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**FISH AND GAME**

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## **Healey-Driscoll Administration Awards Over \$800K to Support Dam Removal & Wetland Restoration Projects**

*Projects will restore nature and protect communities from extreme weather*



*The first phase of construction for the Abbey Brook Restoration and Revitalization project in Chicopee was completed in 2024. (Credit: DER)*

**BOSTON**—The Healey-Driscoll Administration today announced the award of \$839,288 in grants to support priority restoration projects in eight communities. These projects, funded by the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), focus on removing barriers in rivers and restoring

coastal wetlands. The projects will strengthen resilience to climate change, improve water quality, reduce flood risks, and restore wildlife habitat.

“Ecological restoration projects like these are important for preparing our communities for extreme weather, protecting our neighborhoods, and ensuring that wildlife has the habitats they need to survive,” said **Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper**. “Investing in these projects benefits us now and helps create a healthier environment for the future.”

“With every river, wetland, and stream restored, we have profound benefits for nature and people in Massachusetts,” said **DFG Commissioner Tom O’Shea**. “Now is the time for action—we are proud to support tangible solutions to protect our state’s irreplaceable biodiversity and help communities prepare for climate change. These critical projects will restore critical habitat for fish and wildlife and make our communities safer, healthier, and more beautiful.”

All eight projects are being awarded grants from the DER’s Priority Projects Program, which supports wetland and river restoration projects that benefit the state’s environment and economy. Once designated as a DER Priority Project, projects are eligible to apply for funding opportunities and receive technical support and services from DER. The projects awarded funding today were chosen through a competitive process and include important restoration work. This work involves removing aging and unsafe dams, restoring freshwater wetlands that used to be cranberry farmlands, replacing and removing undersized and degrading culverts, and restoring coastal habitats. These awards are in addition to over \$2 million granted to 17 projects in March, bringing the total of DER awarded funds for restoration Priority Projects in 2025 to over \$2.8 million.

“DER is proud to support river and wetland restoration throughout the Commonwealth and work closely with our partners on these efforts,” said **DER Director Beth Lambert**. “Together, we increase climate resilience, reconnect important wildlife passage corridors, enhance critical habitat, and improve water quality and public safety.”

DER is awarding funding to the following eight Priority Projects:

- **Abbey Brook Restoration & Revitalization; City of Chicopee: \$45,000**  
This award will provide additional support for the second phase of the Abbey Brook Restoration and Revitalization Project in Chicopee, which will ultimately remove two dams, replace an undersized culvert, and “daylight” a 250-foot stretch of river that currently runs underground. This work will restore natural river processes, enhance water quality and stormwater management, and improve stream connectivity.
- **Becker Pond Dam Removal; Town of Mount Washington: \$86,000**  
This award will support construction for the Becker Pond Dam Removal Project in Mount Washington, which will remove an obsolete dam on an important coldwater tributary of Schenob Brook.
- **Frost Fish Creek Restoration; Town of Chatham: \$5,288**  
This award will support planning and development for the Frost Fish Creek Restoration Project in Chatham, which will restore natural tidal exchange and stream flow to upstream salt marsh and an impounded former cranberry bog. This work will improve water quality and restore the health of the wetland within Frost Fish Creek, which is a part of the Pleasant Bay Area of Critical Concern.
- **Kinne Brook Restoration; Town of Chester: \$240,000**  
This award supports construction for the Kinne Brook Restoration Project in Chester, which will replace an undersized culvert on Kinne Brook Road and remove a collapsed culvert in the Hiram H. Fox Wildlife Management Area, ultimately eliminating two barriers to fish and wildlife passage on a Coldwater Fishery Resource.
- **Old Swamp River Dam Removal; Town of Weymouth: \$180,000**

This award will support construction for the Old Swamp River Dam Removal Project in Weymouth, which will restore fish passage on a Coldwater Fishery Resource that historically supported a wild population of brook trout and currently provides critical spawning habitat for river herring.

- **Sesuit Creek Restoration; Town of Dennis: \$210,000**

This award will support design and permitting, implementation, and post-planting assessment for the Sesuit Creek Restoration Project in Dennis. This project is restoring natural salt marsh vegetation and monitoring the restoration process of 57 acres of salt marsh after two severely undersized culverts were replaced in 2008 to restore tidal flow.

- **Upper Bass River Restoration; Town of Yarmouth: \$62,000**

This award will support survey and design work for the Upper Bass River Restoration Project in Yarmouth as well as final design for a portion of the site. This project will restore 57 acres of former cranberry bogs and replace two undersized road-stream crossings to improve water quality, restore wetland and stream processes, improve fish passage, and increase coastal resilience.

- **Windswept Cranberry Bog Wetland Restoration; Town of Nantucket: \$11,000**

This award will support post-construction monitoring for the Windswept Cranberry Bog Wetland Restoration Project in Nantucket, which is currently finishing construction and will restore 40 acres of wetlands on retired cranberry farmland and reconnect the wetland and trail system to a larger assemblage of 231 acres of open space.

"This latest round of funding from the Division of Ecological Restoration is another strong investment in the environmental and economic future of the Cape and Islands. Just take one look at the before-and-after pics from recent restoration projects and you see why this is so important," said **State Senator Julian Cyr (D-Truro)**. "In total, we're talking about hundreds of acres of revitalization between Nantucket, Yarmouth, Dennis, and Chatham. Thank you to Governor Healey and Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Tom O'Shea for including us in the Priority Projects Program."

"I am optimistic that this grant will be crucial in the continuance of the Old Swamp River dam removal, not just in the sense that it will be what is best for the maintenance and safeguarding of the environment, but because of the cultural significance that the herring run has within the Town of Weymouth. For years, many have gathered from across the South Shore to watch the herring run and keep the area well preserved for the enjoyment of all. With the removal of the dam that obstructs the river herring from spawning, among other things, this is an investment not just into wildlife conservation, but community preservation" said **State Senator Patrick M. O'Connor (R-Weymouth)**. "These funds will aid in ensuring that the Old Swamp River will be a place for community gratification and wildlife habitation and growth for years to come."

"Thank you to the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the Department of Fish & Game Division of Ecological Restoration for providing these resources to help restore the Frost Fish Creek wetlands. The continued support for this restoration will without a doubt be very helpful through every step of this complicated but necessary process," said **State Representative Hadley Luddy (D-Orleans)**.

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