



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Charles D. Baker
GOVERNOR

Karyn E. Polito
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Matthew A. Beaton
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

February 23, 2018

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
ON THE
ENVIRONMENTAL NOTIFICATION FORM

PROJECT NAME : Mass Audubon/Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible
Trail
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY : Princeton
PROJECT WATERSHED : Nashua
EEA NUMBER : 15794
PROJECT PROPONENT : Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc.
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR : January 24, 2018

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA; M.G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-621) and Section 11.06 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I hereby determine that this project **does not require** an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Project Description

As described in the Environmental Notification Form (ENF), the project includes the replacement of an existing mowed grass trail with a manufactured product (GrassPave2) to achieve a firm Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) / Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) compliant surface. The project also consists of the construction of an accessible stone patio, connection to a former dairy barn and an existing covered porch, repairs to the stone crib and floor of the porch, construction of a stormwater infiltration system, and the installation of an accessible floating platform on a pond.

Project Site

The 1,124-acre project site is a former farmstead that is now part of the Massachusetts Audubon Society's (the Proponent's) network of wildlife sanctuaries. The site includes upland and wetland

resources and provides a hiking trail system, year-round educational programming, and ecological management and monitoring activities. The project area includes a mowed trail terminating at the shoreline of Wildlife Pond, an adjacent dairy barn, and a covered porch. Wildlife Pond is a man-made pond dating to the 1960s and is predominately bordered by forest and meadow, and drains to the South Wachusett Brook which is a tributary to the Wachusett Reservoir. The project is located within mapped *Estimated or Priority Habitat of Rare Species* as delineated by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) in the 14th Edition of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas. The project site is within the Four Corners/Goodnow Farm Historic District as listed in the State Register of Historic Places.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

Environmental impacts associated with the project include 14,810 square feet (sf) (0.34 acres) of land alteration, 435 sf (0.01 acres) of new impervious area. The floating platform will alter 230 sf of Land Under Waterbody (LUW). Measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate Damage to the Environment include revised configuration, design, and location for the proposed trail, stone patio, and floating platform, a stormwater infiltration system to capture roof runoff from a portion of the former dairy barn and the proposed stone patio, and implementation of a Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan during construction.

Jurisdiction and Permitting

This project is subject to MEPA review and preparation of an ENF pursuant to 301 CMR 11.03(4)(b)(6) because it requires a State Agency Action and it results in an alteration requiring a Variance in accordance with the Watershed Protection Act (WsPA) as administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The installation of the floating platform may require a 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP).

The project will require an Order of Conditions from the Princeton Conservation Commission, or in the case of an appeal, a Superseding Order of Conditions from MassDEP.

The project is not receiving Financial Assistance from the Commonwealth. Therefore, MEPA jurisdiction is limited to those aspects of the project that are within the subject matter of any required or potentially required State Agency Actions and that may cause Damage to the Environment as defined in the MEPA regulations. In this case, jurisdiction is limited to land alteration, water supply and wetlands.

Review of the ENF

The ENF provided a description of existing and proposed conditions, preliminary project plans, and identified measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate environmental impacts. Comments received from MassDEP, DCR, NHESP, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) do not identify any additional concerns or request additional MEPA review.

The ENF included an alternatives analysis which described several alternatives that were analyzed for both the project site location and the configuration of the various project elements. An

addendum to the alternatives analysis was submitted by the Proponent on February 9, 2018. The primary goal for the proposed project is to provide accessible access to wetland habitats. The ENF indicated that alternative trail locations at Wachusett Meadows (e.g. in the meadow and forest habitats) were dismissed because they did not meet this primary goal. As described in the ENF, alternative configurations of the trail which included a wetland boardwalk, longer trail, a return land loop, and a different location for the proposed platform were eliminated to reduce and avoid impacts to wetland resources. Trail head and path improvements were modified to achieve an ADA-compliant grade and simultaneously avoid the need for cuts and fill during installation. Instead, the preferred trail route was repositioned to follow the existing contours and handrails will be installed. The proposed stormwater infiltration system includes the installation of a drip line by the former dairy barn and drainage trench around the stone patio.

Water Supply/Wetlands

As noted earlier, the project involves work within a Zone A surface water protection area which requires a Variance in accordance with the WsPA as administered by DCR. According to the ENF, Wildlife Pond is frequently accessed at an exposed bank for viewing, programming, and aquatic investigations by thousands of visitors annually. The proposed trail terminus and the installation of the floating platform at Wildlife Pond will offer improved opportunity for educational programming and improved protection of the wetland resource areas as it will shift significant foot traffic away from exposed sections of the pond bank. The addition of a stormwater infiltration system will result in small improvements in water quality and groundwater recharge over current conditions. The Princeton Conservation Commission will review the project to determine its consistency with the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA), the Wetlands Regulations (310 CMR 10.00), and associated performance standards, including the Stormwater Management Standards (SMS).

The current drinking water supply for the facility is provided by an onsite well. The project is proposing an increase in the existing water withdrawal from 135 gallons per day (gpd) to 150 gpd. As indicated by MassDEP's comments, the existing water supply well is not registered with MassDEP's Drinking Water Supply Program as a Public Water Supply (PWS). The Proponent should register the PWS with MassDEP. As indicated in the project plans, no work is proposed within the 100-foot radius (Zone 1) of the PWS.

Conclusion

The ENF has sufficiently defined the nature and general elements of the project for the purposes of MEPA review and demonstrated that the project's environmental impacts will be avoided, minimized and/or mitigated to the extent practicable. Additional issues can be addressed during the permitting process. Based on review of the ENF and comments received, and in consultation with State Agencies, I have determined that no further MEPA review is required.



February 23, 2018

Date

Matthew A. Beaton

Comments received:

01/26/2018 Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)
02/07/2018 Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)
02/09/2018 Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
02/13/2018 Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection - Central Regional Office
(MassDEP – CERO)

MAB/ENS/ens



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

Central Regional Office • 8 New Bond Street, Worcester MA 01606 • 508-792-7650

Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary

Martin Suuberg
Commissioner

February 13, 2018

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Attention: MEPA Unit – Everose Schlüter

Re: Environmental Notification Form (ENF)
Mass Audubon/Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible Trail
Princeton
EEA #15794

Dear Secretary Beaton,

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's ("MassDEP") Central Regional Office has reviewed the ENF for the Mass Audubon/Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible Trail Project (the "Project") in Princeton. The Project is proposed by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc. (the "Proponent").

The Project will replace an existing mowed grass trail to the sanctuary's Wildlife Pond with a GrassPave2 trail. GrassPave2 is a manufactured product that achieves a firm ADA/ABA compliant surface that is also vegetated and water permeable. Additionally, the Project includes the construction of an accessible stone patio and connection to the former dairy barn, an accessible connection to the covered porch and repairs to its stone crib and floor, and the installation of an accessible floating platform on the pond. These improvements will provide access to the buildings and wetland habitat areas related to educational opportunities to the public.

The Project will alter 230 square feet (sf) of Land Under Waterbody (LUW) at the location of a proposed floating platform on Wildlife Pond. The Project description describes impacts to Bank; however Bank impacts are not quantified in the Wetland Impacts section of the ENF. Additionally, the Proponent estimates that 6,500 sf of Buffer Zone will be altered by the Project.

The Project is under MEPA review because it meets or exceeds the following review threshold:

- 11.03(4)(b)6 - Alteration requiring a variance in accordance with the WsPA.

The Project requires the following State Agency Permits:

- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR) - Watershed Protection Act Variance

MassDEP offers the following comments on the Project:

Wetlands

The Proponent will be required to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the proposed work to the Princeton Conservation Commission and MassDEP. Upon receipt of the NOI filing, MassDEP may provide project-specific comments to the Princeton Conservation Commission and the Proponent as part of the File Number Issuance Notification Letter. The Project shall be designed to meet all performance standards identified in the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations (310 CMR 10.00) for work proposed in each affected wetland resource area. The NOI should include a description of the proposed work/alterations of not only LUW but all other resource areas. A permanent floating dock will be installed on Wildlife Pond (ORW) which will impact 230 sf of LUW. This impact will require a 401 Water Quality Certification from MassDEP under 314 CMR 9.00.

Water Supply

The Project proposes an alteration of 0.38 acres of land within the Wachusett Reservoir's Watershed (Zone A Surface Water Protection Area). The Meadow's Wildlife Pond drains to South Wachusett Brook, which is a tributary to the Wachusett Reservoir. The Project includes excavation and fill within this Zone A Surface Water Protection Area. Work includes the installation of an infiltration basin for the improvement of runoff in the area over the existing conditions.

The ENF describes an existing permitted water withdrawal of 135 gallons per day (gpd) and proposes an increase of 150 gpd. However, drinking water for the facility is provided by an onsite water supply well that is not registered with MassDEP's Drinking Water Program as a Public Water System (PWS). MassDEP discussed the existing usage with the Proponent and determined that the facility likely meets the definition of a PWS and MassDEP will follow up directly with the Proponent on registering the facility. No work should take place in the Zone I radius of a PWS well which is a minimum of 100 feet. It appears from the plans submitted with the ENF that all work is proposed more than 100 feet from the drinking water well.

MassDEP appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Project. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please do not hesitate to contact Stella Tamul, Central Regional Office MEPA Coordinator, at (508) 767-2763.

Very truly yours,



Mary Jude Pigsley
Regional Director

cc: Commissioner's Office, MassDEP



RECEIVED
FEB 09 2018
MEPA

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

February 7, 2018

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Attn: Eve Schlüter, Assistant Director, MEPA Unit
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible Trail, 113 Goodnow Road, Princeton MA.
MHC # RC.63688. EEA # 15794.

Dear Secretary Beaton:

Staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) have reviewed the Environmental Notification Form (ENF) submitted for the project referenced above. The MHC notes that the project will utilize federal funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Recreational Trails Grant program. The MHC looks forward to consultation and a determination of effect by FHWA pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (36 CFR 800) for the project.

Review of the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth indicates the project impact area is within the Four Corners/Goodnow Farm Historic District (MHC # PRI.J), which is listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The project impact area is located adjacent to the existing Crocker Cow Barn of the Edward Goodnow House property (PRI.5) and the Goodnow Farm Pond. The trail improvements, patio, subsurface infiltration basin, and floating platform will be constructed within areas adjacent to the Crocker Cow Barn previously disturbed by barn construction and associated agricultural activities. No archaeological survey is recommended for the project as proposed.

After review of our files and the information provided, in the MHC's staff opinion, the proposed project will have "no adverse effect" (36 CFR 800. 5(b); 950 CMR 71.07(2)(b)(2)) on the significant historic characteristics of the Four Corners/Goodnow Historic District.

These comments are offered to assist in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (36 CFR 800), Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 9, Sections 26-27C (950 CMR 71), and MEPA (301 CMR 11). If you have any questions concerning this review, please contact Jonathan K. Patton, at this office.

Sincerely,

Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Executive Director
State Archaeologist
Massachusetts Historical Commission

xc: Michael Chong, FHWA
Amanda Lewis, DCR
Cindy Dunn, Mass Audubon



February 9, 2018

Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Attn: Eve Schuller
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

RE: MEPA File No. 15794, Mass Audubon/Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible Trail, Princeton, Massachusetts 01541

Dear Secretary Beaton:

The Department of Conservation and Recreation ("DCR" or "the Department") is pleased to submit the following comments in response to the Environmental Notification Form ("ENF") filed by Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc. for the MassAudubon/Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible Trail (the "Project") in Princeton. As proposed, the Project includes the installation of a trail, stone patio, accessible connection to the covered porch, repairs to the floor of the covered porch and installation of an accessible floating platform on the pond. This project is located within the watershed of the Wachusett Reservoir.

An Application for Variance is needed under the Watershed Protection Act ("WsPA") because of the proposed alteration within two hundred feet from the bank of a tributary or surface water. The DCR Division of Water Supply Protection ("DWSP") will review an Application for Variance and accompanying information relative to the WsPA (M.G.L. c.92A ½ sec. 1 *et. seq.*) and applicable regulations (313 CMR 11.00). DCR believes that all issues can be addressed through the Application for Variance and that an EIR is not necessary.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
180 Beaman Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
508-792-7806 508-792-7805 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Charles D. Baker
Governor


Karyn E. Polito
Lt. Governor

Matthew A. Beaton, Secretary, Executive
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Leo Roy, Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Notification Form. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Nancy McGrath of the Division of Water Supply Protection at (508) 792-7806 ext. 314 or Nancy.McGrath@state.ma.us. Thank you.

Sincerely,



John Scannell
Regional Director
Division of Water Supply Protection

CC: Nathaniel Tipton, DCR

Schluter, Eve (EEA)

From: Paulson, David (FWE)
Sent: Friday, January 26, 2018 12:36 PM
To: Schluter, Eve (EEA); Cheeseman, Melany (FWE)
Subject: Mass Audubon/Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible Trail (15794/18-37483)

Secretary Matthew Beaton
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Attention: MEPA Office
Eve Schluter, EEA No. 15794
100 Cambridge St. Suite 900
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Project Name: Mass Audubon/Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible Trail
Proponent: Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc.
Location: 113 Goodnow Road, Princeton
Document Reviewed: Environmental Notification Form
EEA No.: 15794
NHESP No: 18-37483

Dear Secretary Beaton:

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (the Division) has reviewed the Environmental Notification Form for the proposed Mass Audubon/Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Pond Accessible Trail and would like to offer the following comments regarding state-listed rare species and their habitats.

The Division has determined that this project, as currently proposed, will occur within the actual habitat of American Bittern, listed as "Endangered" according to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas (14th Edition). This species and its habitats are protected pursuant to the MESA. Based on the information provided and contained in our database, the Division does not have significant concerns.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact David Paulson, Endangered Species Review Biologist, at (508) 389-6366 or david.paulson@state.ma.us.

David Paulson
Senior Endangered Species Review Biologist
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581
p: (508) 389-6366 | e: david.paulson@state.ma.us
mass.gov/masswildlife | facebook.com/masswildlife