



# PUBLIC NOTICE

**In Reply Refer to:** Kevin DiRocco  
Kevin.J.DiRocco@usace.army.mil

**Office:** Engineering Division

**Date:** January 31, 2025

**Comment Period Closes:** February 14, 2025

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## 15 DAY PUBLIC NOTICE

### REPLACEMENT OF THE OXBOW BRIDGE OLD SPRINGFIELD ROAD OVER MILL RIVER NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District (USACE) is evaluating plans pursuant to 33 U.S.C. 408 (Section 408) to allow the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to replace the “Oxbow” Bridge on Old Springfield Road, a feature of the Northampton Local Protection Project (LPP) in Northampton, MA. The LPP is operated and maintained by the city of Northampton for managing flooding from the Connecticut River and Mill River. The LPP also includes floodwalls, closure structures, levee embankments, a pumping station, an earthfill dike, and the Mill River diversion channel.

This notice is being issued pursuant to 33 U.S.C. 408, USACE Engineering Circular (EC) 1165-2-220, and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.) and the USACE procedures for implementing NEPA (33 CFR 230). Section 408 allows USACE to grant permission for the alteration, occupation, or use of USACE civil works projects if it is determined that the activity will not be injurious to the public interest and will not impair the usefulness of the federal project. A decision on a Section 408 request is a federal action, and therefore subject to NEPA and other environmental compliance requirements.

**Project Description and Purpose of Work:** The Northampton LPP was completed in 1941 and includes the Old Springfield Road “Oxbow” bridge and the diversion channel of Mill River that empties into the “Oxbow” on the Connecticut River. However, the deck of the bridge is in poor condition and the land and structures beneath the bridge have become exposed due to erosion from scour. A temporary ACROW bridge has been in place since 1991. MassDOT will replace the original four-span bridge with a single-span bridge, remove the box culvert, stabilize the area with riprap, and line the channel underneath the bridge with stone armoring to prevent scour and maintain the required water flow. Work completed below the Ordinary High Water (OHW) line is covered

under a Section 404 permit and is not assessed by this Section 408 review. The work is anticipated to begin in summer 2025 and finish by December 2026.

**Alternatives:** In addition to the proposed action, the Environmental Assessment evaluated the no action alternative. Under the no action alternative, the temporary ACROW bridge would remain in place while the scour would continue to erode the land and structures beneath the bridge.

**Additional Information:** Additional information may be obtained from the Engineering Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through Kevin DiRocco, Senior Geotechnical Engineer, (978) 318-8396, [Kevin.J.Dirocco@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kevin.J.Dirocco@usace.army.mil), or the Planning Division through Nicholas Warner, Environmental Specialist, (978) 318-8223, [Nicholas.Warner@usace.army.mil](mailto:Nicholas.Warner@usace.army.mil).

**Coordination:** The proposed work has, or will be coordinated with the following agencies and tribes:

**Federal:**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**State of Massachusetts:**

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife)  
Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office

**Tribal Nations:**

Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)  
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe  
Narragansett Indian Tribe  
Stockbridge Munsee Tribe  
Delaware Tribe of Indians

**Environmental Impacts:** An environmental assessment (EA) is available for review upon request. I have made a preliminary determination that an environmental impact statement for the proposed bridge replacement is not required under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This determination will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice. Any environmental impacts that occur from work performed below the OHW line has not been assessed in the EA and are instead assessed through a separate Section 404 review.

**Other Information:**

- a. Floodplain Management: In accordance with Executive Order 11988, USACE has determined that the proposed work will not contribute to negative impacts or damages caused by floods.
  
- b. Endangered Species: It is our preliminary determination that the project is not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species. USACE is in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed activity will not significantly affect any species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844).
  
- c. Cultural Resources: USACE is coordinating the project with the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the Narragansett Indian Tribe, the Stockbridge Munsee Tribe, and the Delaware Tribe of Indians in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

The decision whether to perform the proposed work will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits that reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal will be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic 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.

Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you know to be interested in this project. Comments are invited from all interested parties and should be directed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751, ATTN: Kevin DiRocco; or emailed to [Kevin.J.DiRocco@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kevin.J.DiRocco@usace.army.mil) within 15 days of this notice.

January 28, 2025

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Date

*Christopher Hatfield*

Christopher Hatfield  
Chief, Plan Formulation Branch  
Corps of Engineers