



SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

Massachusetts Chapter
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October 12, 2006

Mr. Todd Chadwell
MA SubCouncil, Housatonic River NRD Fund
c/o Woodlot Alternatives
30 Park Drive
Topsham, Maine 04086

Re: Proposal for Rare Species Recovery on the Housatonic River

Dear Mr. Chadwell:

I am writing in support of the proposal submitted to the Housatonic Natural Resource Damages Fund by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program to protect and aid the recovery of rare species in the Housatonic watershed of Massachusetts.

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The Conservancy is actively involved in biodiversity conservation in the Housatonic Watershed. Our science-based priorities include the upland forest systems, as well as the wetland and aquatic systems and the numerous rare species for which they provide habitat.

The Nature Conservancy supports the approach of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program outlined in this proposal to identify rare species populations and habitats, identify sites for active restoration and land acquisition projects, and provide updated conservation planning materials to towns within the watershed. Because of their professional staff and several decades of successful rare species inventory, documentation and prioritization, and management, there is no better organization to accomplish the important work outlined in this proposal. The survey and mapping information resulting from this project will significantly improve the ability of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and municipalities to achieve meaningful conservation of rare species and their habitats in the watershed for years to come.

We look forward to the results of the Housatonic Rare Species Recovery Project, which will facilitate The Conservancy's conservation efforts in the watershed, and to collaboration with the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program to protect and restore biodiversity. We thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Andrew D. Finton
Director of Conservation Science