



# MassDEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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## **Baker-Polito Administration Awards More Than \$210,000 in Grants to Assist Local Water Quality Management Efforts**

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded \$210,860 in grants to five projects across the Commonwealth to conduct watershed pollution assessment and planning work to address water quality impairments in local water bodies.

This year's projects, selected annually by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), are located in Berkshire County, Nantucket, Southamptton/Easthampton, Sturbridge and Watertown. The grants are funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through Section 604b of the federal Clean Water Act.

“Massachusetts has long-supported its watersheds and waterways as a community asset,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “These local water quality grants will continue to help local officials assess and protect vital watershed resources.”

“These grants help the Commonwealth to build strong coalitions with our municipal and regional partners, and to invest in real solutions that address their non-point source pollution problems,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn E. Polito**.

“One way to keep our communities safe and healthy is through a comprehensive watershed protection effort,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew A. Beaton**. “These grants will help the communities assess and ultimately protect vital local watershed resources.”

“Communities collect watershed data and develop green infrastructure plans to help them manage their local water resources, and we are pleased to be able to offer this support for their efforts,” **said MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg**. “The testing of threatened water bodies for bacteria and nutrients and the development of green infrastructure and low-impact development plans to manage stormwater are key steps in our overall water resource protection efforts across the Commonwealth.”

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Since January of 2007, MassDEP has funded 53 projects under the 604b Water Quality Management Program for more than \$2.5 million. Overall, since 2007, MassDEP has issued 132 grants under both the 604b and Section 319 programs, totaling more than \$16 million, to address non-point source pollution problems.

The term “non-point source pollution” refers to contaminants that are carried to a waterway as a result of precipitation and stormwater runoff from the land or infiltration into the soil. Common types of non-point source pollution include phosphorus and nitrogen from lawn and garden fertilizers, bacteria from pet waste and waterfowl, oil and grease from parking lots and roadways and sediment from construction activities and soil erosion.

The selected projects, and descriptions, are:

**Berkshire Regional NPDES Phase II – \$50,000**  
**Hoosic and Housatonic Rivers/Berkshire Regional Planning Commission**

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) will work with the Towns of Adams, Cheshire, Dalton and Lanesborough and the City of Pittsfield to form a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Regional Working Group to develop a plan to address the cost of stormwater management and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) compliance. BRPC will conduct initial research to see if a stormwater utility is appropriate for the communities. BRPC will work with Comprehensive Environmental Inc. to quantify the current and future cost of stormwater management programs, estimate the costs to comply with MS4 requirements, and develop regional agreements and funding structures to address the cost of stormwater management and MS4 compliance.

**Phosphorus Sources for Hummock and Miacomet Ponds, Nantucket – \$26,850**  
**Cape Cod Islands/Town of Nantucket**

Both Hummock and Miacomet Ponds are major public recreational resources on Nantucket, but both experience algae blooms in summer, including cyano-bacteria at potentially hazardous levels. Previous sampling efforts have evaluated nitrogen loading. While in-lake phosphorus levels are known to be elevated, there has been no focused assessment of the sources of phosphorus, groundwater and internal release from sediments that are supporting algae blooms. This project will sample groundwater entering the lake and test surficial sediments to determine the potential for those sources to supply enough phosphorus to support observed blooms. Additional work will assess algal blooms and oxygen status critical to release of phosphorus from sediments, as recommended by recent studies. This project will provide information to the Town of Nantucket to develop plans for nutrient reductions to improve the conditions of these ponds.

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## **Manhan River Water Quality Monitoring & Bacteria Source Tracking – \$50,000 Connecticut River/Pioneer Valley Planning Commission**

The lower 6.2 miles of the Manhan River in Southamptton and Easthampton is currently listed as impaired for primary contact in the MassDEP 2012 Integrated List of Waters for *E. coli* contamination. Due to increased public access to the Manhan River, this project aims to identify the major sources of *E. coli* impairment in the Manhan River, including nonpoint sources and potential remaining illicit connections through water quality monitoring and bacterial source tracking. This project will identify sources of bacterial contamination through targeted sampling and provide recommendations for remediation, including preliminary design of Best Management Practices (BMPs).

## **Sturbridge Stormwater Pollution Reduction Project – \$42,900 Quinebaug River/Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission**

Green Infrastructure (GI) and Low-Impact Development (LID) techniques reduce stormwater runoff from residential and commercial development and mimic natural site hydrology by storing, infiltrating and recharging stormwater on site. Currently, the Town of Sturbridge does not have a LID Bylaw, which is identified as a need in the town's Master Plan. This project will assist the town in the development of a LID Bylaw for passage at the Sturbridge Town Meeting. A LID-based education component will be implemented at Old Sturbridge Village (OSV), the largest outdoor museum in New England with 260,000 annual visitors. Additionally, this project will team with OSV to develop a conceptual drawing and feasibility of a GI/LID installation for the OSV main visitor parking lot to address stormwater runoff issues. These activities will help lead to better water quality throughout the Town of Sturbridge and the Quinebaug River Watershed.

## **Watertown Green infrastructure Planning & Education – \$41,110 Charles River/Town of Watertown**

Watertown will build on previous green infrastructure planning efforts, including Massachusetts projects funded by the 604b program and projects elsewhere in the region to identify opportunities and constraints for green infrastructure projects in Watertown. A number of these projects have developed and tested GIS methodologies to assess sources of pollutant loadings and to identify promising areas for green infrastructure projects. In addition, there has been substantial research on the performance and cost-effectiveness of different green infrastructure designs in different circumstances from the Charles River Watershed Association's Blue Cities Program, from the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center, and elsewhere. This project will draw on the results of these efforts, both to inform stakeholders about effective green infrastructure approaches in general and to develop green infrastructure priorities for Watertown.

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To find out more information about grants and financial assistance related to water quality and watersheds, turn here: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/grants/watersheds-water-quality.html>

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

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