

Housatonic River Natural Resource Damages Fund

Round 3, SubRound 2 Restoration Project Proposals for
Land Acquisition to Conserve Habitat

Doc. No. BWSC-NRD-2015-03

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Project Name: Parsons Marsh Conservation Project (Proposal No. 307)

Consensus-Based Score: 259

Review Team Members: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (2), Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (1), Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (1), and Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (1).

Summary of Criteria Discussed:

- **Criterion A1 (Natural Recovery Period):** Multiple reviewers expressed that protection of land in perpetuity provides restoration benefits in advance of the natural recovery period because protection in perpetuity is not otherwise guaranteed and because land acquisition is a relatively "quick" action whereas other restoration actions can take a long time. One reviewer expressed that much of this parcel didn't seem to have high probability / risk of development. One reviewer also noted that this criterion isn't a strong fit for land protection projects. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion A3 (Sustainable Benefits):** One reviewer expressed that some recurring land management needs seemed likely. Other reviewers felt that long-term self-sustaining benefits would be provided even without human maintenance or management. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion A4 (Magnitude of Ecological Benefits):** One reviewer expressed that they felt the project would provide only a moderate level of ecological benefits because portions of the land seem to have a low probability of development and thus may provide long-term conservation benefit without additional protections. Other reviewers expressed the opinion that the project would provide a high level of ecological benefit based on proximity to sensitive habitat. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion A7 (Enhancement of Remediation / Response Actions):** Reviewers discussed that the "enhancement of remediation/response actions" refers to USEPA actions addressing PCB clean-up, and agreed that this project does not appear to have a direct nexus with or enhance remediation/response actions.
- **Criterion B4 (Measurable Results):** Some reviewers expressed that specific, measurable results might be limited due to a perceived low risk that portions of the land would be developed. Other reviewers felt that the project included numerous measurable aspects (e.g., acreage) and that these provided the potential for quantifiable results. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion C1 (Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits):** Reviewers agreed that the project's qualitative cost-benefit relationship demonstrates net benefits, and some reviewers thought that the proposal demonstrated a high net benefit based on factors including acreage, nexus to sensitive habitat, and cost. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.

- **Criterion D2 (Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship):** Most reviewers felt the proposed project would clearly support ongoing environmental stewardship and provide a foundation of future restoration activities. Two reviewers agreed, but felt the effect might be “limited”. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion D3 (Community Involvement):** The reviewers discussed that the proposed project does appear to include community involvement opportunities in some stages of the project’s life. Most reviewers provided a “medium” score because it was “unclear whether these opportunities would have a significant effect on the project itself”. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion D6 (Public Outreach):** Reviewers discussed that the proposal included general mention of public outreach (e.g., describing installation of a kiosk and “opportunity” for education); however, many reviewers felt that sufficiently detailed information (e.g., “clear plans for conducting public outreach”) was not provided to warrant a “high” score. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.
- **Criterion D7 (Diverse Partnerships):** The reviewers discussed that the proposal identifies a variety of project partners contributing directly to the project and representing a broad range of community resources (e.g., individuals, municipalities, state and federal agencies, private foundations, conservation organizations, community groups, academia). Two reviewers felt that the identified partners were not “considerably diverse”, warranting a “medium” but not “high” score. Unanimity among individual scores was not achieved in the course of the discussion, but all reviewers expressed consensus that the final individual scores yielded an acceptable average score for the criterion.

Evaluation Scoring Summary

Project Name: **Parsons Marsh Conservation Project**

Project Score: **259**

CATEGORY & CRITERIA	EVALUATION SCORES							
	GR1	GR2	GR3	GR4	GR5	GR6	GR7	Average
A. RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF PROJECT								
1. Natural Recovery Period	9	15	15	9	15	9	15	12
2. Location of Project	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
3. Sustainable Benefits	15	15	15	15	15	9	15	14
4. Magnitude of Ecological Benefits	15	15	15	15	15	9	15	14
5. Human Health and Safety	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
6. Benefits to Multiple Restoration Categories	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
7. Enhancement of Remediation/Response Actions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal (max=85)	74	80	80	74	80	62	80	76
B. TECHNICAL MERIT								
1. Technical/Technological Feasibility	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
2. Technical Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
3. Potential for Adverse Environmental Impacts	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
4. Measurable Results	6	10	10	10	10	6	10	9
5. Contingency Actions	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
6. Administrative Capacity of Applicant and Project Team	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Subtotal (max=65)	61	65	65	65	65	61	65	64
C. PROJECT BUDGET								
1. Relationship of Expected Costs to Expected Benefits	9	9	15	15	15	9	15	12
2. Implementation-Oriented	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
3. Budget Justification and Understanding	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
4. Leveraging of Additional Resources	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
5. Coordination and Integration	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Subtotal (max=60)	50	50	56	56	56	50	56	53
D. SOCIOECONOMIC MERIT								
1. Enhancement of Public's Relationship w/ Natural Resources	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
2. Fostering Future Restoration and Stewardship	9	15	15	9	15	15	15	13
3. Community Involvement	9	9	15	9	9	9	9	10
4. Potential for Adverse Socioeconomic Impacts	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
5. Complementary with Community Goals	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
6. Public Outreach	3	5	5	3	5	3	3	4
7. Diverse Partnerships	5	5	5	3	5	3	5	4
Subtotal (max=75)	61	69	75	59	69	65	67	66
Total Score (max=285)	246	264	276	254	270	238	268	259