

3 Project Planning, Partners, and Process

As referenced in the historical discussion in the previous section, there have been many local, state, and federal partners and non-governmental organizations involved in the efforts to restore the Herring River. The process has encompassed many years of scientific and engineering investigations, but also has included a systematic public review process to ensure that all concerns and interests are recognized and considered. This section is intended to summarize the process that has transpired and to recognize the primary partners that have been involved in the planning process.

Since the Town of Wellfleet owns the Chequesset Neck Road dike, and the Cape Cod National Seashore manages roughly 80% of the Herring River floodplain, these two parties have logically been at the forefront of planning for the restoration of the Herring River. In August 2005 these two parties formally agreed to work together to restore the River by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that established a “process and framework that will determine whether a restoration of the Herring River is feasible and subsequently develop a conceptual plan of the restoration goals and objectives to meet stakeholder needs should restoration be deemed appropriate.” Prior to signing the MOU, in January 2005, the Town of Wellfleet Board of Selectmen agreed “in principle to the fact that restoring the Herring River saltmarsh will be beneficial to the public interests and the environment and is a project worth proceeding with, with the caveat that a memorandum of understanding is signed between the NPS and the Town of Wellfleet and the development of a comprehensive restoration plan and filing for permits to proceed.” (see MOU in Appendix A).

3.1 The Herring River Technical Committee

The MOU specified the formation of a technical committee and a stakeholder group, and provided criteria for the composition of both groups and their intended functions. The Herring River Technical Committee (HRTC) was designated to consist of a representative from the NPS, one from the MACZM-WRP, and other individuals selected by the Town. In its operational form the HRTC has included the following representatives from local commissions and boards/agencies:

Sworn-In Voting Members:

Gordon Peabody	Chair, Member-at-large
Hillary Greenberg	Wellfleet Conservation and Public Health Agent
John Portnoy	Cape Cod National Seashore
Tim Smith	MA CZM Wetland Restoration Program

Robert Hubby	Wellfleet Open Space Committee
Joel Fox	Wellfleet Shellfish Advisory Committee
Andy Koch	Wellfleet Shellfish Constable
Carl Breivogel	Wellfleet Herring Warden
John Riehl	Wellfleet Natural Resource Advisory Committee
Jack Whalen	Chequesset Yacht & Country Club
Gary Palmer	Selectman, Town of Truro
Eric Derleth	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Stephen Spear	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Diane Murphy	Cape Cod Cooperative Extension Service
Steve Block	NOAA Restoration Center

Advisory Members:

George Heufelder	Barnstable County Health Department
Peter Watts	Herring River Stakeholders Group Chair
Gabrielle Sakolsky	Cape Cod Mosquito Control Project

The HRTC was directed to review and summarize the scientific and technical information on the Herring River system, receive and consider input related to community concerns, develop and submit recommendations to the Board of Selectmen on the feasibility of restoration of the system, and develop a conceptual restoration plan should it be deemed appropriate. Within the HRTC, a variety of subcommittees were formed to address specific areas of concern associated with the restoration process, and each subcommittee produced reports summarizing the issues.

In January 2006, the HRTC produced a “Full Report of the HRTC” (Appendix C) which summarized their findings and recommended that:

“tidal restoration of the Herring River Saltmarsh is feasible and will provide numerous and substantial public benefits. As outlined in the Technical Committee’s Synopsis, significant improvements in water quality would provide subsequent public health, recreational, environmental, and economic benefits. Our recommendation includes a new structure capable of full tidal restoration. The new structure should incorporate controlled gates to provide incremental increases

in tidal exchange. This would allow for well thought out management, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation."

As directed by the MOU, that finding by the HRTC has lead to this CRP. Acceptance of this CRP will initiate the formal process of developing a specific, detailed restoration plan.

The Herring River Stakeholder Group was designated to also include representatives from the Town and the CCNS, as well as landowners potentially affected by a restoration, the shellfish/fishing community, Cape Cod Mosquito Control, Division of Marine Fisheries, NRCS, and NOAA. The stakeholder group has been charged with communicating to the HRTC their interests and concerns, ensuring that public and private concerns are understood and incorporated in the development of recommendations and continuing to provide community input into the development of the restoration plan.

Moving forward, the restoration effort remains focused on both technical and public review components. A second MOU is under development between the NPS/CCNS and the Towns of Wellfleet and Truro. This second MOU is intended to move the CRP into a more detailed stage and envisions the creation of a Herring River Restoration Committee to advance that objective. From a more technical perspective, MA CZM's Wetlands Restoration Program has completed topographic mapping of the Herring River floodplain. This mapping is critical for more detailed evaluation of tidal control options through hydrodynamic modeling, currently under way. Both the state (MEPA) and federal (NEPA) environmental impact review process will be undertaken simultaneously, leading to the selection of a preferred alternative and a detailed restoration plan and permitting.

3.2 Project Funding Needs and Sources

Funding sources for the Herring River restoration project have been actively sought and developed for several years. Funding is not anticipated at the local level, but rather from a variety of state, federal, and private funding sources. Indeed, funding for work completed to date has been from such varied sources. Specific tasks that have been conducted and/or those anticipated to need funding include:

- Topographic survey and mapping
- Hydrologic modeling and other technical analyses
- Engineering and design plans and specifications
- CYCC land acquisition, reconfiguration plans, and construction
- Assessment of impacts and mitigation to private landholdings
- Environmental Impact Statements/Reports and environmental permitting
- Construction modifications at Chequesset Neck Road, other potential tidal control

locations, and other low-lying roadways

Among the funding sources that have already contributed to the efforts and those considered viable for future needs include:

- NOAA Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)
- MACZM-WRP
- Coastal America Foundation
- Wellfleet Land Bank
- USFWS Coastal Wetland Conservation Grants
- USFWS North American Wetland Conservation Grants
- National Park Service
- Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- American Rivers
- Ducks Unlimited
- Conservation Law Foundation
- Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment
- NOAA Restoration Center, direct funding and partnership grants