Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET) Grants

MASSACHUSETTS ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

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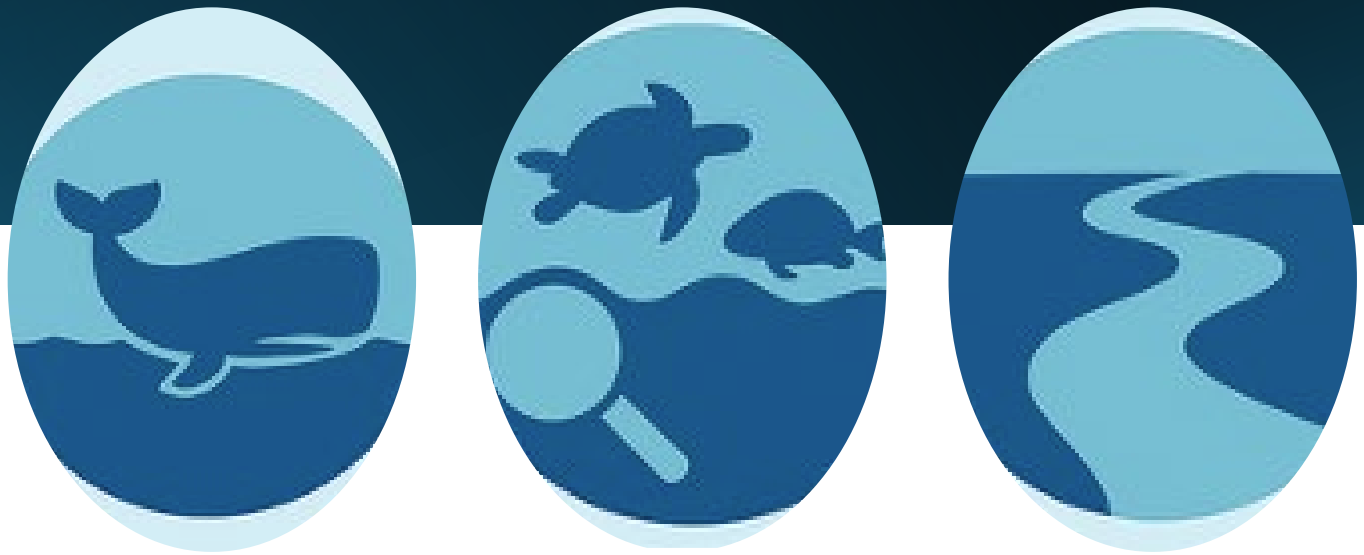
What is the *Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET)?*



- grantmaking program that supports organizations working to protect and conserve marine animals and fish and restore river and estuarine ecosystems
- established in 1988 by the Massachusetts Legislature with a $2 million settlement for violations of the Federal Clean Water Act in Boston Harbor
- housed in the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs and operates without tax dollars or legislative appropriations with oversight from a non-paid Board of Trustees

HOW ARE THE GRANTS FUNDED?

- grantmaking program is funded by the sales of our 4 environmental license plates available through the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV)
  - the whale plate (introduced in 1994) largely funds marine conservation projects
- donations

MET appreciates the strong support and advocacy of watershed organizations, non-profits, etc. to promote the message that its availability to fund projects is based on these two streams.

RIGHT WHALE PLATE

The ‘Whale Plate’ features the fluke of a North Atlantic right whale (RW) and two roseate terns (RT).

The North Atlantic right whale is the state marine mammal and the world’s most endangered large whale.

Roseate terns are native to Massachusetts and are also endangered.

- MET annually supports the **Division of Marine Fisheries and Center for Coastal Studies Large Whale & Sea Turtle Conservation Program**, an intensive effort to protect, restore and manage large whale and sea turtle species found in surrounding MA state waters.
- **Monitors and analyses the population and habitat of right whales, with readiness and response year-round at-sea rescues of right, humpback, fin whales, and leatherback sea turtles** in waters from NH to RI
- Program began in 1998 and continues as a partnership between MET, DMF, CCS, and NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to protect, monitor and rescue whales and sea turtles.

Striped Bass Conservation Plate

Striped bass are native to the US and have been prized in MA since colonial times.

Today, stripers support both recreational and commercial fisheries and are by far one of the most important fish to local anglers.

- MET and DMF developed the Striped Bass Conservation plate to support studies of striped bass populations, stock structure, movements, and local ecology to help ensure that future generations of anglers will have the opportunity to experience the unmatched thrill of fishing for this iconic species

LEAPING BROOK TROUT PLATE

The Brook Trout (FW) license plate was introduced in 1998. Native to the state's western streams and serves as a symbol of both the pristine water in which it thrives, and the recreational benefits of a healthy environment.

- Proceeds from the **Brook Trout plate** are used to protect and restore rivers, streams, and coastal waters of MA
- Since 2022, the MassWildlife and MET work together to fund programs to restore habitats for trout and other coldwater species

BLACKSTONE VALLEY MILL PLATE

The **Blackstone Valley plate** signifies the importance of restoring our urban rivers and streams to enhance their ecology and to improve the health of our riverfront communities.

The Blackstone Valley, which runs through the central part of the state, was the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. By featuring the historical and economically significant waterways of Central MA.

WHAT KINDS OF GRANTS DOES MET CURRENTLY FUND?

Environmental Advocacy, Educational and Conservation Activities focused on Improving Aquatic Habitats

- By funding innovative projects, we work to restore and sustain critical waterways and habitats, ensuring thriving ecosystems for future generations

Threatened & Endangered Marine Life Protection & Conservation

- Protecting threatened and endangered marine life while preserving aquatic species and their habitats is at MET's core. Through targeted initiatives, we tackle pressing environmental challenges to maintain the health and biodiversity of MA.
- In the past MET invested in many projects geared to river restoration, dam removal, and stormwater innovation

MET STORMWATER RELATED GRANTS

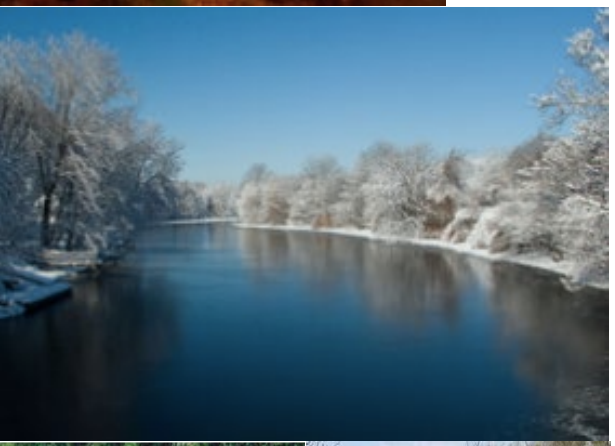
- used to find new, greener, cheaper applications for wastewater and stormwater management

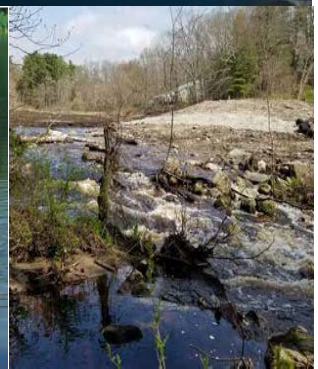
- provided to organizations to develop onsite methods to control stormwater that would be effective, environmentally friendly, and orders of magnitude less expensive than conventional underground pipes

  - Metropolitan Area Planning Commission
  - Clean Water Fund
  - Charles River Watershed Association
  - Massachusetts Watershed Coalition

From 2012 to 2020, MET funded:

~17 stormwater-related projects with a total amount of almost $500,000 (average of ~$30,000)





Examples of past stormwater grants

Blackstone River Coalition
(2019) - Campaign for a fishable/swimmable Blackstone River Phase 2 - Tackling stormwater in the Blackstone River Watershed to Protect Cold Water Fishery Streams
(2013) - Restoring the River and its tributaries and protecting several coldwater streams and their fisheries. Worcester Storm(water) Chasers: Finding Urban Solutions to Water Pollution - a major outreach campaign to reduce stormwater volume and pollutants discharging to Worcester waterways which are tributary to the Blackstone River and increase groundwater recharge.

Franklin Regional Council of Governments (2015) - Using Low Impact Development (LID) to manage stormwater runoff in Greenfield.

Groundwork Lawrence (2011) - Lawrence's Urban Tree Canopy in partnership with the City of Lawrence, local community development organizations and the Mass Urban Forestry Coalition, to engage local stakeholders in increasing Lawrence's Urban Tree Canopy to improve stormwater discharges.

Mystic River Watershed Association (MYRWA) (2018) - Mystic River Watershed Phosphorus Reduction Project: A 3-year water quality testing program to complete a plan to address nutrient pollution in the Mystic River watershed. Phosphorus, introduced by stormwater, causes excessive growth of invasive plants and algae, low dissolved oxygen levels that threaten fish habitat, and blooms of toxic cyanobacteria that are a threat to public health.

Berkshire Environmental Action Team (2019 & 2020) - Regionalized Method of Surveying and Sampling Storm Water Outfalls in Berkshire County BEAT and partners will survey storm water outfalls in Pittsfield, Dalton, and Lanesborough, Adams and North Adams. Trained volunteers will sample outfalls conveying dry-weather flow to identify point source pollution. Partners will work to address point source pollution.

Additional examples of past stormwater grants

Nashua River Watershed Association (2020) - Engineering Designs to Improve Stormwater Management on Gravel Roads in Ashby and throughout the Commonwealth

Neponset River Watershed Association

(2020) - The Traphole Brook Restoration Project to protect and restore the Brook by addressing human development and climate change impacts to the watershed by removing barriers to fish passage, constructing stormwater BMP retrofits, and reforesting riparian buffer areas.

(2012) - Municipal Stormwater Management Assistance Project to strengthen stormwater bylaws, and implementation of stormwater measures that are effective at treating bacteria through water conservation education, educating Conservation Commissions statewide about techniques for treating bacteria in stormwater, and advising Neponset Valley towns on adoption of effective stormwater bylaws.

Saugus River Watershed Council (2013) - Protecting Watershed Resources in a Changing Climate - In partnership with municipal officials to create and implement Climate Change Adaptation/Mitigation Plans aimed at protecting watershed resources using strategies recommended in the MA Climate Change Adaptation Report such as promoting LID techniques, protecting and enhancing vegetated buffer zones, identifying 'high risk' and 'high priority' sites, and improving stormwater conveyance systems.

Worcester Ecotarium (2020) - Ecotarium Stormwater Management Planning – A study to improve the water quality of stormwater runoff from the site. Existing closed stormwater management system was constructed prior to the implementation of the MA Stormwater Management Standards and a lack of water quality treatment led to the discharge of pollutants to the lower pond, resulting in degradation of water quality and increased sedimentation in the pond habitat.

Additional examples of past stormwater grants

Friends of the Malden River (2020) – Trash Reduction on the Malden River. The City's storm water system illustrates and magnifies the trash problem because the large culverts allow trash into the River before any catchments stop the flow.

Massachusetts Audubon Society, Inc. (2013) – Stream Crossings. Help improve health of urban communities in the watershed by providing information/guidance to community leaders and public on how to restore the infiltration and filtration capacity of areas presently impacted by high degrees of imperviousness and inadequate stormwater treatment. Help suburban/rural communities protect riverine corridors, wetlands, floodplains, water supply, and bordering uplands through use of techniques such as Open Space Residential Design and LID (e.g. bio-retention swales and gardens, narrowing of roadways and use of permeable pavement) as alternatives to sprawl and increased construction of impervious surfaces.

Massachusetts Watershed Coalition (2011) – Community Stormwater Solutions. Project activities will reduce stormwater runoff, as well as increase groundwater recharge and stream flow; assist municipal boards/builders with LID; spur diverse community participation in implementing local stormwater practices. Project outreach and technical assistance will build the capacities of municipal officials, community groups, businesses and residents to improve stewardship of watershed resources. Guidance supplied by this project will also help municipal boards and developers to build greener infrastructure for stormwater management.

Salem Sound Coastwatch (2013) – The Nature and Causes of Turbidity and its Impact on Eelgrass in Salem Harbor.

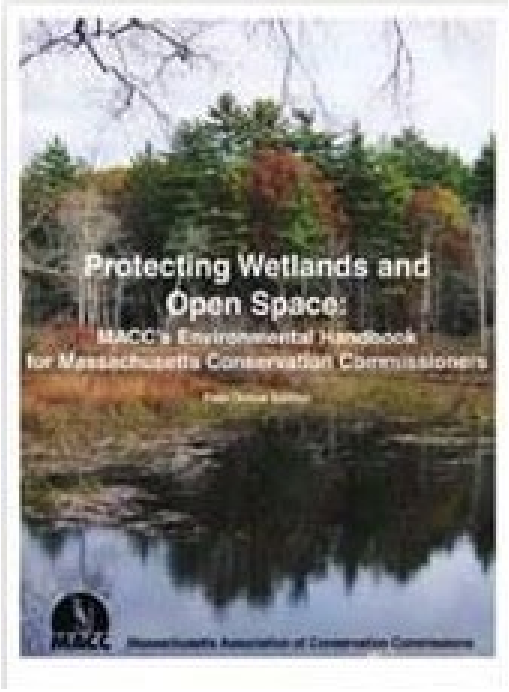
Town of Great Barrington (2015) – Lake Mansfield Water Quality Evaluation and Monitoring. Determine lake's overall water quality and chemistry; judge impacts of nonpoint source stormwater pollution on lake health; judge impacts/benefits of Town's nonpoint source stormwater improvements; establish an educational partnership program where the college students can learn about and participate in water quality analysis and environmental research; and inform the community about this collaborative water stewardship effort by utilizing a variety of public outreach tools.

RIVER RESTORATION & AQUATIC HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

MET grants have funded:

- Natural cranberry bog restoration
- Removal of dams and harmful aquatic debris
- Stream crossing inventories & identification of culverts and other structures that are barriers to fish and wildlife
- Volunteer monitoring programs
- and so much more….

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & AWARENESS



MET supports efforts that serve to create an informed and proactive citizenry with the knowledge, appreciation and skills to act as responsible environmental stewards.

Projects involve:

- Community educational campaigns designed to build awareness and influence conferences, symposia, or publications
- Public outreach efforts such as workshops, festivals, cleanups
- Support for conservation commissions, watershed alliances, marine fisheries and habitat associations

LEARN MORE ABOUT MET

- 30 Years and Beyond Anniversary Report
- a list of past grants on our website at www.mass.gov/eea/met