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Baker-Polito Administration Awards Grants to 25 Ecological Restoration Projects and Partnerships

BOSTON — Seeking to strengthen community preparedness for large storms, improve climate-ready infrastructure, protect fisheries, wildlife, and river habitats, and restore floodplain habitat and flood storage capabilities, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) has awarded a total of nearly \$1 million in grants through three programs. DER awarded \$180,472 in state funds to support three partnerships through its new Regional Restoration Partnerships Program, \$708,500 in state grant funds to nine Priority Ecological Restoration Projects, and \$82,000 to a project that is part of DER's Culvert Replacement Training Initiative, which provides direct technical assistance and funding to municipalities to advance the replacement of select municipally owned culverts at strategic locations throughout Massachusetts to provide convenient, centralized learning locations for local road managers.

“As the impacts associated with climate change are felt throughout the Commonwealth, our Administration continues to support projects in communities across the state that increase Massachusetts' climate resilience,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “This ecological restoration work directly aligns with our goals, which will have long lasting benefits within the many regions of the state.”

“Ecological restoration not only helps communities respond to climate change, but also benefits the environment, wildlife and the people of Massachusetts, who can continue to enjoy and experience our outdoor spaces,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “We're proud to support this work and will continue to work with cities and towns in all corners of the Commonwealth.

DER's new Regional Restoration Partnerships Program seeks to build capacity of local and regional organizations to collaboratively advance restoration work, increasing the pace and scale of ecological restoration throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, DER Priority Ecological Restoration Projects aid local partners in removing aging dams, replacing deteriorated culverts, rejuvenating historic wetlands, and restoring floodplain habitat and flood storage. Furthermore, DER has also designated 12 new river and wetland restoration projects as Priority Projects through the Priority Projects Program. These new projects will deliver significant ecological, climate resiliency, and economic benefits to communities across the Commonwealth.

“The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to support these projects that will deliver significant ecological and environmental benefits to communities across the Commonwealth and support strong and healthy partnerships among municipalities, local watershed groups, and other environmental organizations,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides**. “Partnerships are the cornerstone of our restoration efforts, and these projects will advance critical local priorities such as habitat restoration, culvert replacement, and flood mitigation through the climate-ready infrastructure.”

“The benefits of ecological restoration are unquestionable and it has been a privilege to watch the state’s restoration work grow and expand,” **said Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ronald Amidon.** “I look forward to seeing all that’s to come from these projects and partnerships.”

DER’s new Regional Restoration Partnerships Program helps non-profit organizations and Regional Planning Agencies increase their capacity to lead and support ecological restoration within their regions through direct financial and technical assistance. Pairing partner strengths with the state’s investments will empower networks of partners to restore rivers and wetlands and help people and nature adapt to climate change. The successful partnerships are supported for at least three years through the program as they plan and carry out ecological restoration actions. The awards announced today will support the first year of this work. The following three Partnerships were awarded grants through the Regional Restoration Partnerships Program via DER’s Capital Budget.

Through the Priority Projects Program, DER selects projects that advance the mission to restore and protect the Commonwealth’s rivers, wetlands, and watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment. Projects are selected through a competitive process for Priority Project designation. Today, the Administration announces the designation of 12 projects to Priority Project status, which will make them eligible to receive technical assistance from DER staff, technical services by qualified contractors, and/or direct funding. These projects will restore retired cranberry bogs and wetlands, remove dams, and replace culverts. Of the 12 new projects, three will receive “provisional” status in order to determine their long-term readiness for implementation. Including these new designations, more than 65 active ecological restoration projects throughout the state are currently designated as Priority Projects. To review a list of projects, please visit the Department of Fish & Game’s [DER Priority Projects Map webpage](#). The newly designated Priority Projects include:

Bayview Cranberry Bog Restoration, Yarmouth; Partner: Cape Cod Conservation District

Church Manufacturing Co. Dam Removal/Chicopee Brook Restoration, Monson; Partner: private dam owner

Frost Fish Creek Restoration, Chatham; Partner: Chatham Conservation Foundation; This project will enhance ecosystem services and benefits within the Frost Fish Creek estuary by restoring natural tidal exchange and stream flow to extensive estuarine habitats and freshwater wetlands.

Larkin Road Dam Removal/Parker River Restoration, Newbury; Partner: Town of Newbury

Long Pond Brook Restoration and Dam Removals, Great Barrington; Partner: Bard College at Simon’s Rock

Ryder’s Cove Restoration, Chatham; Partner: Massachusetts Department of Transportation; This project will restore salt marsh, increase tidal flow, and restore significant

estuarine habitat in the Frost Fish Creek watershed for the natural reproduction and benefit of several public trust species including river herring, American shad, striped bass, and rainbow smelt.

Talbot Mills Dam Removal/Concord River Restoration, Billerica; Partner: OARS

Upper Bass River Restoration, Yarmouth/Dennis; Partner: Friends of Bass River

Whitney Pond Dam Removal, Ashburnham; Partner: Town of Ashburnham

DER's recommended "Provisional" Priority Projects include:

- **Malden Brook Restoration/Edwards Pond Dam Removal**, West Boylston, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- **Marstons Mills Cranberry Bog Restoration**, Marstons Mills, Barnstable, in partnership with Barnstable Clean Water Coalition
- **Old Swamp River Dam Removal**, Weymouth, in partnership with the Town of Weymouth

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