

Environmental Justice Screening Form

Project Name	Ponkapoag Pond Fisherman’s Cove Improvements and Landscape Management Plan
Anticipated Date of MEPA Filing	July 17, 2023
Proponent Name	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Contact Information (e.g., consultant)	Amanda J. Houle, PWS, CERP Tighe & Bond, Inc. AJHoule@tighebond.com / (508) 304-6354
Public website for project or other physical location where project materials can be obtained (if available)	Physical project materials can be obtained by contacting the Proponent’s consultant, Tighe & Bond, Inc. (c/o Amanda Houle, AJHoule@tighebond.com / (508) 304-6354
Municipality and Zip Code for Project (if known)	Canton 02021 Randolph 02368
Project Type* (list all that apply)	Recreation, Ecological Restoration, Master Plan – Development
Is the project site within a mapped 100-year FEMA flood plain? Y/N/unknown	Yes
Estimated GHG emissions of conditioned spaces (click here for GHG Estimation tool)	No conditioned spaces/buildings are proposed as part of this project. No residential dwellings or commercial buildings intended for human use or occupancy are proposed.

Project Description

<p>1. Provide a brief project description, including overall size of the project site and square footage of proposed buildings and structures if known.</p> <p>The proposed project is located at the Ponkapoag Pond subarea of the Blue Hills Reservation in Canton and Randolph, Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR) is proposing necessary improvements at Fisherman’s Cove on the south end of the property off Randolph Street. The goal of the work is to improve park user experience through improvements to parking and pond access for hiking and boating (i.e., personal non-motorized watercraft). The work will include the reconstruction and paving of a portion of the existing unpaved parking area for improved accessibility. This area has experienced severe erosion and has many areas with potholes and ledges, and large depressions. Drainage improvements and installation of stormwater infrastructure (e.g, rain gardens) are also proposed to mitigate stormwater runoff into Ponkapoag Pond and adjacent wetlands. Interpretive and educational signage and wayfinding signage, picnic tables, benches, portable restrooms, and native landscaping will also be installed. Additionally, the work at Fisherman’s Cove includes the restoration of an existing mowed wetland. The Fisherman’s Cove project promotes the sustainable use of this area and will provide enhanced year-round access to clean natural resources, open space, water resources, recreational facilities, and educational opportunities. This work will provide direct benefits to Environmental Justice Populations through safety improvements, universal accessibility, water quality improvements, and ecological restoration to this recreational space.</p> <p>In addition to the work at Fisherman’s Cove, MassDCR plans to conduct long-term landscape and</p>

invasive species management as a part of their Landscape Management Plan throughout the Ponkapoag Pond area, as budgets allow. This management work will occur on and adjacent to established trails and will require both hand tools and mowing equipment. Depending on the species, methods of management will include hand pulling, cutting with hand saws, mowing, uprooting, girdling trees, and prescribed controlled burning. Areas of invasive species management will be re-vegetated and restored with native plantings.

2. List anticipated MEPA review thresholds (301 CMR 11.03) (if known)

301 CMR 11.03(11)(b) – Any Project of ½ or more acres within a designated ACEC, unless the Project consists solely of one single family dwelling.

3. List all anticipated state, local and federal permits needed for the project (if known)

- **MA Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) – Expanded ENF and Rollover EIR**
- **Canton Conservation Commission - Order of Conditions**
- **Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) Project Review**
- **MA Historical Commission Project Notification Form (PNF)**
- **EPA NPDES Construction General Permit – eNOI and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan**

4. Identify EJ populations and characteristics (Minority, Income, English Isolation) within 5 miles of project site (can attach map identifying 5-mile radius from [EJ Maps Viewer](#) in lieu of narrative)

EJ Populations within 5 miles of the project site have the following characteristics:

- **Minority**
- **Low Income**
- **Minority and Income**
- **Minority and English Isolation**
- **Minority, Income, and English Isolation**

These populations are in the municipalities of Canton, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Avon, Holbrook, Braintree, Quincy, Milton, Boston, Dedham, Westwood, and Norwood.

5. Identify any municipality or census tract meeting the definition of “vulnerable health EJ criteria” in the [DPH EJ Tool](#) located in whole or in part within a 1 mile radius of the project site.

The following municipalities meet the definition of “vulnerable health EJ criteria” within 1-mile of the project site:

- **Canton – Low Birth Weight**
- **Randolph – Low Birth Weight and Childhood Asthma**

6. Identify potential short-term and long-term environmental and public health impacts that may affect EJ Populations and any anticipated mitigation.

Potential short-term impacts associated with the construction period are stormwater runoff and dust generation from the reconstruction of the parking lot and Fisherman’s Cove access. Construction-period Best Management Practices will be incorporated into the project to mitigate these impacts during construction. Dust will be mitigated by sediment and erosion control barriers and application of water to dry areas. Stormwater runoff will be mitigated using erosion and sediment control barriers. The project will also result in the construction of rain gardens for

long-term stormwater mitigation resulting in measurable water quality improvements to this area. No long-term environmental or public health impacts are anticipated as a result of this project. Long-term benefits to the environment and surrounding communities are anticipated as this project will increase universally accessible recreational access and opportunities and will provide stormwater treatment, invasive species management, habitat preservation, and wetland restoration.

7. Identify project benefits, including “Environmental Benefits” as defined in 301 CMR 11.02, that may improve environmental conditions or public health of the EJ population

This project is anticipated to have a net benefit on Environmental Justice Populations and the environment by providing improved universal access to open space and recreational opportunities through parking and trail improvements and improving water quality through enhanced stormwater management. Improvements to Fisherman’s Cove will also increase public safety of recreational opportunities for day-use visitors accessing and recreating along the pond shore. Educational, interpretive, and wayfinding signage are also proposed, which will provide increased environmental and cultural educational opportunities and ease of navigating for visitors. Additionally, proposed stormwater mitigation infrastructure, wetland restoration, and invasive species management will enhance and preserve the ecological value and aesthetics of Ponkapoag Pond and the surrounding Blue Hills Reservation.

8. Describe how the community can request a meeting to discuss the project, and how the community can request oral language interpretation services at the meeting. Specify how to request other accommodations, including meetings after business hours and at locations near public transportation.

The community is encouraged to contact MassDCR with any questions at mass.parks@mass.gov. For questions, please contact Amanda Houle, Tighe & Bond, at AJHoule@tighebond.com / (508) 304-6354 or contact Cassidy Chroust, MassDCR, at (978) 621-4627 / Cassidy.Chroust@state.ma.us.