

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

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100 CAMBRIDGE ST, 6<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, BOSTON, MA 02114



### Request for Response

Tidal Restoration Preliminary Field Investigations: Narragansett  
Bay Estuary Region

**COMMBUYS Bid#: BD-26-1046-DER-FWE01-126020**

**Agency Document Number: DER 2027-01**

**March 23, 2026**

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## **1 OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY**

### **1.1 Procurement Scope and Description of Proposals Sought**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) is seeking applications for potential tidal restoration sites within the Massachusetts portion of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Region that need preliminary field investigations to support tidal restoration project planning and development. **The purpose of this RFR is to select tidal restoration project sites; the field investigations will be contracted directly by DER.** These studies will provide DER with critical information for future ecological restoration planning in a coastal region where the Commonwealth lacks data on restoration and resilience opportunities. Likewise, the studies help owners and partners assess opportunities and constraints during early planning phases of potential tidal restoration projects. DER is interested in tidal restoration projects that are at an early stage of development and/or decision-making. Selected projects will be eligible to receive technical assistance from DER staff and DER-led contracted technical services from qualified vendors. Status designation awards for selected sites will commence in state Fiscal Year 2027 with an opportunity for a one-year renewal.

### **1.2 Goals and Objectives**

The overall goal of the preliminary field investigations is to gather and synthesize information on potential tidal restoration projects. Specific objectives to be accomplished include:

- Determine the overall breadth of the project(s);
- Determine likely project opportunities and challenges, and identify areas for future investigation to promote restoration; and to
- Position the owner and partners to move into project planning and design phases by providing a field data collection technical memorandum, including an existing conditions plan and a recommendation of next steps.

### **1.3 Applicable Procurement Law**

This Bid is issued under the following law(s):

- 815 CMR 2.00

### **1.4 Funding Availability**

DER anticipates spending up to \$200,000 on preliminary field investigations for up to five (5) sites selected under this RFR. DER reserves the right to designate additional sites for preliminary studies from among the applicants to this RFR, if additional funding becomes available. Acceptance of this opportunity does not guarantee receipt of technical services or technical assistance. DER is not offering further services beyond the scope of this RFR to

selected applicants at this time. However, DER reserves the right to amend a contract scope and budget to add services and funds at DER's discretion, and if funds become available. There is no guarantee of future assistance from DER, but selected applicants may be eligible to apply for DER assistance under future RFRs.

Awarded sites will not be eligible to receive additional funding from other DER grant programs within the same fiscal year(s).

### **1.5 Number of awards**

Multiple status designation awards may result from this Request for Response (RFR).

### **1.6 Eligible Applicants and Sites**

Eligible applicants include any State, Regional, or Municipal agency, Tribal government, Non-Governmental Organization, or public or private entity that either owns or has the written permission by the owner of the site to complete the study. Federal agencies are not eligible applicants for this opportunity; however, non-Federal applicants may apply to conduct work on ecologically valuable Federal lands located in the Commonwealth. Additionally, for-profit firms that are not owners will not be considered as eligible applicants.

An applicant may be the owner, or another entity who applies on the owner's behalf. In either case, the owner(s) must provide a signed access agreement(s) with the application (see Section 6.1). If a site has more than one owner, a signed access agreement for each owner must be submitted with the application. An access agreement is not required for abutting property owners that are upstream or downstream of the tidal restriction. These access permissions will be coordinated separately by the contractor conducting the field investigation as needed, if the site is selected by DER.

Eligible sites must be potential tidal restoration projects within coastal wetlands, located within the boundaries of the Commonwealth and within the Narragansett Bay watershed. This includes coastal watersheds within the municipalities of Berkley, Dighton, Fall River, Freetown, Raynham, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Somerset, Swansea, and Taunton (see map of region included in Section 8. Appendix). DER is focusing on this coastal region of the Commonwealth to address critical data gaps in ecological restoration and climate resilience opportunities. DER has historically had fewer projects in this region as compared to other coastal regions of Massachusetts. The current opportunity builds on a tidal crossing study led by DER in the Massachusetts portion of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Region.

Applicants may apply for more than one site but must submit an individual application for each. However, if a site contains multiple associated structures to be evaluated, a single project application can be submitted.

The following practices are **not** eligible under this RFR:

- Marsh platform or adaptive management work including runneling, ditch-remediation, plantings, and thin-layer deposition.
- Replacement of a freshwater, non-tidal culvert; or
- Wetland mitigation projects.

### 1.7 Contract Duration

Awarded project status for selected sites will expire no later than June 30, 2027. A one-year renewal option may be awarded in the following fiscal year, state Fiscal Year 2028.

### 1.8 Compliance with Section 3A of MGL C. 40A

Compliance with [Section 3A of MGL c. 40A](#) (Multi-family zoning as-of-right in MBTA communities) will be considered when making grant award recommendations.

### 1.9 Definitions

**Coastal Wetlands:** tidally influenced systems with a direct connection to coastal waters. Coastal wetlands include marine or estuarine habitats (i.e., salt marsh), and brackish or freshwater habitats that are subject to tidal action on a routine basis (at a minimum, they experience water level changes due to monthly maximum spring tide levels).

**Owner:** the owner of the site with one or more types of structures that are causing a tidal restriction (e.g., culvert, bridge, berm, trail, dam or other barriers to tidal flow).

**Site:** the area containing the potential tidal restriction(s). Sites may contain one or more types of infrastructure or barriers to tidal flow, for example a single culvert under a road, a berm with a tide gate, or a culvert under a road as well as a rock wall immediately upstream. Multiple tidal restrictions can be included in one site if they can be reasonably demonstrated to be part of one tidal restoration effort. For example, multiple culverts under a road conveying a single stream with a rock wall immediately upstream and an earthen berm immediately downstream may be considered part of one site, as it is reasonable to assume that all features would need

to be evaluated together to restore tidal flow to this area. If two tidal restrictions cannot reasonably be demonstrated to be part of one tidal restoration project, then they are considered separate sites. For example, a dam that is a quarter of a mile upstream of an undersized culvert would be considered a separate site from the culvert.

**Tidal Restoration:** a project that addresses a tidal restriction causing ecological degradation (e.g., impaired or lost coastal wetlands habitat, decreased water quality, reduction in fish passage and fish and wildlife habitat etc.) and community impacts (e.g., erosion and flood risk, impacts to passive and active recreation etc.).

**Tidal Restriction:** a barrier to tidal flow conveyed through a channel (e.g., tidal creek, stream, river or ditch that is the primary conveyance of flow to an upstream area) which can include stream crossings (e.g., undersized openings under transportation infrastructure such as culverts, pipes, tide gates, and bridges), and other partial or full barriers to upstream tidal exchange such as dams, agricultural berms, water control structures, trails, old abutments, or rock walls.

## 2 ESTIMATED PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE
<b>Notice of Funding Opportunity</b>	March 3, 2026
<b>Bid Release Date</b>	March 23, 2026
<b>Deadline for Submission of Questions through “Q&amp;A” Period</b>	April 13, 2026; 4:00 PM
<b>Official Answers for Bid Q&amp;A published (Estimated)</b>	April 17, 2026
<b>Deadline for Quotes/Bid Responses (“Bid Opening Date/Time” in COMMBUYS)</b>	May 11, 2026; 4:00 PM

Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted but applicants may be eligible to apply under a subsequent RFR. DER reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or request additional information and documentation if needed.

Times are Eastern Standard/Daylight Savings (US), as displayed on the COMMBUYS system clock to applicants after logging in. If there is a conflict between the dates in this Procurement Calendar and dates in the Bid’s Header, the dates in the Bid’s Header on COMMBUYS shall

prevail. Applicants are responsible for checking the Bid record, including Bid Q&A, on COMMBUYS for Procurement Calendar updates.

Award status under this procurement expires June 30, 2027, with the possibility of (1) one-year renewal at DER's discretion.

By submitting a proposal, the applicant acknowledges the terms and specifications contained within the RFR.

## **2.1 Written "Q&A" Questions and Answers Period**

The "Q&A" provides the opportunity for applicants to ask written questions and receive written answers from DER regarding this RFR. Applicant questions must be submitted through the **Q&A Form** on DER's website, prior to the Deadline for Submission of Questions stated in the Procurement Calendar. See Section 2 above. DER will not respond to questions submitted after this date. A link to the **Q&A Form** will be posted to DER's dedicated webpage for this opportunity. Please note that questions submitted to DER using any other medium (including those that are sent by mail, fax, email, text, or call/voicemail, etc.) will not be answered.

Applicants are responsible for submitting written questions that are suitable for public viewing, since all questions and answer responses provided by DER are accessible to the public. Applicants must not include information that could be considered personal, security sensitive, inflammatory, incorrect, collusory, or otherwise objectionable, including information about the applicant's organization. DER reserves the right to edit or omit submitted questions that raise any of these issues.

DER responses to questions in writing will be provided in COMMBUYS and on DER's website on the date stated in the Procurement Calendar, see Section 2. All answers are final when posted. Any subsequent revisions to previously provided answers will be dated.

### **3 SPECIFICATIONS**

#### **3.1 Scope of Work (SOW) Requirements**

A typical tidal restoration preliminary field investigations scope of work may include review of existing information, a site visit by the qualified contractor, topographic and bathymetric survey, wetlands resource delineation, tidal conditions study, subsurface borings, existing conditions plan, and a technical report summarizing field investigations results and discussion of project benefits, site constraints and potential next steps. DER reserves the right to adjust the scope of work based on the contractor's recommendation and with approval from the owner(s) or owner's/owners' authorized representative.

#### **3.2 Requirements for Contract or Engagement Termination**

Please note that DER does not guarantee that any contracts or technical assistance may result from this RFR.

Copies of all final deliverables produced as part of the preliminary field investigations will be provided to the successful applicant and the owner if not the applicant, upon conclusion of the study. Draft materials may be provided to the applicant and the owner(s), if not the applicant, for review and comment, if desired.

There is no obligation for the applicant, owner(s), or project partners to move forward with a selected tidal restoration project after the preliminary field investigations are complete. Nor is there any guarantee of further assistance from DER after this effort concludes.

#### **3.3 Use of This Procurement**

This RFR is a single department procurement. All contracts awarded under this RFR will be utilized solely by DER.

#### **3.4 Request for Single or Multiple Contractors**

This RFR may result in one or more preliminary field investigation awards.

#### **3.5 RFR Distribution Method**

In order to conduct a fair and open procurement, DER is issuing this request for interested parties through COMMBUYS and DER's Website. This RFR has been distributed electronically using this system. It is the responsibility of every applicant to check for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond. DER, alongside the Commonwealth,

accepts no responsibility and will not provide accommodation to applicants who submit an application based on an out-of-date RFR or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

#### **4 AUDIT**

During the term of this Agreement and for a period of six years thereafter, DER, its auditors, the Operational Services Division, the Office of the Inspector General, or other authorized representatives shall be afforded access at reasonable times to Contractor's accounting records, including sales information on any system, reports or files, to audit all records relating to goods sold or services performed pursuant to this Agreement. If such an audit indicates that Contractor has materially overcharged DER, then the Contractor shall remit the overcharged amount and be responsible for payment of any costs associated with the audit.

#### **5 EVALUATION**

##### **5.1 Application Evaluation and Selection**

Applicant scores will be used to rank Applications and will determine which applicants will proceed to subsequent stages of the evaluation and/or enter negotiations with the Commonwealth to receive a Contract award.

As part of the review of proposals, DER may contact applicants for (a) response/application clarifications, (b) to request additional information and documentation, and/or (c) to conduct field inspection.

DER reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to only accept projects that are in keeping with DER's mission.

## 5.2 Evaluation Criteria (100 Points Total)

Applications will be evaluated based on criteria and associated point values described below, using information and materials supplied by the applicant, knowledge of the sites, and relevant publicly accessible information, such as GIS data from MassGIS.

Ecological Value (40%): *To what extent would restoration at this site benefit the environment?*

The proposed site's potential benefit to the environment will be evaluated based on existing site condition and context, proximity to important habitat, available ecological data, and any additional information provided by the applicant on the application form.

Community Benefits (30%): *Will the proposed project have a positive impact on the local community?* Potential benefits will be evaluated based on available information about the site, nearby infrastructure, and information provided by the applicant on the application form.

Climate Resilience Benefits (10%): *Will the proposed project increase the resilience of habitat and/or infrastructure to climate change impacts?* Potential benefits will be evaluated based on available resilience information and may include reduction of flood-risk from coastal storm surge, reduction of damage to transportation infrastructure or surrounding infrastructure, and salt marsh migration opportunities.

Environmental Justice Benefits (10%): *Will the proposed project provide targeted or meaningful benefits to communities that have historically experienced environmental, public health, economic, or infrastructure disadvantages?* More information can be found on the [Department of Fish and Game's Environmental Justice](#) and [Office of Environmental Justice and Equity's](#) websites.

Overall Project Quality (10%): *What is the overall project quality and how well does the project align with DER's mission?* Overall project quality points will be allotted at the discretion of the review committee.

## 6 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

### 6.1 Application Submission Method

Applications must be submitted through DER [Website](#). No paper applications will be accepted. ***Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.*** Applicants for preliminary field investigations must meet the eligibility requirements described above in Section 1. Applicants must submit a separate application package *for each site applied for*.

Applicants must fill out the application submission form provided on the DER [Website](#). A completed Application Form, Site Photographs and signed Owner Access Agreement(s) must be attached/uploaded to the application submission form.

Submissions must include the following:

- Completed **Application Form** (*Required*)
- **Site Photographs** (*Required*)
  - Photos may be uploaded in a single document to reduce file size or uploaded individually. Please be aware of file size limits, DER recommends photo files should not exceed 2 MB per photo. DER requests the following photographs of each tidal restriction at the site, if feasible.
  - **Inlet** – A photo looking towards the tidal restriction from upstream.
  - **Outlet** – A photo looking towards the tidal restriction from downstream.
  - **Upstream**– A photo looking upstream from the tidal restriction.
  - **Downstream** – A photo looking downstream from the tidal restriction.
- **Signed Owner Access Agreement(s)** (*Required*) An Access Agreement must be signed by the owner or by each owner (if more than one) and submitted with the application.

Applicants are encouraged to submit optional supporting documentation as applicable. Such information may include but is not limited to:

- Planning documents and reports.
- Older technical analyses and assessments.
- Other site photographs beyond what is required.

If you have trouble with your online submission, please contact Kacey Ruderman, [Kacey.Ruderman@mass.gov](mailto:Kacey.Ruderman@mass.gov).

By submitting a proposal, the applicant acknowledges the terms and specifications contained within the RFR.

### **6.1.1 Acceptable Forms of Signature**

For all 1) CTR forms, including the Standard Contract Form, W-9s, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) forms, ISAs, and other CTR-issued documents and forms, or 2) documents related to state finance and within the statutory area of authority or control of CTR (i.e. contracts, payrolls, and related supporting documentation), CTR will accept signatures executed by an authorized signatory in any of the following ways: 1. Traditional “wet signature” (ink on paper); 2. Electronic signature that is either: a. Hand drawn using a mouse or finger if working from a touch screen device; or Page 2 b. An uploaded picture of the signatory’s hand drawn signature 3. Electronic signatures affixed using a digital tool such as Adobe Sign or DocuSign. If using an electronic signature, the signature must be visible, include the signatory’s name and title, and must be accompanied by a signature date. Please be advised that typed text of a name not generated by a digital tool such as Adobe Sign or DocuSign, even in computer-generated cursive script, or an electronic symbol, are not acceptable forms of electronic signature.

## **7 ADDITIONAL CONTRACTUAL DOCUMENTATION**

If an application is awarded, the selected recipient will be required to submit the following forms to complete a contract. Applicants are encouraged to review these forms prior to submission of a Response.

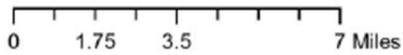
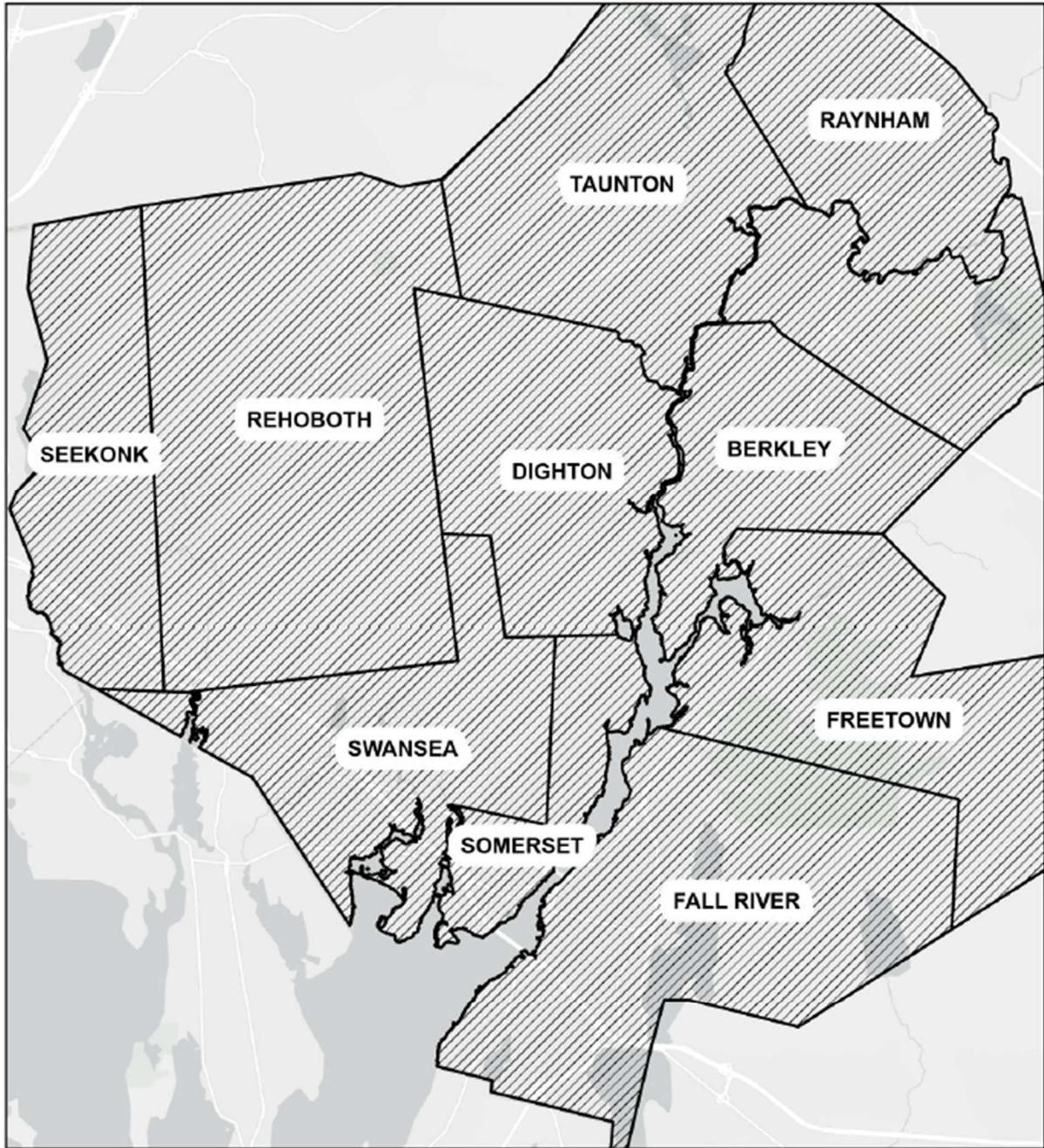
- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing Form
- Commonwealth W-9 Tax Form
- Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) Authorization Form\*

Forms with an asterisk(\*) may not be submitted if they are already on file with the Commonwealth.

Forms can also be downloaded from: <https://www.macomptroller.org/forms/#section->

**8 APPENDIX**

Map of Narragansett Bay Eligible Region



 Massachusetts Cities and Towns