

An underwater photograph showing several fish, likely Atlantic menhaden, swimming in clear water. Numerous small, bright white bubbles are scattered throughout the scene, creating a dynamic and lively atmosphere. The fish are silvery with some darker markings, and their eyes are prominent. The lighting is bright, highlighting the textures of the fish scales and the movement of the bubbles.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

2025–2030 | FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

# CONNECTIONS

WORKING TOGETHER FOR NATURE







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*The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). This plan was created with the support of the Healey-Driscoll Administration.*



## LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Massachusetts is a state defined by its diverse landscapes and bountiful natural resources: over 3 million acres of forest, 8,000 miles of rivers, 1,500 miles of coastline, 2,500 square miles of state ocean waters, 45,000 acres of salt marsh, and over 18,000 unique species. These important lands, waters, plants, animals, and habitats anchor our history, heritage, and culture, sustain our health and economy, and enrich our lives. Yet, we are experiencing unprecedented biodiversity loss, a climate crisis, and persistent environmental injustices that threaten not only the species and people that call Massachusetts home, but our collective future.

We are pleased to share with you the Department of Fish and Game's five-year strategic plan **Connections: Working Together for Nature**. Created collaboratively across our four Divisions, **Connections** creates a bold and unifying vision for the Department, focusing our critical work on solutions at the intersection of **biodiversity, climate change**, and **environmental justice** while advancing the priorities of the Healey-Driscoll Administration and Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

**In the next five years, the Department of Fish and Game will take bold actions to:**

- Conserve biodiversity to sustain an abundance and variety of species and habitats and ensure all life flourishes for generations to come.
- Use nature-based solutions to build climate resilience and store and sequester carbon.
- Meaningfully connect with environmental justice and Indigenous communities and improve access to fisheries, wildlife, and natural areas and their benefits.
- Build our capacity, visibility, and impact through investment, strategic partnership, outreach, and education and connect more deeply with the people we serve.

What we do today will not only improve the quality of life in Massachusetts, but will also strengthen our legacy of national leadership on climate and biodiversity and create positive momentum for future generations. We are deeply grateful for the leadership and support of Governor Maura Healey and Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper and the significant contributions of our staff that developed such a bold, ambitious, and inspiring path forward. We look forward to working together to make a difference by 2030!



*Thomas K. O'Shea*

**Thomas K. O'Shea**  
Commissioner of the Department of Fish & Game

*Mr. H. Cameron*

**Douglas H. Cameron**  
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Director  
Division of Fisheries & Wildlife





# CONNECTIONS

## Working Together for Nature

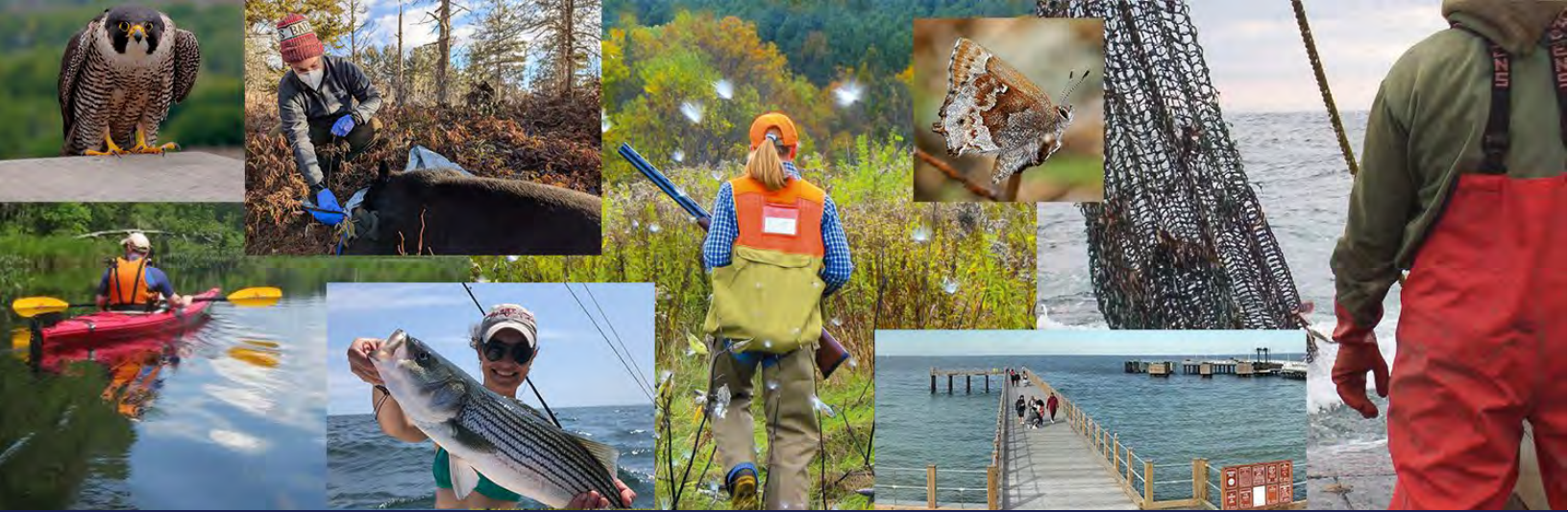
The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game is proud to present **Connections: Working Together for Nature**, a bold five-year strategic plan for conserving nature for people and wildlife.

**Connections** establishes a unifying vision for our Department—focusing our critical work on solutions at the intersection of **biodiversity, climate change, and environmental justice**.

**Why Connections?** As wildlife and fisheries biologists, botanists, foresters, restoration ecologists, marine scientists, engineers, technical experts, and more—we know first-hand that all life is interconnected. To meet the crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and environmental injustice, we must come together, invest strategically, and strengthen our connections to each other and nature.

Three themes—**biodiversity & climate, environmental justice, and relevance, visibility, & capacity**—frame the goals, objectives, actions, and key results that we seek to accomplish by 2030. By aligning our efforts, this plan will allow us to leverage the necessary funding and resources to respond with urgency and impact. When achieved, the actions outlined move the Commonwealth towards a nature positive future where plants and animals thrive and all people feel a sense of appreciation, belonging, and connection to nature.





ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

# WHO WE ARE

## OUR MISSION

The Department of Fish and Game's mission is to conserve the Commonwealth's abundant marine and freshwater fisheries, wildlife, plants, and natural communities, as well as the habitats that support them, for the benefit and enjoyment of all people.

We are an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), which seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for Massachusetts residents.



## BY THE NUMBERS

346 Employees | 234,000 acres conserved | 238 Wildlife Management Areas | 132 Wildlife Conservation Easements | 13 Wildlife Sanctuaries | 300 Fishing & Boating Access Sites | 5 Fish Hatcheries | 3 Marine Research Stations | 3 Shellfish Bacteriological Laboratories

DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME



# WHAT WE DO

**Since our Department was first established, our guiding mission has been the conservation of fish and wildlife for the benefit of all people.**

Over the decades, our work has evolved. We've expanded efforts for endangered species recovery, sustainable management of fisheries, land conservation and habitat management, and restoration of our rivers, wetlands, and streams. In addition, we have enhanced efforts to connect the public with nature through recreation, education, and public access.

We stand proudly by our commitment to conserve fish and wildlife and continuing the long traditions of hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation that are so important to the people of our state. However to sustain our significant progress, ensure the long-term success of our Department, and fully realize the commitment we have made to our state's species and the public—we must continue to adapt, learn, and rise to emerging challenges with bold solutions.

This plan outlines priority areas of focus and growth to meet the challenges of today. Yet, our day-to-day work remains critically important, and we are committed to sustaining this strong foundation as we grow and expand.

## WHO WE SERVE

We serve the people of the Commonwealth, including:

**OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS  
& NATURALISTS**

**HUNTERS & ANGLERS**

**COMMERCIAL FISHERS**

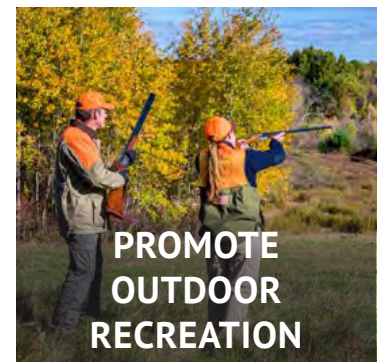
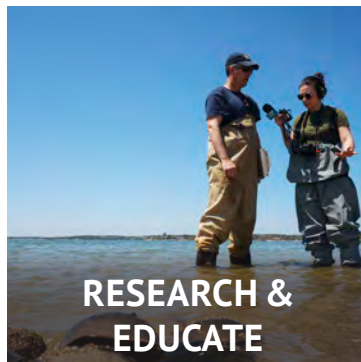
**CONSERVATION  
PARTNERS**

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
& TRIBES**

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
COMMUNITIES**

**MUNICIPALITIES**

**STATE & FEDERAL  
AGENCIES**



## ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

# OUR DIVISIONS



### DIVISION OF ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) restores and protects rivers, wetlands, and watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment. DER partners with nonprofits, towns, individuals, and groups to carry out ecological restoration projects.



### DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

MassWildlife is responsible for the conservation of freshwater fish and wildlife in the Commonwealth, including endangered plants and animals, and restores, protects, and manages land for wildlife to thrive and for people to enjoy.



### DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) strives to manage the Commonwealth's living marine resources in balance with the environment, resulting in sustainable fisheries, stable availability of diverse, healthy seafood, and enriched opportunities that support our coastal culture.



### OFFICE OF FISHING & BOATING ACCESS

Office of Fishing and Boating Access (OFBA) provides access to public waters in Massachusetts, including great ponds, rivers, and coasts. The division constructs and maintains boat access sites, shore fishing areas, and sport fishing piers at more than 300 locations.



CONNECTIONS | *Working Together for Nature*

# OUR VISION

**We envision a Commonwealth with healthy, resilient lands and waters, where our state's abundant fish and wildlife, plants, natural communities, and habitats can thrive, and where all people feel a sense of appreciation, belonging, and connection to nature.**

**This five-year strategic plan will advance this transformational vision**—taking a forward-looking approach and outlining a bold action plan for growth and expansion. We will develop nation-leading biodiversity conservation goals for 2030, 2040, and 2050 called for by Governor Maura Healey's Executive Order No. 618. We will double the pace of land protection, restore critical habitats, build resilience, and store and sequester carbon to ensure a livable future for people and wildlife. We will do our part to reach net zero emissions by decarbonizing our facilities. We will meaningfully connect with environmental justice communities and Indigenous peoples, boost food security, and provide equitable access to nature.

## OUR VALUES



### TRUST

We uphold the highest degree of honesty, transparency, and service to build and maintain trust with the communities we serve.



### DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We value diversity of thought, backgrounds, and experience and diversity of ecosystems to create a better future.



### RESPECT

We hold the highest level of respect for the living world, both people and nature, and are committed to cultivating relationships of mutual care and collaboration.



### ACCESSIBILITY

We are committed to breaking down barriers, building bridges, and bringing all people along to ensure every person can experience nature and its benefits.



### INNOVATION

We strive to experiment, learn, and adapt in the face of unprecedented change, while drawing on our long-standing expertise and research to inform sound decision-making.



### SHARED STEWARDSHIP

We have a shared responsibility to join together with the people of the Commonwealth to care for our lands, waters, and wildlife for future generations.



# STRATEGIC PLAN THEMES

Our Department is leading a **whole-of-government approach to biodiversity conservation**, as called for by Governor Healey's Executive Order No. 618. Three guiding themes anchor our strategic plan—**biodiversity & climate, environmental justice**, and **relevance, visibility, & capacity**—and support this critical biodiversity initiative.



## BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE

Sustain an abundance and variety of species and habitats, use nature-based solutions to build climate resilience and store and sequester carbon.



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Meaningfully connect with Environmental Justice (EJ) populations and Indigenous communities and provide equitable access to nature and its benefits.



## RELEVANCE, VISIBILITY, & CAPACITY

Grow our impact through investment, strategic partnership, outreach, and education and connect more deeply with the people we serve.

## ALIGNMENT WITH STATE PRIORITIES

**Biodiversity, climate, and environmental justice, are top priorities of the Healey-Driscoll Administration.**

This clear alignment is critically important—our Department has a responsibility to do our part in advancing our state's nation-leading efforts to conserve biodiversity, transition to clean energy, build climate resilience, and achieve environmental justice for all.

**84%**  
**OF THE ACTIONS  
IDENTIFIED IN THE  
BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE  
THEME ADVANCE:**

Clean Energy & Climate Plan, Forests As Climate Solutions, Resilient Lands Initiative, or ResilientMass



# OUR PRIORITIES



## CONSERVE KEY LANDSCAPES & DOUBLE THE PACE OF LAND PROTECTION

Identify key landscapes, including areas that have an outsized impact on biodiversity

Complete 5 landscape-scale conservation projects in key landscapes

Protect 6,000 acres/year, up from an average of 3,000 acres/year



## RESTORE HABITATS & CONNECTIVITY

Protect, restore, and/or reconnect 3,000 acres of floodplain habitat

Complete 8 culvert or small bridge replacement projects

Increase acres of eelgrass restored by 50%

Advance up to 45 additional DER Restoration Partnerships Program projects



## DECARBONIZATION & CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Complete decarbonization plans for all Dept. facilities

Enroll 4,000–6,500 acres of salt marsh in Blue Carbon Incentives Program

Designate 10–15% of Dept. upland forests as forest reserves

70% or more of acres protected by Dept. each year are forested



## EQUITABLE ACCESS TO NATURE

Provide new public recreation opportunities near underserved & EJ communities

Develop a pilot program to increase accessibility & use of Dept. public access & restoration sites by EJ communities

Improve language access for facilities signage & postings



## INCREASE FOOD SECURITY

Increase venison donated & distributed by Hunters Share the Harvest by 1,500 pounds/year

Identify opportunities to connect EJ communities with fresh, local seafood

Increase Harmful Algal Bloom monitoring by 25%

## EXPLORE OUR FULL STRATEGIC PLAN

Across all goals and objectives outlined in our strategic plan, we identify five priority areas for 2025–2030. To view the full set of strategic plan key results, see the Appendix below.



# BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE

**THINK OF MASSACHUSETTS.** Mountains, river valleys, forests, and fields. Rushing rivers and streams connecting our communities. Ocean bays, salt marshes, and estuaries, teeming with life. Brilliant barrier beaches, working waterfronts, and the deep blue ocean.

The Commonwealth is known for its scenic landscapes, beautiful coastlines, rolling hills and mountains, and extensive waterways. These destinations provide places for people to enjoy, as well as habitats for plants and animals to thrive. Some of these habitats are globally rare—such as pine barrens and calcareous fens—and some are home to regionally or globally rare and imperiled species—including migratory birds that nest on our shores.





## **Biodiversity is in crisis, globally and right here in Massachusetts. Climate change is accelerating impacts.**

**If we act today, we can build biodiverse, resilient ecosystems for tomorrow. We are rising to meet this unprecedented moment by addressing major climate threats to Department-entrusted natural resources, upholding statutory mandates for climate mitigation goals, and boldly pursuing nature-based solutions to create resilient communities—both natural and human—for generations to come.**

### **CHALLENGE**

Scientists estimate over one million species could go extinct in the 21st century—a rate ten-times higher than anything we’ve seen in the Earth’s history.<sup>1</sup> In Massachusetts, over 430 species are on the state endangered species list, and hundreds more are at risk. Over 2,000 river miles are impaired for aquatic health according to the Environmental Protection Agency.<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts rivers and streams have the fifth-highest number of dams per mile in the nation, with over 3,000 dams remaining.<sup>3</sup> Between 2013 and 2019, Massachusetts experienced approximately 4,000 acres of net forest loss per year.<sup>4</sup>

**430+ SPECIES  
ARE PROTECTED BY  
THE MASSACHUSETTS  
ENDANGERED  
SPECIES ACT**

The 2022 Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment shows that we are already feeling the impacts of global warming with increased precipitation, flooding, drought, and extreme heat.<sup>5</sup> These impacts are rapidly accelerating—threatening our wildlife and way of life. Precipitation during heavy rain events has increased by 55% between 1958 and 2016 in the northeastern United States.<sup>6</sup> As temperatures warm, we expect to see more severe storms. In 2016, our state experienced the most significant drought since the 1960s with record low surface and groundwater levels, then severe drought again in 2020, 2022, and 2023.<sup>7</sup> Temperatures in Massachusetts have increased by 3.5°F since the beginning of the 20th century. The number of days in Boston over 90°F is expected to increase from a historical average of 10 days per year to as many as 46 days per year by 2070.<sup>8</sup>



**NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS** Salt marshes can store 10x the carbon of forests on a per-acre basis. They’re also critical habitat for climate-vulnerable species, like the salt marsh sparrow.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

Biodiversity sustains our health, well-being, and economy, and enriches our quality of life. Healthy ecosystems provide clean water and air, sustainable fisheries and food security, and innumerable benefits for mental and physical wellness.

Conserving biodiversity is also a critical climate resilience strategy. In Massachusetts Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer’s Recommendations for a whole-of-government approach to the climate crisis, bold biodiversity goals are named as a key strategy for adaptation and mitigation.<sup>9</sup> By protecting and restoring our lands and waters, we can also build climate resilience within these natural systems and safeguard our communities from the impacts of climate change.

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO.618  
DIRECTS US TO DEVELOP  
NATION-LEADING  
BIODIVERSITY  
CONSERVATION GOALS  
FOR 2030, 2040, & 2050**

<sup>1</sup> Global assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) (2019); <sup>2</sup> Environmental Protection Agency’s “How’s My Waterway?” tool  
<sup>3</sup> American Rivers The State of Dam Removal in the U.S. Report (2022) <sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Forests As Climate Solutions Initiative Recommendations for Climate-Oriented Forest Management (2023)  
<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment (2022) <sup>6</sup> U.S. Global Change Research Program Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I (2017) <sup>7</sup> Massachusetts Drought Management Plan (2023)  
<sup>8</sup> Climate Ready Boston Heat Resilience Plan (2022) <sup>9</sup> Recommendations of the Massachusetts Climate Chief (2023)



# BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE



## GOAL #1

### Make Room to Move

Restore and connect key aquatic habitats, terrestrial wildlife migration corridors, and important landscapes to sustain species and ecosystems

#### RESTORE & CONNECT AQUATIC HABITATS

As climate change alters environmental conditions significantly faster than previously experienced, it can be difficult for species and ecosystems to keep pace. To help species and systems adjust, the Department will restore and reconnect aquatic systems—including floodplains, freshwater and tidal wetlands, and inland and coastal streams—to enhance migration opportunities and access to suitable habitats, improve ecosystem functions, allow tidal exchange, and improve fish passage.

#### CONNECT KEY CORRIDORS & LANDSCAPES

Enhancing the ability of organisms to move across the landscape is a critical component for their continued survival in the face of climate change. To support this, the Department will identify and conserve key corridors and landscapes to sustain and support regional species in greatest conservation need and at-risk species and establish wildlife corridors to support species migration, movements, and habitat shifts with climate change.



**DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME**



## GOAL #2

# Build Climate Resilience for Nature & People

Restore natural resilience of oceans, estuaries, wetlands, and lands to support biodiversity and protect our communities from climate impacts



### COASTAL & MARINE HABITATS

Climate resilience is the ability of an organism, ecosystem, or infrastructure to adapt to, recover from, or continue to function in the face of climate change impacts. To increase climate resilience in our coastal and marine habitats, the Department will enhance and expand upon regional efforts to identify, restore, manage, and protect critical marine and coastal habitats, manage fisheries resources, and promote sustainable fisheries.

### AQUATIC HABITATS

Restoring connections in and among aquatic habitats and reducing pollution from runoff are important factors in maintaining ecological health while increasing climate resilience. To accomplish this, the Department will remove or upgrade targeted infrastructure barriers to allow passage of fish and aquatic animals and reduce public hazards, reduce direct stormwater runoff from Department managed properties, and reduce the use of road salt and sand near sensitive aquatic habitats.

### WETLAND HABITATS

In the face of increasing temperatures, sea-level rise, and more frequent droughts, floods, and extreme weather, actions must be taken to build climate resilience in wetland habitats. To accomplish this, the Department will protect and restore function and integrity of wetland habitats that are particularly sensitive to climate impacts, and which support highly specialized and often vulnerable species, including calcareous and acidic fen natural communities and Atlantic white cedar wetlands.

### TERRESTRIAL HABITATS

By building climate resilience in terrestrial habitats, we can help ensure the structure, species composition, processes, and function of these habitats under future conditions. The Department will use targeted protection, management, and restoration actions to increase resilience of climate-sensitive terrestrial habitats, increase drought tolerance, support native wildlife, and reduce the need for intensive management.

### MANAGE INVASIVE SPECIES

When left unchecked, invasive species can overwhelm ecosystems, negatively impacting native biodiversity and wildlife's ability to thrive. The Department will prioritize removal of invasive plants on agency conservation lands and encourage invasive control on other conservation lands and private property through education and technical assistance.



## GOAL #3

### Store & Sequester Carbon with Nature

Protect and restore our coastal estuaries, wetlands, and forests to help meet the Commonwealth's ambitious net zero emissions goals



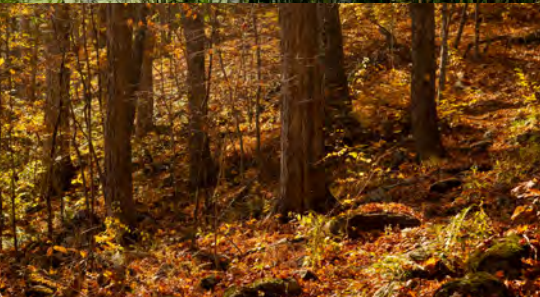
#### MARINE & ESTUARINE HABITATS

Marine and estuarine habitats, such as eelgrasses and salt marshes, are essential elements of climate mitigation. They store disproportionate amounts of carbon dioxide in plants and soils. The Department will develop a greenhouse gas inventory for salt marsh, submerged aquatic vegetation, and marine macroalgae. We will establish a Blue Carbon Incentives Program to support a statewide vision for carbon sequestration and coastal resilience.



#### FRESHWATER WETLAND HABITATS

Healthy freshwater wetlands can help offset emissions of greenhouse gasses, which are released in large amounts when wetlands degrade. We will increase carbon sequestration in freshwater wetlands across the state through land acquisition, ecological restoration, and habitat management projects.



#### FORESTED HABITATS

Carbon storage in forested habitats is a critical component of reaching the Commonwealth's net zero emissions goals for 2050. The Department will prioritize protection of the most intact forests and climate resilient forests. We will also align our forest management practices with EEA's Forests as Climate Solutions management guidelines and agency goals for climate resilience and biodiversity conservation.



**PARTNER TO EXPAND IMPACT** Accelerate efforts to restore critical habitats through strategic collaboration.



## GOAL #4

# Scale Action to Keep Pace with Biodiversity & Climate Crises

Respond to the biodiversity and climate crises with urgency, leverage partnerships to amplify our impact

## GROW CAPACITY TO IDENTIFY & CARRY OUT RESTORATION PROJECTS

To meet the mounting challenges ahead, we must scale up our efforts to address biodiversity loss and the impacts of climate change. The Department will expand the pipeline of potential habitat restoration projects across the Commonwealth to build climate resilience and support biodiversity conservation. We will incorporate climate considerations into all of our ecological restoration and land acquisition projects.

## COLLABORATE WITH PARTNERS TO INCREASE CAPACITY, KNOWLEDGE, & IMPACT

To successfully address the climate and biodiversity crises, the Department must create and leverage strong partnerships to advance our common goals. To achieve this, we will strengthen and expand our collaborations, not only here in the Commonwealth, but with multistate and regional partners.

## WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO STREAMLINE PERMITTING

Given our limited jurisdictions and resources, the Department recognizes a need to collaborate with municipal, state, and federal agencies to improve and streamline permitting pathways and guidelines to accelerate the pace of ecological restoration, climate mitigation, and climate adaptation projects.

## SUPPORT CLEAN ENERGY SITING WHILE PROTECTING NATURE

The Department has a responsibility to protect and provide appropriate access to its trust resources. We will actively participate in the development of revised siting laws and regulations to ensure processes include adequate review for the sustained protection of our entrusted resources.

## GOAL #5

# Lead by Example

Take urgent steps to decarbonize and increase resilience of our facilities

## BUILD CAPACITY TO DECARBONIZE & INCREASE RESILIENCE

The Department is committed to doing our part to achieve the Commonwealth's net zero emissions and climate goals. To achieve these goals, we will increase our internal capacity and coordination. We will collaborate with EEA's Leading by Example (LBE) program to develop educational materials for our staff on the goals, directives, and requirements established by LBE directives.

## ESTABLISH ROADMAP TO ACHIEVE LBE TARGETS FOR 2030, 2040, & 2050

As part of the Department's commitment to decarbonize our facilities, make them more resilient, and convert our fleets to electric wherever possible, we will complete an energy audit and emissions assessment for each Department-owned facility, develop decarbonization and resilience plans for all facilities, and create an overall roadmap to transition to a clean energy future.



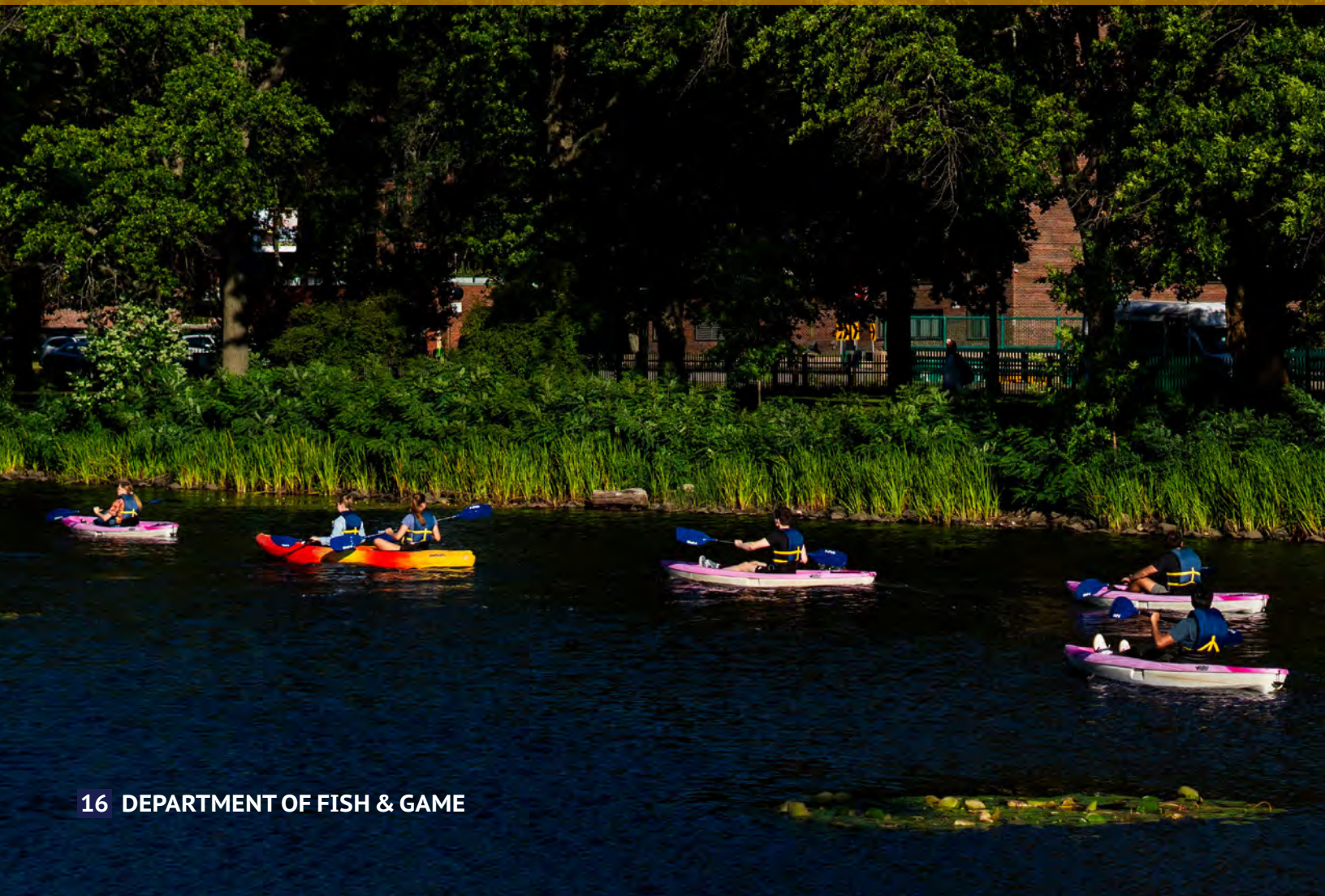


# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

**“The people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose.”**

*Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens.





## **Stark disparities exist in access to nature and its benefits—we must center equity in everything we do.**

**We must act with urgency to right injustice. Promoting environmental justice will have innumerable benefits for community wellness, quality of life, food security and resilience, and physical and mental health. Through meaningful engagement, collaboration, and partnership with Environmental Justice populations and Indigenous peoples, we can ensure all have access and opportunity to deepen appreciation, belonging, and connection with the natural world.**

### **CHALLENGE**

Environmental Justice populations have traditionally not had equal access to the Commonwealth's abundant natural resources, equal opportunity to engage in their stewardship, nor equal access to the life-giving benefits that nature provides.

Today, Environmental Justice populations are more likely to face disproportionate exposure to pollution and unjust health outcomes, more likely to experience food insecurity, more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and less likely to have access to greenspaces for recreation, well-being, and mental health benefits.

Indigenous peoples and tribes experience the same marginalization and many of the same barriers as Environmental Justice populations, even though identifying as Indigenous or being a member of a tribe is not an Environmental Justice-defined population characteristic.

**Lowest income neighborhoods have HALF AS MUCH PROTECTED LAND as highest income neighborhoods <sup>10</sup>**

**Communities with the highest proportions of people of color have LESS THAN 60% AS MUCH PROTECTED LAND <sup>11</sup>**



**A SENSE OF BELONGING** We strive to connect people with nature by creating new, inclusive opportunities for outdoor recreation.

### **OPPORTUNITY**

We know nature is essential for human health, well-being, and flourishing communities—as the Department responsible for stewarding our natural resources, we are perfectly positioned to take action to address environmental injustice and ensure all people have equitable access to the benefits of nature.

Connecting people with nature through activities such as fishing, hunting, boating, hiking, and nature observation will not only improve physical and mental health outcomes, but help all people feel a sense of belonging in nature. We will create inclusive and welcoming outdoor recreation opportunities, reduce barriers to access, and connect people with nature through community-led initiatives and engagement. We will continue to develop relationships of respect and engagement with tribes and Indigenous peoples to protect, connect, restore, and sustain lands and waters within the purview of the Department.

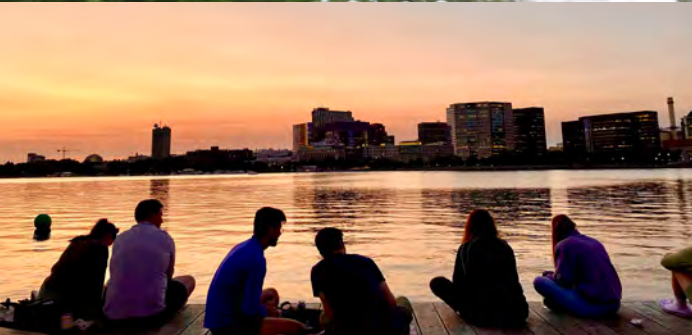




## GOAL #1

### Strengthen Capacity to Advance Environmental Justice

Grow our capacity to build meaningful relationships, listen and learn, and ultimately better serve all communities



#### ASSESS CURRENT CAPACITY IN THE DEPARTMENT

To successfully and meaningfully engage with environmental justice communities and advance environmental justice principles and practices within our Department, we must first assess and understand our current capacity and knowledge. Once complete, this assessment will guide and inform our work, programs, projects, and practices as we implement our strategic plan.

#### ENHANCE CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING

By deepening our understanding of environmental justice principles and practices, we can be better positioned and prepared to successfully and meaningfully engage with environmental justice communities. To achieve this, we will organize and complete tailored environmental justice trainings for staff, volunteers, and members of Boards, Commissions, and similar entities affiliated with our Department's Divisions, with guidance and assistance from EEA.



## GOAL #2

# Advance Equity Through Improved Communication, Engagement, & Access to Information & Opportunities

Break down barriers through increased language access, improved communication, and inclusive community engagement

## IMPROVE COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT WITH EJ POPULATIONS

Equity, in part, is dependent on accessibility. Accessibility includes access to information as well as access to meaningful opportunities to participate in Department programs, efforts, and actions. To advance equity and accessibility, we will develop tools to support environmental justice organization and community leader participation, enhance inclusivity in regulatory promulgation, and effectively engage and communicate with diverse audiences.

## INTEGRATE EJ PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES INTO DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

To ensure equitable access to our programs, as well as equitable distribution of program benefits, we will incorporate and enhance the scoring of environmental justice principles and considerations in our grants, restoration programs, conservation projects, and recreation projects.

## IMPROVE LANGUAGE ACCESS FOR ALL

Making Department services and resources more accessible and equitable for people with limited English proficiency and non-English speakers is a critical first step in addressing environmental injustice. We will work to fully implement the Department's Language Access Plan and develop and implement an informational and welcoming signage and postings plan to ensure our Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and public access facilities are approachable and welcoming to environmental justice community members.





## GOAL #3

### Improve Access to Nature & its Benefits

Ensure all people have access to properties we steward, create new outdoor recreation opportunities in environmental justice communities, and boost food security for all with better access to wild foods



#### IMPROVE ACCESS TO WMAs & PUBLIC ACCESS FACILITIES

Environmental justice communities often face disparities in the availability of and access to nature. To help address this, the Department will raise awareness around and increase visibility of existing WMAs and public access facilities for these populations and develop pilot programs to improve accessibility, increase use, and create a sense of welcoming and belonging at these facilities and sites.

#### CREATE NEW RECREATION & PUBLIC ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

Public recreation sites, waterfront access, or access to Department restoration projects are often geographically disconnected from environmental justice communities. We will work to reduce this isolation by identifying and creating, where feasible, new opportunities to access nature and its benefits in or near environmental justice communities.

#### INCREASE FOOD SECURITY & ACCESS TO WILD FOODS

Environmental justice communities often face barriers to accessing healthy, affordable, nutritious food. The Department will boost food security by exposing more people to the possibilities and benefit of healthy foods available through fishing and hunting. We will work to increase access to and awareness of affordable, fresh fish and shellfish through partnerships with the commercial fishing community.



**SUSTAINABLE WILD FOODS** We will connect people with wild foods, promote fresh, local seafood, and expand Hunters Share the Harvest.





## GOAL #4

# Engage Indigenous People in Spirit of Reciprocity & Respect

Cultivate meaningful relationships with Massachusetts tribes

## ADVANCE RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MASSACHUSETTS TRIBES

To advance a meaningful relationship of respect and engagement with Massachusetts tribes, the Department will provide training to all staff on the history and cultural identities of Indigenous peoples of Massachusetts. We will also participate in leadership-to-leadership conversations to identify areas of common values and interests to protect, connect, restore, and sustain lands and waters.

## IDENTIFY SHARED AREAS OF INTEREST & FOSTER COLLABORATION

The Department manages resources Massachusetts tribes might wish to access for traditional and cultural uses. We will work with tribes to jointly identify these resources and develop a program and process to implement Cultural Use Agreements and Cultural Respect Easements.





# RELEVANCE, VISIBILITY, & CAPACITY

The Department of Fish and Game is responsible for the conservation, management, and restoration of the Commonwealth's marine and freshwater fisheries, wildlife, and their habitats, and for the promotion of wildlife-dependent recreation including fishing, hunting, boating, and wildlife observation. This comprehensive mandate is critically important to all Massachusetts residents and visitors, yet many people are not aware of our Department's mission and programs.





## By connecting more deeply with the people we serve, we will build our collective capacity to achieve our goals.

Through our Department's communications, educational programming, and outreach and through working collaboratively with both traditional and new partners, we can create a broad and strong constituency committed to the conservation and restoration of Massachusetts natural resources.

### CHALLENGE

According to the landmark public attitudes survey conducted in 2022, more than two-thirds of Massachusetts residents believe we need to do more to conserve land, water, and wildlife habitat.<sup>12</sup> Yet, most people do not know that this is the core mission of our Department.

Without public awareness and support, we will be unable to accelerate our efforts to conserve biodiversity, build climate resilience, and achieve environmental justice at the speed and scale required of this moment. To expand the impact of our critical work, we must ensure our mission is relevant and known to the people of Massachusetts, increase the visibility of our programs and projects, and grow our collective capacity.

**MORE THAN  $\frac{2}{3}$   
OF MASSACHUSETTS  
RESIDENTS BELIEVE  
WE NEED TO DO  
MORE TO CONSERVE  
LAND, WATER, &  
WILDLIFE HABITAT**



### OPPORTUNITY

By connecting more deeply with the people we serve through strengthened partnerships, outreach and education, communication, and capacity and funding, we can create a lasting movement for nature.

Connection with nature through public access and outdoor recreation is a key motivator for inspiring people to engage in stewardship of the natural world around us. By strengthening existing conservation partnerships and fostering new connections, we leverage the strength of our community to expand the impact of our projects and programs.

Through accessible communication and outreach, including digital information, signage, and outreach materials, we will better inform the people we serve and inspire them to take action for nature. By providing new participatory science, educational, volunteer stewardship, and advocacy opportunities, we will forge stronger connections and conservation outcomes.



<sup>12</sup> Massachusetts Public Attitudes Survey by Responsive Management, MassWildlife, Mass Audubon, Trout Unlimited, and The Nature Conservancy (2020)





### GOAL #1

## Connect All People With Nature Through Outreach, Engagement, & Education

Create opportunities to engage with nature through partnerships, outreach, and education

### CONNECT CORE CONSTITUENTS & NEW AUDIENCES WITH NATURE THROUGH STRONG, SUPPORTIVE, MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

While our Department is ultimately responsible for the protection, restoration, and management of Massachusetts wildlife and habitats, our success in achieving this mission is dependent on strong partnerships with conservation organizations, hunting and fishing groups, commercial fishing organizations, and others. To achieve the bold goals in our strategic plan, we will strengthen partnerships with traditional constituent groups and foster mutually beneficial partnerships with environmental justice, Indigenous, and other community-based organizations.

### IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT & ACCESS TO INFORMATION

People who engage in outdoor recreation and read and learn about nature and wildlife make strong partners for conservation and other Department priorities. With almost all Massachusetts residents using digital technology daily, we will work to improve our information resources and use innovative technologies to engage the public regarding wildlife, nature, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

### GROW EDUCATIONAL & PARTICIPATORY SCIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Environmental education is critical to the success of our conservation efforts. We will strengthen and expand Department-sponsored educational programs and participatory science opportunities for hunters, anglers, and others with an interest in wildlife and nature to engage more people from core constituents and new audiences.



## GOAL #2

### Grow Public Awareness of the Department

Effectively communicate who we are and what we do with the people we serve

#### STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION & CAPACITY

Fostering collaboration among Department communications team members and coordination with the EEA communications team will enhance communications efforts and amplify our conservation messaging. To strengthen our coordination and capacity, we will support peer-to-peer learning, professional development, and media training of team members and other key professionals, in addition to identifying and addressing any gaps in communications staff capacity.

#### ESTABLISH A CLEAR, COHESIVE, & RECOGNIZABLE IDENTITY FOR THE DEPARTMENT

By developing a modern brand identity and a refined mission statement consistent with our mission and strategic goals, we will better reflect our priorities and the needs of our diverse constituencies. Adopting a new Department name that reflects our expansive mission is also an important component of this rebranding.

#### CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Developing a comprehensive communications plan is necessary to effectively connect the Department's work to the values, issues, and interests of all Massachusetts residents. As part of this communications plan, we will work to identify the messages and ideas that resonate with the public we serve and how best to connect the Department's work with these interests.

## GOAL #3

### Increase Capacity to Implement our Strategic Plan

Foster ongoing coordination within the Department and secure the necessary resources to implement our strategic plan

#### INCREASE FUNDING FROM EXISTING & NEW SOURCES

Achieving the goals of our strategic plan will require additional financial investment. The Department will explore new, innovative, dedicated funding mechanisms, aggressively pursue grants, federal funds, and foundation support, as well as work to secure increased operating and capital funding to support identified programs and priorities.

#### INCREASE CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT THIS WORK


To ensure we have the necessary capacity to carry out this strategic plan, the Department will analyze staffing needs and use our strategic plan to guide annual spending plans, hiring plans, and staff retention efforts.

#### INCREASE STAFF CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT

The strategic planning process brought staff from the Commissioner's Office and all Divisions together on a regular basis for the first time in memory. Staff involved in the process expressed their appreciation for the collaborative spirit and peer learning opportunities, and the value of working together to achieve common conservation goals. To foster and strengthen this foundation of collaboration, we will continue to convene intra-Department teams to discuss and assess progress on achieving strategic plan results, highlight and celebrate successes, discuss challenges, and identify necessary adjustments.







**CONNECTIONS** | *Working Together for Nature*

# ONWARD

The Department of Fish and Game's five-year strategic plan **Connections: Working Together for Nature** establishes a unifying vision for our Department—focusing our critical work on solutions at the intersection of **biodiversity, climate change, and environmental justice**.

**As we look forward to putting this plan into action, one thing is clear.** Achieving the goals we have outlined in our strategic plan is critical to the Commonwealth's future, but we cannot do it alone. Our Department must leverage the necessary resources and grow our capacity to respond with urgency to the crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and environmental injustice that threaten our wildlife and way of life. We must foster meaningful partnerships at the federal, state, municipal, and community level to scale up our efforts and impact in order to address these challenges. **We hope you will join us!**

## APPENDIX: EXPLORE OUR FULL STRATEGIC PLAN

See our full goals, objectives, actions, and key results in the detailed charts below that include the lead agency, and expected timeline.





CONNECTIONS | *Working Together for Nature*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Thank you to all who played a role in the development of our five-year strategic plan.**

**This collective effort would not have been possible without the significant contributions of our dedicated staff**—especially members of our Steering Committee, Project Team, and Working Groups. We are especially grateful for the commitment of Division Directors Douglas Cameron, Beth Lambert, Daniel McKiernan, and Mark Tisa, the collaboration of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board and Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission, the support of the Healey-Driscoll Administration and Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, and the leadership of Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Tom O'Shea.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR STRATEGIC PLAN TEAM

Mike Armstrong  
Kate Bentsen  
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Douglas Cameron  
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Jesse Leddick  
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Holden Sparacino  
Jennifer Sulla  
Mark Tisa  
Amanda Veinotte  
Jason Zimmer





## CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH



### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents. Through the stewardship of open space, protection of environmental resources, and enhancement of clean energy, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs works tirelessly to make Massachusetts a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.



### DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

The Department of Fish and Game is an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. We work to preserve the state's natural resources. We exercise responsibility over the Commonwealth's marine and freshwater fisheries, wildlife species, plants, and natural communities, as well as the habitats that support them. The Department has four divisions: Division of Ecological Restoration, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Division of Marine Fisheries, and Office of Fishing and Boating Access.



### DIVISION OF ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Division of Ecological Restoration restores and protects rivers, wetlands, and watersheds in Massachusetts for the benefit of people and the environment.



### DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

MassWildlife is responsible for the conservation of freshwater fish and wildlife in the Commonwealth, including endangered plants and animals, and restores, protects, and manages land for wildlife to thrive and for people to enjoy.



### DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

Division of Marine Fisheries strives to manage the Commonwealth's living marine resources in balance with the environment resulting in sustainable fisheries, stable availability of diverse, healthy seafood, and enriched opportunities that support our coastal culture.



### OFFICE OF FISHING & BOATING ACCESS

Office of Fishing and Boating Access is responsible for providing access to public waters in Massachusetts, including great ponds, rivers, and coastal waters. The division constructs and maintains boat access sites, shore fishing areas, and sport fishing piers at more than 300 locations.





## MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

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**GOAL #1 Make Room to Move****Objective 1.1: Restore and Connect Aquatic Habitats****Action 1.1.1: Restore and reconnect floodplains<sup>1</sup> to one another and adjacent uplands, waterways, and wetlands through land acquisition and ecological restoration projects.**

Key Results	Lead
A process for identifying and prioritizing ecologically valuable floodplains is developed by January 2026 through GIS analysis. Data sources for this analysis may include data on land use (e.g., National Land Cover Database), Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) Priority Natural Communities, Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), BioMap, MassWildlife Fish Community Assessment metrics, longitudinal (i.e., upstream/downstream) and lateral (i.e., away from water's edge) connectivity, and climate change projections, among other factors.	MassWildlife
Acquisition and reconnection of ecologically valuable floodplains and adjacent uplands, waterways, and wetlands is included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2026.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
3,000 acres of ecologically valuable floodplain habitat are identified, acquired, restored, and/or reconnected by June 2030.	DER, MassWildlife

**Action 1.1.2: Reconnect BioMap Aquatic Core habitats, climate vulnerable habitats, habitats with high native species diversity, and climate refugia to allow fish and other aquatic organisms access to suitable habitats.**

Key Results	Lead
Priority areas on agency conservation land where restoration will enhance aquatic connectivity to cold- and coolwater climate refugia are identified by June 2026.	MassWildlife
3 - 5 identified priority areas on agency conservation land are restored by June 2030 to increase groundwater infiltration and enhance aquatic connectivity to cold- and coolwater climate refugia.	MassWildlife
6 Department-owned dams are removed by June 2030 that restore connectivity and high priority habitat, such as Coldwater Fishery Resources or migratory fish habitat.	MassWildlife
Working strategically with partners and agencies, high priority streams to target for stream crossing replacements that enhance regional and landscape-scale aquatic connectivity are identified by DER's Stream Continuity Program by June 2030.	DER

**Action 1.1.3: Improve diadromous fish species access through barrier removal and effective fish passage structures.**

Key Results	Lead
In cooperation with partners, policies to support integration of fish passage with other essential infrastructure improvements by towns and transportation authorities are developed by June 2026 and 8 cooperative fishway improvement projects are completed by June 2030.	DMF
3 projects of high regional significance in large and mid-sized coastal watersheds that support cooperative efforts to remediate diadromous fish passage impediments through effective fish passage structures or dam removal are designed and permitted by June 2027 and completed by June 2030.	DMF

<sup>1</sup> Floodplains are any land areas susceptible to being inundated by floodwaters from any source, including riparian areas along rivers and streams, and other areas subject to periodic inundation.



**Action 1.1.4: Restore and connect coastal streams and tidal wetlands through land acquisition and ecological restoration projects that create future salt marsh migration opportunities, improve ecosystem function, store carbon, allow tidal exchange, and improve fish passage.**

Key Results	Lead
Acquisition of inland areas adjacent to salt marshes is included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025. SWAP, BioMap CNL Coastal Adaptation Areas, and CZM's Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) are used in this identification and prioritization process.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
In collaboration with project partners, up to 10 new salt marsh restoration opportunities are assessed using DER's tidal restoration database, 6 new projects are advanced through assessment and design, up to 5 existing projects are constructed, and long-term monitoring on 6 constructed projects is completed by June 2030.	DER
In collaboration with project partners, 5,000 acres of salt marsh are protected, restored, and/or reconnected by June 2030.	MassWildlife

**Objective 1.2: Connect Key Corridors and Key Landscape**
**Action 1.2.1: Prioritize landscape-scale conservation projects<sup>1</sup> and land acquisition projects within identified key corridors and key landscapes that connect adjacent habitats or existing conservation lands, or that create contiguous or “stepping-stone”<sup>2</sup> corridors that support and facilitate species migration, movements, and habitats shifts resulting from climate change.**

Key Results	Lead
Methodology for identifying key corridors and key landscapes is developed by June 2025 and key corridors and key landscapes are identified by June 2026 in coordination with the Resilient Lands Initiative and statewide conservation priorities.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Identified key corridors and key landscapes are included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by December 2026.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Opportunities to collaborate with conservation partners on landscape-scale conservation projects within key corridors and key landscapes are identified and evaluated within each Wildlife District by June 2027.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
At least 75% of all land acquisition projects completed by MassWildlife are within an identified key corridor or key landscape, abut existing conservation land, or are designated BioMap Core Habitat by June 2027.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Five landscape-scale conservation projects within identified key corridors and key landscapes are completed by June 2030.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife

<sup>1</sup> Landscape-scale conservation projects are those that have substantial impact across broad and diverse habitats, meeting the lifecycle needs of even highly mobile species in Massachusetts. This can be accomplished by conserving large land areas with diverse habitats or by strategic connection of existing conservation lands.

<sup>2</sup> Stepping-stone corridors are a series of habitats that act as dispersal corridors, even while being spatially separated.



## GOAL #2 Build Climate Resilience for Nature & People

### Objective 2.1: Build Resilience in Coastal and Marine Habitats

#### Action 2.1.1: Enhance and expand upon regional efforts to identify, restore, protect critical marine habitats, manage fisheries resources, and promote sustainable fisheries.

Key Results	Lead
In collaboration with regional governmental and non-governmental partners, a marine water quality monitoring network is developed for the purposes of coordinating efforts, centralizing data streams, and enhancing access to a broad array of marine resource managers and researchers by December 2026.	DMF
Use and potential effectiveness of marine spatial management as means to enhance biodiversity in MA waters is assessed by June 2028 and a comprehensive assessment of cumulative effects of fisheries closures is evaluated by June 2028.	DMF
In collaboration with the Northeast Regional Ocean Council, the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), and other partners, the Northeast Ocean Data Portal is expanded to include additional data streams for Massachusetts state waters including water quality, shellfish classification areas, fish resources, fishing activity, management areas, and protected species. All additional data streams are fully incorporated and routinely updated by June 2030.	DMF
In collaboration with DEP, CZM, and other partners, salt marsh, marine submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and marine macroalgae habitats are explicitly mapped and inventoried by June 2030.	DMF

#### Action 2.1.2: Increase coastal resilience through land acquisition, regulation, habitat management, and ecological restoration projects, including those at public access sites.

Key Results	Lead
The utility, feasibility, and applicability of Living Shorelines, including the utilization of native shellfish species, such as oysters, ribbed mussels, and blue mussels to increase coastal resilience, are evaluated for all the state's coasts by September 2024 and included in the MA Resilient Coasts initiative.	DMF
Sea level rise projections are incorporated into designs for all coastal boat ramp and fishing access site improvement and construction projects by January 2025.	DMF, OFBA
Acquisition of salt marshes, sandplain grasslands, and coastal plain ponds are included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025. BioMap Critical Natural Landscape (CNL) Coastal Adaptation Areas, SWAP, and CZM's Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model (SLAMM) are used in this identification and prioritization process.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Guidance to evaluate and replace culverts and bridges that are currently on freshwater streams but will experience impacts of sea level rise in the next 50 to 75 years is developed by June 2027.	DER
Opportunities to collaborate with partner agencies and programs on buy-back and managed retreat programs for private landowners are explored and evaluated by June 2027.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Up to 3 partnership-based culvert or bridge pilot projects focused on building ecological and community resilience to future sea level rise impacts are advanced through assessment and design by June 2027, an additional 3 projects are advanced through assessment and design by June 2030, and one project is constructed by June 2030.	DER
Recommendations for management of coastal plain ponds and sandplain grasslands migration and habitat restoration are developed and made available to land managers and the public by June 2028.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
The number of restored acres of eelgrass in state waters has increased by 50% above the August 2024 baseline by June 2030.	DMF



**Action 2.1.3: Increase monitoring and response capacity to address emerging biotoxin and ocean acidification impacts, protect public health, and support the Massachusetts shellfish and aquaculture industry.**

Key Results	Lead
ResilientMass funding to support the Coastal Marine Biotoxin Monitoring and Seafood Safety program is secured in July 2024.	DMF
4 additional staff are trained to utilize High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) to detect and manage Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) by June 2025.	DMF
In collaboration with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Cape Cod Conservation District, shellfish growing area pollution source surveys are leveraged to identify potential NRCS stormwater remediation sites by December 2025.	DMF
In collaboration with the aquaculture industry, municipal shellfish departments, and Sea Grant extension agents, monitoring tools and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for addressing ocean acidification impacts are developed and implemented by June 2030.	DMF
In collaboration with the USDA, data to evaluate geographic distribution and trends in infectious shellfish diseases, such as neoplasia, dermo, and juvenile oyster disease, is collected by June 2030 to inform shellfish transplanting management practices within the state.	DMF
HAB monitoring frequency/stations are increased by 25% over December 2024 baseline by December 2030.	DMF

**Objective 2.2: Build Resilience in Aquatic Habitats**
**Action 2.2.1: Improve ecological health, reduce public hazards, and increase the climate resilience of human and natural communities through stream barrier upgrades and removal.**

Key Results	Lead
Prioritization and initial planning for all proposed agency-owned dam removals are completed by June 2026.	MassWildlife
In collaboration with project partners, up to 15 dams are identified, assessed, and prioritized for potential removal, conceptual designs are developed for these 15 dams. Up to 11 dams are removed by June 2030.	DER
30 culvert or small bridge replacement projects supported by DER and other partners are advanced through assessment and/or design by June 2030.	DER
8 projects supported by DER and other partners to replace undersized or deteriorated culverts or small bridges in areas of high ecological value with safer, more resilient structures that better meet the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards and reduce projected flooding risks, are completed by June 2030.	DER
6 Department-owned dams in poor/unsafe condition are removed by June 2030.	MassWildlife
2 agency-owned dams that are not candidates for removal, are classified as significant hazard, and rated as fair/poor/unsafe are rehabilitated/ repaired and brought to safe/satisfactory condition by June 2030.	MassWildlife

**Action 2.2.2: Reduce direct stormwater runoff on DFG properties and public access facilities.**

Key Results	Lead
BMPs, including natural permeation and filtration through the construction of rain gardens, native plants, bioretention basins, etc., are incorporated into all agency-owned facility and public access facility improvement and construction projects by January 2030.	DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA



**Action 2.2.3 Reduce use of road salt and sand near BioMap Aquatic Core and other sensitive habitats (e.g., climate refugia).**

Key Results	Lead
Full participation in the Interagency Road Salt Program is achieved by December 2025.	MassWildlife
BioMap Aquatic Core and other sensitive habitat areas most vulnerable to road salt are identified by January 2028 utilizing best available habitat and species data, including fish, invertebrate, and rare species data.	MassWildlife
In collaboration with the MA Department of Transportation (DOT), BMPs are developed by January 2029 for addressing road salt and sand impacts to BioMap Aquatic Core and other sensitive habitats.	MassWildlife
In collaboration with MA DOT, outreach efforts are implemented by January 2030 to fully engage municipal and private entities in the use of BMPs for salt treatment and sand use near BioMap Aquatic Core and other sensitive habitats.	MassWildlife

**Objective 2.3: Build Resilience in Wetland Habitats****Action 2.3.1: Protect and restore function and integrity to calcareous fen natural communities (i.e., distinctive peat-accumulating wetlands in inland environments), which are critical to supporting highly specialized and often vulnerable species.**

Key Results	Lead
Acquisition of calcareous fens and supplying waters are included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
A cooperative stewardship plan, created in partnership with adjacent landowners to the Agawam Lake WMA, including the Mohican Stockbridge Munsee Tribe, is established by December 2026.	MassWildlife
Stressors (e.g., legacy beaver dams) are identified for basin and sloping fens by June 2026, and management actions to reestablish disturbance regimes (e.g., prescribed fire) and other natural conditions are identified by June 2027 and implemented at 8 calcareous fen sites on agency conservation lands and agency-managed lands by June 2030.	MassWildlife
Invasive plants are removed, and native vegetation restored, at 8 calcareous fen sites by June 2030.	MassWildlife

**Action 2.3.2: Protect and restore function and integrity to acidic fen natural communities (i.e., distinctive peat-accumulating wetlands in coastal environments), which are critical to supporting highly specialized and often vulnerable species.**

Key Results	Lead
Acquisition of acidic fens and supplying waters are included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Acquisition of lands adjacent to acidic fens, to allow for habitat migration and retreat from sea level rise, are included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Stressors (e.g., legacy beaver dams) are identified for acidic fen sites by June 2026, and management actions to reestablish disturbance regimes (e.g., prescribed fire) and other natural conditions are identified by June 2027 and implemented at 4 acidic fen sites on agency conservation lands and agency-managed lands by June 2030.	MassWildlife
Invasive plants are removed, and native vegetation restored, at 4 acidic fen sites on agency conservation lands by June 2030.	MassWildlife



**Action 2.3.3: Protect and restore function and integrity to Atlantic White Cedar wetlands, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change, including sea level rise.**

Key Results	Lead
Acquisition of Atlantic White Cedar wetlands are included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Acquisition of lands adjacent to Atlantic White Cedar wetlands, to allow for habitat migration and retreat from sea level rise and/or to protect hydrologic integrity (e.g., groundwater), are included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Stressors (e.g., hydrologic barriers) are identified for Atlantic White Cedar wetland sites by June 2026, and management actions to reestablish disturbance regimes (e.g., prescribed fire) and other natural conditions are identified by June 2027 and implemented at 3 Atlantic White Cedar wetland sites on agency conservation lands by June 2030.	MassWildlife
Invasive plants are removed, and native vegetation restored, at 3 Atlantic White Cedar wetland sites on agency conservation lands by June 2030.	MassWildlife
Conditions for tree regeneration are improved by alleviating existing stressors, including deer browsing and canopy closure, at 3 Atlantic White Cedar wetland sites on agency conservation lands by June 2030.	MassWildlife
A seed collection program for greenhouse germination is established by June 2030 that contributes to regional partnership efforts to reestablish Atlantic White Cedar wetlands at appropriate restoration sites.	MassWildlife
Working in partnership with tribal members, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Indigenous cultural practices, and the importance and stewardship of Atlantic White Cedar to Indigenous Nations, including the Nipmuc and Wampanoag Nations, are recognized, incorporated, and supported in management actions on agency conservation lands by June 2030.	MassWildlife

**Objective 2.4: Build Resilience in Terrestrial Habitats**
**Action 2.4.1: Increase resilience of climate-sensitive terrestrial habitats on agency conservation land through targeted management actions.**

Key Results	Lead
Climate-sensitive terrestrial habitats on agency conservation lands are assessed for climate change vulnerability (e.g., longer growing seasons, reduced soil moisture, potential for flash droughts) by June 2026.	MassWildlife
NHESP Natural Communities database is updated to identify and verify gaps in spatial data by June 2026.	MassWildlife
Targeted management actions to increase resilience of the most climate vulnerable habitats are identified by June 2027.	MassWildlife
The viability of using genetic rescue and assisted migrations to increase forest resiliency is explored by June 2027.	MassWildlife

**Action 2.4.2: Restore and manage fire-influenced habitats to increase resilience to climate stressors (e.g., wildfire, invasive species).**

Key Results	Lead
Evaluation of all fire-influenced habitats vulnerable to climate stressors using GIS analysis and ground truthing to identify critical management actions is completed by June 2027.	MassWildlife
Restoration and management actions to mitigate and monitor climate stressors, including invasive control, mechanical treatments, and prescribed fire, are implemented at 4 fire-influenced habitats by June 2028.	MassWildlife
Tools, such as UAV (e.g., drones) and ground-based LiDAR, are used to assess current and long-term trends of community structure and composition and shifts in species distributions on fire-influenced habitats by June 2028.	MassWildlife



In collaboration with other land managers, restoration of fire dependent ecosystems is increased by partnering on prescribed burns and leveraging new and existing agreements, such as the National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy and the U.S Forest Service Cooperative Wildland Fire Agreement and Stafford Act.	MassWildlife
Prescribed fire on agency conservation lands and agency-managed lands is increased from 1,300 acres per year to 5,000 acres per year by June 2030.	MassWildlife
<b>Action 2.4.3: Restore grasslands by converting existing fields to native species composition where appropriate (e.g., warm-season grasses) to increase drought tolerance, support native wildlife, and reduce need for intensive management.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Equipment to collect seeds from existing native, warm season-grasses is acquired by June 2025 to provide a renewable, local seed source for future grassland restoration projects.	MassWildlife
Fields on 12 Wildlife Management Areas are converted to native grasses by June 2030.	MassWildlife
Prescribed fire management plans and schedules are developed on each newly restored native grassland site by December 2030.	MassWildlife
<b>Action 2.4.4: Protect existing high elevation spruce/fir/Northern hardwood communities, which are limited in Massachusetts and particularly vulnerable to climate change.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Acquisition of high elevation spruce/fir/Northern hardwood communities is included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Agency conservation lands within the high elevation spruce/fir/Northern hardwood community type are assessed for soil loss and disturbance threats from roads/trails/other uses by June 2026 and threat remediation plans are developed by June 2027 and implemented by June 2030.	MassWildlife
A response plan to invasive plants that threaten high elevation spruce/fir/Northern hardwood communities, particularly those that impact mature trees (e.g., Hardy Kiwi, bittersweet), is developed by June 2027 and quickly implemented on agency conservation lands when an infestation is detected.	MassWildlife
Long-term monitoring protocols for high elevation spruce/fir/Northern hardwood communities, including associated specialists, are developed by June 2027 and implemented beginning July 2030.	MassWildlife
<b>Action 2.4.5: Protect existing rich mesic forests, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change and other disturbances.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Acquisition of rich mesic forests is included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Agency conservation lands within the rich mesic forest community type are assessed for threats from recreational uses, invasive species, etc. by June 2026 and threat remediation plans are developed by June 2027 and implemented by June 2030.	MassWildlife
Access points to and through rich mesic forest areas on agency conservation lands are catalogued and the most sensitive and vulnerable sites are identified by June 2026.	MassWildlife
Physical barriers or other means to discourage illegal OHV and mountain bike use in the most sensitive and vulnerable rich mesic forest sites on agency conservation lands are implemented by June 2027.	MassWildlife
A response plan to invasive plants, pests, and pathogens that threaten rich mesic forests, particularly those that impact mature trees, is developed by June 2027 in coordination with the Department of Conservation and Recreation and quickly implemented on agency conservation lands when an infestation is detected.	MassWildlife



Long-term monitoring protocols for target species, community structure and composition, and stressors, such as earthworm invasions, are developed by June 2027 and implemented at all rich mesic forest sites on agency conservation land by June 2030.	MassWildlife
<b>Action 2.4.6: Protect existing pitch pine, oak and pine barrens, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change and other disturbances.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Acquisition of key tracts associated with MassWildlife pine barren sites is included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
A response plan for invasive pests and pathogens, including Southern Pine Beetle, that threaten pine barren sites is developed by June 2027 and quickly implemented on agency conservation lands and agency-managed lands when an infestation is detected.	MassWildlife
Prescribed fire and mechanical treatments continue at least 8 sites from 2024-2030 as needed to restore and maintain pine barren habitat integrity.	MassWildlife
Long-term monitoring protocols for target species, community structure and composition, and stressors, such as earthworm invasions, are developed by June 2027 and implemented at all pine barren sites on agency conservation land by June 2030.	MassWildlife
<b>Objective 2.5: Build Resilience through Effective Invasive Plant Management</b>	
<b>Action 2.5.1: Prioritize proactive management of invasive plants on agency conservation lands.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Rapid assessment and mapping protocols to identify existing invasive plant hotspots and predicted locations of new invasive plants introductions on agency conservation lands are developed and adopted by June 2027.	MassWildlife
Response plans for invasive plants are developed by June 2027 and quickly implemented on agency conservation lands when an invasion is detected.	MassWildlife
Management and monitoring of invasive plants on agency conservation lands and abutting lands is prioritized in day-to-day operations, through allocations of funding for certified applicators and incorporation of invasive plant control into WMA management plans, beginning no later than July 2027.	MassWildlife

### GOAL #3 Sequester & Store Carbon with Nature

<b>Objective 3.1: Sequester and Store Carbon in Marine and Estuarine Habitats</b>	
<b>Action 3.1.1: Develop a greenhouse gas inventory (GGI) for salt marsh, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and marine macroalgae.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Methodology for quantifying greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including carbon dioxide and methane, on agency conservation lands and agency-managed lands is established by June 2027.	MassWildlife
Salt marsh, marine submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and marine macroalgae habitat mapping and inventory completed by June 2030 (see Action 2.1.1) are consistent with the IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories.	DMF
Results of habitat mapping, inventory, and GHG emission quantification analysis are used by June 2030 to identify specific conservation or management actions for marine and estuarine habitats that could help contribute to GHG emission reduction targets outlined in the Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050. <sup>1</sup>	DMF, MassWildlife

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2050-clean-energy-and-climate-plan/download>



**Action 3.1.2: Develop and implement a blue carbon incentives program to support the statewide vision for carbon sequestration and coastal resilience through salt marsh fee acquisitions and/or Conservation Restriction acquisitions, allowing for large-scale restoration and permanent protection.**

Key Results	Lead
Funding to support development and implementation of the blue carbon program is secured by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office
A carbon accounting methodology for verifying blue carbon sequestration rates based on the best-available science and best practices from other blue carbon initiatives globally is established by December 2026.	Commissioner's Office
Eligibility requirements for participation, including transfer of carbon rights, payment schedules for restoration, and contract terms, are developed by December 2026.	Commissioner's Office
Educational information and technical assistance on blue carbon program options and opportunities is developed and deployed to partners and salt marsh landowners by January 2027.	Commissioner's Office
4,000 - 6,500 acres of salt marsh are enrolled in the blue carbon program by June 2030.	Commissioner's Office

**Objective 3.2: Sequester and Store Carbon in Freshwater Wetland Habitats**
**Action 3.2.1: Increase carbon sequestration in freshwater wetlands through land acquisition, ecological restoration, and habitat management projects.**

Key Results	Lead
Acquisition of BioMap Aquatic Core and wetland and riparian buffers are included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Aquatic habitats are fully integrated into agency habitat management plans (e.g., State Wildlife Action Plan) and programs, including the reintroduction of small and large wood to support habitat complexity and healthy soils in land adjacent to aquatic habitats, by December 2025.	MassWildlife
Methodology for quantifying greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including carbon dioxide and methane, on agency conservation lands and agency-managed lands is established by June 2027.	MassWildlife
Results of GHG emission quantification analysis are used by June 2028 to identify specific management actions for aquatic and freshwater wetland habitats that could help contribute to GHG emission reduction targets outlined in the Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050.	MassWildlife
In collaboration with partners, 450 acres of freshwater wetlands are restored by June 2030, with the majority of restored wetlands occurring on retired cranberry farmland.	DER
3 freshwater wetland or riparian restoration projects on agency conservation lands are completed annually from 2025-2030.	MassWildlife
Up to 10 new freshwater restoration opportunities, including retired cranberry bogs, are identified and prioritized, with the goal of completing assessments on 5 projects and advancing 2 to construction by June 2030.	DER

**Objective 3.3: Sequester and Store Carbon in Forested Habitats**
**Action 3.3.1: Prioritize protection of the most climate resilient forests (i.e., climate change refugia) in Massachusetts.**

Key Results	Lead
Using state climate projections, forests with the highest sequestration rates and storage potential, as well as those that are the most climate resilient, are identified by January 2025.	MassWildlife
Acquisition of climate resilient forests and BioMap Forest Core is included and prioritized in the land acquisition Focus Areas identification and individual parcel selection processes by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife



An average of 6,000 acres per year is protected by the agency by June 2030 of which 70% or more is forested.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
10-15% of agency fee-owned upland forests are designated as forest reserve by June 2030.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
<b>Action 3.3.2: Align forest management practices with Forests as Climate Solutions<sup>1</sup> management guidelines for carbon sequestration and agency goals for climate resilience and biodiversity conservation.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Planting of more drought- and flood-tolerant tree species in appropriate habitats that are native to Massachusetts or native to regions immediately to our south is considered during all revegetation efforts on agency conservation lands and agency-managed lands beginning December 2024.	MassWildlife
Methods to make agency land management goals more transparent are implemented by January 2026, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Identification of the forest elements or characteristics made more resilient when active management is implemented.</li> <li>o Use of resilience metrics to evaluate forest management.</li> <li>o A process for early detection and decision-making regarding pests, pathogens, and invasive plants.</li> </ul>	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Forest management practices on agency conservation lands or agency-managed lands that enhance forest structure complexity and species diversity, including addressing herbivory and invasive species, are implemented by June 2027 where appropriate to meet climate resilience, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity conservation goals.	MassWildlife
75 miles of forest roads and illegal ORV trails on agency conservation land, particularly in forest reserve areas, are restored and/or closed by June 2030 to reduce impacts from surface erosion and allow soil stabilization and regrowth.	MassWildlife

## GOAL #4 Scale Action to Keep Pace with the Impact of Climate Change & the Biodiversity Crisis

### Objective 4.1: Grow DFG's Capacity to Identify and Implement Successful Restoration and Climate Resilience Projects

#### Action 4.1.1: Expand the pipeline of potential habitat restoration projects that build climate resilience and support biodiversity conservation across the Commonwealth.

<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
An efficient methodology to identify and prioritize potential high-value freshwater wetland restoration sites is developed by June 2026.	DER
The technical capabilities of DER and its partners to effectively identify, plan, design, manage, and implement high value adaptation-restoration projects is strengthened by adding staff with capabilities in restoration engineering, project management, restoration planning, GIS, and knowledge management by June 2026.	DER
DER's Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program expands its resources to reach up to 20 municipalities and other awardees on average each year by 2027.	DER
The identification and prioritization of potential project sites using the methodology is piloted by DER, DFG's In-Lieu Fee Program, and MassWildlife's habitat management program beginning January 2027.	Commissioner's Office, DER, MassWildlife
DER's new Technical Services Branch is established by June 2026 to provide programming, products, and services to project partners, including project management, engineering, restoration planning, GIS, QA/QC, and knowledge management capabilities, and is fully operational by June 2027.	DER



Enhanced evaluation of current and future climate impacts (e.g., changing temperature, sea level rise, and precipitation patterns) is integrated into project selection, planning, and design by June 2028.	DER
Staffing and funding to expand DER's river and wetland restoration pipeline by 30% over the 2025 baseline is secured by 2030.	DER
Up to 45 additional DER Partnerships Program restoration priorities, including dam removals, culvert replacements, cranberry bog and salt marsh restoration projects, are identified, advanced, or completed by June 2030.	DER
Results from salt marsh, marine submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and marine macroalgae habitat mapping and inventory (see Action 2.1.1.) are used to identify and prioritize potential high-value marine and estuarine restoration projects by December 2030.	DMF
<b>Action 4.1.2: Incorporate climate considerations into ecological restoration and land acquisition project evaluation, selection, and implementation.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Agency land acquisition evaluation and selection criteria are reviewed and updated to prioritize protection of floodplains, salt marsh and adjacent uplands, climate-resilient and vulnerable forests, carbon rich forests, wetlands, and marsh migration corridors in coordination with the Resilient Lands Initiative and state conservation priorities by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Potential restoration opportunities that could increase habitat or landscape climate-resilience, particularly in floodplains, climate-resilient forests, and on land adjacent to restored salt marshes, are identified and incorporated into the land acquisition Focus Areas identification process by June 2026.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Climate change-related language is reviewed and updated across all DER grant programs to include climate change-related criteria (e.g., designing for climate change, monitoring and adaptive management, and mitigation and resilience benefits) by June 2027.	DER
<b>Objective 4.2: Work Collaboratively with Partners to Increase Capacity, Knowledge, and Impact</b>	
<b>Action 4.2.1: Strengthen and expand partnerships and collaborations within Massachusetts and DFG.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Starting in July 2024, technical expertise and public support are provided during the grant application and selection process for projects and programs that advance coastal/port infrastructure upgrades which support fishing activity and the safe distribution of natural resources for public consumption.	DMF
Opportunities to collaborate with new partners on biodiversity and climate projects (e.g., Center for Braiding Indigenous Knowledges and Science at UMass Amherst) are identified and developed beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife
DER's Partnerships Program is expanded to support 3-5 additional regional organizations to lead and support locally-led watershed-scale restoration planning by December 2025.	DER
In collaboration with municipalities and other partners, up to 5 new Stream Continuity Training Sites are constructed or advanced through assessment and design, and up to 10 trainings are conducted on the MA Stream Crossing Standards, projects that increase stream connectivity and reduce flooding risks, and demonstrate design, permitting, and funding pathways, by June 2030.	DER
The current restoration capacity and technical needs of municipalities, regional organizations, and other stakeholders are assessed by December 2025 and stakeholders' capacity to plan, lead, and support aquatic and marine habitat restoration projects are strengthened through the delivery of new tools, technical trainings, funding and/or services by June 2030.	DER, DMF
Working in collaboration with CZM, a Land Management Agreement between OFBA and the grant recipient for the siting, management, and maintenance of a recreational boating and fishing access facility is included as a requirement for all CZM Coastal Facilities Improvement Program grant awards.	DMF, OFBA



Opportunities to collaborate with the Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center, US Geological Survey, research universities, and others on research targeting climate adaptation and mitigation are identified and prioritized by January 2027 and 4 new research project collaborations are initiated before June 2030.	DMF, MassWildlife
<b>Action 4.2.2: Strengthen and expand multi-state and regional partnerships and collaborations that extend beyond Massachusetts borders.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Beginning January 2025, quarterly planning sessions for the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies are organized to share best practices in resilience and adaptation.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
In collaboration with the Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and others, a regional monitoring network for climate change for inland and estuarine fishes, wildlife, habitat, and landscapes is created by June 2027.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife
Collaboration continues with SMAST / NERACOOS and others to support regional marine monitoring network efforts to address climate change and Ocean Acidification impacts to marine fisheries and habitats.	DMF
Ongoing work continues with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, New England Fisheries Management Council, Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries to explore jurisdictional and governance issues related to climate change and shifting fishery stocks and to complete East Coast Climate Scenario Planning by June 2027.	DMF
A set of tools and processes is advanced through the East Coast Climate Scenario Planning partnership that provide flexible and robust fishery management strategies, which continue to promote fishery conservation and resilient fishing communities and address uncertainty in an era of climate change, by June 2030.	DMF
<b>Objective 4.3: Work Collaboratively with Partners to Streamline Permitting Pathways and Guidelines</b>	
<b>Action 4.3.1: Collaborate with municipal, state, and federal agencies to improve and streamline permitting pathways and guidelines to accelerate the pace of ecological restoration, climate mitigation, and climate adaptation projects.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
In collaboration with lead permitting agencies, opportunities to streamline permitting for ecological restoration projects (e.g., floodplain, prescribe burn, freshwater or salt marsh restoration projects) conducted on publicly and privately-owned lands are identified and pursued where feasible beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife
Participate in the development of new DEP guidelines concerning development in floodplains and the Water Resources Commission-led Hydro-risk model used to project future streamflows and spatial extent of floodplains.	MassWildlife
In collaboration with lead permitting agencies, participate in the permit streamlining process and provide recommendations for projects with impacts below the Mean High Water.	DMF, OFBA
In collaboration with NOAA/NMFS, participate in the permitting process and provide recommendations for projects that impact migrating fish or Essential Fish Habitats (EFH).	DMF
<b>Objective 4.4: Support Siting of Clean Energy while Protecting DFG-trust Resources</b>	
<b>Action 4.4.1: Actively participate in the development of revised siting laws and regulations to ensure processes include adequate review and protection of, and appropriate access to, DFG-trust resources.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
All Massachusetts revised energy facility siting processes and regulations consider and include conservation through protection of habitats, plants, fishes, wildlife, and access to these resources beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife



## GOAL #5 Lead by Example on Executive Order (EO) 594

### Objective 5.1: Establish Internal Leadership and Responsibility to Decarbonize and Increase Resilience at Agency Facilities

#### Action 5.1.1: Hire a full-time DFG Facilities Assessment & Decarbonization Program Coordinator

Key Results	Lead
The DFG Facilities Assessment & Decarbonization Program Coordinator is hired by January 2026, housed in the Commissioner's office, and working with each Divisions to form a Leading by Example (LBE) team.	Commissioner's Office

#### Action 5.1.2: Form an internal LBE team with representatives from each relevant Division, led by the DFG Facilities Assessment & Decarbonization Program Coordinator and accountable to the Commissioner.

Key Results	Lead
A LBE team is established by May 2026, with quarterly meetings scheduled to assist in the development, assessment, and implementation of strategies, milestones, and metrics that will advance EO 594 decarbonization goals to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions from DFG operations and fleets and enhance resiliency at DFG owned and managed buildings and facilities.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

#### Action 5.1.3: Collaborate with EEA's LBE Program to develop and disseminate DFG-specific educational materials that summarize the goals, directives, and requirements set forth by EO 594.

Key Results	Lead
DFG-specific EO 594 educational materials are created by the DFG Facilities Assessment & Decarbonization Program Coordinator, in coordination with the LBE team, by December 2026.	Commissioner's Office
DFG-specific EO 594 educational materials are disseminated to DFG and Division facility managers, fleet managers, fiscal and procurement staff by December 2026.	Commissioner's Office

### Objective 5.2: Establish DFG Roadmap to Achieve EO 594 Targets for 2030, 2040, and 2050

#### Action 5.2.1: Complete an energy audit and emissions assessment for each DFG-owned facility.

Key Results	Lead
A qualified facility energy audit and emissions assessment vendor hired by DFG by May 2026.	Commissioner's Office
Each DFG-owned facility will have an energy audit and emissions assessment completed by January 2027.	Commissioner's Office

#### Action 5.2.2: Develop a decarbonization and resilience plan for each DFG-owned facility.

Key Results	Lead
Each DFG-owned facility has a detailed decarbonization and resilience plan by June 2027 that includes recommended energy efficiency, decarbonization, and resilience improvements as well as the estimated cost, timeline, and priority for facility energy efficiency, decarbonization, and resilience improvements.	Commissioner's Office



**Action 5.2.3: Create overall roadmap for DFG to achieve EO 594 targets for 2030, 2040, and 2050.**

<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
An overall agency implementation roadmap of strategies, priorities, milestones, metrics, costs, and timelines to achieve EO 594 targets for 2030, 2040, and 2050 is finalized by December 2027.	Commissioner's Office
5 agency-owned facilities are decarbonized, to the maximum extent possible, by June 2030.	Commissioner's Office

**Action 5.2.4: Develop and implement a DFG fleet electrification plan.**

<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
An inventory of the DFG fleet and assessment of electrification options, if available, is completed by the DFG Facilities Assessment & Decarbonization Program Coordinator in coordination with the DFG Fleet Supervisor and the Office of Vehicle Management (OVM) by September 2026 and updated annually.	Commissioner's Office
An electric vehicle option is evaluated and selected whenever possible for all vehicles in the DFG fleet by June 2030.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

## GOAL #1 Strengthen DFG's Capacity to Advance Environmental Justice (EJ)

### Objective 1.1: Assess Current Capacity in Department and Divisions

**Action 1.1.1: Form an internal DFG EJ Team with representatives from the Commissioner's Office and each Division, led by the DFG EJ Liaison, and accountable to the Commissioner.**

Key Results	Lead
DFG EJ Summer Internships are posted beginning July 2024 to assist in capacity assessments for the Department and Divisions.	Commissioner's Office
Commissioner's Office and Division representatives are identified, and the DFG EJ Team is established by July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Quarterly meetings are held by the DFG EJ Team beginning July 2024 to assist the DFG EJ Liaison in the development of DFG and Division-specific EJ learning opportunities, trainings, strategies, milestones, and metrics to achieve and evaluate outcomes.	DFG EJ Team
Additional EJ staffing needs are identified by July 2024.	DFG EJ Team
Division-specific EJ strategies are facilitated and coordinated within their respective Divisions by the DFG EJ Team members, with the assistance of and in coordination with the DFG EJ Liaison, beginning October 2024.	DFG EJ Team
A review and update of the DFG EJ Strategy is completed once every three years, per the EEA EJ Policy, by the DFG EJ Liaison, in coordination with the DFG EJ Team.	DFG EJ Team

**Action 1.1.2: Assess baseline understanding, interest, and knowledge gaps in relation to EJ, diversity, equity, and inclusion to assist in the development of trainings and the improvement of programs.**

Key Results	Lead
In collaboration with EEA's EJ program, the best means and methods for assessing baseline understanding, interest, and knowledge gaps in relation to EJ are identified and a staff assessment plan is developed by October 2024.	Commissioner's Office
Assessment is completed by the DFG EJ Liaison, in coordination with the DFG EJ Team, and recommendations for DFG and Division specific staff trainings are submitted to the Commissioner by December 2024.	DFG EJ Team

**Action 1.1.3: Collect and distill existing information about the Department's operations, fiscal processes, programs, projects, and internal practices in relation to its mission and EJ, diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and practices to assist in strategic plan implementation and compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.**

Key Results	Lead
Collection and compilation of findings is completed by the DFG EJ Liaison, in coordination with and assistance by DFG EJ Team members, by December 2024.	DFG EJ Team
Recommendations to assist in strategic plan implementation are submitted to the Commissioner by February 2025.	Commissioner's Office
DFG and its Divisions are prepared for the next Title VI compliance desk review by October 2027.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA



**Objective 1.2: Enhance Capacity Through Training for Staff, Volunteers, and Members of Boards, Commissions, and Similar Entities Affiliated with DFG's Divisions**
**Action 1.2.1: Collaborate with EEA's EJ program to identify and access EJ training curricula and trainers, including EJ mapping tools, community engagement, and language services for limited English proficiency (LEP) persons.**

Key Results	Lead
Access to EJ training curricula and resources is secured by the DFG EJ Liaison by April 2025, ensuring they align with the needs of DFG and EEA policy.	Commissioner's Office

**Action 1.2.2: Organize and complete DFG-wide EJ training, in conjunction with EEA's efforts, for all staff and tailored EJ trainings for Division staff, volunteers, and members of Boards, Commissions, and similar entities affiliated with DFG's Divisions.**

Key Results	Lead
Initial EJ training for all staff is completed by July 2025, and tailored training for Division staff to address Division-specific issues and needs is completed by November 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Tailored EJ training for volunteers and members of Boards, Commissions, and similar entities affiliated with DFG's Divisions are developed by the DFG EJ Liaison in collaboration with the Divisions by July 2026 and completed by December 2026.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife
Additional trainings are developed and/or existing trainings are revised following the collection and compilation of findings on current Department operations and processes (Action 1.1.3).	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

## GOAL #2 Advance Equity Through Improved Communication, Engagement, & Access to Information & Opportunities

**Objective 2.1: Improve Communication and Engagement with EJ Populations**
**Action 2.1.1: Improve means and methods to support EJ organization and community leader engagement.**

Key Results	Lead
Options and possible mechanisms to provide a stipend or other forms of support to EJ organizations and community leaders for their time when asked to provide assessments, evaluations, or expertise to the Department are explored by the DFG EJ Liaison and results and recommendations are provided to the Commissioner by December 2024.	Commissioner's Office

**Action 2.1.2: Identify EJ populations and organizations that intersect with Division programs and projects and create a comprehensive Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog of EJ communities, organizations, and their contacts.**

Key Results	Lead
Beginning July 2024, an ongoing series of conversations with EJ organizations and community leaders that intersect with Division programs and projects are organized and established by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with the DFG EJ Team, to obtain suggestions for a draft Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog.	DFG EJ Team
A draft catalog is created by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with the DFG EJ Team, by December 2024, and includes suggested communication and outreach strategies, tools, and formats for identified populations, communities, and organizations.	DFG EJ Team

Beginning January 2025, a series of conversations with EJ organizations and community leaders identified in the draft catalog are organized by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with the DFG EJ Team, to obtain feedback and suggestions for improving the draft Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog.	DFG EJ Team
Using the feedback received, a final Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog is completed by October 2025 and DFG and Division staff are trained in its purpose and use by December 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
The catalog is made easily accessible to all DFG and Division staff and is updated once every three years.	Commissioner's Office
<b>Action 2.1.3: Develop and implement a comprehensive EJ communication plan to ensure that EJ populations are appropriately and effectively informed of DFG and Division programs, efforts, and actions occurring in or near their neighborhoods, and given meaningful opportunities to provide feedback and be involved in the planning, design, and implementation of DFG and Division programs, efforts, and actions, where appropriate.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Beginning July 2024, an ongoing series of conversations with EJ organizations and community leaders are organized and established by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with the DFG Communications Director, to obtain feedback and suggestions for a draft EJ communication plan.	Commissioner's Office
A draft EJ communication plan is developed by the DFG EJ Liaison, in consultation with the DFG EJ Team and the DFG Communications Director, by December 2024.	DFG EJ Team
Beginning January 2025, a series of conversations with EJ organizations and community leaders is organized by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with the DFG Communications Director, to obtain feedback and suggestions for improving the draft EJ communication plan.	Commissioner's Office
Using the feedback received, a final EJ communication plan is completed, and implementation begins by October 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
DFG and Division staff are trained in the EJ communication plan purpose and use by December 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
<b>Action 2.1.4: Enhance inclusivity in regulatory promulgation.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
A comprehensive toolkit to assess potential impacts of specific regulations on EJ populations is created by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with DFG General Counsel and the DFG EJ Team and distributed to DFG and Division staff by September 2025.	Commissioner's Office
A proactive and targeted outreach strategy is developed and implemented by the appropriate Division, in coordination with the DFG EJ Liaison, for all regulatory promulgation processes to ensure EJ populations have ample opportunities to participate beginning September 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
<b>Action 2.1.5: Build the next generation of environmental and conservation professionals through the creation of an Environmental Justice Community Ambassadors program.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
An Environmental Justice Community Ambassadors program is established within DFG and funding secured by July 2026. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for the program includes competitive pay as well as transportation subsidies for all Ambassadors.</li> <li>Ambassadors participate in and learn from existing Department and Division programs and are provided hands-on opportunities to develop skills and knowledge related to natural resource conservation, management, stewardship, and restoration, climate adaptation, public engagement, and communications.</li> </ul>	Commissioner's Office
Options and opportunities to fund Environmental Justice Community Ambassadors within existing community environmental organizations or at community colleges and universities located within or disproportionately serving EJ communities are explored by the DFG EJ Liaison and results and recommendations are provided to the Commissioner by December 2026.	Commissioner's Office



**Objective 2.2: Integrate EJ Principles and Considerations into Department Programs, Projects, and Operations****Action 2.2.1: Review and revise grant administration processes and scoring criteria in collaboration with the DFG EJ Liaison and EEA's EJ Program to ensure equitable access to grant opportunities and distribution of program benefits.**

Key Results	Lead
In partnership with Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), revisions to existing Food Security Infrastructure Program scoring matrices are explored by December 2024 to place a greater emphasis on benefits to EJ communities.	Commissioner's Office, DMF
Grant administration procedures and scoring criteria are reviewed by December 2024 and revised procedures and scoring criteria that integrate EJ principles and considerations are implemented by February 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

**Action 2.2.2: Evaluate and update as needed existing educational programs and events to ensure equal accessibility for members of EJ populations.**

Key Results	Lead
Guidelines and guidance to make Department and Division educational programs and events more inclusive and accessible to members of EJ populations, including tools such as best practices for outreach and participation, are developed by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with the EEA's EJ program and the DFG EJ Team, and distributed to DFG and Division staff by November 2025.	DFG EJ Team
Existing educational programs and events are evaluated by June 2026 to assess accessibility for members of EJ populations.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Existing educational program and events, and educational program and event frameworks, are updated by December 2026 to ensure inclusivity and accessibility by members of EJ populations.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

**Action 2.2.3: Identify and develop new educational programs in collaboration with EJ community leaders and partners, the DFG EJ Liaison, and Divisions.**

Key Results	Lead
In collaboration with key partners, up to 3 new educational programs are launched by December 2030 that are focused within EJ communities or benefiting members of EJ populations.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Engagement metrics, such as targets for the number of people served, are established for each new educational program by December 2030.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

**Action 2.2.4: Incorporate and enhance the scoring of EJ principles and considerations in restoration programs, conservation projects, and recreation projects to promote equitable access to and distribution of program and project benefits.**

Key Results	Lead
Tailored processes and procedures for assessing and enhancing restoration programs, conservation projects, and recreation projects with EJ principles are developed and implemented in each Division by June 2026.	DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Updated restoration initiatives evaluation and selection criteria are in place by September 2026.	DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Updated conservation project evaluation and selection criteria are in place by September 2026.	DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Updated recreation project evaluation and selection criteria are in place by September 2026.	DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

**Action 2.2.5: Track and publish information annually about the types and locations of restoration, conservation, and recreation projects within EJ populations or that provide direct or indirect benefits to EJ populations.**

Key Results	Lead
Working in collaboration with EEA, a Request for Quotes (RFQ) for statewide EJ ArcGIS mapping services is developed and issued by July 2024.	Commissioner's Office
Guidance on how to define benefits and identify projects that provide direct or indirect benefits to EJ populations is established by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with the DFG EJ Team, by December 2024.	DFG EJ Team
A system to track annual funding across Divisions for projects within or that provide direct or indirect benefits to EJ populations is established by December 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Funding for projects within or that provide direct or indirect benefits to EJ populations are reported annually by each Division in the tracking system beginning December 2024.	DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
An interactive map that displays information in accessible formats for projects within or that provide direct or indirect benefits to EJ populations is created and available on the DFG EJ web page by June 2025 and is updated annually.	Commissioner's Office

**Objective 2.3: Improve Language Access**
**Action 2.3.1: Collaborate with EEA's EJ program to advance implementation of the Department's Language Access Plan (LAP).**

Key Results	Lead
The Department's LAP is fully implemented, subject to the availability of necessary fiscal resources and staff capacity, by January 2027, including for all formats of information the Department uses including ArcGIS.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

**Action 2.3.2: Develop and begin implementation of an informational and welcoming signage and postings plan to provide non-English speakers and LEP individuals with meaningful access to DFG and Division informational and regulatory signage and postings.**

Key Results	Lead
A comprehensive inventory of Department and Division signage and postings, led by the DFG EJ Liaison and in coordination with the DFG EJ Team, is completed by June 2025.	DFG EJ Team
Language access needs and options for improving language access to signage and postings are identified by December 2025, including creating commonly used or universal signage where possible.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
A signage and postings plan, including recommendations for welcoming signage, prioritization, and a proposed implementation timeline, is finalized by June 2026.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
A methodology to evaluate and track signage and postings to determine if the changes are effective and how they might be improved further is developed by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with the DFG EJ Team, by June 2026.	DFG EJ Team
Implementation of the signage and postings plan by the Divisions begins in July 2026.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA



## GOAL #3 Improve Access to Nature & Its Benefits

### Objective 3.1: Improve Access to Existing DFG Properties and Public Access Facilities

#### Action 3.1.1: Increase awareness and visibility of existing Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and OFBA and DMF public access facilities for EJ populations.

Key Results	Lead
A map of existing WMAs and OFBA and DMF public access facilities located within or near designated EJ populations is completed and made available on the DFG EJ webpage by June 2025, including the identification of WMAs and accessible shore fishing access sites located within a 2-mile walking radius, and WMAs and boating access sites located within a 15-mile driving radius of a designated EJ population.	Commissioner's Office
In collaboration with the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOOR), opportunities and options for increasing the visibility of existing WMAs and OFBA and DMF public access facilities to EJ populations, and promoting the benefits of engaging in nature, are identified by July 2025 and implemented by July 2026.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

#### Action 3.1.2: Develop a pilot program for WMAs, public access facilities, and restoration sites to increase accessibility and use by EJ populations.

Key Results	Lead
The feasibility of joining and expanding partnerships with the Greening the Gateway City program at the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is explored by the DFG EJ Liaison by July 2024, before Fall 2024 planting season.	Commissioner's Office
Potential locations for inclusion in the pilot program are identified, assessed, prioritized, and up to 10 WMAs, public access facilities, and/or restoration sites are selected in collaboration with the DFG EJ Liaison, the Divisions, and engagement with EJ community leaders by December 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
A plan to increase accessibility and use for each identified pilot property, including a methodology to evaluate and track the plan's effectiveness, is developed in collaboration with the DFG EJ Liaison, the Divisions, and engagement with EJ community leaders, by December 2026. Plans may also include targeted outreach, informational and welcoming signage, transportation access, developing innovative partnerships with groups such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and transportation agencies, and other activities.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Implementation of plans to increase accessibility and use for each identified pilot property begins in January 2027 and plans are fully implemented by December 2028.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

### Objective 3.2: Create New Public Recreation and Access Opportunities in and Near EJ Populations

#### Action 3.2.1: Identify and create, where feasible, new public recreation opportunities in or near underserved EJ populations.

Key Results	Lead
EJ populations underserved by existing WMAs are identified by the DFG EJ Liaison, in collaboration with MassWildlife, by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Potential locations in or near underserved EJ populations for the creation of new WMAs are identified and evaluated for feasibility by June 2026.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Potential opportunities to partner with municipalities, transportation agencies, other state agencies, and NGOs to create new public access opportunities in or near underserved EJ populations are identified and evaluated for feasibility by June 2026.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife
Feasible locations and partnership opportunities to create new public recreation opportunities in or near underserved EJ populations are advanced beginning July 2026 and implemented where feasible by June 2029.	Commissioner's Office, MassWildlife

**Action 3.2.2: Create new opportunities for waterfront access in or near EJ populations that provide access to nature and relief from heat.**

Key Results	Lead
In collaboration with project partners, potential locations for new accessible shore fishing or sport fishing piers, located on public land and waterbodies, and within designated EJ populations or within a 2-mile walking radius, are identified, evaluated for feasibility, and prioritized for implementation by June 2026. The permitting and design process for feasible, high-priority locations is initiated by June 2028.	DMF, OFBA
In collaboration with project partners, potential locations for new cartop and or trailered boat access sites, located on public land and waterbodies, and within designated EJ populations or within a 15-mile driving radius, are identified, evaluated for feasibility, and prioritized for implementation by June 2026. The permitting and design process for feasible, high-priority locations is initiated by June 2028.	DMF, OFBA

**Action 3.2.3: Increase public access by EJ populations to DFG restoration projects.**

Key Results	Lead
Public access opportunities and improvements, such as trails, artificial reefs, fish passage viewing areas, viewing platforms, self-guided tours, or signage, and potential barriers to access, such as limited English proficiency or transportation, are considered in DFG restoration projects and incorporated and addressed wherever feasible beginning January 2025.	DER, DMF, MassWildlife
River and floodplain restoration opportunities on agency managed land in or near EJ populations are identified and prioritized by June 2026.	MassWildlife
3 river or floodplain restoration projects on agency managed land in or near EJ populations are completed by December 2030.	MassWildlife
In collaboration with project partners and EJ community leaders, up to 5 potential restoration projects (e.g., floodplain restoration, salt marsh restoration, dam removal, fish passage restoration) in or near EJ populations are identified and advanced by December 2030.	DER, DMF
Up to 5 new restorations projects in or near EJ populations incorporate public access opportunities and improvements by December 2030.	DER, DMF, MassWildlife

**Objective 3.3: Increase Food Security and Connect People to Harvestable Wildlife, Fish, and Shellfish****Action 3.3.1: Expose more people to the possibilities and benefits of securing healthy foods through freshwater fishing and hunting by expanding the Hunters Share the Harvest program, connecting with food insecure communities, and continuing to build Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) programs.**

Key Results	Lead
1–3 additional processors are added each year to MassWildlife's Hunters Share the Harvest Program from 2024-2028.	MassWildlife
The amount of processed venison donated and distributed by the Hunters Share the Harvest Program increases by 1,500 pounds each year from 2024-2028.	MassWildlife
1–4 additional food distribution partners are added each year to the Hunters Share the Harvest program from 2024-2028 and new partnerships with non-governmental organizations and tribes have been established by January 2028.	MassWildlife
Statewide coverage in processors for the Hunters Share the Harvest Program is achieved by August 2028.	MassWildlife
The feasibility of providing reduced fishing or hunting license fees to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit recipients and securing reimbursement to the Divisions for discounted licenses is explored by June 2025.	DMF, MassWildlife
The feasibility of loaner equipment programs to minimize barriers for low-income participants is explored by December 2025 as part of MassWildlife's R3 Plan to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters, anglers, and shooting sports participants in Massachusetts.	MassWildlife
Recipes and tips for processing wild fish and game are developed and promoted using best practices and guidance from the Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog and the EJ communication plan by March 2026.	MassWildlife



Outreach materials from the Department of Public Health that highlight the best freshwater fish choices for consumption and low contamination risk are secured and distributed using best practices and guidance from the Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog and the EJ communication plan by March 2026.	MassWildlife
Educational programs and opportunities to harvest wild game and fish are promoted to EJ populations using best practices and guidance from the Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog and the EJ communication plan by June 2026.	MassWildlife
Locations of existing pheasant and trout stocking, and hunting and angling education programs, are mapped and low service areas in relation to EJ populations are identified by June 2026.	MassWildlife
Educational program opportunities and pheasant and trout stocking are increased in identified low service areas, where feasible, by June 2027.	MassWildlife
<b>Action 3.3.2: Increase access to affordable, fresh fish and shellfish and increase access to recreationally caught seafood as a nutritional resource.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Options to provide grants to fish processors to cut and process fish seized by the Massachusetts Environmental Police or made available through other programs (e.g., Federal Max-retention program) and make the processed fish available to food banks and other nonprofits, are explored and evaluated by March 2026 and implemented where feasible beginning October 2027.	DMF
Opportunities to connect EJ communities with seafood dealers and commercial fishermen to market undervalued species such as scup, whiting and redfish are identified by March 2026 and implemented beginning October 2027.	DMF
Seafood marketing materials are created in multiple languages and distributed using best practices and guidance from the Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog and the EJ communication plan by June 2026.	DMF
Opportunities to increase collaboration between Seafood Marketing Program & Take Me Saltwater Fishing Program to facilitate access to and consumption of wild caught fish are identified by October 2026 and implemented by March 2027.	DMF
Opportunities to promote seafood education at events in EJ communities are identified by December 2026 and implemented by December 2028.	DMF

## GOAL #4 Engage with Tribes in the Spirit of Reciprocity & Respect

### Objective 4.1: Advance a Respectful Relationship with Massachusetts Tribes

#### Action 4.1.1: Provide training to DFG staff on the history and cultural identities of Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and in Massachusetts today.

<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
A calendar of relationship-building meetings, informed by conversations with the MA Commission on Indian Affairs, is established by the DFG EJ Liaison as part of Public Involvement and Community Engagement catalog development (EJ Action 2.1.2).	Commissioner's Office
An assessment of training needs is completed by the DFG EJ Liaison by September 2024.	Commissioner's Office
In collaboration with EEA's EJ program, qualified trainers and training programs are identified by the DFG EJ Liaison by December 2024.	Commissioner's Office
Training for all staff is completed by April 2025.	Commissioner's Office
Training is included in new staff on-boarding by April 2025 and continued learning included on a regular, ongoing basis for existing staff beginning April 2025.	Commissioner's Office

**Action 4.1.2: Engage in leadership-to-leadership conversations with Massachusetts tribes to identify areas of common values, interests, and possible actions.**

Key Results	Lead
Support and advise EEA and sister agencies through the EEA Tribal Issues Working Group to inform a discussion concerning the creation of a Tribal Liaison staff position for the Secretariat, located within the Commission on Indian Affairs or the Secretariat, as appropriate.	Commissioner's Office
Guidance on establishing respectful and meaningful relationships with Massachusetts tribes is developed with input from the Massachusetts' Commission on Indian Affairs and tribal governments by May 2025.	Commissioner's Office
A contact list for tribal outreach for grant opportunities and events is substantively developed by June 2025.	Commissioner's Office
Tribal leadership is identified and, in cases where engagement is not already ongoing, an invitation to begin a conversation is extended by July 2025.	Commissioner's Office
Topics for discussion and advancement are identified and jointly determined, including but not limited to collaborative management, collaborative restoration, collaborative stewardship, foraging and harvesting of culturally important wildlife, plants and medicines, and access to DFG properties, beginning July 2025.	Commissioner's Office
DFG and Division websites are reviewed and updated as appropriate to reflect Executive Order 126 by January 2026.	Commissioner's Office

**Objective 4.2: Identify and Advance Common Areas of Interest and Potential Opportunities for Collaboration****Action 4.2.1: Jointly identify DFG-managed resources that tribes might wish to access (e.g., areas, wildlife, native plants with traditional and cultural uses).**

Key Results	Lead
In collaboration with tribal leaders or their designated representatives, a listing of DFG-managed priority access resources is created and listed on the DFG website, and educational signage is developed and placed by December 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Options and opportunities for supporting and implementing increased resource access are identified by June 2026.	Commissioner's Office
Feedback by tribes is collected to inform and refine the success of access efforts by July 2026.	Commissioner's Office

**Action 4.2.2: Develop a program and process for implementing Cultural Use Agreements or Cultural Respect Easements.**

Key Results	Lead
A team of Department and Division representatives is established by December 2025 to review requests and solicit input from tribes related to Cultural Use Agreements or Cultural Respect Easements on existing lands and new acquisition projects.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA



## GOAL #1 Connect Core Constituents & New Audiences with Nature through Outreach, Engagement, & Educational Programs

### Objective 1.1: Connect Core Constituents and New Audiences with Nature through Strong, Supportive, Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

#### Action 1.1.1: Strengthen existing partnerships with core constituency organizations, including environmental, conservation, hunting and fishing, and commercial fishing groups, and community-based organizations.

Key Results	Lead
An inventory of existing partnerships with core constituency organizations, including a description of the function and purpose of the partnership to the Department/Division and our constituents, is completed by January 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
A survey of existing partners to assess their view on the function and purpose of the Department/Division partnership to their organization is completed by March 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Results of the inventory and survey are used by the DFG Communications Team (DFG Comms Team) to identify shared priorities and actions and opportunities to improve or strengthen the partnership for the benefit of the partner, the Department/Division, and the constituents by May 2025.	DFG Comms Team
In collaboration with the partner organization, identified actions and opportunities to improve or strengthen the partnership are implemented and sustained beginning May 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Partnerships are regularly and prominently highlighted in internal and external communications beginning June 2025 to show appreciation for our partners and illustrate how partnerships amplify our impact and shared priorities.	DFG Comms Team

#### Action 1.1.2: Identify and cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships with new audience organizations, including Environmental Justice, Indigenous, and urban community groups.

Key Results	Lead
Potential, new partner organizations, representing non-traditional, underrepresented, or new audiences, are identified by January 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Initial outreach to potential new partner organizations to discuss and identify shared organizational values and priorities, potential benefits of a new partnership, and opportunities for mutually beneficial joint learning, collaboration, engagement, programs, or activities, is completed by July 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Based on the EJ Community Engagement catalog, each Division engages with 3-5 potential new partner organizations starting in October 2025 to further our understanding of shared needs, opportunities, and barriers to participation and engagement.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
In collaboration with interested partner organizations, a partnership engagement plan that is informed by the initial outreach and which outlines tailored engagement actions, programs, and activities, is developed for up to 5 new partner organizations beginning December 2025, and partnership engagement plans are implemented beginning 6 months after plan completion.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Partnerships are regularly and prominently highlighted in internal and external communications beginning July 2026 to show appreciation for our partners and illustrate how partnerships multiply and amplify our impact and shared priorities.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

**Objective 1.2: Connect Core Constituents and New Audiences with Nature through Effective Engagement and Improved Access to Information****Action 1.2.1: Use innovative digital technologies to make opportunities and information about wildlife and outdoor recreation, including existing public lands and public access points managed by DFG, engaging and accessible.**

Key Results	Lead
In coordination with the licensing vendor, desired improvements to the MassFishHunt digital platform and user experience are identified and implemented on an ongoing basis beginning July 2024 to provide easy and intuitive ways for customers to purchase hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses, report harvests, and register for educational courses and events.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife
Opportunities to provide technical support and expertise on mapping and other digital projects (e.g., storymaps, interactive website maps) to increase usability for constituents are regularly identified by the DFG Digital Team and presented to the DFG Comms Team beginning July 2024.	DFG Digital Team
Staffing needs to effectively develop and maintain web content are identified by January 2025 and a plan to address these needs is developed and implemented by June 2025.	DFG Comms Team, DFG Digital Team
In partnership with the Mass.gov Web Services Team, opportunities to make web content about wildlife, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation easy to find and accessible on Mass.gov are identified by June 2026 and fully implemented by January 2027.	DFG Comms Team, DFG Digital Team

**Action 1.2.2: Improve and expand the public's awareness of places to access nature by sharing and promoting existing public lands and public access points managed by the Department and its Divisions.**

Key Results	Lead
Creative opportunities to promote special wild places managed by DFG, such as photography, video, and blog content, are identified regularly by the DFG Comms Teams and incorporated into agency communications on an ongoing basis beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team
A list of local partners advertising public lands and public access points managed by DFG is developed by February 2025 and a request for advertising assistance is sent by March 2025.	DFG Comms Team
In collaboration with the DFG Digital Team, options and opportunities to create, promote, and improve web resources to increase the public's awareness of existing public lands and public access points managed by DFG are identified by June 2025 and fully implemented by June 2026.	DFG Comms Team
Community events and digital experiences using education, outdoor recreation, and interpretation to activate Department managed properties are identified and hosted on a regular basis with support of partners, including the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOOR) and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), beginning July 2025.	DFG Comms Team
In partnership with municipalities, DCR, and other land conservation partners, opportunities to create new interpretive signage that includes natural history, species, and conservation stories, for public lands and public access points managed by DFG are identified by December 2025 and incorporated into the Department's signage and postings plan (EJ Action 2.3.2).	DFG Comms Team
In collaboration with MOOR, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, and the Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), options for appropriate web-based tools (e.g., an interactive, statewide outdoor recreation map created internally, or better use of available tools (Google Maps, Alltrails, Strava)), that feature public lands and public access points managed by DFG, as well as public lands and access points managed by others, is explored by December 2025.	Commissioner's Office



**Objective 1.3: Connect Core Constituents and New Audiences with Nature through Educational Programing****Action 1.3.1: Expand wildlife, hunting, fishing, and educational programs to engage more participants from new audiences and core constituencies.**

<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
In collaboration with new and existing partners, strategies to raise participant awareness of hunting and fishing programs, improve and increase educational offerings, and evaluate participant engagement are identified and implemented on a bi-annual basis, in accordance with MassWildlife's Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Plan.	MassWildlife
A diverse volunteer core including people of different backgrounds, gender identities, and ethnicities is recruited and retained to support MassWildlife's outdoor education programs beginning July 2024.	MassWildlife
Five new educational materials, creative media projects, or social media campaigns related to family saltwater fishing clinics and other DMF educational events are completed on an annual basis beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DMF
In collaboration with new and existing partners, opportunities and strategies to expand capacity to offer more family saltwater fishing clinics and other educational events are identified and implemented on an annual basis beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DMF
Up to 5 additional schools are trained annually in the National Archery in the Schools Program, beginning September 2024.	MassWildlife
Biodiversity messaging is incorporated into all relevant DFG educational programming beginning December 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
A volunteer core to support the Saltwater Angler Education Program is established by March 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DMF
In collaboration with partners, including the Secretary of Education, design and development of innovation pathways for biodiversity, including development of new curriculum frameworks and educational programs, to support and advance the Biodiversity Executive Order (EO) 618 goals is initiated by April 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife
Opportunities to expand DMF's seafood marketing program to continue to increase consumer demand and preference for local seafood products, to support the Commonwealth's fishing and seafood industry and the residents and communities that benefit from these activities, are identified by December 2024 and implemented by May 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DMF
An evaluation plan for the DMF Saltwater Angler Education Program is developed by July 2025 to assess desired program impact and effectiveness, education program evaluations are completed every 2 years thereafter, and evaluation results and suggested program improvements are shared with Division leadership.	DMF
In collaboration with partners, opportunities to expand training of formal and informal educators in established wildlife education programs, such as ProjectWILD and AquaticWILD, are identified by December 2025 and fully implemented by December 2026.	MassWildlife

**Action 1.3.2: Increase public engagement in participatory science opportunities.**

<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
An inventory and assessment of existing participatory science projects, including current level of engagement, is completed by June 2025 and projects that align with Department and Division goals are identified and prioritized for enhancement by December 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife
Options and opportunities to increase public engagement and participation for top-priority participatory science projects, including projects centered in at least two underserved/EJ communities, are identified and implemented by March 2026.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife

Data formats and collection methods are evaluated for top-priority participatory science projects by December 2025 and enhancements to ensure easy access, collection, and reporting of useful and engaging data are identified and implemented where needed by March 2026.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife
Data provided by volunteers is incorporated in Department and Division storytelling and project results beginning March 2026 to emphasize the important role public participatory scientists can play in advancing scientific knowledge and understanding.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife
Opportunities to promote mutually beneficial participatory science opportunities organized by partner organizations (e.g., Big Night, Herring Counts, Christmas Bird Count, Bioblitzes, CZM MyCoast) are regularly identified and shared in external communications by March 2026.	DFG Comms Team
Participatory science projects are assessed annually starting July 2026 to evaluate engagement and determine additional needs.	Commissioner's Office, DMF, MassWildlife

## GOAL #2 Effectively Communicate the Department's Mission, Strategic Goals, Programs, & Services to Reach Core Constituents & New Audiences

### Objective 2.1: Strengthen Communications Coordination and Capacity Across the Department

**Action 2.1.1: Establish an internal DFG Communications Team (DFG Comms Team), comprised of communications staff from the Commissioner's Office and each Division, led by the DFG Communications Director, and accountable to the Commissioner.**

Key Results	Lead
Communications staff from the Commissioner's Office and Divisions are identified and the DFG Comms Team is fully established by July 2024.	DFG Comms Team
The DFG EJ Liaison is invited to take part as needed beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team
Additional staff are identified and added to the DFG Comms Team on an ongoing basis beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team

**Action 2.1.2: Strengthen collaboration and coordination within the DFG Comms Team, and with EEA communications staff, to amplify key messages and support peer-to-peer learning and skill development.**

Key Results	Lead
Monthly DFG Comms Team meetings are held beginning July 2024 to enhance collaboration, share skills, knowledge, and strategies, celebrate successes, and identify communication capacity needs of individuals and the team.	DFG Comms Team
Coordination meetings are held every two weeks between the DFG Communications Director and each Division communications team beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team
Coordination meetings are held every two weeks between the DFG Communications Director and EEA communications staff beginning July 2024 to highlight and amplify key Department and Division priorities.	Commissioner's Office
An internal, department-wide communications calendar is created and maintained by the Communications Director by July 2024 to coordinate key internal and external communications—press releases, major events, and sensitive announcements.	DFG Comms Team



<b>Action 2.1.3: Provide professional development opportunities for communications staff to strengthen communications quality and capacity.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
DFG Comms Team members individually identify and participate in at least one professional development opportunity annually (e.g., trainings, workshops, conferences) to advance their communication skills and knowledge beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team
DFG Comms Team identifies additional training needs, workshops, and conferences to attend on an ongoing basis beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team
DFG Comms Team receives professional media training by September 2024 and professional crisis communications training by December 2024.	DFG Comms Team
<b>Action 2.1.4: Identify and secure necessary technology, software, and equipment to strengthen and support communications capacity.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
An internal, staff-led assessment and prioritization of short- and long-term communications technology, software, and equipment needs, including communications tools like Project Management Software, Design Software, Photo/Video equipment, is completed by September 2024 and updated annually.	DFG Comms Team
Critical technology, software, and equipment are identified and secured beginning September 2024 and procured annually, subject to the availability of necessary fiscal resources.	DFG Comms Team
<b>Action 2.1.5: Identify and address gaps in Communications staff capacity.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
An assessment of current communications capacity at the Division of Marine Fisheries, including the identification of current job titles, responsibilities, and roles, is completed, and gaps in DMF communications capacity identified, by July 2024.	DMF
An assessment of additional communications staff needs for MassWildlife, the Division of Ecological Restoration, and the Office of Fishing and Boating Access is completed by December 2025.	DER, MassWildlife, OFBA
<b>Action 2.1.6: Build communications capacity, knowledge, and skills among all Department and Division staff through training, engagement, empowerment, and inclusion.</b>	
<b>Key Results</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Opportunities for staff to share work, research, successes, and photos/videos with the DFG Comms Team for inclusion in Department and Division internal and external communications are created, expanded, or strengthened, and all staff are made aware of these opportunities, beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team
Guidance for all staff on how to update their professional LinkedIn profiles and allow sharing on DFG's LinkedIn profile is created by the DFG Communications Director by July 2024.	Commissioner's Office
Staff perspectives, quotes, and contributions are regularly highlighted and included in external communications – including newsletters, social media, and print materials – beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team
Professional media training for senior leadership and other key staff within the Department and Divisions, who regularly interact with journalists on their areas of expertise, is completed by December 2024.	DFG Comms Team
Department-specific media training is created by the DFG Comms Team by January 2025, and offered as an optional virtual training twice a year by the DFG Comms Team for any interested staff beginning in January 2025.	DFG Comms Team
Pre-recorded media training is created by the DFG Comms Team and incorporated into new hire onboarding training beginning January 2025.	DFG Comms Team

**Objective 2.2: Establish a Clear, Cohesive, and Easily Recognizable Identity for the Department****Action 2.2.1: Refine the Department's mission statement to align and reflect its modern-day mission, goals, and diverse constituencies.**

Key Results	Lead
An updated mission statement for the Department is established and adopted by September 2024.	Commissioner's Office

**Action 2.2.2: Identify and adopt a new name for the Department that reflects the expansive mission and strategic goals and avoids common confusion with other state agencies and Divisions.**

Key Results	Lead
DFG engages staff, constituents, EEA and the Legislature in a process to discuss, identify, and propose a new name for the Department by October 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DFG Comms Team
DFG formally proposes the new name to EEA and the Administration by November 2024. With stakeholder and Administration support, legislation is filed by January 2025.	Commissioner's Office
With support from the Administration and the legislature, the new Department name is adopted by July 2025 and implemented across formal (e.g., statutes, contracts, etc.) and informal structures (e.g., websites, printed materials, etc.) by December 2025.	DFG Comms Team

**Action 2.2.3: Develop a modern, recognizable brand identity for the Department.**

Key Results	Lead
An interim branding guide is developed, and higher-quality version of existing logo is created by July 2024 and used on all external materials by September 2024.	DFG Comms Team
Following Department name change, a new, updated logo/seal is developed by July 2025.	DFG Comms Team
A Department branding guide that includes logo, color palette, typography, signature graphics, and key organizational messaging is developed and distributed to all staff by July 2025.	DFG Comms Team
All internal and external materials and communications adhere to the branding guidelines beginning December 2025.	DFG Comms Team

**Action 2.2.4: Harmonize the identities of the Divisions with new Department identity and Strategic Plan goals.**

Brand recognition of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife continues to be strengthened over time and measured by periodic public surveys beginning January 2025.	MassWildlife
Branding guidelines for the Division of Ecological Restoration, Division of Marine Fisheries, and the Office of Fishing and Boating Access are created by Divisions with the support of the DFG Communications Director and distributed to all DFG staff by January 2025.	DER, DMF, OFBA
Branding and messaging of the Divisions align with the new Department identity and Strategic Plan goals by December 2025.	DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

**Objective 2.3: Create a Comprehensive Communications Plan for the Department****Action 2.3.1: Inventory existing communications efforts, studies, and plans across the Department to identify strengths, gaps, and useful strategies to incorporate into a comprehensive Communications Plan.**

Key Results	Lead
A comprehensive assessment of existing communications efforts is completed by the DFG Comms Team and a summary of key findings and recommendations are presented to the Commissioner and Senior Leadership by January 2025.	DFG Comms Team



**Action 2.3.2: Identify key values, issues, messages, and ideas that resonate with Massachusetts residents and how the Department's work connects to these topics.**

Key Results	Lead
Building on Massachusetts public attitudes survey results <sup>1</sup> , additional research, including surveys of with core constituents and new audiences, with particular focus on EJ, Indigenous, and urban communities, are completed by March 2025 to identify key values, issues, interests, and needs.	DFG Comms Team
A comprehensive review of research that quantifies the economic impact and benefits our agency provides to the Commonwealth is completed by March 2025.	DFG Comms Team
A comprehensive review of existing social science research on effective strategies for communicating about biodiversity, conservation, outdoor recreation, and climate change is completed by March 2025.	DFG Comms Team
A summary document of key findings is created by April 2025.	DFG Comms Team

**Action 2.3.3: Develop a comprehensive Communications Plan for the Department to effectively connect the agency's work to Massachusetts residents and their identified values, issues, and interests.**

Key Results	Lead
A comprehensive Communications Plan for the Department, including communication strategies and sections focused on core constituents, EJ communities, Indigenous Peoples, and urban populations is completed by May 2025.	DFG Comms Team
All staff are trained in the Department's Communications Plan purpose and use by June 2025.	DFG Comms Team
Communications Plan recommendations are implemented into all external communications beginning June 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DFG Comms Team
Communications Plan is updated following completion of the EJ Communications Strategy in October 2025.	Commissioner's Office, DFG Comms Team
Communications Plan is reviewed and updated annually starting October 2026 to incorporate best practices and strategies for effective communications related to the Department's mission and work.	DFG Comms Team

**Objective 2.4: Clearly Communicate Connections between the Department's Goals and Priorities and Administration Goals and Priorities**
**Action 2.4.1: Make clear connections between the Department's mission, goals, programs, and services and the goals and priorities of the Administration and EEA in relevant internal and external communications.**

Key Results	Lead
Internal guidance document connecting the Department's priorities and programs with major EEA/Administration priorities is developed by the DFG Communications Director by July 2024 to guide external communications. Updates are made on an ongoing basis and upon Administration change.	Commissioner's Office
Opportunities to collaborate with EEA and its agencies on mutually beneficial communications and outreach to amplify key Department and Division messages are identified and pursued beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office
Identify stories at the monthly DFG Comms meeting to proactively pitch to media that align with EEA/Administration goals and priorities beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/doc/responsive-management-survey-summary/download>

Identify and pitch events to EEA/Administration to highlight impacts of Department and Division programs by DFG Communications Director beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office
Routine reports of DFG Comms Team successes are shared by the DFG Communications Director with EEA beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office

## GOAL #3 Increase Capacity to Implement the Strategic Plan

### Objective 3.1: Increase Funding from Existing and New Sources to Support Strategic Plan Implementation

#### Action 3.1.1: Identify and secure new, innovative, dedicated funding mechanisms to support Department and Division goals, priorities, and programs identified in the Strategic Plan.

Key Results	Lead
In collaboration with experts, key partners, EEA, and others, potential options and opportunities for new, dedicated funding mechanisms and trust structures for supplementing existing funding streams are identified and the feasibility of each evaluated April 2025.	Commissioner's Office
In collaboration with experts, key partners, EEA, and others, the most feasible options for creating new, dedicated funding mechanisms and trust structures are pursued beginning July 2025 and implemented, where feasible, by January 2027.	Commissioner's Office

#### Action 3.1.2: Identify and pursue grant opportunities to support Department and Division goals, priorities, and programs identified in the Strategic Plan.

Key Results	Lead
A weekly email, identifying potential grant opportunities that advance Strategic Plan goals, priorities, and programs is created and distributed to Division fiscal leads and other targeted program staff beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
A bi-weekly grant application status tracker, highlighting past, present, and future grant submissions, deadlines and outcomes, is created by the DFG Finance Team and distributed to EEA, Division fiscal leads, and other targeted program staff beginning July 2024.	DFG Finance Team
The identification, discussion, and updates on potential grant opportunities to support Strategic Plan implementation is included on Director and Commissioner Senior Staff meeting agendas beginning September 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
In coordination with the DFG Finance Team, an annual Strategic Plan report, including a summary of grant requests made and grants secured, is created by the DFG Communications Director and distributed to all staff beginning July 2025.	Commissioner's Office

#### Action 3.1.3: Secure increased operating and capital funding annually to support Department and Division goals, priorities, and programs identified in the Strategic Plan.

Key Results	Lead
Annual Capital Investment Plan submissions and funding requests prioritize investments in Department and Division projects and programs that support and advance the Strategic Plan beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Department and Division projects, programs, and actions that support and advance the Strategic Plan are identified, prioritized, and highlighted in operating budget requests and related communications beginning July 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA



**Objective 3.2: Increase Staff Capacity to Support Strategic Plan Implementation**

**Action 3.2.1: Existing and new staffing capacity needs and associated personnel costs for full Strategic Plan implementation are identified, prioritized, and incorporated into a comprehensive, multi-fiscal year Department-wide hiring and retention plan.**

Key Results	Lead
An assessment of current staff capacity and the identification and prioritization of new full-time employee (FTE) needs for Strategic Plan implementation, including needs explicitly identified in the Strategic Plan as well as those not explicitly identified in the Strategic Plan, is completed by the Commissioner's Office and each Division by July 2024 and updated annually.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Implementation of the approved hiring and retention plan begins in July 2024 with available FY25 funding and continues in FY26 and FY27 based on Administration FTE and funding approval.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Reclassification and/or promotion opportunities for existing staff are identified and prioritized annually beginning July 2024 and updated annually.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
Professional development and training needs and opportunities for existing staff are identified and prioritized annually beginning July 2024 and updated annually.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
A comprehensive, multi-fiscal year Department-wide hiring and retention plan for Strategic Plan implementation is developed by the Commissioner in consultation with Division leadership and presented to EEA for approval by September 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
FY26 House 1 (H.1) Priority Expansion Proposal, for the FY26 FTE increase and supporting funding, is developed by the Commissioner and submitted to EEA and Administration and Finance (A&F) for approval by October 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA

**Objective 3.3: Increase Staff Connectivity Across Divisions and within the Department to Support Strategic Plan Implementation**

**Action 3.3.1: Foster and strengthen the cross-department collaboration established during the Strategic Planning process.**

Key Results	Lead
The DFG Comms Team and the DFG EJ Team includes opportunities for consultation and advice on Strategic Plan implementation, as well as opportunities to share successes and lessons learned, as part of their regular meeting agendas beginning July 2024.	DFG Comms Team, DFG EJ Team
Strategic Plan All-Team meetings are held quarterly to discuss and assess progress on achieving Strategic Plan theme Key Results, highlight Strategic Plan successes, discuss challenges, and identify necessary adjustments starting October 2024.	Commissioner's Office, DER, DMF, MassWildlife, OFBA
A Department e-newsletter is created and distributed quarterly to all Department staff that will provide updates on progress and highlight Strategic Plan successes starting October 2024.	Commissioner's Office
Joint projects that involve two or more Divisions are identified regularly by the DFG Comms Team and highlighted in the annual Strategic Plan report and other Department and Division communications beginning July 2025	DFG Comms Team

## Glossary of Abbreviations

A&F – Administration and Finance  
 BMP – Best Management Practice  
 CNL – Critical Natural Landscape  
 CO<sub>2</sub> – Carbon Dioxide  
 CZM – Office of Coastal Zone Management  
 DCR – Department of Conservation and Recreation  
 DER – Division of Ecological Restoration  
 DFG – Department of Fish and Game  
 DFG Comms Team - DFG Communications Team  
 DMF – Division of Marine Fisheries  
 DOT – Department of Transportation  
 EEA – Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
 EFH – Essential Fish Habitat  
 EJ – Environmental Justice  
 EO – Executive Order  
 FTE – Full-Time Employee  
 GGI – Greenhouse Gas Inventory  
 GHG – Greenhouse Gas  
 GIS – Geographic Information System  
 H.1 – House 1 Budget  
 HAB – Harmful Algal Blooms  
 HPLC – High-Performance Liquid Chromatography  
 IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
 LAP – Language Access Plan  
 LEP – Limited English Proficiency  
 LBE – Leading by Example

LiDAR – Light Detection and Ranging  
 MassGIS – Bureau of Geographic Information  
 MassWildlife – Division of Fisheries and Wildlife  
 MDAR – Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources  
 MOOR – Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation  
 NERACOOS – Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems  
 NGO – Non-Governmental Organization  
 NHESP – Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program  
 NMFS – National Marine Fisheries Service  
 NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
 NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 OFBA – Office of Fishing and Boating  
 ORV – Off Road Vehicle  
 OVM – Office of Vehicle Management  
 R3 – Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation  
 RFQ – Request for Quote  
 SAV – Submerged Aquatic Vegetation  
 SLAMM – Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model  
 S Mast – School for Marine Science & Technology  
 SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
 SWAP – State Wildlife Action Plan  
 UAV – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle  
 USDA – United States Department of Agriculture  
 WMA – Wildlife Management Area