PUBLIC NOTICE

US Army Corps of Engineers ®
New England District
696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Comment Period Begins: November 3, 2020
Comment Period Ends: December 3, 2020
File Number: NAE-2007-02926
In Reply Refer To: Ruthann Brien
Phone: (978) 318-8677
E-mail: Ruthann.a.brien@usace.army.mil

SUBJECT: This notice announces a request to modify the Commonwealth of Massachusetts In-lieu Fee ("ILF") Program Instrument for the addition of six individual projects.

ILF PROGRAM SPONSOR: Department of Fish and Game
251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

BACKGROUND: The Department of Fish and Game is the sponsor of the Massachusetts ILF Program which serves as an alternative form of compensatory mitigation for aquatic resource impacts. The Massachusetts ILF program is authorized by the New England District, Army Corps of Engineers (the "Corps"). A copy of the signed ILF agreement entitled "Commonwealth of Massachusetts Final In-Lieu Fee Program Instrument" dated May 23, 2014, includes details about the ILF Program goals and objectives in general and can be found at the following link: https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Portals/74/docs/regulatory/Mitigation/MA/MAILFInstrument.pdf

Six projects have been submitted as proposed additions to the ILF Instrument pursuant to 33 CFR 332, Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources (Federal Register: April 10, 2008, effective June 9, 2008). Pursuant to 33 CFR 332.8 (d), the District Engineer will provide public notice of the proposed addition of ILF program mitigation sites. As such, we are issuing a public notice to solicit comments for the instrument modification due to the proposed addition of ILF mitigation sites.

The Massachusetts ILF Program accrued funds from Army Corps of Engineers Department of the Army permitted impacts throughout the State of Massachusetts. The funds were made available through a competitive grant process for the preservation, restoration and enhancement of wetland and watercourse resources and associated upland buffers in the State of Massachusetts. The District Engineer has received six proposed projects from various applicants who have applied for 2020 funding under the ILF Program.

PURPOSE: These six proposed projects would provide compensatory wetland and stream mitigation for permitted impacts in the following service areas: Coastal South Service Area, Coastal Central Service Area, Quabbin-Worcester Service Area, and the Connecticut River Service Area.

GENERAL INFORMATION: An ILF program involves the restoration, establishment, re-establishment, enhancement, rehabilitation and/or preservation of aquatic resources through funds

paid to a governmental or non-profit natural resources management entity to satisfy compensatory mitigation requirements for Department of the Army permits. Similar to a mitigation bank, an ILF program sells compensatory mitigation credits to permittees whose obligation to provide compensatory mitigation is then transferred to the ILF program sponsor. The operation and use of an ILF program are governed by an ILF program instrument. A group of federal and state regulatory and resource agency representatives known as the Interagency Review Team (IRT) oversees the establishment and management of the program. The IRT is chaired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The primary role of the IRT is to facilitate the establishment of the ILF program through the development of an ILF Instrument. The IRT also reviews ILF mitigation proposals and provides comments to the Corps. The approval of the use of the ILF program for specific projects is the decision of the Corps pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and/or Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Corps provides no guarantee that any particular individual or general permit proposing to use the ILF program for compensation mitigation will be authorized.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The sponsors have submitted maps showing the locations of the projects with their respective prospectuses. Additionally, the draft mitigation plans are available to be reviewed upon request.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267), requires all federal agencies to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Essential Fish Habitat describes waters and substrate necessary for fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity.

The District Engineer has made a preliminary determination that the site-specific adverse effect will not be substantial. Further consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding EFH recommendations will be conducted as necessary and will be concluded prior to the final decision.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT: Based on his initial review, the District Engineer has determined that none of the six projects may affect properties in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places. Additional review and consultation to fulfil requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, will be ongoing as part of the proposal review process and the permit review process for those requiring Corps authorization.

ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSULTATION: The New England District, Army Corps of Engineers, has reviewed the list of species protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, that might occur at the project sites. It is our preliminary determination that the proposed projects are situated or will be operated/used in such a manner that they are not likely to adversely affect any federally listed endangered or threatened species or their designated critical habitat. By this Public Notice, we are requesting that the appropriate federal agency concur with our determination.

EVALUATION: After the end of the comment period, the District engineer will review all comments received and make an initial determination as to the potential of the proposed projects to provide compensatory mitigation for activities authorized by DA permits. That determination will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposals, must be balanced against their

reasonably foreseeable detriments. Factors relevant to the proposals will be considered including conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; American Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the proposed activities. All comments received will be considered by the Corps during the formulation of the initial determination of potential for the proposed activities.

COMMENTS: In order to properly evaluate the proposal, we are seeking public comment. Anyone wishing to comment is encouraged to do so. Comments should be submitted in writing by the above date. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Ruthann Brien at (978) 318-8677, (800) 343-4789 or (800) 362-4367, if calling from within Massachusetts.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the proposed projects. Requests for a public hearing shall specifically state the reasons for holding a public hearing. The Corps holds public hearings for the purpose of obtaining public comments when that is the best means for understanding a wide variety of concerns from a diverse segment of the public.

The initial determinations made herein will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice. All comments will be considered a matter of public record.

THIS NOTICE IS <u>NOT</u> AN AUTHORIZATION TO DO ANY WORK.

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Robert DeSista
Deputy Chief, Regulatory Division

If you would prefer not to continue receiving Public Notices by email, please contact Ms. Tina Chaisson at (978) 318-8058 or e-mail her at bettina.m.chaisson@usace.army.mil. You may also check here ( ) and return this portion of the Public Notice to: Bettina Chaisson, Regulatory Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____

Mashpee Cranberry Bog Restoration Project
Coastal South Service Area

(i) The objectives of the proposed ILF project.

The Town of Mashpee is seeking funds to restore a 6.5 acre cranberry bog to a self-sustaining freshwater wetland. Expected benefits of the project include improved wildlife habitat and water quality improvements in Santuit Pond and Shoestring/Popponesset Bay.

(ii) How the ILF project will be established and operated.

The Town will hire a consulting firm to complete the project, including permitting, planning, design, and construction. The restoration is expected to include assessment of the site to determine layers of sand and peat, regrading and removal of sand and structures as needed to develop self-sustaining wetland hydrology, plugging of ditches, roughening of bog surfaces to expose peat and create topographical features, and reemergence of the native seed bank or potential seeding of a wetland emergent mix.

(iii) The proposed ILF service area (see Attachment A, Map of MA ILF Program+ Service Areas).

Coastal South Service Area (Cape Cod)

(iv) The general need for and technical feasibility of the proposed ILF project.

The site is currently a farmed 6.5 acre cranberry bog with degraded aquatic resources as a result of past agricultural activities. Successful restoration of other cranberry bog sites in MA has been shown to be technically feasible. The proposed project would use the funds provided by the ILF Program to hire an experienced consulting firm to manage all aspects of the restoration project.

(v) The proposed ownership arrangements and long-term management strategy for the in-lieu fee project site(s).

The Town of Mashpee Conservation Commission owns the parcel, and the Native Land Conservancy holds the Conservation Restriction on the site. Long-term management will be addressed in the Mitigation Plan. The site will be open to the public and will be monitored regularly by Conservation Department staff. Educational signage will be installed.

(vi) The qualifications of the Project Sponsor and any contractor/third-party to successfully complete the type of mitigation project proposed, including information describing any past such activities by the Project Sponsor and contractor/third-party.

The project sponsor is the Town of Mashpee Conservation Department. The contractor hired for the project will have demonstrated experience with successful cranberry bog restoration.

ILF Proposals Evaluation 2020

Map of ILF 2020 pre-proposal sites

NHESP, MassGIS | Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management | Contact Person: Marc Carullo | Email: marc.carullo@mass.gov | Contact Address: 251 Causeway Street, Suite 800, Boston, MA 02114-2138 | Created in partnership with: Woods Hole Group (Bourne, MA), the Marine Biological Laboratory (Woods Hole, MA), Massachusetts Dept. of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration (Boston, MA), and the Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection (Boston, MA); with funding support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office for Coastal Management. | USDA FSA, Maxar

Plymouth Cranberry Bog
Coastal-Central Service Area

(i) The objectives of the proposed ILF project.

The objective of the proposed project is to permanently protect 228+/- acres of ecologically significant land in Plymouth, Massachusetts that is under threat of development. Preservation of the 228-acre property will protect on-site aquatic resource and upland buffers from development impacts and allow for the restoration of inactive cranberry bogs at a later date when funds become available. An additional benefit of this preservation project is that it will also enhance protection of resources on an adjacent 275-acre parcel that is the subject of a concurrent non-ILF conservation and restoration initiative.

(ii) How the ILF project will be established and operated.

ILF funds would be used toward the acquisition of a Conservation Restriction (CR) held by Mass Audubon on the 228+/- acre site. The Town of Plymouth will be purchasing the fee interest.

(iii) The proposed ILF service area.

The project is located in the Coastal-Central Service Area.

(iv) The general need for and technical feasibility of the proposed ILF project.

The need for this project is to conserve ecologically sensitive habitat at high risk of development in a coastal section of one of the fastest growing communities in Massachusetts. The likelihood of achieving the goals of this project is high. Discussions between the Project Sponsor and the landowner are well underway, and the owner desires to sell the land for conservation. The 228-acre ILF project site has significant conservation values. The majority of the land is ranked above average on The Nature Conservancy's Resilient Land Map, is mapped as Biomap2 Critical Natural Landscape by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and is within two Zone II water supply protection areas. On-site wetlands include inactive cranberry bogs. Preservation of the land will protect onsite wetland and upland areas, and allow for future cranberry bog restoration as additional funds become available (the currently proposed ILF project is preservation-only). The project also supports protection of endangered species habitat two state-listed species have been identified near the property.

Preservation of this 228-acre site will contribute to a contiguous corridor of thousands of acres of protected habitat stretching from the Pine Hills and Tidmarsh Wildlife Sanctuary in the north to Route 3 in the south, and functionally continuing to Myles Standish State Forest, Massasoit National Wildlife Refuge, and various parcels protected by MA Department of Fish and Game. These include, but are not limited to: Halfway Pond Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Maple Springs WMA, and Camp Cachalot Wildlife Conservation Easement. The proposed ILF project supports a larger conservation initiative that will facilitate wildlife movement at a landscape scale, which is important for adaptation in this time of climate change and for enhancing the region's resilience.

(v) The proposed ownership arrangements and long-term management strategy for the in-lieu fee project site(s)

Mass Audubon will hold and steward a permanent CR on the property, and the Town of Plymouth will own the fee interest. The Town will manage the land for passive recreation. Mass Audubon, in keeping with its standard practices, will annually monitor the site to ensure that the terms of the CR are being upheld in perpetuity.

Provisions in the CR would specifically prevent the conversion of the forest or wetlands on the property to more impactful uses such as ballfields or parking lots.

If funding is available, the wetland resources, including the cranberry bogs, would be restored.

(vi) The qualifications of the Project Sponsor and any contractor/third-party to successfully complete the type of mitigation project proposed, including information describing any past such activities by the Project Sponsor and contractor/third-party.

Mass Audubon has extensive experience working with public and private conservation partners on projects such as the one described in this proposal. Of most relevance to this project is the creation of Tidmarsh Wildlife Sanctuary in 2017. In a joint effort, the Town of Plymouth, Mass Audubon, and DER permanently protected the nearly 600-acre Tidmarsh Farm in Plymouth. That land preservation project included an extensive restoration of the cranberry bogs. At the time, it was the largest freshwater restoration in the northeastern United States. This project is similar in its objectives and is being pursued by the same conservation partners, providing the benefit of their shared experience at nearby Tidmarsh.

Stearns Cranberry Farm Context

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

This map is for planning puroses only and is not a survey.

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By Nick Rossi
7/30/2020

Oyster Reef Installation to Restore Salt Marsh, Nantucket, Massachusetts
Coastal South Service Area

(i) The objectives of the proposed ILF project.

The goal of this project is to construct an intertidal oyster reef designed to buffer wave action and restore the capacity of the adjacent, ecologically important salt marsh to maintain its structure and function. The Medouie Creek salt marsh, located in Polpis Harbour on Nantucket, MA, has experienced extensive dieback due to a purple marsh crab population explosion, leaving the salt marsh sediments susceptible to erosion. While the Nantucket Conservation Foundation (NCF) is concurrently conducting active crab management and native grass planting to stabilize the marsh, that reclamation process can be slow. Regrowth of smooth cordgrass was observed in marshes on the mainland 15 years after initial dieback. As sea level rise increases and extreme storms become more frequent, waiting 15 years for natural recovery to begin would result in lost habitat, carbon storage, and other functions of the salt marsh and allow significant sedimentation to occur in the neighbouring near-shore area, reducing its suitability to support submerged aquatic vegetation, fish, and other aquatic life.

(ii) How the ILF project will be established and operated.

The project will be established and operated by the NCF's Science and Stewardship Department. NCF will work with a professional engineer and obtain input from the Town of Nantucket Natural Resources Department (TON NRD) to develop and permit a design plan for the proposed oyster reef. NCF will use ILF funds to procure prefabricated oyster castles from an experienced manufacturer and will be responsible for the installation and seeding of the structures in accordance with the approved design. NCF will partner with TON NRD's Shellfish Hatchery to cultivate oyster spat to seed the proposed reef. NCF will conduct project monitoring with assistance from TON NRD.

(iii) The proposed ILF service area.

Coastal South Service Area

(iv) The general need for and technical feasibility of the proposed ILF project.

The proposed oyster reef installation is expected to provide multiple ecological benefits. Not only would it buffer salt marsh from erosive wave action and increase coastal resiliency, it would also have a secondary benefit of improving water quality in Polpis Harbour, which has the most degraded water quality on Nantucket. As described under item (i), the Medouie Creek salt marsh has experienced extensive dieback in the last seven years due to increased grazing by the purple marsh crab, leaving marsh sediments exposed and susceptible to erosion. NCF is working a concurrent project to reduce crab populations and plant stabilizing grasses within the marsh. The habitat enhancement and potential water quality improvements provided by the reef may also attract natural predators of the purple marsh crab to the project area and facilitate the restoration of a stable food web. Monitoring data collected before and after the reef installation to document the effect of reef placement on the marsh would also have utility for coastal managers in this region beyond their use for this proposed project site as few applications of this approach have been documented in this geographic area.

From a technical standpoint, this project is within the scope of NCF's ability to implement and conduct long-term monitoring. NCF has a full-time year-round science staff with experience in long-term ecological monitoring in a variety of habitats including wetlands and intertidal zones. NCF also has a maintenance department with equipment available to assist with monitoring and adaptive management of the oyster reef. NCF is partnering on project design with the TON NRD, which has implemented one successful oyster reef restoration and is in the process of implementing a second project.

(v) The proposed ownership arrangements and long-term management strategy for the in- lieu fee project site(s).

The salt marsh portion of the project (Medouie Creek, 11.1 acres) is owned and permanently protected by the NCF. The intertidal area proposed for the oyster reef restoration is property of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and subject to oversight from the Town of Nantucket Select Board, which, in consultation with the Nantucket Harbormaster and the Nantucket Shellfish Association has been extremely supportive of oyster reef restoration projects within the waters of Nantucket. We anticipate petitioning the Select Board to close the reef to any shellfishing. Under the Town of Nantucket's Shellfishing Policy and Regulations Section 2.8 Habitat Sensitive Areas: "No commercial or recreational shellfishing may occur in areas deemed 'habitat sensitive' and have a posted closure by the Board of Selectmen or its designee" (adopted March 2015). This regulation will allow the Town to close the reef for three years. Currently, the MA Department of Marine Fisheries (DMF) allows shellfish closures in approved areas for a period no longer than three years without petitioning for an extension. We plan to further petition the DMF for closures of at least 5 years post- restoration with further closures dependent on the results of oyster population surveys at the site.

NCF commits to long-term management of the established oyster reef and the adjacent salt marsh. Management and monitoring will seek to maintain both ecological integrity of the habitats as well as providing coastal resilience for adjacent uplands. Monitoring will give NCF the ability to adaptively manage the project in consultation with ILF Program staff as necessary.

(vi) The qualifications of the Project Sponsor and any contractor/third-party to successfully complete the type of mitigation project proposed, including information describing any past such activities by the Project Sponsor and contractor/third-party.

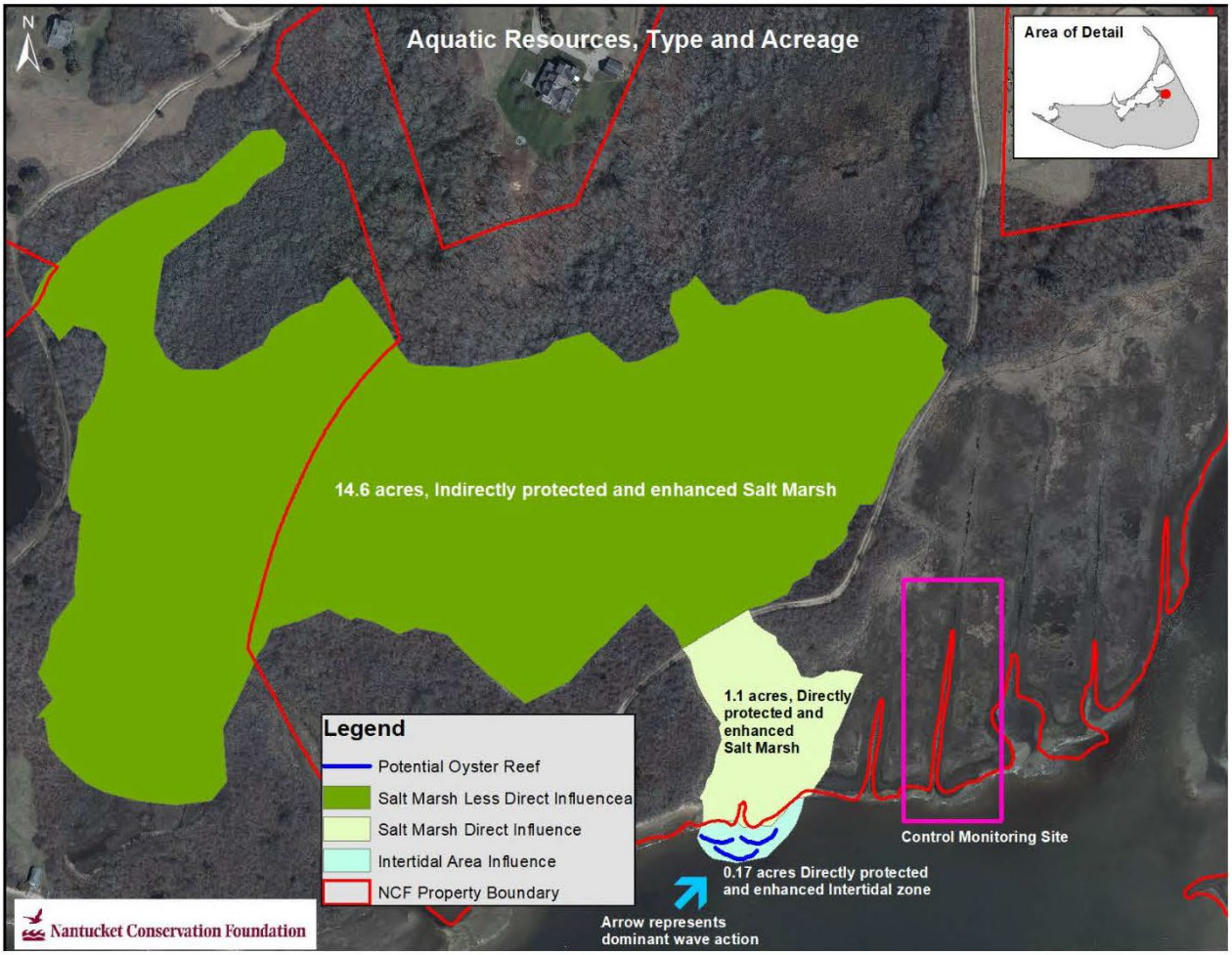
The NCF employs a full-time science staff including staff with extensive wetland ecology and restoration experience.

In 2008, NCF completed permitting and construction of a large-scale salt marsh restoration project at Medouie Creek which included culvert placement and road restructuring. As project manager for this past project, NCF gained experience designing, permitting, and overseeing construction of this wetland restoration project as well as performing long term monitoring. NCF just published the results of 10 years of research following this large restoration project: https://www.nantucketconservation.org/science-stewardship/research-projects/marsh-restoration- research/

As a project partner, the TON RD is advising on project design and monitoring and assisting with field work. TON NRD has already conducted one oyster reef restoration project on Nantucket and is beginning installation of a second. Their expertise on oyster

ecology and reef construction is extensive and key to this project: https://www.nantucket-ma.gov/1427/Oyster-Restoration

Map B: Project area, control site and aquatic resources



Barre Land Preservation
Quabbin Worcester

(i) The objectives of the proposed ILF project.

To protect from development a 40-acre parcel of land, containing wetlands and upland buffer, that drains to adjacent Ware River Watershed Protection Area and the Burnshirt River. The adjacent Ware River Watershed Protection Area, owned and managed by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP), is part of the Quabbin/Wachusett system for supplying drinking water to the Metro-Boston area.

(ii) How the ILF project will be established and operated.

Protection of the 40-acre parcel will be achieved by Mount Grace Land Trust purchasing the parcel from its current private landowner, holding it as a Conservation Area and donating a Conservation Restriction (CR) on the property to East Quabbin Land Trust for added protection. The property will be managed by Mount Grace Land Trust and monitored by East Quabbin Land Trust. There is future potential for a sustainable hiking trail loop in the uplands of the parcel that then connects to the Ware River Rail Trail.

(iii) The proposed ILF service area.

Quabbin-Worcester

(iv) The general need for and technical feasibility of the proposed ILF project.

The property contains important aquatic resources and is under threat of development as further described below. With the ILF funds requested, acquisition and permanent protection is feasible, as the Project Sponsor has negotiated terms with the landowner and both project sponsor and conservation partner have the track record and expertise to successfully implement and manage over the long-term.

The 40-acre undeveloped parcel plays a significant role in water filtration and flow attenuation. The land contains 3,916 linear feet of groundwater-fed intermittent streams that crisscross the property and half an acre of deciduous forested swamp as well as large areas of saturated ground and associated wetland plant species. Water flows over a property-wide down-gradient and is filtered by the premises before reaching the Burnshirt River, whose Steep Gutter Branch is a coldwater stream, and then the Ware River, and ultimately the Quabbin.

The property plays an important role in managing and improving water quality and is entirely covered by Mass DEP Water Supply Protection Zone C which supports the Zone A areas surrounding nearby streams which contribute to the Quabbin water supply. The south-east of the Gionet parcel is Biomap 2 Critical Natural Landscape and Core Habitat which blankets the abutting DWSP Ware River Watershed conservation land. The property also contains one certified vernal pool and other potential vernal pools were observed during a site visit.

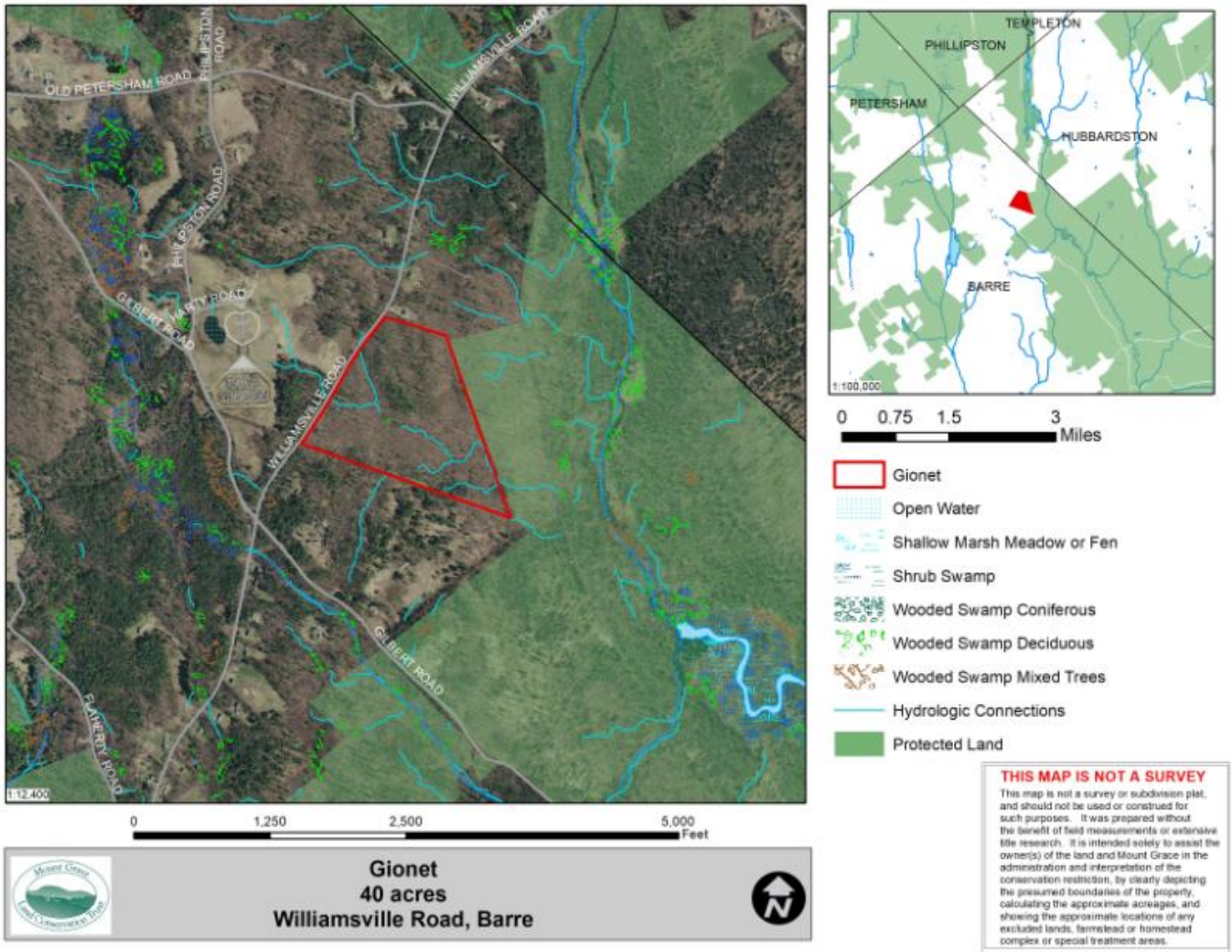
With ample backland and approximately 1,400 feet of frontage along the paved, two- lane Williamsville Road, were it to be sold for non-conservation purposes it would most likely be developed as multiple residential properties in the near future. In their analysis of development pressure on Massachusetts towns, Mass Audubon shows Barre as currently under moderate development threat with its neighboring town, Rutland, listed under high threat and part of the "Sprawl Frontier" of suburban development that expands west from Metro-Boston. In a conversation with the landowner, a local Barre realtor recently suggested the property would be most desirable to a developer who could potentially fit a 7 or 8 house subdivision on the lot. This development potential is further supported by abutting residential properties which lie on similar land to the north, south, and west.

(v) The proposed ownership arrangements and long-term management strategy for the in-lieu fee project site(s).

The current strategy is for Mount Grace to own the fee-simple interest and for East Quabbin Land Trust to hold a CR on the parcel. Both organizations have a strong history of exemplary stewardship, monitoring, and care of conserved lands. Annual monitoring visits will be conducted by one or both land trusts to ensure the conservation values as recorded in the Baseline Report Document.

(vi) The qualifications of the Project Sponsor and any contractor/third-party to successfully complete the type of mitigation project proposed, including information describing any past such activities by the Project Sponsor and contractor/third-party.

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, founded in 1986, is accredited by the Land Trust Alliance and follows science-based land management practices. Our land trust manages and stewards more than 80 privately-owned Conservation Restrictions and 21 land-trust owned Conservation Areas. In total we steward over 9,000 acres of conservation land.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Wooded Swamp Deciduous
Wooded Swamp Mixed Trees
Hydrologic Connections
Protected Land
THIS MAP IS NOT A SURVEY
This map is not a survey or subdivision plat, and should not be used or construed for such purposes. It was prepared without the benefit of field measurements or extensive title research. It is intended solely to assist the owner(s) of the land and Mount Grace in the administration and interpretation of the conservation restriction, by clearly depicting the presumed boundaries of the property, calculating the approximate acreages, and showing the approximate locations of any excluded lands, farmstead or homestead complex or special treatment areas.

Amherst Road Land Preservation
Connecticut River Service Area

(i) The objectives of the proposed ILF project.

The purpose of the project is the permanent conservation of 20.7 acres of open space at 315 Amherst Road in South Hadley, Massachusetts. This project involves preservation of 1,500 linear feet of stream along Bachelor Brook, a perennial tributary to the Connecticut River, with 10 acres (approximately) of associated palustrine scrub shrub wetlands and 10 acres of upland (6.4 acres of which has been a hay field, while the remaining acreage is upland forest). The property also provides habitat for three aquatic and amphibian species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

(ii) How the ILF project will be established and operated.

The project is the fee acquisition of the property by the Town of South Hadley, to be held under the care and control of the Conservation Commission for conservation purposes under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution. The Town is exercising its right of first refusal to acquire the property under MGL Chapter 61A, Section 14. A full appraisal of the property has been completed, and a Title examination. The Town is ready to initiate the acquisition upon receipt of grant funding for the amount requested.

(iii) The proposed ILF service area

Connecticut River Service Area

(iv) The general need for and technical feasibility of the proposed ILF project.

The technical feasibility of this land conservation project is relatively straightforward, upon assemblage of all of the necessary funding. The appraisal supported the sale price of $190,000. The title exam documented clear title. The Town has the necessary matching funds to support a cost-share on the long-term management of the site and passive restoration of the existing hay field to a scrub shrub wetland/forested wetland and upland buffer zone.

The general need for the project is significant. The seller has submitted a subdivision plan documenting three lots that could be developed for residential purposes, and has a buyer. It is only through the Chapter 61A status that the Town has been given the opportunity to purchase the land as open space for conservation purposes. If the Town were to decline this opportunity, the property would be converted to residential development.

(v) The proposed ownership arrangements and long-term management strategy for the in-lieu fee project site(s).

As stated above, the property would be owned in fee by the Town of South Hadley, under the care and control of the Conservation Commission for conservation purposes. A Baseline Documentation Report would be completed upon acquisition to be used for monitoring the property annually, and to inform a final Long-Term Management Plan. A Draft Long-Term Management Plan has been submitted to the MA ILF Program, based on the Town's current understanding of existing site conditions. Currently, the Town is proposing to allow the existing hay field to revert to scrub shrub wetland/red maple swamp in areas with wetland soils, and successional upland buffer zone habitat in non-wetland areas. Throughout this transition, non-native invasive species will be managed through manual practices (cut stem/ mowing) and herbicide treatments. A small patch of *Phragmites australis* (0.2 acres) exists alongside Amherst Road at the edge of the hayfield. This patch will also be eradicated by mowing and herbicide treatment.

(vi) The qualifications of the Project Sponsor and any contractor/third-party to successfully complete the type of mitigation project proposed, including information describing any past such activities by the Project Sponsor and contractor/third-party.

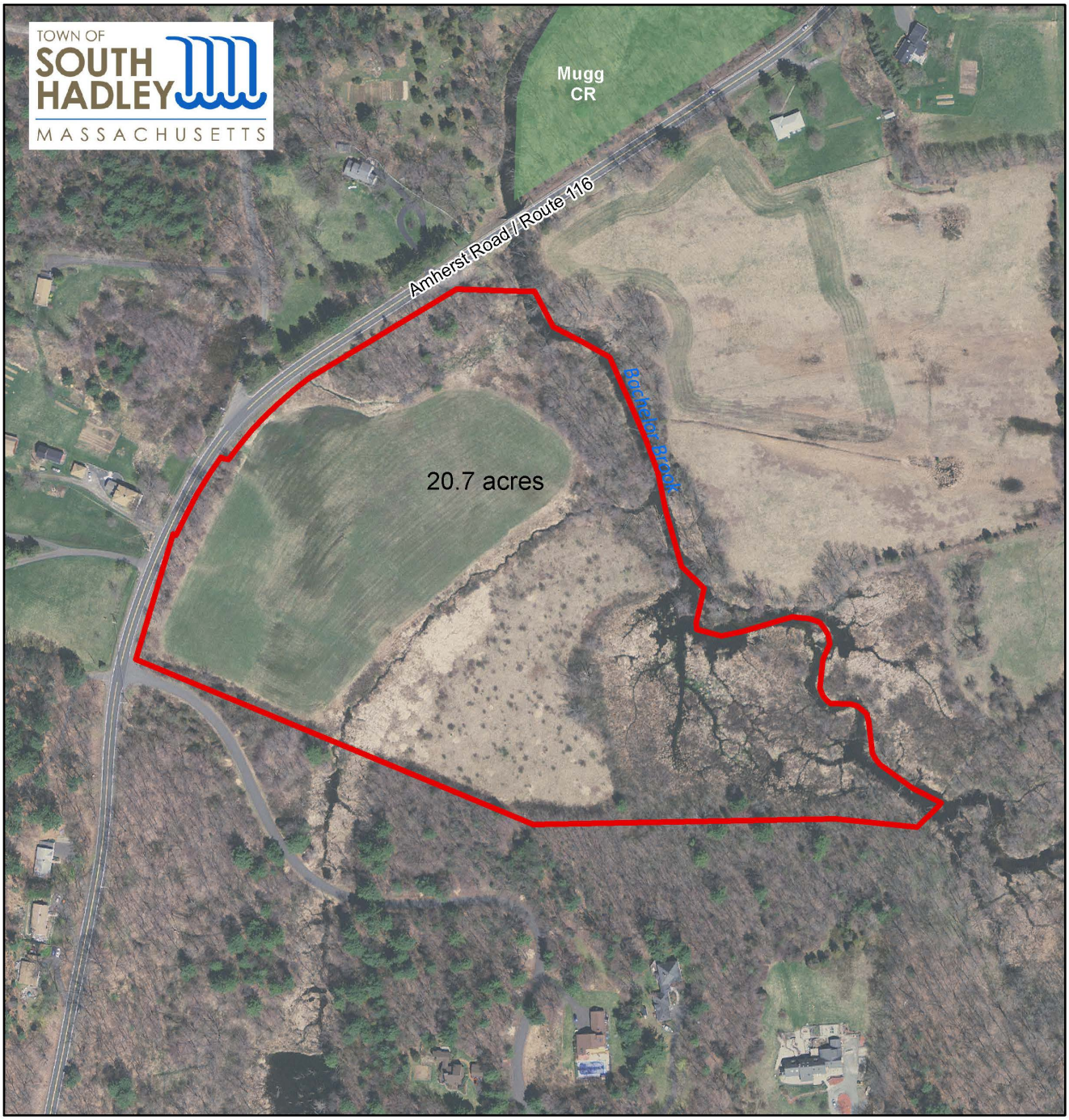
The Town of South Hadley currently has just over 1,000 acres of protected conservation land across fifteen properties under the care and control of the Conservation Commission. The largest of these is the 285-acre Bachelor Brook-Stony Brook Conservation Area located at the mouth of Bachelor and Stony Brooks on the Connecticut River. The Town is seeking to develop a protected greenway corridor along Bachelor Brook due to its significance both locally and regionally to rare and endangered species, and based on its proximity to both the Holyoke Range and the Connecticut River. The streams are recognized by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program as small-river floodplain forests of statewide significance. The acquisition of this parcel would be another piece within the greenway corridor.

Relative to the stewardship of conserved land in South Hadley, the following are some examples of projects completed or underway to document our capacity to manage the acquisition of these 20.7 acres at 315 Amherst Road:

The Town of South Hadley maintains fifteen individual conservation areas under the care and control of the Conservation Commission, totaling 1,080 acres. In 2018 and 2019, the Conservation Administrator conducted site visits at all of these properties to understand current conditions and stewardship needs. As a result of this assessment, in January 2020 a Conservation Land Management Plan (CLMP) was developed to guide annual stewardship activities and annual budget appropriation for this work. In past years, the Town appropriated $5,000 per year to a Land Conservation Fund, to be used as a savings account for the acquisition of land for conservation; however, no funds were directly appropriated for land stewardship.

In response to the CLMP, the Town of South Hadley approved
$15,000 in the FY21 budget for stewardship activities. It is our intention to continue to plan for and budget for our annual stewardship needs, rather than react to situations as they arise.

The creation of the Volunteer Conservation Corps, which was established in 2018 and has 54 current members. This is a group of volunteers coordinated by the Planning and Conservation Department to assist in stewardship activities such as removal of invasive plant species at town-owned conservation areas. The Volunteer Conservation Corps could be called into action to assist with stewardship of the proposed project as appropriate.



315 Amherst Road
Color Orthophoto Map

Legend

315 Amherst Road, Map 58, Parcel 96

0 0.05 0.1 Miles

Plum Brook Culvert Replacement in Amherst, Massachusetts
Connecticut River Service Area

(i) The objectives of the proposed ILF project.

The objectives of this project are to replace two undersized round 36" corrugated metal stream culverts with a box culvert that meets the MA Stream Crossing Standards. The project will also include bank and wetland restoration in the vicinity of the new box culvert. The goal of this work is to restore stream continuity and health to enhance aquatic and terrestrial wildlife passage in the Plum Brook. The Plum Brook is a perennial, coldwater stream that flows from the Mount Holyoke Range to the Fort River. The Fort River is the longest free flowing (no dams) tributary of the Connecticut River in Massachusetts, and is home to a number of anadromous fish, such as the sea lamprey, that are found in its tributaries.

(ii) How the ILF project will be established and operated.

The proposed project is a culvert replacement that would be managed by the Town of Amherst Department of Public Works (DPW). Contractors will be hired for certain aspects of the preliminary site study and construction. The finished culverts will be maintained by the DPW.

(iii) The proposed ILF service area.

Connecticut River Service Area

(iv) The general need for and technical feasibility of the proposed ILF project.

The current culverts are undersized, deteriorating, cause downstream erosion, and also limit wildlife passage. The culvert replacement is technically feasible. There are underground utilities beneath the current culverts; therefore, the box culverts would need to be open bottom.

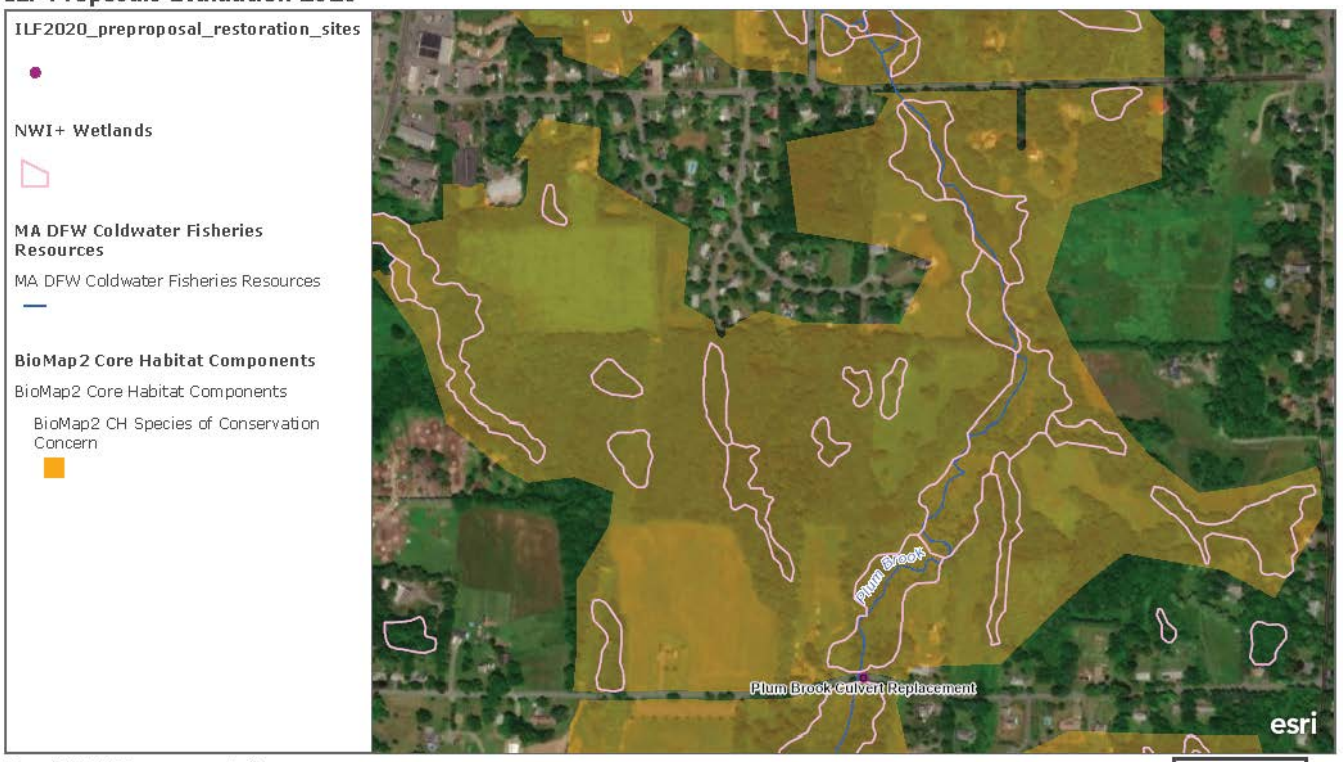
(v) The proposed ownership arrangements and long-term management strategy for the in- lieu fee project site(s).

The new stream crossings would be within the Town road right-of-way, so would be owned and maintained by the Amherst Department of Public Works.

(vi) The qualifications of the Project Sponsor and any contractor/third-party to successfully complete the type of mitigation project proposed, including information describing any past such activities by the Project Sponsor and contractor/third-party.

An environmental engineer would be hired to conduct the hydrologic and hydraulic study, and any geotechnical work that might be needed. The Amherst Department of Public Works has the technical capabilities to do the wetland delineation, surveying, engineering and design, permitting, and construction to complete the culvert replacement project. The only equipment that will need to be rented is a large excavator to lay the box culverts in place. An environmental engineer would be hired to design

and implement the bank and wetland restoration. The Amherst Department of Public Works replaced failing undersized corrugated metal pipe culverts carrying the Hop Brook with box culverts in 2018.



Map of ILF 2020 pre-proposal sites

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