



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
Wetlands Restoration Program

ONE WINTER STREET – 5th FLOOR, BOSTON, MA 02108

JANE SWIFT
Governor

BOB DURAND
Secretary

CHRISTY FOOTE-SMITH
Director
(617) 292-5991

News Release

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Media Contacts: Susan Redlich
(617) 292-5676
and Christy Foote-Smith
(617)-292-5991

Neponset Marshes Restoration Project To Begin

First-of-its-Kind Program Uses Corporate Contributions to Leverage Federal/State Funding

BOSTON—Twenty acres of wetlands along the Neponset River in Dorchester, cut off from its full tidal flow by years of development, will be restored under a first-of-its-kind program that uses corporate contributions to bring more federal environmental dollars to Massachusetts, state environmental officials announced today.

The \$550,000 project will breathe new life into the Neponset Marshes by reconnecting the wetland with its original source of water. Restoration work, including excavation and relocation of 46,400 cu.yds. of fill, channel construction, breaching of dikes, and planting of creek banks with saltmarsh cordgrass is expected to be underway later this year.

The Neponset restoration is the latest project to move forward under the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP), founded in 1999 by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, The Gillette Company and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-Region 1. To date, 34 companies have joined the Massachusetts CWRP and 36 projects have been approved for CWRP support.

"The partnership is designed to make smart use of state and private money by leveraging already available federal resources," said Bob Durand, Secretary of Environmental Affairs. "While federal funding for wetlands restoration has increased, a large portion has gone unused because local

project sponsors have been unable to raise the required non-federal share of project costs. This partnership fills that void. Particularly in times of disappearing state revenues, programs like CWRP play an important role."

At a media tour of the site in Dorchester this morning, MDC Commissioner David Balfour, Mike Bartlett of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Royall Mack, Vice President of Civic Affairs for The Gillette Company, state Senator Brian Joyce, and Tim Famulare of the Boston Environment Department toured the project site. Gillette is corporate sponsor of the Neponset project.

The Massachusetts program has been such a success that the federal government adopted it as a national program and is expanding it to several regions of the country. The national CWRP program now has more than 87 private sector partners. CWRP is entirely voluntary. The money raised leverages funding from the federal government at favorable ratios.

The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), the Neponset project sponsor, will receive \$425,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore the tidal flow that will improve the ability of the marshes to provide fisheries and wildlife habitat, thereby increasing the biodiversity of the marsh. The Gillette Company, a CWRP partner, helped leverage the federal funding.

"Boston is Gillette's home, and we're pleased to take our environmental commitment into the community by supporting such an important project as the Neponset Marshes restoration," Gillette's Mack said.

Prior to the site tour, 14 companies that recently joined the CWRP received awards for their participation. A total of 34 companies have signed agreements with EOEA for voluntary donations totaling \$1,075,426 in funds and technical services for restoration projects in the Commonwealth. Over the past two years, approximately \$191,000 of the corporate donations to CWRP has attracted \$714,000 in federal dollars to 12 wetlands restoration projects.

In a letter of congratulations to the 14 new CWRP partners, Senator John F. Kerry said, "Massachusetts is setting the pace for the rest of the nation on wetlands restoration. The \$1 million in restoration work currently underway is proof positive that public-private partnerships work. And the new businesses committing to corporate citizenship and environmental stewardship convince us of the continued success of this effort."

EOEA's Wetlands Restoration Program manages the partnership. Both large and small companies have signed on to expedite environmentally beneficial projects. Companies decide the level of involvement they want. Besides cash donations, companies have donated employee time and resources to the variety of tasks required in restoration work: field survey, hydrologic modeling, civil

engineering, construction activities (excavation, channel and culvert work), and post-construction monitoring.

The practice of wetland restoration is the act, process, or result of returning a wetland or former wetland to a close approximation of its condition prior to disturbance. Projects assisted by the CWRP are initiated proactively by local project sponsors who want to bring back the state's wetland heritage, and are not wetland replication (mitigation) required under permits to compensate for unavoidable impacts caused by construction and other activities,

Firms honored at the new partner recognition event at the nearby Captain Forbes Museum in Milton included: Clipper City Survey (Newburyport), Col-East (N. Adams), Daylor Consulting Group (Braintree), Doyle Engineering (E. Falmouth), Great Meadow Farm (Rowley), Jacques Whitford (Woburn), New England Development (Newton), Northeast Utilities, The Louis Berger Group (Needham), Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (Watertown), Warwick and Associates (N. Falmouth), Weston and Sampson (Peabody), and Wheelabrator (Saugus).

For more information regarding the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, please contact:

Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership

Wetlands Restoration Program

Susan Redlich, CWRP Manager

Phone: (617) 292-5676; Fax: (617) 292-5850

E-mail: susan.redlich@state.ma.us

The Wetlands Restoration Program, (WRP) in the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, manages a statewide effort to restore the Commonwealth's inland and coastal wetlands. Through a cooperative agreement, WRP helps direct the support of the federal Coastal America agencies to community-based wetland restoration efforts. WRP manages the Massachusetts Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, the first public-private initiative in the nation to provide corporate support for voluntary wetland restoration projects.