



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589




In Reply Refer To:
FWS/Region 5/ES-EC

JUN 19 2013

Memorandum

To: Supervisor, New England Field Office

From: Assistant Regional Director - Ecological Services 

Subject: Final Amendment to the Housatonic River Basin Final Natural Resources Restoration Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Evaluation for Connecticut

This is to inform you that the Regional Director, as Authorized Official, has approved the Final Amendment to the Housatonic River Basin Final Natural Resources Restoration Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Evaluation for Connecticut. The Regional Director has signed the Department of the Interior approval page, the Environmental Action Statement, and the Finding of No Significant Impact. The original signed documents are attached.

We appreciate the efforts of you and your staff in accomplishing restoration under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program.

Attachments

U.S. Department of the Interior Approval

Final Amendment to the Housatonic River Basin Final Natural Resources Restoration Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Evaluation for Connecticut

In accordance with U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) policy regarding documentation for natural resource damage assessment and restoration projects (521 DM 3), the Authorized Official for the Department must demonstrate approval of draft and final Restoration Plans and their associated National Environmental Policy Act documentation, with concurrence from the Department's Office of the Solicitor.

The Authorized Official for the Housatonic River case is the Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region.

By the signatures below, the Final Amendment to the final Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment is hereby approved.

Approved:



Wendi Weber
Regional Director
Northeast Region
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

6/24/13

Date

Concurred:

Mark Barash
Senior Attorney
Northeast Region
Office of the Solicitor

Date

UNITED STATES FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT

Within the spirit and intent of the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other statutes, orders and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and have determined that the action of the *Final Amendment to the Housatonic River Basin Final Natural Resources Restoration Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Evaluation for Connecticut*:

_____ is a categorical exclusion as provided by 516 DM 6 Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1. No further documentation will therefore be made.

XX is found not to have significant environmental effects as determined by the attached Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact.

_____ is found to have significant effects, and therefore further consideration of this action will require a notice of intent to be published in the Federal Register announcing the decision to prepare an EIS.

_____ is not approved because of unacceptable environmental damage, or violation of Fish and Wildlife Service mandates, policy, regulations, or procedures.

_____ is an emergency action within the context of 40 CFR 1506.11. Only those actions necessary to control the immediate impacts of the emergency will be taken. Other related actions remain subject to NEPA review.

Other supporting documents (list):

Final Amendment to the Housatonic River Basin Final Natural Resources Restoration Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Evaluation for Connecticut



Regional Director/DOI Authorized Official

6/21/13
Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Final Amendment to the Housatonic River Basin Final Natural Resources Restoration Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Environmental Impact Evaluation for Connecticut

The U.S. Department of the Interior, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and State of Connecticut have completed a Final Amendment that identifies and evaluates eleven alternatives to restore aquatic resources impacted by polychlorinated biphenyls from the General Electric facility in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The preferred alternative is to implement the following seven projects to benefit aquatic natural resources:

- Power Line Marsh Tidal Wetlands Restoration – Milford, CT (\$55,000)
- Long Beach West Salt Marsh Restoration and Habitat Enhancement – Stratford, CT (\$40,000)
- Pin Shop Pond Dam Removal – Steele Brook (Naugatuck River Watershed), Watertown, CT (\$700,000)
- Old Papermill Pond Dam Removal Feasibility Study (East Aspetuck River Watershed), New Milford, CT (\$100,000)
- Housatonic Watershed Continuity Project (\$150,000)
- Tingue Dam Fish Passage – Naugatuck River Seymour, CT (\$672,000)
- McKinney NWR Salt Marsh Restoration - Stratford, CT (\$300,000)

By implementing these projects, the Trustees seek to increase the restoration of injured aquatic natural resources and more fully compensate the public for the full suite of injuries to the environment resulting from the release of hazardous substances from the GE facility in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, thereby fulfilling the goals of the original Restoration Plan. Four other alternatives (no action, Leete's Island restoration, Heminway Pond Dam Removal, and an Eel Research and Passage Feasibility Project) were evaluated and determined to be not preferred.

The Trustees provided the Draft Amendment for public review from February 8, 2013, through March 25, 2013. A notice of availability was published in the local media outlets, and on February 19, 2013, the Trustees held a public meeting to discuss the Draft Amendment and to respond to questions from the public. Trustee responses to public comments and questions are presented in Section 6 of the Final Amendment.

Based on a review and evaluation of the information contained in the Final Amendment, I have determined that the proposed actions do not constitute a major federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102 (2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, the preparation of an environmental impact statement on the proposed actions is not required at this time.



Regional Director/DOI Authorized Official

6/24/13

Date