve the aesthetics of the river, and increase public safety in the vicinity of Environmental Justice populations.

#### **Executive Order 13186 – Migratory Bird Protection**

This Order directs federal agencies to avoid or minimize, to the extent possible, adverse impacts on migratory birds while conducting agency actions. None of the Preferred Alternatives are expected to cause adverse impacts to migratory birds, other than temporary disturbances during some construction activities. Rather, the Preferred Alternatives under the Wildlife Resources and Habitat restoration priority category will protect and enhance migratory bird habitat.

### **6.2.2 State and Local Policies**

As appropriate, restoration actions will consider and comply with other relevant policies at the state and local levels, e.g. the MADEP Stormwater Discharge Policy.

**7.0 LIST OF PREPARERS**

Todd Chadwell Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. 100 North Street, Suite 317 Pittsfield, MA 01201-5109	Michael Chelminski Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. 30 Park Drive Topsham, ME 04086
John Lortie Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. 30 Park Drive Topsham, ME 04086	Cara Meinke Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. 30 Park Drive Topsham, ME 04086
Veronica Varela U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 70 Commercial Street, Suite 300 Concord, NH 03301-5087	Dale Young Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900 Boston, MA 02114-2524

**8.0 LIST OF AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND PARTIES CONSULTED  
FOR INFORMATION**

Ken Collette, Deputy General Counsel, EOEEA

Mark Barash, Office of the Solicitor, US Department of the Interior

Marjorie Snyder, NEPA Coordinator, Northeast Regional Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Robin Heubel, NRDAR Coordinator, Northeast Regional Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service

## **9.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PROJECT APPLICATIONS**

### **9.1 RECEIVED WITH PROPOSALS**

**9.2 RECEIVED DURING/IN RESPONSE TO THRESHOLD CRITERIA  
EVALUATION**

**9.3 RECEIVED AFTER SEPTEMBER 21, 2006, EVALUATION SCORING  
MEETING (DEADLINE = OCTOBER 13, 2006)**

## **10.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS ON DRAFT RP/SEA**

Public comments were solicited from the public following the presentation of the Draft RP/SEA at a public meeting in Lenox, Massachusetts on July 9, 2007. Public comments were also accepted after the meeting via letter and email through July 22, 2007 (Appendix E). Public comments and questions regarding the Draft RP/SEA during the July 9, 2007, public meeting were recorded in the meeting minutes. Public comments during the meeting addressed both the planning process implemented to date by the MA SubCouncil and the Project Applications received in response to the Round 1 funding solicitation. A summary of comments and questions received during the public meeting is presented below, and the minutes from this public meeting are included in Appendix F.

### **10.1 PLANNING PROCESS**

Multiple public comments were received expressing support for the amount of public participation afforded by the MA SubCouncil's planning process. Public comments did express concern regarding the duration of the process, but included requests to maintain the level of public participation through multiple public meetings.

In response to a public question, the MA SubCouncil stated that it may focus the Round 2 funding solicitation on restoration categories, i.e., Wildlife and Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat.

Public comments expressed concern about the level of effort required to complete project applications and whether the three month period was sufficient to complete project applications. Some public comments expressed support for a period longer than three months to complete project applications. Other public comments expressed support for the current three-month period so as not to delay future funding allocations. Public comments were received suggesting that a means to assist potential applicants would be to facilitate workshops by others intended to educate interested parties in filling out project applications.

### **10.2 PROJECT APPLICATIONS**

The public comments and questions regarding the Round 1 Project Applications are summarized below. After the July 9, 2007, public meeting, the MA SubCouncil developed responses to questions received during the meeting to which it was not prepared to respond during the meeting. MA SubCouncil responses, either given during the meeting or prepared afterwards, are also presented below.

#### **10.2.1 PEDA Money**

The public asked whether the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA) funding obligation to the Trustees of \$4,000,000.00, as described in Paragraph 124 of the CD, is to be allocated to both Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Response: The MA SubCouncil determined that any PEDA monies paid to the Trustees pursuant to the CD shall be obligated for the Trustees' joint use for restoration, or restoration planning and oversight. The Trustees collectively include EOEEA, CTDEP, NOAA, and USFWS.

### **10.2.2 Project Match**

Two questions were received from the public regarding the expenditure and documentation of matching funds. The public questions were 1) whether the project match period will be extended, and 2) whether receipts would need to be submitted for work performed as match.

Response: The MA SubCouncil determined that for its record keeping, project proponents should send a summary/tally of receipts for "work performed as match" to Todd Chadwell of Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. As noted in the RPSP, matching funds shall not include general organizational/operational costs and are limited to project-related expenditures including those up to six months prior to the deadline for receipt of applications.

### **10.2.3 PAB Question**

The public asked whether funding Restoration Project No. 8 (Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River) would duplicate work already performed by the Public Access Board (PAB).

Response: The MA SubCouncil reviewed previous evaluations by the Public Access Board of public access sites to the Housatonic River. Based on this review, it was determined during consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MA DFW) that potential access sites on state-owned land were reviewed in 2002, but formal records of these evaluations are not currently available. Based on this information, the MA SubCouncil determined that an updated assessment of potential public access points to the Housatonic River is appropriate.

### **10.2.4 BCAP Question**

The public commented that funding of Project No. 13 (Berkshire Conservation Agent Program) should not be limited to exclude projects outside of the Housatonic River watershed, as proposed by the MA SubCouncil.

Response: The MA SubCouncil maintains that NRD funds may not be used for review of specific projects falling outside the Housatonic River watershed unless a benefit to watershed resources is demonstrated. Educational programs performed using NRD funding must target audiences within the watershed, but may be attended by people from outside of the watershed.



### **10.2.5 Lee River Walk**

A public comment expressed that Project # 5 (Lee River Walk) should be funded by the Ma SubCouncil.

Response: The Ma SubCouncil maintains that the project, though likely beneficial for recreational purposes, lacks adequate detail in the application to yield a high evaluation score, and there is uncertainty of completion, e.g. access agreements have yet to be secured from land owners along the proposed trail.

## 11.0 LITERATURE CITED

[EOEA] Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 2003. Housatonic River 5-Year Watershed Action Plan. June.

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[Woodlot] Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. 2002a. Ecological Characterization of the Housatonic River. Prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. September.

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[Woodlot and IEc] Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. and Industrial Economics, Inc. 2005a. Restoration Planning Strategy. Prepared for the Massachusetts SubCouncil of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees. February 18, 2005.

Woodlot and IEc. 2005b. Restoration Project Selection Procedure. Prepared for the Massachusetts SubCouncil of the Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees. June 30, 2005.

Roy F. Weston, Inc. 1998. Upper Reach-Housatonic River Ecological Risk Assessment. Prepared under EPA Contract No. 68-W5-0009. Roy F. Weston, Inc., West Chester, PA.

**APPENDIX A**

**Public libraries where documents can be accessed**

## **Final Round 1 Restoration Plan and Supplemental Environmental Assessment**

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Great Barrington Mason Library  
231 Main Street  
Great Barrington, MA 01230-1604  
(413) 528-2403

Lee Public Library  
100 Main Street  
Lee, MA 01238  
(413) 243-0385

Lenox Public Library  
18 Main Street  
Lenox, MA 01240  
(413) 637-0197

Berkshire Athenaeum  
One Wendell Avenue  
Pittsfield, MA 01201-6385  
(413) 499-9488

Bushell-Sage Library  
48 Main Street  
Sheffield, MA 01257-0487  
(413) 229-7004

Stockbridge Library  
Main Street  
P.O. Box 119  
Stockbridge, MA 01262-0119  
(413) 298-5501

**APPENDIX B**

**Newspapers and radio and television stations used for public announcements**

## **Final Round 1 Restoration Plan and Supplemental Environmental Assessment**

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### **Newspapers** used for public outreach include:

- Berkshire Eagle, Pittsfield, MA
- Berkshire Record, Great Barrington, MA
- Pittsfield Gazette, Pittsfield, MA
- Springfield Union, Springfield, MA
- Republican, Springfield, MA
- The Advocate, Williamstown, MA
- The Advocate, Lenox, MA
- Pennysaver, Lee, MA
- Yankee Shopper, Pittsfield, MA
- Shoppers Guide, Great Barrington, MA
- North Adams Transcript, North Adams, MA
- Lakeville Journal, Lakeville, CT
- Litchfield County Times, Litchfield, CT

### **Radio stations** used for public outreach include:

- WBEC 1420 AM, Pittsfield
- WAMQ 105.1 FM, Great Barrington
- WCFM 91.9 FM, Williamstown
- WNAW 1230 AM, North Adams
- WSBS 860 AM, Great Barrington
- WUPE, Pittsfield
- WBEC, Pittsfield
- WSBS, Great Barrington
- WBRK, Pittsfield
- WAMC, Albany N.Y.
- WAMQ, Great Barrington
- WCFM, Williamstown
- WNAW, North Adams
- WKZE, Litchfield, CT

### **Television stations** used for public outreach include:

- Channel 22, Springfield, MA
- PCTV, Pittsfield, MA
- CTSB, Lee, MA
- WRGB, Albany
- WNYT, Albany
- News Channel 40, Springfield, MA
- WTEN, Albany

**APPENDIX C**

**Final Results of Round 1 Threshold Criteria Evaluation**

## **Final Results of Round 1 Threshold Criteria Evaluation**

The following document summarizes the MA SubCouncil's final evaluation of Threshold Criteria as applied to all proposed projects. Threshold Criteria are listed and described below. A brief abstract of each proposed project, as provided by the applicant, is followed by the MA SubCouncil's response and brief rationale of whether this proposal passes the Threshold Criteria or not. If an abstract was not provided by the applicant, text summarizing the proposal from the project narrative is provided. Abstracts are categorized by each project's predominant restoration priority category, as provided by the applicant.

### ***Description of Threshold Criteria***

**1. Does the application contain the information necessary to proceed with an evaluation as described in this document?**

(A "NO" response may render the proposed project ineligible for further consideration.)

**2. Does the proposed project restore, rehabilitate, replace, and/or acquire the equivalent of natural resources or natural resource services that were injured by the release of PCBs or other hazardous substances?**

(A "NO" response renders the proposed project ineligible for further consideration.)

The MA SubCouncil will only fund a restoration project if the primary purpose of the project is to restore, rehabilitate, replace, or acquire the equivalent of natural resources and/or their services that were injured by the release of PCBs and/or other hazardous substances into the Housatonic River watershed. The MA SubCouncil will not select a proposed project for funding if the restoration benefit to the injured natural resource and/or its related services is incidental to the objective of the project. This criterion addresses the requirements of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) regulations at 43 C.F.R. § 11.81-82 and 11.93.

**3. Is the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, an action that is presently required under other federal, state, or local law?**

(A "YES" response renders the proposed project ineligible for further consideration.)

The MA SubCouncil will not fund a restoration project if there is an independent legal obligation to perform the project pursuant to statute, regulation, ordinance, consent decree (excluding the October 2000 Consent Decree regarding natural resource damages associated with the General Electric facility in Pittsfield, MA), judgment, court order, permit condition, or contract, or if otherwise required by federal, state, or local law. Regardless of whether a governmental body or agency has elected to exercise its discretion to enforce a provision of law, if any governmental body or agency has the authority to order a party to commence certain work or activities subject to enforcement actions, then the MA SubCouncil will consider the project "otherwise required" and not appropriate to be considered for funding. This Threshold Criterion is taken directly from the Trustee Memorandum of Agreement, Part 7, Section D (*see* Restoration Planning Strategy, Appendix 1).



**4. Is the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, inconsistent with any federal, state, or local law, regulation, or policy?**

(A “YES” response renders the proposed project ineligible for further consideration.)

The MA SubCouncil will consider the degree to which a proposed project is consistent with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies (to the extent the MA SubCouncil is aware of those laws and policies and believes them to be applicable and meritorious). The MA SubCouncil will not fund a restoration project that is inconsistent with any federal, state, or local law, regulation, or policy. This criterion addresses the direction provided to the Trustees in NRDA regulations, 43 C.F.R. § 11.82(d)(9).

As a related matter, all selected projects must be implemented in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies, in accordance with NRDA regulations, 43 C.F.R. § 11.82(d)(10). Applicants are required to provide a list of permits and approvals that are necessary to implement the proposed project.

**5. Will the proposed project, in terms of its cost, be consistent with the stated goals of the MA SubCouncil to retain sufficient funds to 1) accomplish restoration over at least three rounds of proposal solicitations and 2) serve a wide geographic area that benefits the restoration priority categories?**

(A “No” response renders the proposed project ineligible for further consideration.)

In determining whether a proposed restoration project will be funded, the MA SubCouncil will consider whether the project fits, in terms of the project’s cost, with the MA SubCouncil plan to retain sufficient funds to accomplish meaningful and necessary restoration work after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s cleanup is finished and to select a suite of projects that will accomplish restoration priorities. The MA SubCouncil has not established an explicit funding cap for each round of solicitations; however, the MA SubCouncil has decided that it will not expend an amount of funds that would impair its ability to accomplish meaningful restoration following the completion of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (USEPA) remediation.

**6. Will the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, be inconsistent with any ongoing or anticipated remedial actions (i.e., primary restoration) in the Housatonic River watershed?**

(A “YES” response renders the proposed project ineligible for further consideration.)

The MA SubCouncil will not fund a restoration project that will be undone or negatively impacted by, or that will interfere with, any remediation work, including completed, ongoing, and future actions. This criterion addresses direction given to the MA SubCouncil in the Trustee Memorandum of Agreement, Part 7, Section D (*see* Restoration Planning Strategy, Appendix 1).

## ***Restoration Priority Category - Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat***

### **Proposal No. 7 – West Branch of the Housatonic Revitalization Project City of Pittsfield**

Abstract: The City of Pittsfield, in partnership with the Massachusetts Riverways Program and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, is seeking to develop an integrated river restoration plan for the downtown portion of the West Branch of the Housatonic River. This will be a multiyear, multi-phase project with two main focus areas that include (1) development of a greenway plan for the river corridor from Wahconah Park to Clapp Park; and (2) the removal of the Mill Street Dam which is located within the corridor. The goal of the *West Branch Housatonic River Revitalization Project* is to restore the river corridor to a more natural setting that can be used and enjoyed by the general public. The future envisioned for this river corridor is a series of linked green spaces available for public use amidst a densely developed urban neighborhood. Improvements to the natural environment, primarily through riparian habitat improvements, improved water quality, and reduced flooding will in turn contribute to and stimulate ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts in one of the City of Pittsfield’s most degraded neighborhoods. The project will require extensive neighborhood involvement and will detail an Action Strategy that will be implemented through the City of Pittsfield’s ongoing and future neighborhood revitalization efforts. The dam removal component will implement a recommendation of the MA Office of Dam Safety for the structurally unsound Mill Street Dam, removing a public health and safety hazard leading to improved natural stream conditions, facilitating movement of resident aquatic species, improving water quality, and enhancing public access along the West Branch.

Threshold Criteria Determination: Preliminary application of the Threshold Criteria to this proposal suggested that the Dam Removal component of the proposal passes Threshold Criteria; however, certain components of the proposal may have been “already required” under other federal, state, or local law (Threshold Criterion No. 3). Specifically, the “Stormwater Aspects” of the Greenway portion of the proposal appeared to be required by the City of Pittsfield’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Small MS4 Stormwater permit. The MA SubCouncil has established a policy that Natural Resource Damages recoveries should not be used as a source of funding for entities to meet their independent legal obligations (e.g., permit requirements pursuant to other environmental laws).

The MA SubCouncil, therefore, requested that the City of Pittsfield submit a revised budget that reflects the removal of budget items and costs for work associated with the City’s NPDES permit. The City was specifically requested to excise the costs associated with the portion of the Proposal’s Task 2 (Assessment of Existing Conditions): the entire portion titled “Stormwater Conditions.” In addition, the City was asked to adjust costs associated with portions of the other three tasks that may involve storm drainage related assessments and resubmit Tables 1 and 2 for the Greenway Component budget section, as well as a revised budget narrative reflecting the requested changes. After the City of Pittsfield provided the requested revisions excising the Stormwater Conditions, the MA SubCouncil determined that Proposal No. 7 passes Threshold Criteria.

**Proposal No. 9 – Proposal to Perform Aquatic Habitat Restoration of the Housatonic River  
ENSR Corporation**

Abstract: The objective of this project is to mitigate impairment of aquatic biota by enhancing river habitat quality, diversity and connectivity within the Massachusetts portion of the Housatonic River system. Data on existing river habitat will be efficiently collected, mapped and assessed to select projects that will significantly improve communities of fish and related aquatic biota. Benefits would also accrue to wildlife using the river and recreational users of improved fisheries. Demonstrating aquatic restoration also represents an environmental educational opportunity.

Project tasks include:

- Phase 1 – Data Collection and Mapping. Housatonic River habitat will be assessed. Geographical Information System (GIS)-based mapping will be developed to indicate overall conditions and improvement opportunities.
- Phase 2 – Project Selection. Impairments will be identified and logistically feasible projects will be prioritized.
- Phase 3 – Design and Permitting. Potential projects include instream physical alterations to enhance habitat for target species, obstruction removal to improve fish passage, and streambank modification to control erosion or reconnect floodplains with the river.
- Phase 4 – Implementation and Monitoring. Up to ten (10) projects from the prioritized list will be implemented, based on available funding. Project results will be monitored to track success.

The project team will consist of ENSR and Mt. Holyoke College, with support from Trout Unlimited, Housatonic Valley Associates, and Trustees of the Reservations. The project schedule is Phase 1: November 2006 – April 2007; Phase 2: March – May 2007; Phase 3: June 2007 – April 2008; Phase 4: May 2008 – December 2009. The amount requested from NRD funds for this project is \$1,308,980.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Aquatic habitat restoration would benefit natural resources and services. However, to comply with Criterion 4, the following minor adjustments must be made to the proposal: (a) the criteria for prioritizing the specific aquatic habitat projects will be coordinated with and subject to final approval of the MA SubCouncil, and (b) final project selection will be coordinated with and subject to the approval of the MA SubCouncil.

**Proposal No. 11 – Housatonic Watershed Fisheries Assessment  
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife**

Abstract: Hazardous substances have had negative affects throughout the watershed. This has affected aquatic resources and impacted recreational opportunities. The Natural Resource Damage Fund offers a rare opportunity to mitigate these effects through science, management and outreach. We propose a project with two primary components. The first component will address the fisheries resources in the watershed. We will

conduct surveys of fisheries resources and produce maps for distribution to conservation commissions, municipalities, watershed organizations, and other local level conservation groups. These maps will guide conservation, restoration and land use planning in the watershed.

The second project component will address recreational fishing. We propose to study of movement of the brown trout population in the mainstem and development and production of recreational fishing guides. The brown trout population in the river is of recreational importance, but is poorly understood. We intend to track movements of these fish using radiotelemetry techniques. This information will help identify the key habitat components necessary for the survival of these important recreational fish. It can also be used to identify barriers to fish movement and potential limiting factors for the population.

We also propose to use existing information, as well as newly collected fisheries data, to produce and distribute recreational fishing guides for the public. Awareness of the resource is a key component in determining recreational fishing access. No specific watershed based fishing guide currently exists.

[Threshold Criteria Determination:](#) This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Locating fisheries resources for purposes of conservation planning would benefit natural resources, while fishing guide books would facilitate recreational fishing.

### **Proposal No. 18 – Rare Species Recovery on the Housatonic River Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program**

Abstract: The Western New England Marble Valleys of the Housatonic and Hoosic Rivers are one of the most biologically rich and unique regions of the Commonwealth. The Housatonic watershed supports at least 117 species of plants and 33 species of animals that are considered rare and imperiled and are thus protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, is putting forward a project which would protect and aid in the recovery of rare species injured or potentially injured by PCB contamination in the Housatonic watershed, including mussels, fish, dragonflies, damselflies, amphibians, turtles, mammals, marsh-birds, and aquatic and flood-plain plants. Our project goals are to 1. identify and protect rare species populations and their habitats to ensure their survival and to protect potential sources for recolonization to the impacted populations of the main-stem of the Housatonic, 2. identify and prioritize sites for active restoration and land acquisition projects to be proposed for Phase II, Request For Proposals, and 3. provide updated conservation planning materials for a subset of towns within the Housatonic watershed. We are requesting \$556,950 in Natural Resource Damages funding. We estimate our project costs to be \$655,040, and will provide \$98,090 in kind. Our project spans two years, beginning survey in the spring of 2007 continuing through the fall of 2008. We will process data, generate conservation planning maps, and prioritize sites for land acquisition and restoration in late 2008, producing the final products in early 2009.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Locating currently unknown occurrences of rare species and updating known occurrences will enhance the capacity of the Commonwealth to protect these species, providing benefits to natural resources. At the April 27, 2006, public meeting announcing the preliminary results of applying the Threshold Criteria a member of the public asked whether the State was already required by law to protect Threatened and Endangered species. Protection of Threatened and Endangered species is part of the Natural Heritage Program's statutory mandate; however, the accomplishment of that mandate is subject to annual appropriation. There is no legal requirement that every effort in furtherance of that mandate be funded. The Trustees recognize a difference between a general statutory mandate like the Natural Heritage program has and specific, independent legal requirements, such as any federal requirements for the program. If Natural Heritage sought funding for specific activity required by federal law such as listing a new species, then the Trustees would respond that this is already required by law. In this case, this proposal is something that the Natural Heritage Program has determined to be in furtherance of its statutory mandate but for which it lacks the necessary funds; thus, the proposal.

## ***Restoration Priority Category – Wildlife Resources and Habitat***

### **Proposal No. 2 – Rising Pond Land Acquisition Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Inc.**

Abstract: Using a grant from the Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages Fund (NRD Fund) Berkshire Natural Resources Council Inc. (BNRC) will acquire and permanently protect three parcels of land totaling 161 acres. The land is abutting the Housatonic River in the municipality of Great Barrington, Village of Housatonic. It is currently owned by Fox River Paper Company LLC., of Appleton Wisconsin and is the land surrounding the Rising Paper Mill. The Rising Pond Land Acquisition will result in permanent protection and management for conservation purposes, of these important tracts along the river and its floodplain.

BNRC will complete all due diligence associated with the purchase of the property. Upon satisfactory completion of the due diligence, BNRC will take fee ownership of the parcels and complete a natural resource inventory and a management plan. Said plan will include baseline documentation to verify the current condition of the parcels and provide recommendations to improve the wildlife resources and opportunities for public access. Under current ownership the property is not being actively managed and is closed to the public. BNRC will maintain a presence on the property and work to improve habitat and recreational value. BNRC will actively manage the property and foster partnerships with state agencies, town officials, environmental groups, educational groups and other organizations to maximize wildlife habitat value and the public benefit.

Threshold Criteria Determination: [This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Preserving natural habitat in the Housatonic River watershed should benefit natural resources and services.](#)

### **Proposal No. 10 – Proposal to Perform Bartholomew’s Cobble Restoration ENSR Corporation**

Abstract: The Trustees of Reservations owns, protects, and maintains a 329-acre publicly-accessible property in Sheffield on the banks of the Housatonic River known as Bartholomew’s Cobble. The area contains a variety of interesting and rare plants, including assemblages of rare ferns. A significant natural element at the reservation is the Housatonic River, an oxbow known as Half River, and adjacent floodplain fields and forests, all of which contain rare species habitats. These habitats are impacted by sediment laden runoff from Weatogue Road. The Trustees of Reservations and ENSR propose to investigate the sources of siltation, evaluate the feasibility of erosion and sediment control options, evaluate the potential range of ecological restoration options, and work with the Town of Sheffield to implement source control and ecological restoration.

The Trustees of Reservations’ Management Plan identified needs and opportunities throughout the reservation and provided a framework for prioritizing projects. The goals of this project are to:

1. Identify the sources and pathways of sedimentation into Half River and the Housatonic River
2. Quantify the level of impact in these resource areas
3. Investigate both remedial and restoration actions to help prevent the continuation of impact and to restore impacted areas
4. Establish a scope and budget for the implementation phase and to form partnerships for that phase
5. Develop a systematic approach that can be applied to other similar situations in the Housatonic River watershed

Fieldwork will be led by staff from The Trustees of Reservations, with assistance from ENSR and an active group of volunteers at Bartholomew's Cobble.

[Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Correcting the sedimentation problem at Bartholomew's Cobble should benefit natural resources.](#)

### **Proposal No. 15 – Clapp Park to Wild Acres Greenway Project City of Pittsfield**

Abstract: The City of Pittsfield, through their Conservation Commission, proposes the use of \$450,000 of NRD funds to acquire two land parcels located on the Southwest Branch of the Housatonic River, and containing portions of the river and its associated floodplain (see Figures 1, 2 and 3). The acquisition will protect the parcels from development while contributing to the eventual formation of a public-use greenway extending from Clapp Park to the Wild Acres Conservation Area. The greenway will be maintained as a natural area to promote recreational and educational opportunities along the river and its tributaries, partially by teaming with the Berkshire Museum. Eventually, the City will create a path within the Greenway once all necessary acquisitions are completed. The NRD funding is specific to the acquisition portion of this overall project. The acquisitions are expected to take one year to complete.

The two parcels (G6-34 and Parcel G7-20 based on current tax map identifiers) comprise approximately 31 acres of mature forested and scrub-shrub habitat located within the R-12 zoning district of the City of Pittsfield (minimum 12,000 SF lots). Both parcels are near the City center, and contain some developable uplands that could be developed according to present zoning. Acquisition will provide permanent protection of the existing vegetative cover types, will preserve open water, bank and floodplain habitat of the river in close proximity to the City center, and will provide a key piece of the proposed greenway that will promote recreational and educational opportunities along the river and its tributaries.

[Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Preserving natural habitat in the Housatonic River watershed should benefit natural resources and services. Establishing a Greenway should facilitate recreational and educational uses of Housatonic River natural resources.](#)

## **Proposal No. 17 – (Project Idea) Integrated Habitat Acquisition Strategy Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife**

Abstract: Please note – Project Idea forms did not request abstracts. The following text was excerpted from the project narrative.

We are proposing that the Trustees specifically earmark a significant percentage (75%) of the NRD funds available for habitat acquisition and implement a more integrated approach to habitat protection. Funding criteria should incorporate habitat assessment tools and takes advantage of developing mapping tools. This approach should rely on and benefit from the experience and knowledge of state agencies and NGO's such as the Nature Conservancy, Land Trusts and Berkshire Natural Resources Council.

Threshold Criteria Determination: The MA SubCouncil determined that the intent of the submitted Project Idea was to suggest changes to the overall restoration strategy adopted by the MA SubCouncil. Therefore, it was decided that because this Project Idea suggests changes to the overall restoration strategy and does not propose specific parcels to be considered for land acquisition, the proposal would not undergo review by the review team with other proposals. The Evaluation Criteria, which are the focus of the review team, were not designed to evaluate restoration planning strategy options but were designed to rank the merits of specific actions yielding natural resource benefits.

Nevertheless, Proposal No. 17 includes valuable suggestions relating to a process for planning land acquisition. The MA SubCouncil will consider the proposal's suggestions and whether a revision to its overall restoration planning strategy to accommodate the proposal is appropriate. If the MA SubCouncil revises its Restoration Planning Strategy a notice will be provided for public review and comment. Meanwhile, the public is encouraged to provide comments now on Proposal No. 17, which will be accepted as part of the public comments process for all Round 1 proposals.

## **Proposal No. 19 – Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project Project Native**

Abstract: The Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project will restore and enhance the integrity of critically important floodplain forests along the Housatonic River through a collaborative, long-term and sustainable initiative. A grassroots partnership involving several organizations and constituencies will accomplish this through a series of coordinated and phased projects to:

- Restore the native habitat of a critical six-acre buffer zone at Kamposoa Bog.
- Place 100 acres of floodplain forest habitat and buffer zone under conservation easements along a prioritized riparian corridor in Sheffield.
- Mitigate nonnative invasives in three Sheffield floodplain forest communities totaling 30 acres.
- Restore 20 acres of farmland abutting the Housatonic River into floodplain forest habitats.
- Structure the capacity of Project Native to implement active restoration projects and to increase its capacity and experience to oversee projects in the long term.



- Expand regional outreach programs to increase public participation in the restoration and protection of native habitats.

This three-year, \$963,181 proposal enlists a wide range of partners including The Nature Conservancy, Sheffield Land Trust, Kamposa Bog Committee, Project Native, Southern Berkshire Regional School District, area conservation commissions, and individual farmers to help restore priority natural communities in the watershed, increase public consciousness of native habitats, and provide the resources and capacity for local communities to act on that knowledge. The project is part of a 10-year plan to restore the natural habitat of the entire Sheffield floodplain forest riparian corridor. The project seeks \$587,256 in funding support from the NRD Fund.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Restoring and preserving natural habitat in the Housatonic River watershed should benefit natural resources and services.

## ***Restoration Priority Category – Recreational Use***

### **Proposal No. 1 – Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk Great Barrington Land Conservancy**

Abstract: Housatonic River Walk reclaims a severely abused section of Housatonic Riverbank in south Berkshire County, secures public access, and provides a ½-mile riverside walking trail and boat launch. River Walk is located adjacent to Great Barrington's Main Street, yet offers a rare nature experience of river and wildlife views. Two thousand (2,000) volunteers have contributed to this 18-year effort, attracting approximately 5000 visitors/year. The Great Barrington Land Conservancy, partnering with Simon's Rock College and Flying Cloud Institute, requests \$133,308 for a three-year program (April 2007 – December 2009):

- Riparian reclamation (2.63 acres) (native plant propagation/planting, ecological management, invasive plant control, compost tea soil amendments) (NRD:\$73,719)
- Trailway management, riverbottom cleanups, trail amenities (0.5 linear mile) (signage, bulletin board/communication center) (NRD:\$26,967)
- Environmental education/outreach (9-18 interns, 15+ student programs or 225+ students, native and invasive plant workshops @ 60 participants) (NRD:\$13,071)
- Dissemination through revised/expanded 96-page River Walk Guide (3500 pieces) with card and map, and River Walk Website. (NRD:\$9,586)
- Measure native plant success by monitoring growth; test success of compost tea treatments (15/year) by monitoring plant growth and species composition (3 growing seasons) (NRD:\$9,965)

Injured natural resources and impaired resource services benefited:

- General outdoor recreational opportunities; passive use and aesthetic values of the river environment; wildlife viewing (trail amenities and enhancements).
- Surface water and aquatic biological resources (water quality enhancements).
- Wildlife resources (riparian habitat enhancements) by maintaining and improving the connection between state-designated rare species habitats.

Environmental education and outreach sustain the restoration of Housatonic River resources by altering behaviors of participating interns, students, volunteers and visitors and extending the River Walk experience throughout the watershed.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Riparian habitat restoration would benefit natural resources and services. Proposed activities should enhance recreational and educational uses of the Housatonic River natural resources.

### **Proposal No. 5 – Lee Riverwalk The Lee Land Trust**

Abstract: The Town of Lee, incorporated in 1777 and named in honor of General Charles Lee, Second in Command to George Washington during the American Revolution has progressed from a mill town along the Housatonic River to have its lower Main St.

designated as "genuine" historic New England Downtown in 1976, and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The proposed Riverwalk, a short distance from the Village green on lower Main St. will provide a recreational and educational pathway along the river bank in a scenic and tranquil location.

This project will not infringe upon natural habitat will provide an opportunity to remove the invasive growth (Multiflora roses etc.) and debris from the river.

In Phase One we move from a concept plan (Peter Jensen 2001) with the continuing cooperation of landowners to trail design and permitting. Est. cost \$10,000.

The second Phase – construction. A supervisor will be needed (cost \$6,000) utilizing a contractor with volunteer labor and donations. Cost 30,000 – \$40,000

Support and encouragement for this project included Robert Nasson, Lee Town Administrator for post construction maintenance, and the Lee Board of Health. A local medical group has indicated financial support for signage. Lee students were involved in early landowner research and we anticipate their post-design and post construction monitoring support. Tim Gray, Past President of the Lee Land Trust and Executive Director of Housatonic River Initiative has volunteered to be project advisor.

This walk in its very special location will be part of the "beaded necklace" envisioned in the Housatonic River Restoration Plan, December, 1999. The vision of the H.R.R. plan is to have a location for recreational access in each town along the river.

[Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. The Riverwalk should enhance recreational and educational uses of the Housatonic River natural resources.](#)

**Proposal No. 6 – Proposal for a Beaded Necklace Housatonic River Greenway  
Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.  
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
Berkshire Bike Path Council**

Abstract: Inspired by the “Beaded Necklace” vision that emerged from the extensive community planning process led by the Housatonic River Restoration (HRR), this project seeks NRD funding for the master planning, feasibility study, conceptual design, and development of a detailed implementation plan for a combined bikeway/greenway. With the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and the Berkshire Bike Path Council (BBPC) as project partners, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) will manage the project and provide technical support, based on experience planning and completing over 70 bikeway/greenway projects over the past 20 years. BRPC will coordinate the community collaboration and consensus-building, and BBPC will provide advice and local grassroots organizing.

The Beaded Necklace will create linkages between existing and proposed bike paths, trails, boat launches, and parks within watershed communities to restore public interest in, enjoyment of, and accessibility to the exceptional natural resources of the Berkshires. The result will weave the many local projects, from the Vermont to Connecticut borders, into a connected whole.

Over two years, our implementation plan will identify project feasibility, phasing, budgets, and most importantly, potential sources of funding. Congressman John W. Olver has been a staunch supporter of bikeway/greenway projects in the Berkshires, and with a comprehensive plan, additional federal, state, local, and private sector funding can be sought for further design, permitting, and construction, greatly leveraging the requested \$665,000 of NRD funds. Restoring the injured and impaired natural resource services through a significant recreational bikeway/greenway project will bring immediate, long-lasting, and widespread benefits to watershed residents.

[Threshold Criteria Determination:](#) This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. A bikeway/greenway could enhance the recreational uses of the Housatonic River natural resources.

**Proposal No. 8 - Proposal to Provide Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts**  
**ESS Group, Inc.**  
**Housatonic Valley Association**

Abstract: This public access project is needed to increase people's awareness of this resource and encourage their re-acceptance of it as a viable recreational asset. The river lacks sufficient public access, particularly locations accessible to handicap, elderly, small children, and others that may not be able to manage the rigors or safety issues associated with unimproved access points. The Housatonic River will benefit from this project since the access points created will be safe, approved locations that can be managed for issues such as litter, river bank or soil erosion, invasive species, etc. which commonly plague unimproved access points.

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) and ESS Group, Inc. (ESS) will perform an initial screening of 37 potential sites based on land availability, and the physical, hydrological, and natural resources. Once the list has been refined, we will select 6 to 8 sites as new public access locations, develop conceptual designs for each for review by watershed stakeholders, and obtain necessary permits. The new access sites will be constructed under this project and will include a range of access improvements from limited access (i.e., "primitive" access), to canoe access, up to full handicap accessibility. Educational information will be included at each access facility. A monitoring program will be designed and implemented to minimize the potential for invasive species to become established at new access points.

The project will cost \$490,000 (including \$30,000 in-kind match) and will be completed within 20 months of funding. The first new access site should be available for use within 16 months of funding.

Tasks include:

- 1) Investigation of the physical, hydrological, and natural resources at each potential site
- 2) Selection of 6 to 8 priority sites
- 3) Meeting of watershed stakeholders to solicit input
- 4) Conceptual and final engineering design
- 5) Obtain necessary permits for construction
- 6) Prepare construction bid documents
- 7) Construction of each facility per bid documents and specifications
- 8) Construction monitoring
- 9) Revegetation of disturbed land with native vegetation along with follow-up monitoring
- 10) Develop educational materials to be posted at each new access point

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Improved public access to the Housatonic River could enhance recreational uses of the River's natural resources. However, to comply with Criterion 4, the following minor adjustments must be made to the proposal: (a) the criteria for prioritizing the specific access projects will be coordinated with and subject to final approval of the MA SubCouncil, and (b) final project selection will be coordinated with and subject to the approval of the MA SubCouncil.

### **Proposal No. 16 – Old Mill Trail Housatonic Valley Association**

Abstract: In 2003, Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) and Crane and Co. began the long-planned construction of a low-impact pedestrian trail, about three miles long, along the East Branch of the Housatonic River to connect the Hinsdale and Dalton communities. HVA, Crane, and the two communities are project partners, and the project has attracted many volunteer workers.

The Old Mill Trail will provide:

1. Environmentally sound access to the river (as opposed to a few constantly eroding bootleg trails). River access is a goal in both towns' strategic plans. Walkers, birders, cyclists, and anglers-tourists and residents-will use the trail;
2. A window on the history of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century mills built on the river here. Schools view the trail as an educational resource, and other potential partners are interested in the history.

Phase I comprises Section 1, from Old Dalton Road in Hinsdale to the old dam and Section 2, from the dam to Route 8. Phase I construction began on Section 2, because bridge and boardwalks are necessary to access Section 1. Approximately 70% (~1700 feet) of Section 2 is complete.

Phase II, not yet begun, comprises Section 3, from Route 8 downstream to the Old Stone Condominium in Dalton, and Section 4, from the Condominium to East Housatonic Street.

Modest private and state grants supported the early work. Installation of bridges and boardwalks require significant grants. Phase I, costing about \$97,000 (not counting the value of In Kind contributions) includes a major bridge, could be completed by the end of the first half of FY2008. Phase II, costing about \$147,000-also including a major bridge) could be begun in FY2008 and completed by the end of the first half of 2010.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. The trail should enhance the recreational uses of the Housatonic River natural resources, as well as benefit natural resources.

**Proposal No. 20 – The Rehabilitation of Forest Roads and Trails  
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of State Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry**

Abstract: The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation manages 67,000 acres on 22 different properties within the Housatonic River watershed. This state-owned land has the potential to supply many of the natural resource and environmental services that were damaged by the release of hazardous materials into the Housatonic River watershed. However, many miles of roads and trails within these state parks and forests are in poor condition after years of neglect and overuse. Today, severe erosion has rendered many roads impassible, compromised public access opportunities, and degraded regional surface water quality / ecological habitat.

There are at least 118 miles of road and 226 miles of trail on DCR land within the Housatonic River watershed. A preliminary analysis of the three largest state forests within this region indicates that 32% of all roads and trails are in "poor" condition. A complete GIS-based road and trail assessment of all DCR properties within the Berkshire Mountains will be conducted during this summer and fall. This data will be used to guide and focus rehabilitation efforts.

The total estimated cost of this rehabilitation project is \$2,725,000 dollars. \$2,000,000 of this amount is requested from the Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages Fund and \$75,000 has already been committed for this project in 2006 from the environmental capital bond program. Presently \$650,000 of environmental bond capital funding has been submitted for approval in the 2007 Massachusetts budget. Over the next two years, this rehabilitation project would selectively close, abandon and reconstruct specific roads and trails to improve regional aquatic biological resources and enhance safe and environmentally sound access opportunities for recreational use.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. Proposed road and trail maintenance should enhance recreational uses of Housatonic River natural resources, as well as benefit River natural resources. While maintenance of land and facilities under its management may be part of DCR's general statutory mandate, it is subject to annual appropriation. There is no legal requirement that every effort in furtherance of that mandate be funded. Further, the MA SubCouncil, in conjunction with its legal counsel, could not identify an independent legal reference in Commonwealth law

that requires a certain degree of maintenance for the roads and trails that are the subject of the proposal.

**Proposal No. 21 – Hazardous Debris Removal**  
**Gloria Wesley**

Abstract: Please note – Because the applicant did not provide an abstract, the following text was excerpted from the project narrative.

The primary goal of my project is to remove hazards and debris (man made and natural) from the waterways of the Housatonic River from Fred Garner Park to Woods Pond for a one-year period.

I plan on following up the clean up work done on the river by sending local stores flyers showing the progress and asking for the public's support in keeping the river clean.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal does not pass Threshold Criteria, because the application does not contain sufficient information necessary to proceed with an evaluation (Threshold Criterion 1). However, the MA SubCouncil saw some merit in the concepts of the proposal. This proposal will continue to be considered for future implementation as a Project Idea, so that the details of the project's budget, implementation, and environmental/socioeconomic impacts can be more fully developed.

## ***Restoration Priority Category – Environmental Education and Outreach***

### **Proposal No. 3 – Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River**

**Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc.**

Abstract: The Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries and the Housatonic Valley Association are collaborating to create the "Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River." The goal of HELP is to restore and repair the relationship of Berkshire County's children, families, and the public to their river and its watershed through education and active involvement. Our objectives are to offer a comprehensive river education experience to *all* students in the Housatonic watershed by providing multi-unit, experiential programs for students when they are in fourth and sixth grades, and to make an optional Envirothon program available to interested high school students in the area. An "on the water" free canoe program in the summer season will extend educational benefits to families and the general public, serving to connect them to the river. The sixth grade program also includes a field trip and canoe component.

HELP will consist of an abbreviated Year One followed by three full years, spanning December 2006 through June 2010. Program costs total \$972,371, with a request amount of \$874,842. HELP will have a tremendous reach into the community, as we anticipate serving from 5,700 to 7,500 children, families, teachers, and the public. Our aim is to give people back *their* river—to connect them with it emotionally as well as physically, and to foster an understanding and appreciation that leads naturally to stewardship. Students must feel that *they* own the river. The school students of today will be the stewards, directly and indirectly, of the river and its watershed tomorrow.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. The proposed activities could benefit the natural resources of the Housatonic River watershed by fostering an understanding and appreciation for the watershed's natural resources so that human behaviors are changed in a manner that facilitates the watershed's restoration.

### **Proposal No. 4 – Housatonic River Museum City of Pittsfield**

Abstract: The Housatonic River Museum is being developed as a dynamic center for exploring the natural science of the Housatonic River watershed and examining the historical and ongoing relationship between humankind and the river. The museum will join existing environmental and educational organizations as we celebrate the role of rivers in our landscape.

Museums serve communities educationally, socially, artistically and economically. We seek funding of \$298,100 for the development and construction of museum exhibits to be created by Roto Studio of Dublin, Ohio (totaling 1,500 sq.ft or 113 of the complete exhibit space). Through these exhibits, the public will have an immersive, hands-on experience as they develop a greater understanding of the impact of human behaviors on the sustainability of a healthy Housatonic River watershed.



Examples include: **Discovery Tree**- A giant structure that invites guests to embark on a physical exploration of the natural wonders found at the River's edge, **Fish Story**- Visitors create stop-motion animation with an underwater setting addressing the ecology and restoration of the Housatonic River, **Water Garden**- An interactive space showcasing the power and dynamics of water, and in partnership with the University of Massachusetts, their **Watershed Community Initiative** that uses modern information technology to enrich our knowledge of and appreciation for the natural communities in which we live. Off-site programs (e.g. **Community Boat Building**) are also included in this proposal.

The museum location will tie in with the City of Pittsfield's West Branch Greenway plans and the West Side Initiative.

Project timeframe: Exhibit Development and Construction- 18 months. Full Museum project- Three years.

Project stages: Planning, Schematic Design, Design Development, Construction and Exhibit Production, Installation and Opening.

[Threshold Criteria Determination:](#) This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. The proposed activities could benefit the natural resources of the Housatonic River watershed by fostering an understanding and appreciation for the watershed's natural resources so that human behaviors are changed in a manner that facilitates the watershed's restoration.

### **Proposal No. 12 – The River Institute Housatonic River Initiative**

Abstract: The River Institute of the Housatonic (TRI) is dedicated to the on-going restoration and preservation of the Housatonic River. TRI will be a joint project of the Housatonic River Initiative/Housatonic Riverkeeper<sup>TM</sup>, scientists active in the fields of river chemistry, biology, and the ecological and human consequences of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), the sportsmen and women of Berkshire County, all environmental and stakeholder groups, educators, and any other interested parties.

The River Institute will be a multi-disciplinary organization dedicated to the restoration of the Housatonic River. The long term goal of The River Institute intends to site a permanent river center along the Housatonic River in Berkshire County. With an advisory board that reflects all of the affected user groups of the Housatonic Watershed, and a commitment to community participation, TRI will provide an on-going forum for higher education research, training, public and secondary education, and information dissemination relating to natural resource protection and awareness. The institute will create a research environment to train students and citizens in scientific approaches to river issues and foster recreational/ education opportunities through public use to aid in restoration from lost use of the river and its watershed.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. The proposed activities could benefit the natural resources of the Housatonic River watershed by fostering an understanding and appreciation for the watershed's natural resources so that human behaviors are changed in a manner that facilitates the watershed's restoration.

**Proposal No. 13 – Berkshire Conservation Agent Program  
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission**

Abstract: The Berkshire Conservation Agent Program would empower municipal Conservation Commissions, front-line defenders of water related natural resources, to better protect, maintain, and preserve wetlands and related water based resources in the Housatonic watershed and connected Berkshire County habitats. Wetlands, floodplains, riverfront, and aquatic habitat, resources which are under the jurisdiction of Conservation Commissions, were severely compromised by the release of hazardous substances. This Program would halt further degradation of those important natural resources.

Building on the successful, established 3 year track record, this Program would provide flexible technical assistance, training, and education directly to municipal Conservation Commissions. Commissions would receive direct technical assistance, including field work, application review, permit preparation, monitoring and enforcement activities to administer projects proposed for Wetlands Protection Act permits. Commissions would also receive highly individualized training on the increasingly complex law and practices associated with the Wetlands Protection Act. In addition, Conservation Commissions would receive training, assistance and support to expand their role and influence as resource protectors as well as to adopt local wetland bylaws, wildlife habitat management plans, and provisions of the Scenic Mountains Act. This Program would also build capacity through coordination of peer to peer networking of Commission members.

Matching funds from at least nineteen participating municipalities are projected to provide almost one quarter (\$80,385) of the total Program amount of \$328,940. NRD funds totaling \$248,555 are requested for this 4 year program by the project applicant, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, partnering with Terry Eucker and Conservation Commissions.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. The proposed activities could benefit the natural resources of the Housatonic River watershed by enhancing the ability of local Conservation Commissions to protect, maintain, and preserve natural resources in the Housatonic watershed.

**Proposal No. 14 – Less Toxic Landscapes: A Healthier Housatonic River  
Center for Ecological Technology**

Abstract: The Housatonic River suffers from nutrient concentrations that diminish habitat for fish and other aquatic species as well as impairment from herbicides and pesticides. Diazinon, found in urban areas, is highly toxic to birds, mammals, beneficial

insects and freshwater fish. Changing human behavior through effective, timely education will reduce the overall toxic load from non-point sources.

**Less Toxic Landscapes: A Healthier Housatonic River** will adapt successful strategies used by Town of Wellesley MA and King County, Washington to address the water pollution caused by outdoor pesticide use. The Center for Ecological Technology (CET) will target the public; garden centers, hardware stores, landscape contractors, facility managers; and municipalities in the watershed. Education will reach specific audiences when they are most receptive to change. Training landscapers will take place in the winter months when they have time to attend a workshop. Workshops for homeowners will be scheduled before and during the growing season when they are thinking about their lawns and gardens. Workshops, trainings, media, retail displays and social marketing techniques will stimulate behavior changes so less chemical pesticides reach the Housatonic River. This multi-year effort will reduce the quantity of pesticides used on lawns and protect the environment and public health.

Total cost: \$282,540 for 2007 – 2010. Request to NRD Trustees: \$216,540

Overall schedule: Winter: Landscaper Workshops, training for retail staff  
Early spring – fall: education for general public (repeated over 3 years)

Partners: City of Pittsfield, Western Massachusetts Master Gardeners Association.

Threshold Criteria Determination: This proposal passes Threshold Criteria. The proposed activities could benefit the natural resources of the Housatonic River watershed by fostering an understanding of the potential natural resource issues regarding pesticide use and an appreciation for the watershed's natural resources so that human behaviors are changed in a manner that facilitates the watershed's restoration.

**APPENDIX D**  
**Evaluation Summary Memos**

## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 001**

**Project Name: Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk**

**Consensus-Based Score: 258**

Method used to Reach Consensus: Average of individual scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- **Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions):** One reviewer viewed this criterion as strictly dealing with ongoing remediation activities. Other reviewers took this criterion to signify the synergistic benefits that would result from the various components of the project. The consensus was that synergistic benefits would be provided by the various components of the project and the one reviewer adjusted his score accordingly.
- **Criterion B1 (Technical/Technological Feasibility):** One reviewer scored this criterion low because of concerns that compost tea application may be an inappropriate technology due to the necessity of repeated applications and the reviewer's impression that this technology does little to improve the water holding capacity of soils. Because the applicant describes the soils as being comprised of demolition debris, sand, and "other non-geologic fill", soil augmentation with organic matter may be a more appropriate technology. Consensus was not reached.
- **Criterion B4 (Measurable Results):** RE connectivity enhancement. One reviewer was of the opinion that the applicant's assertion River Walk would enhance connectivity between upstream and downstream rare species habitats was not substantiated. The criterion would have scored higher had the applicant provided specific information such as the species affected and how River Walk would enhance connectivity. The individual hoped for expansion of the width and/or length of the vegetated riparian buffer instead of merely enhancing existing riverfront area that has already been restored and is in relatively good condition.
- **Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits):** Two reviewers agreed that the proposal requests a great deal of money but the applicant's previous endeavors warrant the expenditure and the proposal will add a new dimension to the existing river walk.
- **C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources):** Following discussion of the standards assigned to the criterion two reviewers lowered their scores.
- **D6 (Public Outreach):** Reviewers generally agreed that it would be desirable for the applicant to attempt to disseminate the knowledge and other benefits of the River Walk project to others in the Housatonic Watershed.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 001

Project Name: Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk

Total Score: 258

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	15	15	9	<b>13.5</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	15	9	9	9	<b>10.5</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	6	<b>9</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	6	10	10	<b>9</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>71</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	9	<b>13.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	10	10	10	<b>9</b>
4. Measurable Results	10	6	10	10	<b>9</b>
5. Contingency Actions	10	10	10	6	<b>9</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>60.5</b>



**Evaluation Summary Memorandum**  
**Application ID: 002**  
**Project Name: Rising Pond Land Acquisition**  
**Consensus-Based Score: 263**

**Method Used to Reach Consensus:** Average of individual scores following discussion.

**Review Team Members:** United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

**Criteria Discussed:**

- **Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period):** Two review team members felt that because this project does not have as much “enhancement” as other projects and it does not include any actual restoration activities they could not award it a high score.
- **Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits):** Review Team agreed that the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) is likely very committed and capable of maintaining the land, but one reviewer felt that the proposal did not adequately address a plan for long term maintenance.
- **Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions):** Review Team generally felt that this category is a difficult one to address in Round 1. Since it is not known what other projects will be along the river the reviewers do not feel that the applicants can plan to “concurrently/subsequently” implement restoration with other projects. One review team member felt that there was somewhat of a loophole clause and decided to stick with their five. Since the difference between awarding a low score of zero and a high score of five does not seem as though it will impact whether this project is funded or not, the Review Team recommends the MA SubCouncil examine the merits of this criterion. The Review Team does acknowledge that this criterion may make more sense in Round 2 when some projects will be underway.
- **Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions):** Review Team agreed that there is little that could go wrong with a land acquisition project. The applicant did, however, mention that the purchase of the land could be delayed due to severe winter weather that could delay necessary survey work. However, the applicant recognizes and addresses this problem.
- **Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding):** Review Team discussed this criterion in light of the substantial change in funding necessary to acquire the 161 acres reflected in the appraisal that arrived after the application was submitted. While one review team member felt that it reflected poorly on the applicant that they requested a much larger sum of money than the appraisal warrants, the rest of the Review Team did not agree that this was adequate justification for awarding the project a low score. Most of the Review Team based their score solely on the (lower) amount reflected in the appraisal. Review



Team came to consensus but noted that the MA SubCouncil needs to be vigilant and award only the funds necessary to acquire the land (i.e., the amount reflected in the appraisal).

- Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration): One review team member mentioned that they researched easements in the vicinity of the proposed project and felt that the easement proposed in the application will work well with existing nearby easements. In light of this information, one review team member felt compelled to increase their score.
- Criterion D6 (Public Outreach): One review team member felt there were no outreach provisions included in the acquisition phase; the primary phase of the project. Another review team member justified the lack of outreach planned during the acquisition phase by pointing out the need to keep land purchase negotiations private prior to finalizing. Review Team agreed to recognize the outreach that is anticipated with future volunteer activities and the planned educational signage.
- Criterion D7 (Diverse Partnerships): Review Team discussed the partnerships established to carry out the project and the partnerships anticipated to be established later in the project. Since it was pointed out that it is clearly indicated in the application that diverse partnerships will be incorporated at a later date, the two low scoring reviewers increased their scores.

**Additional Comments from Review Team:**

- Generally, the reviewers felt this was an excellent proposal with tangible, long term benefits through the purchase of land along a stretch of the Housatonic River considered high in ecological value and because it provides considerable public access opportunities.
- Review Team noted that it was gratifying to review this high quality application.
- Review team hopes to see this project rise to the top and highly recommends funding BNRC's proposal to acquire the 161 acres.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 002

Project Name: Rising Pond Land Acquisition

Total Score: 263

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	15	9	9	<b>12</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	15	9	15	15	<b>13.5</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	5	0	5	<b>3.25</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>78.75</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
4. Measurable Results	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	10	10	10	<b>9</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>64</b>

**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 002**

**Project Name: Rising Pond Land Acquisition**

**Total Score: 263**

<b>C. PROJECT BUDGET</b>					
1. Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
2. Implementation-oriented	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Budget Justification and Understanding	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
4. Leveraging of Additional Resources	3	3	6	3	<b>3.75</b>
5. Coordination and Integration	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=60)</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53.75</b>

<b>D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT</b>					
1. Enhancement of Public's Relationship with Natural Resources	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
2. Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Community Involvement	9	15	9	9	<b>10.5</b>
4. Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts	6	10	10	10	<b>9</b>
5. Complementary with Community Goals	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Public Outreach	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
7. Diverse Partnerships	5	3	3	3	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=75)</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>66</b>

<b>Total Score</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>263</b>
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## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 003**

**Project Name: Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP)**

**Consensus-Based Score: 239**

Method used to reach Consensus: Average of revised scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period): There was a difference in how each of the reviewers interpreted “the natural recovery period”. Although there was disagreement on this point, all agreed that the proposal inadequately addressed this issue.
- Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits): Two reviewers raised scores because they felt that the school funding would provide a moderate amount of sustainable security. One reviewer lowered score because there would be an amount of human intervention that would be required for the length of the project.
- Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Effects): There was no clear demonstration of direct ecological benefits as part of this proposal.
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): Two reviewers lowered scores because they felt the proposal did not demonstrate that the project demonstrated exemplary net benefits. One reviewer raised score reflecting expected net benefits pointed out by other reviewers.

### **Additional Review Team Comments:**

- Scores were similar from most of the reviewers. Most changes were made as the group addressed items that were not considered during their individual review.
- Project would have scored higher if more partners or additional financial support from others had been secured.
- There was a question as to what the direct relationship is between biological/ecological restoration/remediation and outreach and education. Also, there was a note that the project proposal could have better linked how education and outreach would enhance the natural recovery period and provided direct ecological benefits.
- Description of sustainability of the project after the funding period expired was poorly addressed in the proposal.
- Ratio of other committed funds was rather low compared to what was being requested.

- The project describes a well structured environmental education and outreach program and has the potential to provide many indirect impacts on the restoration of the watershed.

**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 003**

**Project Name: Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP)**

**Total Score: 239**

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>56</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
4. Measurable Results	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	10	6	10	<b>8</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>63</b>



**Evaluation Summary Memorandum**  
**Application ID: 004**  
**Project Name: Housatonic River Museum**  
**Consensus-Based Score: 207**

Method used to Reach Consensus: Average of individual scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

**Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period): General consensus among reviewers that proposal failed to make a strong connection between museum implementation and resource recovery. However, one reviewer felt that an indirect impact through environmental education warranted a medium score.
- Criteria A3 (Sustainable Benefits) and A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits): Review Team scored these criteria low because a strong argument was not made linking museum activities to restoration of the watershed.
- Criterion A6 (Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories): Review Team decided that implementation of the project could benefit both recreation and environmental education categories. Two reviewers raised scores based on discussion.
- Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions): Three reviewers viewed this criterion as strictly dealing with ongoing restoration activities. Remaining reviewer took this criterion to signify the synergistic benefits that would result from the various components of the project.
- Criterion B4 (Measurable Results): Reviewers agreed that results could be measured in the development of a museum, but tangible “on the ground” restoration results would be difficult to quantify. Scores would have been higher had the applicant demonstrated likely improvements to the watershed that could be measured.
- Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions): Proposal is requesting \$298,100, yet \$2,389,700 would be needed to implement the entire project. Reviewers would have scored this criterion higher had they been assured that this additional funding was available.
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): Reviewers would have scored criterion higher if a stronger linkage to benefits within the watershed had been created.
- Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration): Reviewers agreed that proposal did mention some element of coordination between City of Pittsfield, and University of Massachusetts.



**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 004**

**Project Name: Housatonic River Museum**

**Total Score: 207**

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	0	9	0	0	<b>2.25</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	6	10	6	6	<b>7</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	3	0	0	<b>0.75</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	9	<b>13.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	10	6	6	<b>7</b>
5. Contingency Actions	0	6	6	6	<b>4.5</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>55</b>



## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 005**

**Project Name: Lee River Walk**

**Consensus-Based Score: 157**

Method used to reach Consensus: Average of Revised Scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- **Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits):** One reviewer pointed out that the plan lacked detail and that the proposal could result in increased invasive species colonization due to disturbance and would have scored the criterion higher had more detail been provided.
- **Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions):** One reviewer viewed this criterion as strictly dealing with ongoing restoration activities. Remaining reviewers took this criterion to signify the synergistic benefits that would result from the various components of the project such as habitat improvement and improved access to the river.
- **Criterion B1 (Technical/Technological Feasibility):** Low scores resulted from the apparent lack of landowner permission, whereas medium scores resulted from the simplicity of the project.
- **Criterion B3 (Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts):** One reviewer lowered score based on discussion concerning lack of detail in proposal.
- **Criterion B4 (Measurable Results):** One reviewer scored low because applicant did not demonstrate how results would be measured.
- **Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding):** Reviewers would have scored higher had the budget narrative been more detailed. Proposal did not describe what construction materials would be required, nor provide details on the footbridge needed to cross the intermittent stream. Two reviewers lowered scores because discussion concerning lack of detail in budget.
- **Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration):** After discussion, reviewers felt criterion was not addressed and therefore scored the criterion as “Not Addressed” (0 points).
- **Criterion D7 (Diverse Partnerships):** Potential exists for diverse partnerships, but not adequately addressed by applicant.

**Additional Comments:**

- Consensus among reviewers that implementation of the proposal would provide valuable socioeconomic benefits.
- Reviewers concerned about applicant statement “Permission or agreements will be a challenge due to the diversity of landowners to be contacted.”
- Consensus among reviewers that project is vague in details.
  - There is not much detail in project design or logistics. Feasibility depends on cooperation of many parties such as land owners and the Town of Lee. It is unclear from the application that these issues have been resolved and that all parties are agreeable. The ecological benefits from the project are limited. Invasive control is mentioned but not addressed in any detail and therefore can't be properly assessed. The total project costs are quite low which is positive. However, the costs seem remarkably low for the proposed project which makes certain reviewers skeptical about completion.
- Reviewers were concerned that the letter provided by Lee Bank did not correlate well with the proposal and added to the lack of project feasibility.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 005

Project Name: Lee River Walk

Total Score: 157

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	15	9	9	9	<b>10.5</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	0	9	<b>6.75</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	6	10	10	6	<b>8</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	6	6	10	<b>8</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	3	3	0	<b>2.25</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>59.5</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	0	9	0	<b>4.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	0	6	6	<b>4.5</b>
5. Contingency Actions	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	3	0	3	0	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16.5</b>

**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 005**

**Project Name: Lee River Walk**

**Total Score: 157**

<b>C. PROJECT BUDGET</b>					
1. Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits	9	15	15	9	<b>12</b>
2. Implementation-oriented	15	15	15	9	<b>13.5</b>
3. Budget Justification and Understanding	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
4. Leveraging of Additional Resources	6	3	3	0	<b>3</b>
5. Coordination and Integration	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=60)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28.5</b>

<b>D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT</b>					
1. Enhancement of Public's Relationship with Natural Resources	15	9	9	15	<b>12</b>
2. Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship	15	9	9	9	<b>10.5</b>
3. Community Involvement	9	0	9	9	<b>6.75</b>
4. Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
5. Complementary with Community Goals	10	6	6	10	<b>8</b>
6. Public Outreach	5	3	3	3	<b>3.5</b>
7. Diverse Partnerships	3	0	3	0	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=75)</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>52.25</b>

**Total Score**

**188**

**137**

**158**

**144**

**157**

## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 006**

**Project Name: Beaded Necklace Housatonic River Greenway**

**Consensus-Based Score: 162**

Method used to reach Consensus: Average of revised scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period), A3 (Sustainable Benefits), and A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits): The proposal is for master planning and development of a detailed implementation plan for a combined bikeway/greenway. There was some uncertainty with these (and other) criteria about whether the plan that was developed would ever get built, and therefore whether injured resources would be restored. One reviewer mentioned that the plan would not be expected to degrade over time and would be valuable in the future even if it wasn't constructed immediately.
- Criterion B4 (Measurable Results): Scored low because there is no guarantee that projects "on the ground" will be developed, funded and implemented.
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): Project budget scores were generally low because the project was expensive (this project would spend about 9% of all NRD funds), and was essentially a planning study. Budget seems high for what is being done – too many meetings, - too many layers of involvement.

### **Additional Review Team Comments:**

- Most of the Technical Merit criterion received high scores because reviewers believed that the application was well prepared.
- The project proposal assumes local communities can't plan on their own.
- For the most part since the roads follow the streams because of the gorging, that's where the bikeway will go. A bikeway linking trails and parks is one thing, but to use a bikeway to link boat launches is a stretch.
- If this project is funded it will be important to involve all social classes.
- The way the project is set-up, it will be four years before anything is done.
- Too many consultants; too much \$\$\$; too much of budget to salaries and overhead.

- BRPC should be in driver's seat with support from communities and VHB assistance on design as needed.
- Too much weight placed on feedback from "Delegated Rep." May not be the best or most accessible advisor for project.
- There were no support letters from communities.
- It was unclear whether the applicants were suggesting that DCR or MHD manage the consultant contract? If so, they should have been asked and included a support letter.
- Think focus should be on identifying and implementing beads –then work on necklace.
- Recommend getting clearer on overall goal - consensus & then applying for \$\$ to carry it out.



## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 006

Project Name: Proposal for a Beaded Necklace Housatonic River Greenway

Total Score: 163

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	0	0	9	9	<b>4.5</b>
2. Location of Project	15	9	15	15	<b>13.5</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	6	10	10	10	<b>9</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	6	6	10	6	<b>7</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	3	5	3	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37.5</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	9	15	<b>13.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	6	<b>9</b>
4. Measurable Results	10	0	6	0	<b>4</b>
5. Contingency Actions	10	10	6	6	<b>8</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>54.5</b>



## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 007**

**Project Name: Revitalization of the West Branch of the Housatonic River**

**Consensus Score: 196**

To reach consensus on scores for each criterion, the Review Team either averaged the revised individual scores or decided by consensus on the group score for a criterion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

*Note that one of the reviewers assigned separate scores for the greenway and Mill Street Dam components of this proposal, and included a general comment recommending the separation of this proposal into two distinct proposals. At the start of the review team discussion it was clarified that the proposal should be considered as submitted. Single scores were therefore assigned by this reviewer during the consensus discussion. Discussion of changes to the scores of this reviewer are not presented here unless the final score of this reviewer was different than either of the two scores initially provided by this reviewer.*

- Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits): One reviewer lowered score reflecting uncertainty of sustainable benefits associated with aspects of the greenway component of this proposal.
- Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits): One reviewer lowered score reflecting uncertainty of ecological benefits associated with the greenway component of this proposal and some of the proposed alternatives associated with the Mill Street Dam, such as the “rock ramp.”
- Criterion B1 (Technical/Technological Feasibility): One reviewer lowered score reflecting technological feasibility of project components, such as the “rock ramp.”
- Criterion B2 (Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team): One reviewer lowered score.
- Criterion B3 (Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts): While the greenway component of this proposal does not appear to have a high potential for adverse environmental impacts, the consensus score for this criterion was weighted by the potential adverse impacts associated with the Mill Street Dam component and the relative amount of requested funds associated with this component of the proposal.
- Criterion B4 (Measurable Results): One reviewer lowered score reflecting the lack of discussion on measurable results.

- Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions): One reviewer lowered score reflecting the lack of discussion on contingency actions.
- Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding): One reviewer lowered score reflecting apparent lack of detail in budget, including the apparently large lump-sum costs for work such as sediment sampling
- Criterion C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources): One reviewer lowered score reflecting the proposed matching fund ratio.
- Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration). One reviewer raised score reflecting apparent coordination with other activities, such as future remediation/response actions.
- Criterion D1 (Enhancement of Public's Relationship with Natural Resources): Two reviewers lowered scores reflecting lack of discussion of project benefits related to the enhancement of the public's relationship with natural resources.
- Criterion D3 (Community Involvement): One reviewer raised score reflecting the community involvement aspects of the greenway component of this proposal.
- Criterion D6 (Public Outreach). One reviewer lowered score from reflecting the apparent lack of public outreach associated with the Mill Street Dam component of this proposal.
- Criterion D7 (Diverse Partnerships): One reviewer lowered score reflecting the lack of diversity of partnerships described in this proposal.

**Additional Comments:**

- There was a general consensus that the two components of work described in this proposal should be separated into two distinct proposals.
- The reviewers concurred that dam removal would be the preferred approach to the Mill Street Dam component of this proposal. The "rock ramp" alternative does not appear to be technologically viable and is without precedent on the proposed scale in the Northeast.
- A number of questions regarding the Mill Street Dam component of this proposal were discussed, including:
  - Dam owner liability and cooperation with the proposed work.
  - A lack of discussion of the current condition of the dam and associated liability.
  - The apparent lack of discussion regarding the determination of a potentially responsible party as related to potentially-contaminated sediments.

**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 007**

**Project Name: Revitalization of the West Branch of the Housatonic River**

**Total Score: 196**

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	15	n/a	9	<b>12</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	6	10	<b>9</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>67</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	10	6	10	<b>8</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>



## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 008**

**Project Name: Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts**  
**Consensus-Based Score: 208**

Method Used to Reach Consensus: Average individual scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): Cost of project struck the review team as being high (\$490,000).
- Criterion C2 (Implementation-oriented): A significant portion of the funds would go to the consulting company's overhead costs and profit.
- Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding): Given the scale of the proposed project, the review team felt that a more detailed budget would have been helpful. Some review team members felt that permitting, land acquisition, and construction costs were potentially under estimated.
- Criterion D6 (Public Outreach): Review team noted that the proposed project includes a significant amount of public outreach regarding site selection.

### **Additional Review Team Comments:**

- While noting the potential benefits of enhancing public access to the Housatonic River, the review team had a sense that the proposed project was potentially disproportionate to the actual needs for additional access. The review team considered, for example, whether it was going to be feasible to identify 6 to 8 viable sites in the study area.
- The Housatonic Valley Association's role in the project was not clear to the review team.
- In general, the Team felt that the project should be scaled back to provide fewer sites in an effort to reduce potential costs and to ensure that the number of access points on the river was commensurate with actual needs.
  - The merit of a phased approach to the project was also discussed.
  - Some Team members noted the potential environmental impacts associated with increased public access to the river.
- The Team discussed who would be responsible for the future monitoring and maintenance of the sites. Ideally, the sites would explicitly become the responsibility of the municipality in which they are located, or they would become state-operated facilities. Regardless, the Team recommends that the future management of the sites be made more explicit.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 008

Project Name: Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts

Total Score: 208

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	15	15	9	<b>12</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	5	5	0	<b>3.25</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>59.25</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	15	9	15	<b>12</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	6	10	10	<b>8</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	10	10	6	<b>8</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>





**Evaluation Summary Memorandum**  
**Application ID: 009**  
**Project Name: Aquatic Habitat Restoration**  
**Consensus Score: 174**

To reach consensus on scores for each criterion, the Review Team either averaged the revised individual scores or decided by consensus on the group score for a criterion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

**Criteria Discussion:**

- Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period): Two of the reviewers lowered scores and one raised score for this criterion. These changes reflect the uncertainty associated with the proposed work, particularly implementation-related aspects of work.
- Criterion A2 (Location of Project): One of the reviewers raised score.
- Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits): One reviewer lowered score. This change reflects the uncertainty associated with the proposed work, particularly implementation-related aspects of work.
- Criterion A5 (Human Health and Safety): One reviewer raised score, reflecting that there do not appear to be human health and safety issues associated with the work described in this proposal.
- Criterion A6 (Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories): Two reviewers lowered scores, reflecting minimal discussion in the proposal of integration with project categories such as education and outreach.
- Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions): Two reviewers lowered scores, reflecting minimal discussion in the proposal regarding coordination with future remediation/response actions.
- Criterion B3 (Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts): One reviewer lowered score, reflecting minimal discussion in the proposal regarding existing pollutants in the project area and the consequent potential for adverse environmental impacts.
- Criterion B4 (Measurable Results): One reviewer lowered score, reflecting the lack of discussion on measurable results.
- Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions): One reviewer lowered score, reflecting the lack of discussion on contingency actions.
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): One reviewer raised score, reflecting potential benefits associated with implementation of this proposal while acknowledging uncertainty associated with such benefits.

- Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding): One reviewer lowered score, reflecting apparent lack of detail in budget.
- Criterion C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources): Two reviewers lowered scores, reflecting proposed matching fund ratio.
- Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration). One reviewer lowered score, reflecting apparent lack of coordination with other activities, such as future remediation/response actions.
- Criterion D2 (Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship): Two reviewers changed scores, reflecting uncertainty in applicability of proposed work at fostering future restoration and stewardship.
- Criterion D3 (Community Involvement): Two reviewers changed scores, reflecting uncertainty in level of community involvement.
- Criterion D4 (Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts): Two reviewers changed scores, reflecting uncertainty in potential for adverse socioeconomic impacts.
- Criterion D6 (Public Outreach): Reviewers changed all scores, reflecting the lack of discussion whether the proposed work would be complementary with community goals.
- Criterion D7 (Diverse Partnerships): Two reviewers changed scores, reflecting the diversity of partnerships in this proposal.

**Additional Comments:**

- Potential benefits are unknown.
- Proposal would have benefited from coordination and input from private and public-sector resource groups. This is not mentioned in Section 4 of the proposal.
- There is uncertainty in the proposed modeling work and a lack of documentation that the model methodology would result in ecological benefits.
- The schedule and budget for the second phase of work (implementation) does not appear realistic.
- Monitoring of results could be difficult.
- There does not appear to be sufficient consideration for contingency actions, particularly with regard to permitting work.

**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 009**

**Project Name: Aquatic Habitat Restoration**

**Total Score: 174**

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	0	6	0	<b>3</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>



## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 010**

**Project Name: Proposal to Perform Bartholomew's Cobble Restoration**

**Consensus-Based Score: 203**

Method used to Reach Consensus: Average of final individual scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion B4 (Measurable Results): One reviewer raised score after a discussion that the feasibility study conclusion itself provided a measurable result. One reviewer lowered score because there was no identifiable monitoring plan described in the project proposal.
- Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions): One reviewer lowered score after a discussion of the other potential issues that could arise during the project implementation.
- Criterion C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources): Project did an excellent job at matching funds, but was just below the agreed upon ratio for the assigned score. All felt that higher scores are justified, but could not be granted based upon the ranking criteria.
- Criterion D1 (Enhancement of Public's Relationship with Natural Resources): Majority of review team felt that there was no assurance that The Trustees of Reservations would actively support outreach of this project with defined programs, even though that is one of the Trustees of Reservations missions. Scoring this criterion required a bit of a leap beyond the project proposal.
- Criterion D5 (Complementary of Community Goals): Proposal did not directly cite that project is a priority to the community. Citation of the community master plan would have been appropriate.
- Criterion D6 (Public Outreach): Outreach is only implied for this project. It was not directly addressed how the public would be involved in this feasibility study.

### **Additional Comments:**

- There was a concern as to whether the Trustees of Reservations would have sufficient involvement with the project. There was not concurrence on this issue.
- The implementation timeline was rather confusing. If this feasibility study were implemented, it is likely that the potential ecological benefits would not be

realized unless additional NRD funding was used to pay for the actual restoration project.

- The proposal generally lacked details, partly due to its nature as a feasibility study.
- The project suffers from being a planning project only. If implementation of the restoration was certain, scores could have been much higher. If selected, would the actual restoration be funded in the second round?
- The team seems very technically capable to complete the project.
- It would have been advantageous to include other members of the Housatonic River watershed community in this proposal.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 010

Project Name: Bartholomew's Cobble Restoration

Total Score: 203

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	6	10	6	6	<b>7</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	0	0	0	<b>0.75</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>59.75</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
5. Contingency Actions	0	0	0	6	<b>1.5</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>52.5</b>





**Evaluation Summary Memorandum**  
**Application ID: 011**  
**Project Name: Fisheries Assessment**  
**Consensus Score: 204**

Method used to reach Consensus: Average of Revised Scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

**Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits): One reviewer lowered score, reflecting uncertainty associated with the proposed work.
- Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions): One reviewer lowered score, reflecting lack of discussion in the proposal regarding coordination with future remediation/response actions.
- Criterion B4 (Measurable Results): Reviewer commented that proposal should have discussed dissemination of study results.
- Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions): Three reviewers changed scores due to lack of discussion on contingency actions.
- Criterion C2 (Implementation-Oriented): One reviewer raised score, reflecting potential benefits associated with implementation of this proposal while acknowledging uncertainty associated with such benefits.
- Criterion C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources): One reviewer lowered score, reflecting proposed matching fund ratio.
- Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration). Two reviewers changed scores reflecting the lack of discussion of coordination and integration with other groups, such as Trout Unlimited.
- Criterion D3 (Community Involvement): Two reviewers lowered scores from reflecting the lack of discussion of community goals in this proposal. As with Criterion C5, proposal would have benefited from statement regarding coordination with groups such as Trout Unlimited.
- Criterion D5 (Complementary with Community Goals): One reviewer raised score, reflecting the apparent benefits to community goals associated with this project. Similar to previous comments, the proposal would have benefited from a stated objective to coordinate with other, ongoing activities, including the Eastern Brook Trout Conservation Initiative/National Fish Habitat Initiative.
- Criterion D6 (Public Outreach). One reviewer raised score reflecting community outreach associated with the flyer development proposed as part of this proposal.

**Additional Review Team Comments:**

- The review team suggests that the Trustees recommend increased public outreach as part of this proposal to enhance its long-term viability. Such work might include outreach to groups including Trout Unlimited, the Izaak Walton League of America, local fish and game clubs, and coordination with the National Fish Habitat Initiative.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 011

Project Name: Housatonic Watershed Fisheries Assessment

Total Score: 204

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	15	15	9	<b>12</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	3	3	0	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>66.5</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	9	9	<b>12</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	6	10	<b>9</b>
4. Measurable Results	10	10	6	6	<b>8</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>55</b>



## **Draft Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 012**

**Project Name: The River Institute**

**Consensus-Based Score: 193**

Method used to Reach Consensus: Average of final individual scores after discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period): Difference in how each of the reviewers interpreted “the natural recovery period.” Although there was disagreement on this point, all agreed that it was not clear the proposal adequately addressed this issue.
- Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Effects): Tied to criteria A1 (Natural Recovery Period), there was not agreement on the direct application of ecological recovery and effects. One reviewer raised score based on the fact that two of the reviewers scored this category “0” and that at best the reviewer felt that moderate benefits are described.
- Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions): Two reviewers lowered scores based upon further review of the proposal and through the conversation. Consensus was that the proposal did not demonstrate that synergy between the ongoing actions in the watershed were adequately described, even though it could be assumed that such coordination would occur.
- Criterion B1 (Technical/Technological Feasibility): Two reviewers lowered scores based upon the discussion that utilization of the University laboratory alone would give them a high score. Specific techniques and tests to be applied were not adequately addressed in the proposal to ensure that methods were appropriate and directed to Housatonic River protection and cleanup. Additional information would have raised this score.
- Criterion B3 (Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts): Two reviewers lowered scores after a third reviewer pointed out that the lack of details on the techniques left some doubt as to whether the tests performed could have a negative impact on the watershed by physically damaging ecologically sensitive areas during collection of samples.
- Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions): Two reviewers changed scores based upon consensus that contingency actions were not adequately detailed (e.g., how to determine if there are sensitive species or what to do if they are encountered).
- Criterion C2 (Implementation Oriented): Reviewers believed costs associated with general support were high, but all agreed that they were only moderate.

- Criterion C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources): Two reviewers changed scores based upon the proposed matching funds ratio.

**Additional Review Team Comments:**

- The various perspectives of the reviewers led to varied views of how to interpret the reviewing criteria.
- Part of the review team felt that the proposal had the basis for a good project, however it was unclear whether additional testing outside of what EPA and DEP was needed. There was not consensus on this comment.
- Part of the review team felt that this proposal quality and detail did not align with the reputation of the Riverkeeper program and that the approach and description was unfocused. There was not a consensus on this issue.
- All agreed that the socioeconomic and educational benefits of the proposed project were the strong point and of merit.
- There were several comments that the scoring criteria of high, medium, or not addressed to be a bit restrictive for some of the sections.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 012

Project Name: The River Institute

Total Score: 193

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	0	0	9	0	<b>2.25</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	0	0	9	0	<b>2.25</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	0	9	0	<b>4.5</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	6	10	6	<b>8</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>45</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	9	9	15	15	<b>12</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	6	10	6	<b>7</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>





## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 013**

**Project Name: Berkshire Conservation Agent Program**

**Consensus-Based Score: 229**

Method Used to Reach Consensus: Average individual scores.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits): Considerable discussion focused on what the sustainable benefits of the proposed project might be. Review Team members noted that the project was essentially to fund the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program for four more years.
  - Review Team noted that the applicant stated that additional funding would be needed after the four years and that Towns were either unwilling or unable to fund the full cost of using a Conservation Agent.
- Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits): Team thought that it would be difficult to quantify the magnitude of the ecological benefits potentially resulting from implementation of the project. Program is mainly focused on ensuring adequate review of proposed development projects. Review team noted, therefore, that any mitigation resulting from such projects would be intended to offset permitted impacts (i.e., there would be no net gain in ecological benefits).
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): Some Team members viewed the overall cost of the project as being somewhat high.

### **Additional Review Team Comments and Recommendations:**

- Review Team noted that the premise of the project – notably that Conservation Commissions typically lack the staff or expertise to adequately review permit applications – was sound.
  - There was some discussion regarding whether the problem was one that DEP should address or whether it was appropriate to address it locally via the Conservation Agent Program.
  - To some degree the program covers topics already addressed by the MADEP Wetlands Circuit Rider Program (<http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/compliance/cridr.htm>) and the Team recommends that the Trustees contact Alice Smith ([alice.smith@state.ma.us](mailto:alice.smith@state.ma.us)), who coordinates the program, to discuss the potential overlap between the Circuit Rider Program and the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program.

- Although the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP) is run through the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), some Team members noted that the proposal was essentially a no-bid four-year contract to Ms. Eucker's consulting company.
  - The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's web-site notes: *"BCAP is available through BRPC, which, as a municipal body can contract with municipalities without going through the bidding process of the Uniform Procurement Act. Therefore, a Conservation Commission does NOT have to request bids from several outside consultants in order to use the services of the Program. The Program services are available without the delay of bidding. BCAP is a "fee for service" with municipalities only paying for the services that are used."*
  - If the project is funded, the Team recommends that the Program funding structure be independently evaluated to ensure compliance with applicable procurement regulations.
- Review Team recommends that the project include efforts to evaluate alternatives for making the program ultimately self-sustaining.
- Review Team noted that the majority of the program is to be accomplished by one person and concern was expressed over the potential for the described work being too much for an individual to achieve.
- Performance goals are not explicitly described in the proposal and the Review Team had some concern regarding how the success of the program would be monitored over a four-year period. Review Team also noted that it might be difficult to address problems in the program, should they arise.
- Some Review Team members noted that some members of the public might view the program as an effort to curb development and economic growth (i.e., a socio-economic impact).
- Review Team felt that the aspects of the project dealing with Conservation Commission training and outreach were potentially a more appropriate use of NRD funds in comparison to funding technical reviews of individual projects. The caveat remains that the Trustees should ensure that the proposed program doesn't duplicate services provided by the DEP's Circuit Rider Program.
- The consensus was that, given the concerns expressed above, the program was likely beneficial to the communities that chose to use it.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 13

Project Name: Berkshire Conservation Agent

Total Score: 229

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	15	15	9	<b>12</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	9	9	<b>12</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	6	10	10	10	<b>9</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	5	3	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	15	15	15	<b>13.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	6	10	6	<b>7</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	3	5	5	5	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>56</b>



## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 014**

**Project Name: Less Toxic Landscapes – A Healthier Housatonic River**

**Consensus-Based Score: 223**

Method used to Reach Consensus: Average of individual scores.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- **Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits):** One reviewer lowered score because it was opined that this project would require continued human involvement to assure continued benefits.
- **Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits):** One reviewer scored this criterion as a 0 because although the reviewer is for the reduction of chemical input to the environment, the reviewer did not believe that implementation of the project would likely have a measurable impact on the watershed.
- **Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions):** Two reviewers believed that this criterion strictly dealt with remediation of the river and thus scored the item as “not addressed”; the other two reviewers believed that this criterion encompassed “synergistic” benefits derived by various components within the project.
- **Criterion B1 (Technical/Technological Feasibility):** There was some concern among reviewers whether this was the best methodology for reaching chemical applicators and how broad the impact would be. Acceptance and implementation by the public is critical, but not guaranteed.
- **Criterion B4 (Measurable Results):** All reviewers were generally concerned that changes in chemical input to the River would not be directly measured and that monitoring the sale of chemicals might not provide the best measure of results.
- **Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits):** All reviewers were concerned that net benefits were not laid out clearly.
- **Criterion C5 (Coordination and Integration):** It was remarked that the applicant did not directly address this criterion, one reviewer lowered score for this reason, one reviewer raised score after observing that this topic was covered in other sections of the proposal narrative.
- **Criterion D3 (Community Involvement):** One reviewer did not feel that the community at large would be involved with the project; rather there may be small pockets of acceptance within the community.
- **Criterion D5 (Complementary with Community Goals):** One reviewer raised score after discussion of Housatonic River Restoration Plan and its concern about “preventing further damage” to the river from pesticides.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 014

Project Name: Less Toxic Landscapes: A Healthier Housatonic River

Total Score: 223

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	15	9	9	<b>10.5</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	0	9	9	9	<b>6.75</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	6	10	10	6	<b>8</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	3	0	0	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>60.75</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	15	9	15	<b>12</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
4. Measurable Results	0	6	6	6	<b>4.5</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	10	6	6	<b>7</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>53.5</b>





## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 015**

**Project Name: Clapp Park to Wild Acres Greenway Project**

**Consensus-Based Score: 237**

Method used to Reach Consensus: Average of individual scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- **Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period):** Unclear how proposal would provide restoration benefits to injured natural resources and/or services in advance of the “natural recovery period.” Consensus was that if the proposed land parcels are acquired, aquatic and riparian habitat would be protected from future development and further degradation. Wildlife viewing and general outdoor recreation opportunities are listed in the Restoration Project Selection Procedure as natural resource services that were damaged by the release of PCBs to the Housatonic River. Although the proposal did not create a strong nexus between the land acquisition and proposed greenway development, it was viewed that certain natural resources would potentially be enhanced by the implementation of this project.
- **Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions):** Unclear whether the applicant had explored opportunities to enhance remediation/response actions by concurrently or subsequently implementing restoration projects. It was decided that synergistic benefits could be provided by the acquisition of land, future development of a greenway and path between Clapp Park and Wild Acres, and teaming with the Berkshire Museum to create environmental education opportunities.
- **Criterion B3 (Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts):** Adverse impact could result from creating trails in undisturbed areas.
- **Criterion B5 (Contingency Actions):** Two reviewers believed criterion not addressed well (e.g., availability of land to create final link between Clapp Park and Wild Acres).
- **Criterion C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources):** Review Team would like elaboration on this criterion. Details such as commitment of funding for land surveying, trail construction, acquiring necessary parcels to connect the greenway, and a passageway for crossing railroad tracks among others would have provided the reviewers with more confidence that the proposed greenway would be fully developed.

**Additional Comments by Review Team:**

- Reviewers would have liked to have seen more detail in the project narrative and the budget concerning the linkage between Clapp Park and Wild Acres as well as details on proposed future improvements.
- Reviewers are concerned about the trail crossing the railroad and recommend acquiring a letter of support from the railroad.

**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 015**

**Project Name: Clapp Park to Wild Acres Greenway Project**

**Total Score: 237**

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	9	15	9	<b>10.5</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	15	9	9	9	<b>10.5</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	9	15	<b>10.5</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	6	6	10	10	<b>8</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>69.5</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	9	15	15	<b>13.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	9	9	15	15	<b>12</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	10	10	10	<b>9</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	6	10	10	<b>8</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	10	10	6	<b>8</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	3	5	5	5	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>55</b>



## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 016**

**Project Name: Old Mill Trail**

**Consensus-Based Score: 227**

Method Used to Reach Consensus: Average individual scores.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussion:**

- Criterion A2 (Location of Project): Review Team concluded that this was a worthy project in close proximity to the Housatonic River.
- Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits): One reviewer felt that there would be no measurable ecological benefit associated with the project and elected to not indicate a score
- Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions): Review Team gave no points for criterion, but concluded that it wasn't possible for the applicant to identify such opportunities given that remediation/response actions have yet to be defined.
- Criterion B3 (Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts): Review Team recognized that there would be minor ecological impacts associated with increased human use in the riparian corridor.
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): Budget struck the Team as somewhat high and some concern was expressed over the proportion of the budget devoted to salaries, benefits, and overhead. A more detailed budget justification, therefore, may be warranted.
- Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding): Budget amount for permitting struck some Team members as low.
- Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding): \$84,000 of committed non-NRD funding was credited to the Crane & Company Conservation Restriction. Means of establishing the fair market value of easement, however, was not explained (see Review Team Guidance for Criterion C.3., which requires the applicant to have an independent appraisal of the property).

### **Additional Comments:**

- In general, Team members gave relatively similar scores for each criterion and there were no points of contention regarding the consensus scores.

- While recognizing that both towns support the project, the Review Team recommends seeking explicit assurance from both towns that they would be responsible for maintaining the trails and bridges.
- Concern was expressed regarding the fate of the project if a safe crossing of Route 8 can't be accomplished. The Team recommends, therefore, asking the applicant to seek input from the appropriate local and State highway officials prior to funding the project.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 016

Project Name: Old Mill Trail

Total Score: 227

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	15	9	15	<b>13.5</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	0		<b>6</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	6	6	<b>8</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>61.5</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	9	15	15	15	<b>13.5</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
4. Measurable Results	10	10	6	10	<b>9</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	10	6	6	<b>7</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>55.5</b>

**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 016**

**Project Name: Old Mill Trail**

**Total Score: 227**

<b>C. PROJECT BUDGET</b>					
1. Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits	15	15	9	9	<b>12</b>
2. Implementation-oriented	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Budget Justification and Understanding	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Leveraging of Additional Resources	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
5. Coordination and Integration	5	5	5	3	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=60)</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>43.5</b>

<b>D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT</b>					
1. Enhancement of Public's Relationship with Natural Resources	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
2. Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship	9	15	15	9	<b>12</b>
3. Community Involvement	15	15	9	9	<b>12</b>
4. Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
5. Complementary with Community Goals	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Public Outreach	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
7. Diverse Partnerships	5	5	5	3	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=75)</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>66.5</b>

<b>Total Score</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>227</b>
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**Evaluation Summary Memorandum**  
**Application ID 018**  
**Project Name: Rare Species Recovery**  
**Consensus-Based Score: 205**

Method used to reach Consensus: Average of Revised Scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (1) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (2), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

**Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits): Did not receive the highest score because of some uncertainty whether parcels identified with rare species could be permanently protected. It was recognized that the presence of a rare species on a parcel allows some level of protection through other state laws and regulations, therefore even if parcels aren't acquired, results of the study may provide value for rare species protection.
- Criterion B4 (Measurable Results): One reviewer believed that because parcels would not necessarily be protected as a result of this work, that measurable results should be scored low. Other reviewers believed that some additional protection would be afforded to those species and lands that support them once rare species were identified on a site.
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): Some discussion regarding project budget and whether costs were commensurate with expected benefits. Reviewers scored 4 of 5 criteria in budget section differently because of these differences.

**Additional Comments:**

Although the topic of this proposal is an extremely relevant one to the NRD and the applicant is qualified to conduct the project, the reviewers wish the proposal had been stronger. Shortcomings include:

1. The proposal indicates and explains the methodology for designating a "critical supporting watershed" CSW target area, but then elsewhere talks about the ecological significance of the "marble valley" eco region. While there is a good deal of overlap between these two areas, there is some concern that ecologically significant "marble valley" lands lying outside of the CSW will not get surveyed. These include lands along the Green and Williams River corridors, Konkopot corridor and Schenob Brook area in Sheffield. The reviewers understand how the connectivity to the main stem issue is relevant for preserving aquatic species like fish and mussels, but that is less relevant for other listed organisms (plants, odonates, birds). Indeed, the portion of the proposal discussing wading/marsh

bird habitat talks (rightly) in terms of the entire Housatonic watershed and not just the CSW.

2. Considering how active many NGOs are in the effort to identify and protect elements of natural diversity in the Berkshires (most notably The Nature Conservancy, which has a handful of staff devoted specifically to this purpose), it is strange that NHESP's proposal makes almost no mention of this. Ideally, we would have liked to have seen TNC and NHESP submit a joint proposal or at the very least, TNC should have submitted a letter of support for the proposal (were they ever asked?) Some discussion was provided regarding the need to avoid re-surveying areas that other groups have done, but the proposal would have been stronger had there been more explicit cooperation here between TNC, Audubon, as others could have been good sources of matching monies and in-kind contributions, which were not included in the project budget. Likewise, there was no reference to any cooperative role for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which plays a major role in rare species recovery efforts elsewhere.
3. Regarding permits required, proposal omits necessity to get pesticide applicator licenses for invasive species control should that be deemed to be necessary.
4. The proposal would have been stronger had it presented a two-prong strategy:
  - a. Survey the larger portion of the watershed for ecological hotspots
  - b. Ask for acquisition money to purchase an ecological hotspot that's already been identified by Biomap, Living Waters or other means. The proposal could have done a better job of explaining why Biomap and Living Waters, plus surveys done by TNC and others are insufficient for prioritizing key acquisitions in the Berkshires and this additional surveying step is necessary.
5. While the proposal is billed as a rare species recovery project, we did not see in the proposal any methodology for identifying the degraded sites that offer the best opportunities for ecological restoration, e.g. the sites that could be good locations for the re-introduction of listed and other native species. Or maybe even restoring historic species to a former part of their range.
6. We would have liked to see in this proposal a little more discussion of current threats to listed species and their habitat and how the work proposed to be funded under this proposal will address those threats. The role of hotspot acquisitions and resulting protection through MESA was adequately discussed, but we wanted to hear more about how other threats will be addressed, like invasive species and burgeoning ATV use.
7. There should have been more discussion of the 34.16% overhead cost. (we think this is assessed by the state comptroller, but the proposal doesn't confirm that). Was there any attempt to use an NGO like TNC as a pass-through to minimize the

overhead charge? Losing more than a third of the NRD funds allocated to this project to overhead makes it much less cost-effective.

8. This project was well thought out and the application well-written and thorough. Lack of outside funding and public outreach were the only downsides to the proposal.

**Additional Comments Concerning Review Process:**

- Several reviewers mentioned that some of the criterion could have had more choices for scores, i.e., the median score was either too high or too low.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 018

Project Name: Rare Species Recovery on the Housatonic River

Total Score: 205

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	15	15	9	<b>12</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	6	10	10	10	<b>9</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>67</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	15	15	15	<b>13.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	9	15	15	15	<b>13.5</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
4. Measurable Results	0	10	6	6	<b>5.5</b>
5. Contingency Actions	0	6	6	6	<b>4.5</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	3	5	5	5	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>51.5</b>



## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 019**

**Project Name: Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project**

**Consensus Score: 246**

Method used to reach Consensus: Average of Revised Scores following discussion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions): Team considered as pertaining to actual PCB remediation in the rest of river and scored this criterion as “0” because it was not addressed in the proposal.
- Criterion B1 (Technical/Technological Feasibility): General concern among review team about technical merit. Anticipated that project would be slow to start with growing pains at beginning. Project would likely require more than 3 years of funding.
- Criterion B2 (Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team): Team divided with two members scoring lower because of apparent lack of experience and one scoring higher because experience of certain individuals on project team made up for lack of experience by others.
- Criterion B3 (Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts): One reviewer concerned about adverse environmental impact from spraying invasive species. Consensus was that adverse impacts would be mitigated by permitting.
- Criterion B4 (Measurable Results): One reviewer scored lower because believed that monitoring plan was not sufficient.
- Criterion B5 (contingency actions): Consensus was that there was no mechanism for finishing within 3 years and a general concern existed about what would happen if the project was not finished within the established timeline.
- Criterion B6 (Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team): reviewers agreed that although Project Native is a young organization, the strength of the team members was high enough to warrant a medium score.
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): Although the group was confident that Conservation Restrictions (CRs) would be put in place, there was less certainty towards the restoration of these parcels.
- D1 (Enhancement of Public’s Relationship with Natural Resources): Two reviewers scored high because of the combination of the anticipated restoration, canoe launch area, and aesthetic value. One reviewer scored medium because it is his opinion that not everyone wants land tied up in CRs.

- D4 (Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts): One reviewer was concerned that this criterion was not addressed well and that production of plant nursery stock could create competition for other local nurseries.

**Additional Review Team Comments:**

- Management and stewardship needed beyond project timeframe (e.g., stewardship of CRs, invasive plant control, monitoring floral and fauna response).
- Aggressive timeline for nursery/seedbank startup. Short-term habitat restoration attainable, but long-term unknown or outside project timeframe. Land protection objectives attainable. Project objectives not attainable during timeframe if contingencies need to be used (especially habitat restoration, revegetation).
- Potential for competition w/ local, private nurseries – issue not addressed.

**Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 019**

**Project Name: Housatonic River Floodplain Forest Restoration Project**

**Total Score: 246**

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	9	15	9	9	<b>10.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	9	9	<b>12</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	10	10	10	<b>9</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>50.5</b>





## **Draft Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 020**

**Project Name: Rehabilitation of Forest Roads and Trails in the Housatonic River Watershed**

**Consensus-Based Score: 173**

Method Used to Reach Consensus: Average of individual scores.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion B3 (Potential for Adverse Environmental Impact): Needs to be consistent project/contractor oversight to ensure that best/appropriate conservation management practices are followed otherwise potential exists for adverse environmental impacts.
- Criterion C3 (Budget Justification and Understanding): Much concern that project requests a sizeable budget of \$2 million, but the details of the budget are seriously lacking. This is a very expensive project and does not appear to provide adequate justification. One review team member mentioned that it looks as though the project is requesting a large sum of money that will basically be handed directly over to a contractor for the work.
- Criterion C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources): Concern raised regarding the project being solely dependent on grants and bonds and the impact that could have on long-term stewardship (Criterion D2 – Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship). It is not clear what will become of this project in the future.
- Criterion D3 (Community Involvement): One reviewer felt that the proposal did not talk about community involvement. Another pointed to the project goal to, “enhance safe and environmentally sound access opportunities for recreation use.” The review team conceded that given the criterion, “Projects should demonstrate how the community would be involved, such as through hands-on habitat restoration, science-based monitoring and/or training” the project does not provide opportunities for community involvement. It was noted that on page 9 of the proposal, it states “This proposed rehabilitation project does not complement any existing plans that incorporate public input and involvement.”

### **Additional Comments from Review Team:**

- Consistent concerns were raised about the lack of
  - partnerships beyond Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation,
  - an outreach component beyond the recreational survey, and
  - a long term maintenance plan.
- The review team feels the benefits of the project to the Housatonic watershed are clear.
- It is commonly understood that Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is lacking necessary funding to provide for proper maintenance of roads and trails.
- The need for a project such as this is evident.

- Concept of the proposal is good, but the proposal itself is lacking attention to detail.
- Team questions whether the applicant is fully committed to the project at this time.
- The review team recommends the applicant reexamine this proposal, enhance the outreach and public involvement components, provide detailed justification for the \$2 million budget, and re-submit this proposal in Round 2.

**FINAL Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary**

**Application ID: 020**

**Project Name: Rehabilitation of Forest Roads and Trails in the Housatonic River Watershed**

**Total Score: 173**

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	15	9	15	9	<b>12</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	9	9	9	9	<b>9</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	<b>10</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	6	<b>9</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	5	3	3	<b>2.75</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>66.75</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	9	<b>13.5</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	9	15	<b>13.5</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	6	<b>9</b>
4. Measurable Results	6	10	6	6	<b>7</b>
5. Contingency Actions	6	10	6	6	<b>7</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	3	5	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>54.5</b>



## **Evaluation Summary Memorandum**

**Application ID: 021**

**Project Name: Hazard and Debris Removal from the Housatonic River**

**Consensus Score: 143**

To reach consensus on scores for each criterion, the Review Team either averaged the revised individual scores or decided by consensus on the group score for a criterion.

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2) (USFWS), Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Department (1), and Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (1)

### **Criteria Discussed:**

- Criterion B2 (Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team): One reviewer lowered score based on clarification that this was to be reviewed as a “Project Idea.”
- Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits): One reviewer changed score to reflect that solicitation of proposals for implementation of this “Project Idea” could result in higher implementation costs. The relevance of this criterion to a “Project Idea” is questionable.
- Criterion C4 (Leveraging of Additional Resources): One reviewer lowered score during discussion. The relevance of this criterion to a “Project Idea” is questionable.
- Criterion D3 (Community Involvement): One reviewer lowered score. General discussion was that this proposal could have included additional community involvement. This is reflected in the comments presented below, particularly with regard to stakeholder input.
- Criterion D5 (Complementary with Community Goals): One reviewer lowered score reflecting the lack of proposed discussion whether the proposed work would be complementary with community goals.
- Criterion D6 (Public Outreach). One reviewer lowered score reflecting the lack of discussion whether the proposed work would be complementary with community goals.
- Criterion D7 (Diverse Partnerships): One reviewer lowered score reflecting the lack of stakeholder input.

### **Additional Comments:**

- Proposal did not pass threshold criteria for completeness and was subsequently reviewed as a project idea.
- Question amongst reviewers whether to consider as a project idea or as a project. This question affected results of criteria such as B2 (Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team), which is not relevant to a project idea.

- Reviewers noted benefits of coarse woody debris (CWD) in river and questioned affects of removal.
- Reviewers noted that other project proposals involving recreational access (i.e., canoeing) on the river are somewhat contingent on clearing of pathways where debris blockage is across the entire channel of the river.
- Reviewers suggested that proposals to remove debris should include the following:
  - Stakeholder input prior to issuing a RFP based on this project idea. This could be performed during the second round of project solicitations.
  - Development of a management plan for debris removal, including an assessment of benefits associated with debris removal.
  - Trash management goals, including education outreach to limit deposition of trash into the river.
- Reviewers determined that this project should not have been funded as presented in the original proposal.

## Consensus Based Review Evaluation Summary

Application ID: 021

Project Name: Hazard and Debris Removal from the Housatonic River

Total Score: 143

<b>A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT</b>					
1. Natural Recovery Period	0	0	9	9	<b>9</b>
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	<b>15</b>
3. Sustainable Benefits	9	0	0	0	<b>2.25</b>
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	0	0	0	NA	<b>0</b>
5. Human Health and Safety	10	6	6	6	<b>6</b>
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	6	0	10	<b>6.5</b>
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	3	0	3	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=85)</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40.25</b>

<b>B. TECHNICAL MERIT</b>					
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	9	0	<b>9.75</b>
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	idea	9	0	0	<b>3</b>
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	6	10	0	6	<b>5.5</b>
4. Measurable Results	10	6	6	6	<b>7</b>
5. Contingency Actions	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	idea	0	3	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Subtotal (max=65)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26.25</b>





**APPENDIX E**  
**Public Comments on Draft RP/SEA**

PO Box 1625  
Lanesborough MA 01237  
July 4, 2007

Housatonic Draft RP/SEA  
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME 04086

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a member of Mass Audubon's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries' Advisory Committee, living in Lanesborough, MA. I am very pleased that the *Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River* has been selected for funding through the Round 1 Draft Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment (currently open for public comment). I understand that the final RP/SEA must be approved by the Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region.

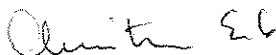
I am writing to respectfully request this approval. Mass Audubon has been committed to conservation for over a hundred years. Its educational role has helped adults and children to understand the natural world and take action to protect it. Excellent programs and outdoor experiences help to create a positive and personal connection to nature.

I have been personally involved with the Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries for over 16 years, ever since my son attended day camp there. The staff has excellent teaching skills, along with a love of nature, and they are especially skilled in engaging children. Both adults and children who attend programs often continue to learn about and protect their community's natural heritage. Therefore, I believe that the *HELP for the River* program will have a profound impact, and will successfully meet all the goals of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program.

Mass Audubon's work all over our state protects the future for our native plants and animals, and natural resources. I am sure that this program will improve environmental stewardship in the Berkshires. With this program in place, I look forward to a healthier Housatonic River ecosystem, as well as benefits to nearby communities. I will support this effort in any way I can.

I am very grateful that you proposed funding for this program, and will be excited to hear that this recommendation has been approved.

Sincerely,



Christine Erb



June 28, 2007

Housatonic Draft RP/SEA  
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME 04086

To Whom It May Concern:

As chair of Mass Audubon's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries' Advisory Committee, and a resident of Richmond, MA, I am delighted that the *Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River* has been selected for funding through the Round 1 Draft Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment that has just been released for public comment. It is my understanding that the final RP/SEA must be approved by the Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region and this letter is written to respectfully request this approval.

Mass Audubon's mission is to protect the nature of Massachusetts. For over 110 years, this organization has been an inspired and effective conservation leader - building bonds between people and the environment that encourage adults and children alike to value the natural world and take action to protect it. Much of their effectiveness comes through the programs and outdoor experiences they offer that create this positive, personal connection to nature.

I am very proud of the work that Mass Audubon performs throughout the Commonwealth. Undoubtedly, this program will improve environmental stewardship in the Berkshires and lead to a healthier Housatonic River ecosystem that will benefit our communities as well as protect the species that live in our rivers and watersheds. Thank you so much for proposing that this program be funded and I look forward to hearing that this recommendation has been approved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Harrison", written over a horizontal line.

Robert E Harrison, Architect, AIA

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Jennifer Glockner  
**Sent:** Friday, July 20, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** Housatonic Draft RP/SE

July 20, 2007

Housatonic Draft RP/SEA  
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME 04086

To Whom It May Concern:

As a member of Mass Audubon's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries' Advisory Committee, and a resident of Pittsfield, MA, I am delighted that the *Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River* has been selected for funding through the Round 1 Draft Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment that has just been released for public comment. It is my understanding that the final RP/SEA must be approved by the Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region and this letter is written to respectfully request this approval.

Mass Audubon's mission is to protect the nature of Massachusetts. For over 110 years, this organization has been an inspired and effective conservation leader—building bonds between people and the environment that encourage adults and children alike to value the natural world and take action to protect it. Much of their effectiveness comes through the programs and outdoor experiences they offer that create this positive, personal connection to nature.

My personal experience with the Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries over the years has shown me that the staff exemplifies this mission. Their skills and expertise, and passionate love of nature, ensure that everyone who encounters their programs, especially children, leave wanting to learn and do more to protect their community's natural heritage. Because of this, I believe that the *HELP for the River* program will have a profound impact, and will successfully meet all of the goals of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program. I am happy to support their efforts in any way I can.

The work that Mass Audubon performs throughout the Commonwealth ensures a vibrant future for wildlife and their habitats. Undoubtedly, this program will improve environmental stewardship in the Berkshires and lead to a healthier Housatonic River ecosystem that will benefit our communities as well as protect the species that live in our rivers and watersheds. Thank you so much for proposing that this program be funded and I look forward to hearing that this recommendation has been approved.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Glockner

7/23/2007

July 18, 2008

Housatonic Draft RP/SEA  
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME 04086

To Whom It May Concern:

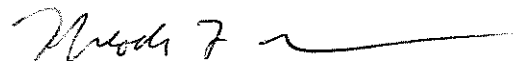
As a member of Mass Audubon's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries' Advisory Committee, and a resident of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, I am delighted that the *Housatonic Environmental Literacy Program (HELP) for the River* has been selected for funding through the Round 1 Draft Restoration Plan/Supplemental Environmental Assessment that has just been released for public comment. It is my understanding that the final RP/SEA must be approved by the Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region and this letter is written to respectfully request this approval.

Mass Audubon's mission is to protect the nature of Massachusetts. For over 110 years, this organization has been an inspired and effective conservation leader—building bonds between people and the environment that encourage adults and children alike to value the natural world and take action to protect it. Much of their effectiveness comes through the programs and outdoor experiences they offer that create this positive, personal connection to nature.

My personal experience with the Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries for over five years has shown me that the staff exemplifies this mission. Their skills and expertise, and passionate love of nature, ensure that everyone who encounters their programs, especially children, leave wanting to learn and do more to protect their community's natural heritage. Because of this, I believe that the *HELP for the River* program will have a profound impact, and will successfully meet all of the goals of the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program. I am happy to support their efforts in any way I can.

The work that Mass Audubon performs throughout the Commonwealth ensures a vibrant future for wildlife and their habitats. Undoubtedly, this program will improve environmental stewardship in the Berkshires and lead to a healthier Housatonic River ecosystem that will benefit our communities as well as protect the species that live in our rivers and watersheds. Thank you so much for proposing that this program be funded and I look forward to hearing that this recommendation has been approved.

Sincerely,

  
Theodore F. Glockner



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

# RIVERWAYS PROGRAM

*Building Partnerships, Protecting Rivers*

Joan C. Kimball, *Riverways Director*

July 20, 2007

Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees  
C/O Woodlot Associates, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, Maine  
04086-1737

Re: Revitalization of the West Branch of the Housatonic River (ID #7), Housatonic Draft RP/SEA

Dear Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees (Trustees) and Woodlot Associates,

The City of Pittsfield, Riverways Program in the Department of Fish and Game and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission thank you for your support of Proposal Application Number 7, Revitalization of the West Branch of the Housatonic River. This letter is to confirm that the partners involved in this project are strongly committed to moving the project forward in the time period outlined in the Draft Restoration Plan. According to the schedule in year one we plan on completing two important components of the project, approval of the monitoring program and completion of the sediment management plan.

To assist us in developing a feasible sediment management plan, Susan Steenstrup from Department of Environmental Protection's Springfield office has agreed to assist us in the development and review of this plan. Sue's experience with sediment remediation in the Housatonic watershed will be invaluable to the partnership.

We look forward to working with the Trustees throughout the dam removal process and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at

Sincerely,

Tim Purinton  
River Restoration Planner

CC: Jim McGrath, City of Pittsfield  
Tom Matuszko, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
Susan Steenstrup, Mass DEP

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Dennis Regan  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 19, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Cc:** Carl Nielsen  
**Subject:** Draft RP/SEA Comments

Dear NRD Trustees:

I would like to provide my perspective on a comment that was made at the July 9 NRD meeting regarding the Restoration Project No. 8 – Proposal to Provide Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts. It was stated that implementing new access sites was attempted a few years ago and it was not worth the effort to try it again.

I was part of that small committee of interested outdoor enthusiasts who requested a number of environmental projects to be implemented in the Housatonic watershed when Robert Duran was Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. The group that I was working directly with was the group requesting to have the state install additional river access sites on the Housatonic River.

We worked with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, in particular the Public Access Board (PAB) on this issue, and held many of our meetings in the HVA office. I still have the notes from those meetings on file. We used the Housatonic River Restoration (HRR) list of potential access sites as our basis for locating potential access locations.

Due to the specific requirements that the PAB had to operate within, they could not construct many of our listed sites since the land was not owned by a governmental body. (There also may have been other issues within the state government regarding Housatonic River access sites that we did not know about that also hindered this project.) But these requirements proved to be very restrictive and after about a year of work on the project, the PAB established one access site on Park Street in Stockbridge.

The new proposal to implement river access sites would use the experience and information learned from the previous access work to make this access project a success. Our ESS/HVA NRD proposal will once again use the HRR list of access sites as a starting point, but we will not eliminate sites that are on land trust or private non-profit land as long as we can obtain written authorization that the site is open to the public and in perpetuity. We have already been in communication with these landowners and are anxious to develop safe, user-friendly low impact access sites to the Housatonic River.

Sincerely,

Dennis Regan



July 19, 2007

Housatonic River NRD Fund  
c/o Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME 04086

Re: Restoration Project #8, Proposal to Provide Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts

Dear NRD Trustees:

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC0) supports the Housatonic River Valley's (HVA) and ESS Group's grant application to the Housatonic River NRD Fund to improve public access to the Housatonic River. This project will improve public access to the river for a variety of user groups, including the disabled, the elderly and young families. Despite good efforts by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, access to natural resources in Berkshire County continues to be severely limited for the disabled and the elderly. BRPC applauds the proponents' efforts to increase the accessibility of the Housatonic River to users of all abilities. Increasing the accessibility of the river to families with children will help to reacquaint our youth to the joys and plights of the Housatonic River, one of the region's greatest natural assets. BRPC supports the approach taken by the proponents to identify potential sites by utilizing and building upon the extensive technical and public outreach work that was conducted throughout the county by the Housatonic River Restoration project.

We hope that you look favorably upon the grant application being proposed by the HVA and ESS Group.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel W. Karns  
Executive Director

July 19, 2007

Housatonic Draft RP/SEA  
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME 04086

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to support the grant proposal submitted for funding by Housatonic Valley Association and ESS Group, Inc. Their project proposes to provide five new public access points to the Housatonic River in Berkshire County. I applaud efforts such as this to make this great resource more accessible to people of all ages and physical abilities. For more than two decades Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries has been taking people out on the Housatonic. Our trip leaders have helped school children, families, and adults connect with their river. For many it is their first experience on the Housatonic. Most are surprised to learn of the rich biological diversity and natural beauty that they encounter.

In my estimation, creating river stewards is one of the most important things that we can do for this resource. People who have a connection with the Housatonic will be far less likely to abuse it. Just as our school outreach program is targeted to developing a generation of river lovers, so too, this proposal, in my opinion, will help accomplish that goal with the general public. In other words, one cannot love or protect that which one does not know, and providing first class access points for boaters and anglers of all abilities will create vital points of contact between the resource and the public.

I urge you to fund this program in its entirety. Additional bona fide river access points are sorely needed. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

René Laubach  
Sanctuary Director  
Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries  
Mass Audubon

From: Tim Minkler  
Sent: Sunday, July 15, 2007  
To: Todd Chadwell  
Cc:  
Subject: Housatonic River

I am writing this E-Mail to offer my personal support for the Housatonic River Access Project.

I am 60 years old and have been paddling a canoe on the river along with a group of other

Canoe enthusiasts for the past 25 years. For the group of Berkshire paddlers who start to

train early in the year, the Housatonic River is our only access to open water in the early spring.

It is a tremendous resource for this area and other canoeist travel to the Berkshire from as far

as Keene NH, Albany N.Y. and Springfield Ma. to make use of this jewel in the Berkshires. It

is really a shame that more people don't take advantage of this resource.

Tim Minkler

R. Timothy Minkler, CPCU, LIA  
Minkler Insurance Agency, Inc.

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Mike Duffy  
**Sent:** Friday, July 20, 2007 3:24 PM  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Cc:** Dennis Regan  
**Subject:** Draft RP/SEA Comments

To whom it may concern.

I am writing to you to endorse the proposal "Restoration Project No. 8 – Proposal to Provide Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts" submitted by the Housatonic River Association and the ESS Group, Inc.

I run an Outdoor Activities Program at Canyon Ranch in Lenox MA. One of our programs is to run guided kayak and canoe tours on the Housatonic River from Deckers Launch and Woods Pond in Lenox. Many of our clients are from out of state and frequently comment on the beauty of the river and surroundings and return year after year to repeat this same activity.

This section of the river was not always this pleasant, in fact the first time we scouted it out as a possible trip to take our clients on we rejected it because of the level of trash and pollution in the river. That was approx 15 years ago when the river was seriously neglected by local industry and the local population.

Many factors, organizations and individuals have helped raise public awareness and assisted in the cleaning of the river. Having witnessed first hand the turn around on this section of the River I firmly believe that the access provided at Deckers Launch and Woods Pond has had a significant effect in helping raise this awareness to the condition of the river and prompted many to help in the clean up. In addition to the environmental revival of this section of river there has also been a positive economic impact, by way of a thriving boating, guiding and educational industry that was virtually non existent 15 years ago.

Any proposal that would promote this kind of success along the entire Housatonic River in Berkshire Co. could only have a positive effect on the environment and local economy and I personally endorse and highly recommend this proposal.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal, I hope my comments will help your decision making process. I would be happy to be available for anymore questions or comments.

Yours Sincerely,

**Michael Duffy**

Director | Outdoor Sports Department

Canyon Ranch in Lenox

## Todd Chadwell

---

**From:** Pat & Tom Baker  
**Sent:** Friday, July 20, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** BCAP Proposal #13

Dear Members of the Massachusetts SubCouncil,

Our Commission was delighted to learn that the SubCouncil has included the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP) proposal #13 in its list of projects to be funded. We would like to add our enthusiastic support for the BCAP proposal. BCAP has helped Commissions protect the natural resources in many ways and this funding will enable the program to continue to support our Commission in our volunteer efforts.

The technical assistance offered by BCAP in the way of application review and construction monitoring has resulted in a decrease in impacts to wetlands, floodplains and water resources throughout Berkshire County. Assistance with enforcement issues for violations has helped us get altered resource areas restored expeditiously. In addition, the BCAP proposal includes other activities such as providing training to conservation commissions.

The training that BCAP has provided has helped Commissions in Berkshire County with guidance in a number of areas. Workshops and assistance included reviewing and conditioning permits, hiring consultants for third party review, working with town DPW's to protect resources during routine road maintenance, and adopting local wetland bylaws to further the Commission's ability to protect our water resources.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue to utilize the valuable resources in the way of workshops and technical assistance that will be available to our Commission due to the SubCouncil's support of the BCAP proposal.

Sincerely,

Thomas Baker, Vice Chairman  
Dalton Conservation Commission

## Todd Chadwell

---

**From:** tuxc  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 22, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** Ma SubCouncil RE: Berkshire Conservation Agent Program

I write in support of the Berkshire Regional planning Commission proposal of a Berkshire Conservation Agent Program to do training and technical assistance with conservation Commissions. This is an invaluable program for communities as the complex body of environmental law continues to grow.

Best regards,

Teresa Carlo  
Pittsfield, MA

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Rose  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 21, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** proposal to fund BCAP from GE settlement

Dear Members of the Massachusetts SubCouncil,

I would like to add my support for the BCAP proposal to include the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP) proposal #13 in its list of projects to be funded.. BCAP has helped Commissions protect the natural resources in many ways and this funding will enable the program to continue to support and improve our Commission in our volunteer efforts.

The technical assistance offered by BCAP in the way of application review and construction monitoring has resulted in a decrease in impacts to wetlands, floodplains and water resources throughout Berkshire County. Assistance with enforcement issues for violations has helped us get altered resource areas restored expeditiously. In addition, the BCAP proposal includes other activities such as providing training to conservation commissions.

The training that BCAP has provided has helped Commissions in Berkshire County with guidance in a number of areas. Workshops and assistance included reviewing and conditioning permits, hiring consultants for third party review, working with town DPW's to protect resources during routine road maintenance, and adopting local wetland bylaws to further the Commission's ability to protect our water resources.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue to utilize the valuable resources in the way of workshops and technical assistance that will be available to our Commission due to the SubCouncil's support of the BCAP proposal.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Rose  
Dalton Conservation Commission

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Cyndie Wolfe and Jerry Berg  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 22, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** Proposal 13 - Housatonic River Restoration

I would like to express my support for Proposal 13. I worked as an environmental consultant in Pittsfield, Massachusetts and saw firsthand how critical it is to have well-trained and knowledgeable staff on the local conservation commissions. Massachusetts is fortunate to have dedicated volunteers working to protect the waters, lands, and biological resources of their communities. However, it can be very difficult for local conservation commissions to keep abreast of new information and regulations. Conservation biology and environmental science continues to evolve as we discover more about the intricacies of the world we live in. As a result, environmental laws are becoming increasingly complex.

Funding this proposal would provide a valuable source of technical assistance and support to the people dedicated to ensuring local communities grow in an environmentally responsible way. Having well-trained, knowledgeable commissioners not only ensures the conservation of valuable natural resources, it also saves time and money for the client. I believe Proposal 13 would provide multiple, long-term benefits for the Housatonic rivershed.

Cynthia Wolfe  
Wildlife Biologist  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1011 E. Tudor Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503



## Todd Chadwell

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 22, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Cc:** Tom Matuzsko; Ben Granskog; Terry Plantier Eucker  
**Subject:** Support of the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program

Dear Members of the Massachusetts SubCouncil,

Our Commission was greatly encouraged to learn that the SubCouncil has included the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP) proposal #13 in its list of projects to be funded. We would like to add our enthusiastic support for the BCAP proposal. BCAP has helped our Commission in many ways, to the extent that it is now an integral and absolutely vital part of our ability to serve this community effectively.

The technical assistance offered by BCAP has become essential to our Commission's ability to deal properly with the increasingly complex and far-reaching regulations involving wetlands and related water management issues. Expertise and experience now available to us through BCAP assistance is the only way that a small-town volunteer Commission such as ours can perform effectively.

We strongly encourage and support any program that will strengthen this vital service. For small towns such as Mount Washington, it is only with the assistance of BCAP that we are able to provide the full protection of wetlands resources envisioned by this vital legislation. As with so many other aspects of life today, complexity is rapidly outpacing the limited capabilities of all but full-time, costly professional wetlands and resource management professionals. Without BCAP, we would simply be unable to provide these essential and critically important environmental protections.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue to utilize the valuable resources that will be available to our Commission due to the SubCouncil's support of the BCAP proposal.

Sincerely,

Gerry Allan  
Member, Mount Washington Conservation Commission

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Jeffrey Waingrow  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 22, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** BCAP

Sir:

I might as well go straight to the point. The BCAP, and specifically Terry Plantier Eucker, have been a valuable resource for our commission. From time to time, we find that we need someone knowledgeable to guide us when we're unsure about an issue of law, or perhaps uncertain about how to proceed with a complicated application. Other times, we just want an experienced hand to confirm the wisdom of a course we've already chosen to follow. Terry has also held several training sessions that we found most useful. So this is really a quite wonderful program and it would be our commission's loss if it were discontinued.

Regards,  
Jeffrey Waingrow  
Sheffield Conservation Commission

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Stacy Parsons  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 22, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** BCAP Funding Proposal

Dear Members of the Massachusetts SubCouncil,

The Lanesborough Conservation Commission was thrilled to learn that the SubCouncil has included the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP) proposal #13 in its list of projects to be funded. We would like to add our enthusiastic support for the BCAP proposal. As an all volunteer Commission, we have relied on the support of the Berkshire Conservation Agent to assist us with the review of complex projects that have required technical skill beyond our level of training. BCAP has helped our Commission protect our community's natural resources and this funding will enable the program to continue to provide support to Commissioners who have volunteered their time and energy to protect the quality of our natural environment.

The technical assistance offered by the BCAP through the review of applications and construction monitoring has resulted in a decrease in impacts to wetlands, floodplains, and water resources throughout Berkshire County. In Lanesborough, the input of the Berkshire Conservation Agent has resulted in better project designs that avoid impacts to resource areas and stronger Orders of Conditions. In the event of need to issue an Enforcement Order, involvement of the Berkshire Conservation Agent has been essential for documenting the site and helping us to get the resource areas restored in a timely manner.

The BCAP has also been a key source of training for our Commissioners. The Berkshire Conservation Agent has been a wonderful resource and we have all increased our knowledge base through discussions during project reviews and site visits. The Berkshire Conservation Agent has also aided in our work with DEP and assisted in opening lines of communication that have resulted in more coordinated project reviews.

We are looking forward to continuing our relationship with the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program and encourage the SubCouncil 's support of the BCAP proposal.

Sincerely,  
Stacy Parsons Chapman  
Chair, Lanesborough Conservation Commission

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Don't get caught with egg on your face. Play Chicktionary!  
[http://club.live.com/chicktionary.aspx?icid=chick\\_hotmailtextlink2](http://club.live.com/chicktionary.aspx?icid=chick_hotmailtextlink2)

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Tom Matuszko  
**Sent:** Friday, July 20, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Cc:** 'Terry Plantier Eucker'; 'Nathaniel Karns'  
**Subject:** BRPC staff comments - Proposal 13  
**Attachments:** Proposal 13 -Draft Restoration plan comment letter-BRPC 7.20.07.pdf

Todd,

The attached letter contains the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's staff comments about the draft Restoration Plan and Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Massachusetts Housatonic River Watershed Restoration Program.

Please convey our thanks to the MA SubCouncil for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Please also acknowledge that you received this e-mail and will have these comments considered.

Thomas Matuszko  
Assistant Director  
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

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**BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201  
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 · FAX (413) 442-1523  
[www.berkshireplanning.org](http://www.berkshireplanning.org)

JOHN HICKEY, Chair  
SARAH HUDSON, Vice-Chair  
JAMES MULLEN, Clerk  
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNS, A.I.C.P.  
Executive Director

July 20, 2007

Housatonic Draft RP/SEA  
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME 04086  
Attn: Todd Chadwell

RE: Restoration Project 13: Berkshire Conservation Agent Program

Dear Mr. Chadwell and Members of the Massachusetts SubCouncil,

This letter re-iterates the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's (BRPC) strong commitment to the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP) as well as our strong commitment to Restoration Project 13, submitted to the MA SubCouncil. BRPC appreciates the confidence the MA SubCouncil has shown that this proposal will result in immediate environmental benefits in the Housatonic Watershed and thanks the SubCouncil members for your support.

In the several months since the initial proposal submission, BCAP has assisted numerous municipalities with implementation of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. In addition to maximizing environmental protection benefits under current state law, BCAP continues to serve the needs of our region's communities.

The draft Restoration Plan and Supplemental Environmental Assessment (page 44) states, "the MA SubCouncil reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of the agreement." BRPC is willing to work closely with the MA SubCouncil to negotiate the best terms for the final agreement.

The draft Restoration Plan and Supplemental Environmental Assessment (page 44) also states "In addition, for those municipalities partially located in the Housatonic watershed, the MA SubCouncil intends the NRD funding is only used to support BCAP technical assistance on project-specific permit application reviews for projects located in or provide benefits to the Housatonic watershed." The activities proposed in Project 13 involve working with municipalities on such items as education and training as well as working with municipalities to adopt local environmental protection measures, such as local wetland bylaws and the Berkshire Scenic Mountains Act. We believe these activities should be clearly allowed in those municipalities partially located in the Housatonic Watershed. We believe these activities would have clear environmental benefits. We also believe that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to geographically limit the implementation of these activities to only the area in the Housatonic Watershed. For instance, the development and adoption of a local wetland bylaw would have immediate water quality and other environmental benefits. It may, however, become politically impossible to get it adopted by a town if it only applied to one part of the town (i.e. the Housatonic Watershed,) and not uniformly across the entire town. Residents in the Housatonic Watershed may feel they are being unfairly "singled" out. We request that the MA SubCouncil re-consider this limitation as the proposal moves forward.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and thank you again for your support. I look forward to working closely with you as this proposal moves forward to final selection and funding.

Sincerely



Thomas Matuszko  
Assistant Director

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Bruce Garlow  
**Sent:** Friday, July 20, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** Berkshire Conservation Agent Program

To: Members of the Massachusetts Sub Council  
From: Bruce Garlow, Richmond Town Administrator/Conservation Administrator  
Date: July 20, 2007

The Richmond Conservation Commission is pleased to learn that the Sub Council has included the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP) on its list of projects to be funded. The Richmond Conservation Commission is pleased with this decision and wishes to add its support.

At this time the Richmond commission is utilizing the services of the agent to review a Notice of Intent and wildlife habitat evaluation for a bank reconstruction project at Richmond Pond. We chose to use the program for this project because BCAP represents a cost-effective way to get good professional assistance on projects that require the services of a trained wetlands expert. Even with a professional administrator, the Richmond commission, like so many other commissions in Western Massachusetts, does not have the technical expertise that is needed to fairly and effectively review the myriad of projects that even very small towns face. And, even though frequent updating of the state regulations that commissions administer is necessary to provide better protection for the environment, most volunteer commissioners have limited time to do what is necessary to stay current with these regulations. This program fills an important gap for these commissions and enables the commissions to confidently engage the trained consultants that are routinely used by project proponents, large and small.

The Richmond Conservation Commission strongly endorses continued funding for the BCAP program and would be happy to provide additional information or answer any questions you may have.

Thanks you.

## Todd Chadwell

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**From:** Deborah Garry  
**Sent:** Friday, July 20, 2007  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** grant for Berkshire Conservation Agent Program  
**Attachments:** Deborah Garry.vcf

Dear Members of the Massachusetts Subcouncil:

I understand that Berkshire Conservation Agent Program has been included in proposal #13 in your list of projects to be funded. I would like to add my support for the BCAP proposal. The Lee Conservation Commission had employed BCAP in the past and has found it extremely helpful.

Since the funding has come from the GE settlement, I can not think of a more appropriate use of this money than to fund an agency who helps local Commissions continue to protect and decrease impacts to wetlands, floodplains and other resource areas.

Sincerely,

Deborah Garry  
Lee Conservation Commission

Dear Members of the Massachusetts SubCouncil,

The New Ashford Conservation Commission (NACC) is delighted to learn that the SubCouncil has included the Berkshire Conservation Agent Program (BCAP) proposal #13 in its list of projects to be funded. We would like to add our enthusiastic support for the BCAP proposal. BCAP has helped the NACC protect the natural resources in New Ashford in many ways and this funding will enable the program to continue to support our NACC in our volunteer efforts.

The technical assistance offered by BCAP in the way of application review and construction monitoring has resulted in a decrease in impacts to wetlands, floodplains and water resources throughout Berkshire County. Assistance with enforcement issues for violations has helped us get altered resource areas restored expeditiously. In addition, the BCAP proposal includes other activities such as providing training to the NACC.

The training that BCAP has provided has helped the NACC with guidance in a number of areas. Workshops and assistance included reviewing and conditioning permits, hiring consultants for third party review, working with town DPW's to protect resources during routine road maintenance, and adopting local wetland bylaws to further the NACC's ability to protect our water resources.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue to utilize the valuable resources in the way of workshops and technical assistance that will be available to our NACC due to the SubCouncil's support of the BCAP proposal.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. McInerney  
New Ashford Conservation Commission



From: Hinsdale Public Library  
Sent: Tuesday, July 17, 2007  
To: Todd Chadwell  
Subject: Draft RP/SEA Comments

July 17, 2007

Hinsdale Public Library  
58 Maple Street  
Hinsdale, MA  
01235

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I offer my support for the grant proposal regarding the development of the Old Mill Trail submitted by the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA). They have been tireless in their efforts to draw attention to the natural beauty of the region. It is largely through the work of this fine organization that the Old Mill Trail has come into being. Thanks to the natural landscape and the lay of the river, Dennis Regan of the HVA has begun work on the trail in the middle of its proposed extent. The project in its entirety will require not one but two pedestrian bridges across the expanse of the Housatonic. Despite how costly that makes the endeavor, Dennis has never flagged in his enthusiasm.

Indeed, Dennis has been available to all of the organizations community wide. The Library had arranged to do a program on the Trail that brought people from town on over to see what was going on in their own backyards. Everything cooperated with us save the weather. When a few stalwart Patrons and I showed up expecting the much anticipated event to be cancelled, Dennis was there to greet us with umbrellas and a smile.

His dedication, qualified stewardship and attention to detail know no bounds. Not only has he rallied local support to the cause of the Old Mill Trail including hundreds of hours of volunteer labor and materials donations, he also has raised awareness of the entire area about the Upper Housatonic. He was a key contributor to the effort behind having our region designated as a National Heritage Area.

Please do fund this grant; you can't possibly choose someone more competent to administer your funds nor one more dedicated to his cause. We shall all benefit extraordinarily should you choose wisely to grant funding to this great organization.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions about my support. I can be reached via email at \_\_\_\_\_ or by phone at \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,  
BWS Johnson  
Director, Hinsdale Public Library  
Member, State Aid to Public Libraries Review Committee

**APPENDIX F**

**Minutes from July 9, 2007, Public Meeting**

**General Electric/Housatonic River Natural Resource Restoration  
Public Meeting Presenting Round 1 Draft Restoration Plan and  
Supplemental Environmental Assessment**

**July 9, 2007**

**Prepared for:** Massachusetts SubCouncil  
**Prepared by:** Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.  
**Location:** Lenox Town Hall, Lenox, MA  
**Time:** 5:30 pm – 6:55 pm

**Public meeting began at 5:30 pm.**

**I. Opening Statement by John Lortie, Woodlot Alternatives, Inc., and Introductions**

1. Introduction of voting members of Massachusetts SubCouncil (MA SubCouncil):
  - a. Dale Young, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (State Trustee representative).
  - b. Veronica Varela, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Federal Trustee representative).
2. Introduction of Consultant Team:  
John Lortie, Todd Chadwell, and Michael Chelminski, Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.
3. Minutes of prior meeting were not read.

**II. Slideshow Presentation Round 1 Draft Restoration Plan and Supplemental Environmental Assessment by Todd Chadwell, Woodlot Alternatives, Inc. (available at <http://www.ma-housatonicrestoration.org/library.htm>)**

1. Description of Draft RP/SEA.
2. Summary of Preferred Alternatives.
3. Summary of Non-Selected Project Applications.
4. Review of Round 1 timeline.
5. Description of proposed Round 2 timeline.
6. Announcement that Public Comment on the Draft RP/SEA would be received until July 22, 2007.

**III. Questions and Comments from Public**

1. Public input during Round 1 has been very important.
2. Public Question about whether elimination of certain public meetings during Round 2 process is feasible. Trustee Response: the only meeting Trustees are proposing to eliminate is on threshold criteria.
3. Public meetings have not been a problem, rather the time between the meetings has been.
4. Public meetings are important for transparency for proposals not passing. For people who didn't pass threshold criteria, the threshold criteria meeting would be important.
5. Threshold criteria results should be posted on the web first, followed by public meeting to allow for feedback.
6. The meeting covering evaluation criteria was valuable, particularly for people who wrote proposals to receive feedback.

7. There is an expectation that Round 2 would begin later than as proposed by Trustees, i.e. within six months to one year after Round 1.
8. The second RFR release should not stall disbursement of funds from Round 1. Trustee Response: the Fall release of Round 1 funds depends on EOEEA's schedule related to contracting associated with Round 1 projects.
9. Sufficient time may not be available for preparing quality applications if Round 2 RFR time period is shortened from 3 to 2 months as proposed.
10. A Second to previous comment – public does not want Round 2 proposals to suffer for lack of sufficient preparation time. Suggestion made to extend application period for more difficult proposals.
11. Public question about whether Round 2 will include different types of proposals. Trustee Response: there is no decision as yet, but Round 2 RFR may focus on two restoration categories, i.e. Wildlife and Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat, instead of all four.
12. There is concern about focusing on particular restoration categories and Trustees should focus on quality proposals, not categories.
13. Trustees should see this as an opportunity to implement large scale projects with significant impacts.
14. Public Question about whether the trustees liked the depth, quality, and quantity of the proposals received for Round 1 funding. Trustee Response: Trustees would have liked to have seen more Aquatic Biological Resources and Habitat, and Wildlife Resources and Habitat proposals
15. Public Comment regarding surprise that more proposals were not received.
16. Discussion regarding how Trustees could have solicited more proposals. Suggestion from public to invite local groups, such as the Berkshire/Taconic Foundation, to encourage others to submit proposals. Trustees' response to follow-up on increasing awareness and participation by posting grant request on Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) Website.
17. Amount of work involved in writing proposal was intimidating. Suggestion made to streamline applications and potentially create special categories for smaller projects. Trustee Response: discussion occurred around this in Round 1, but wasn't enacted and a Request for Ideas was made instead. Application process can change, but changing the process requires public review. All proposed changes would need to be reviewed. Trustees will consider a simplified application process.
18. Streamlining proposal evaluation process may not be possible. Trustee Response: a lot was learned about process during Round 1, particularly related to proposal review by multiple parties and coordinating issues. Therefore, Trustees should be able to shorten proposal evaluation process and maintain public involvement and transparency.
19. Trustees should hold a grant proposal writing workshop. In response, the Trustees asked whether small workshops or one-on-one assistance may be perceived as providing an unfair advantage to some projects.
20. The Trustees should keep their message consistent to avoid bias and use same written guidelines for all parties.

21. Different grant proposal writing workshops could be held for simple or complex applications. The Massachusetts Cultural Council conducts workshops to educate people, and may provide a good example. Also, the Berkshire Taconic Foundation could potentially assist in conducting grant writing workshops.
22. Conservation Commissions may not be able to complete the application process; some people may have been scared away by the complexity of the application process. Suggested that people be encouraged and contact successful applicants for help.
23. More people may apply in Round 2 because of numbers of applicants that were successful in Round 1.
24. There may be more people for Lake and Pond Associations applying in Round 2 due to increased awareness of funding availability.
25. Permanence of projects should be considered. Some projects funded in Round 1 (i.e., Environmental Education and Outreach) may not see results until 10 to 20 years out. Suggested that there should be a focus on land acquisition and habitat restoration/enhancement.
26. Work on wetlands presents hurdles due to permitting; therefore it would be beneficial to provide ideas of projects that Trustees are looking for. Response that a Project Idea could be used to handle projects with permitting requirements if the applicant is not prepared to undertake the permitting process alone.
27. Public was surprised there weren't more restoration and acquisition projects proposed and funded because land acquisition is considered valuable.
28. An individual expressed dismay that \$450,000 is being proposed for searching for improved access on the Housatonic River (Re Project No. 8 - Proposal to Provide Enhanced Public Access to the Housatonic River in Massachusetts). Further comment that this information already exists. Response: Trustees suggested that commenter submit more detail regarding development of existing information.
29. The Lee River Walk should be funded.
30. Public Question about whether proposals not selected for Round 1 funding would be eligible in Round 2. Trustee Response was "yes."
31. If non-selected proposals from Round 1 are eligible in Round 2, then extending the period between funding rounds makes sense for projects that feed off of one another.
32. Public Question regarding any news on PEDDA (Pittsfield Economic Development Authority) money. Trustee Response: no net revenue has been generated yet, but Trustees are following process.
33. Public Question if PEDDA money includes CT. Trustee Response was "not sure."
34. Public Question of when Round 3 will start. Response was not until Rest of River (ROR) cleanup is determined. According the schedule issued in the Restoration Project Selection Procedure, Round 3 may begin in approximately 2009.
35. Public Question of how funds will be distributed. Response that funds will be distributed through the EOEEA process for reimbursement. Reimbursement may be in quarterly installments or after certain milestones.
36. Public Question of when fund disbursement will be initiated. Response that funds will be disbursed upon contract execution.

37. Public Question about if a match occurs could match funds be utilized prior to 6-month period before project commencement. Trustee Response was “yes.”
38. Public Question whether the project match period will be stretched out. Trustee Response: match requirements need to be clarified by Trustees.
39. Public Question about submitting receipts for work performed as match. Trustee Response: match requirements need to be clarified by Trustees and information will be posted on the web site.
40. Public Question about Round 1 funding to start in October and if all projects will be funded at once. Trustee Response: this depends on the contracting complexity. Some contracts will take longer to negotiate. Anticipated that some projects will receive funding prior to others.
41. Public Comment to support Berkshire Conservation Agent Project (Project No. 13) and City of Pittsfield projects (Project Nos. 7 and 15).

*Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.*