

Environmental Justice Screening Form

Project Name	Farm Pond Dam Removal Project
Anticipated Date of MEPA Filing	June 26, 2026
Proponent Name	Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife)
Contact Information (e.g., consultant)	Isobel Arthen-Long, Tighe & Bond, Inc., 413-875-1635
Public website for project or other physical location where project materials can be obtained (if available)	N/A
Municipality and Zip Code for Project (if known)	Gardner, Massachusetts 01440
Project Type* (list all that apply)	Dam Removal/Ecological Restoration
Is the project site within a mapped 100-year FEMA flood plain? Y/N/unknown	N
Estimated GHG emissions of conditioned spaces (click here for GHG Estimation tool)	N/A

Project Description

1. Provide a brief project description, including overall size of the project site and square footage of proposed buildings and structures if known.

Farm Pond Dam is an approximately 225-foot-long and 12.8-foot-high earthen embankment impounding a section of Carlson Brook. The dam is located within the 2,358-acre High Ridge Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The dam's year of construction and original purpose are undetermined, but the impoundment has historically been used for ice harvest and recreation. MassWildlife proposes to remove Farm Pond Dam to achieve the following goals:

- Improve water quality and restore the natural river flow in Carlson Brook, a cold-water fishery resource;
- Improve aquatic habitats for fish and other aquatic life;
- Remove aging infrastructure to reduce safety risks for users of the WMA;
- Improve outdoor recreation opportunities within WMA; and
- Eliminate the costs associated with ongoing repairs and maintenance.

The project will consist of removal of the full vertical extent of the dam and sufficient horizontal extent such that the dam will not impound water during a 500-year storm event. The dam's outlet structure will be removed in its entirety. The project will additionally include the demolition of an approximately 800-square foot abandoned and collapsing brick structure known colloquially as the "ice house."

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

As the project is an Ecological Restoration Project, the project is not subject to MEPA review, provided the requirements of 301 CMR 11.01(2)(b)4. are met. A Notice of Ecological Restoration Project will be submitted for publication in the *Environmental Monitor* at least 60 days prior to filing a Notice of Intent for a Restoration Order of Conditions. The Project will meet the eligibility criteria for a Restoration Order of Conditions under 310 CMR 10.13: Eligibility Criteria for Restoration Order of Conditions for an Ecological Restoration Project.

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

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of License or funding (specify)</u>
MEPA	Notice of Ecological Restoration Project
Gardner Conservation Commission	MAWPA Ecological Restoration Order of Conditions
MassDEP	Section 401 Water Quality Certification
MA Historical Commission	Project Notification Form
DCR Office of Dam Safety	Chapter 253 Dam Safety Permit
US Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Pre-Construction Notification
US EPA	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit

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)

The Designated Geographic Area (DGA) for the Farm Pond Dam Removal Project is one (1) mile.

The Project Site is located within **Block Group 2, Census Tract 7075, Worcester County, Massachusetts**. This block group is located in Gardner and is an EJ population with the criteria: **Minority**.

EJ characteristics of this block group:

- Minority Population: 35%
- Median household income (MHHI): \$67,941 (81% of MA MHHI)
- Households with language isolation: 2%

This municipality has a median household income of **\$51,708** which is **61%** of the MA MHHI. In 2020 this block group had a population of **2,123** in **524 households**.

On January 22, 2026, members of the project team held a pre-filing consultation meeting with representatives of the MEPA office. At that meeting, it was communicated to the project team that the project's placement within an EJ Community is due to the demographic profile of those incarcerated at the North Central Correctional Institute, a State Prison located approximately 0.35 miles from the Project Site. As such, meaningful community engagement opportunities are limited, as are potential adverse and beneficial impacts related to the proposed project.

Additional EJ Communities within 5 miles of the Project Site are shown on Figure 1 attached to this Screening Form.

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

Elevated Blood Lead Prevalence, Low Birth Weight, Heart Attack Rate, And Childhood Asthma Rates are presented at the community level within the DPH EJ Tool. The Vulnerable Health Criteria for the City of Gardner are shown in the table below.

Vulnerable Health Criteria	Finding
Low Birth Weight Rate (per 1,000)	Gardner meets the Vulnerable Health EJ Criterion for low birth weight.
Elevated Blood Lead Prevalence (per 1,000)	Gardner does not meet the Vulnerable Health EJ Criterion for elevated blood lead prevalence .
Pediatric Asthma ED Visits Rate (per 10,000)	Gardner meets the Vulnerable Health EJ Criterion for pediatric asthma ED visits.
Heart Attack Rate (per 10,000)	Gardner meets the Vulnerable Health EJ Criterion for heart attack rate.

Low Birth Weight and Elevated Blood Lead Prevalence are presented at the census tract level within the DPH EJ tool.

Census Tract 25,027,707,500, Gardner

- Elevated Blood Lead Prevalence

The Towns of Westminster and Ashburnham are additionally located within one mile of the Project Site. However, there are no EJ census blocks in these towns located within the project’s DGA.

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

The Project is not likely to create negative impacts or have disproportionate adverse effect on EJ populations for the following reasons:

- It will not exacerbate pre-existing conditions related to air, water, or soil pollution.
- It will not create additional traffic or result in any new vehicular emissions as compared to existing conditions.
- Construction activities will conform to MassDOT standards and guidelines, which require that contractors install emission control devices in all off-road vehicles.

The project is not expected to exacerbate existing environmental or health burdens as identified by the DPH EJ Tool. The project is an ecological restoration project and will have environmental benefits as described below.

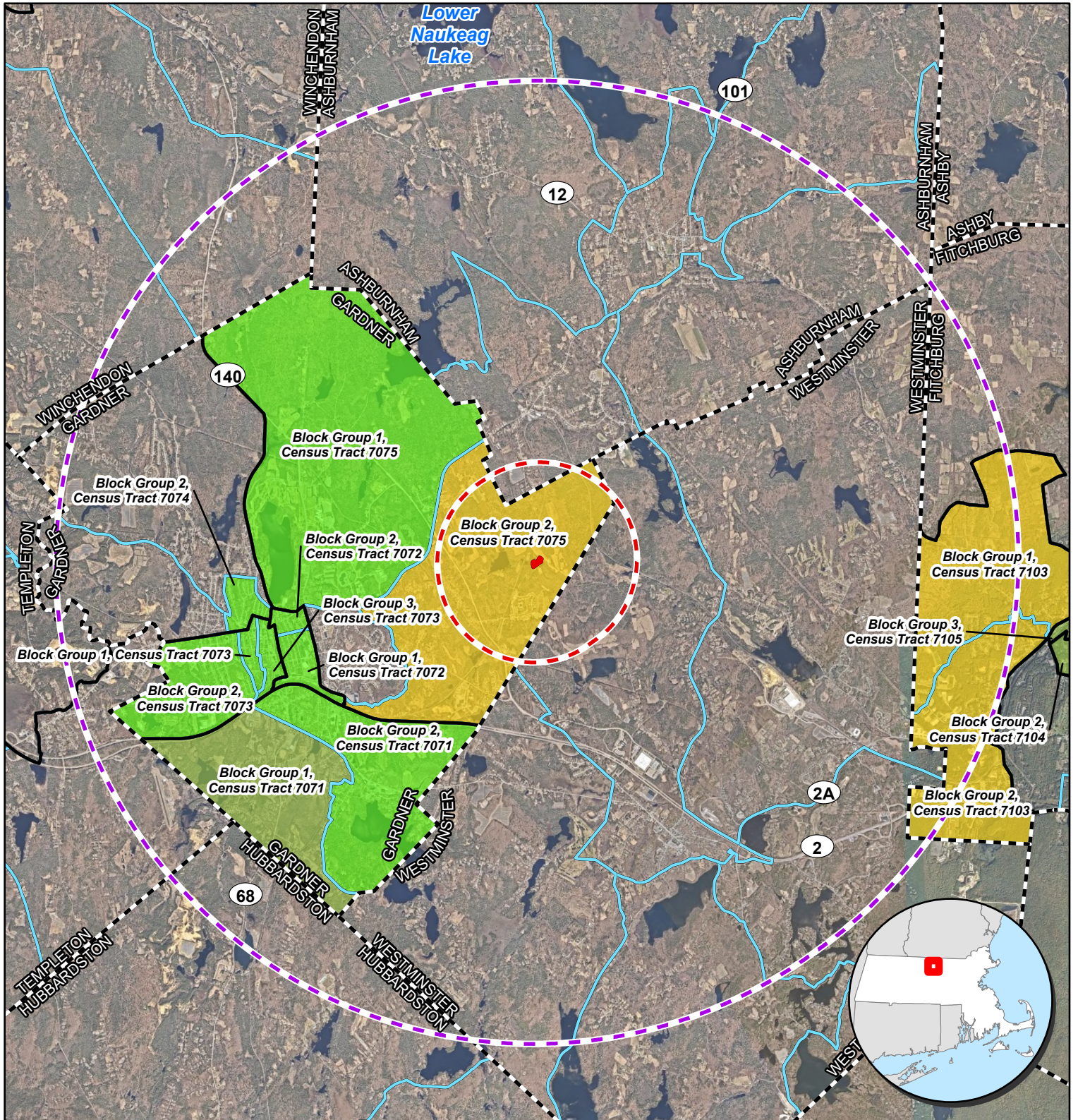
7. Identify project benefits, including “Environmental Benefits” as defined in 301 CMR 11.02, that may improve environmental conditions or public health of the EJ population

The project is an ecological restoration project that will result in enhanced cold-water fisheries habitat and recreational opportunities within the High Ridge WMA. The removal of the dam and the restoration of natural ecological features will provide the following benefits:

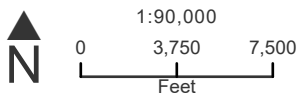
- Improved ecological integrity and diversity in the project area by increasing connectivity and reducing temperature of water flowing within Carlson Brook.
- Improved community and visitor safety by removing dilapidated/unsafe infrastructure.

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.

Community members can request additional Project information, a community meeting, or other accommodations by contacting Isobel Arthen-Long at IArthen-Long@tighebond.com or 413-875-1635.



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|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Limit of Work | Municipal Boundary | Minority |
| 1-Mile Buffer to Limit of Work | Census Tract | Income |
| 5-Mile Buffer to Limit of Work | Census Block Group | Minority and Income |



Based on latest Nearmap Imagery (March 2026).
 Census Data and 2020 Environmental Justice Data is courtesy of MassGIS (2022).

Printer/Export Friendly Project-Specific EJ Reference List

Populate the "Project EJ Ref List" tab to generate a printer friendly format of the list
 Before printing, ensure any "blanks" are filtered from the "Contact Name" column in the table below.

Project Name: Farm Pond Dam Removal Project

Project Address: 0 Smith Street, High Ridge Wildlife Management Area, Gardner

Date Generated: 4/30/2026

Municipalities in Project's DGA: Gardner

Project-Specific EJ Reference List						
Contact Name	Title	Phone	Email	Affiliation	Contact Type	Proponent Notes (contact status, removal requests, updates)
Claire B.W. Muller	Movement Building Director	(508) 308-9261	claire@uumassaction.org	Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network	Statewide CBO	none
Julia Blatt	Executive Director	(617) 714-4272	juliablatt@massriversalliance.org	Mass Rivers Alliance	Statewide CBO	none
Jodi Valenta	Massachusetts State Director	(617) 367-6200	Jodi.Valenta@tpl.org	The Trust for Public Land	Statewide CBO	none
Kerry Bowie	Board President	Not Provided	kerry@msaadapartners.com	Browning the GreenSpace	Statewide CBO	none
Sylvia Broude	Executive Director	(617) 292-4821	sylvia@communityactionworks.org	Community Action Works	Statewide CBO	none
Brittney Jenkins	Vice President	Not Provided	Bjenkins@clf.org	Conservation Law Foundation	Statewide CBO	none
Alex St. Pierre	Director of Communities & Toxics	Not Provided	aestpierre@clf.org	Conservation Law Foundation	Statewide CBO	none
Paulina Muratore	Director of Transportation Justice and Infrastructure	Not Provided	pmuratore@clf.org	Conservation Law Foundation	Statewide CBO	none
Breanne Frank	Associate Attorney	Not Provided	bfrank@clf.org	Conservation Law Foundation	Statewide CBO	none
Phil Papiasvili	Staff Attorney	Not Provided	ppapiasvili@clf.org	Conservation Law Foundation	Statewide CBO	none
Priya Gandbhir	Director of Clean Power	Not Provided	pgandbhir@clf.org	Conservation Law Foundation	Statewide CBO	none
Julia Carlton MacKay	Director of Community Resilience	Not Provided	jcarltonmackay@clf.org	Conservation Law Foundation	Statewide CBO	none
Amy Boyd Rabin	Vice President of Policy	(617) 221-8258	aboydrabin@environmentalleague.org	Environmental League of Massachusetts	Statewide CBO	none
Ben Hellerstein	MA State Director	(617) 747-4368	ben@environmentmassachusetts.org	Environment Massachusetts	Statewide CBO	none
Robb Johnson	Executive Director	(978) 443-2233	robb@massland.org	Mass Land Trust Coalition	Statewide CBO	none
Cindy Luppi	New England Director	(617) 338-8131 x208	cluppi@cleanwater.org	Clean Water Action	Statewide CBO	none
Dálida Rocha	Executive Director	Not Provided	dalida@n2nma.org	Neighbor to Neighbor Mass.	Statewide CBO	none
Lena Entin	Director of Individual Giving	Not Provided	lena@n2nma.org	Neighbor to Neighbor Mass.	Statewide CBO	none
Danny Timpona	Organizing Director	Not Provided	danny@n2nma.org	Neighbor to Neighbor Mass.	Statewide CBO	none
Miles Gresham	Campaign Director	Not Provided	miles@n2nma.org	Neighbor to Neighbor Mass.	Statewide CBO	none
Rob Moir	Executive Director	Not Provided	rob@oceanriver.org	Ocean River Institute	Statewide CBO	none

No supplemental community contacts were identified

Printer/Export Friendly Project-Specific EJ Reference List

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Vickash Mohanka	Director, MA Chapter	Not Provided	vick.mohanka@sierraclub.org	Sierra Club MA	Statewide CBO	none
Heidi Ricci	Director of Policy	Not Provided	hricci@massaudubon.org	Mass Audubon	Statewide CBO	none
Bettina Washington	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer	(508) 560-9014	thpo@wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov	Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)	Federal Tribe	none
Brian Weeden	Chair	(774) 413-0520	Brian.Weeden@mwtribe-nsn.gov	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe	Federal Tribe	none
Nakia Hendricks Jr.	Office Manager	Not Provided	106Review@mwtribe-nsn.gov	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe	Federal Tribe	none
David Weeden	THPO/Director	(774) 327.0068	David.Weeden@mwtribe-nsn.gov	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe	Federal Tribe	none
Alma Gordon	President	Not Provided	tribalcouncil@chappaquiddickwampanoag.org	Chappaquiddick Tribe of the Wampanoag Nation	Indigenous Org	none
Cheryll Toney Holley	Chair	(774) 317-9138	cholley@nipmuc.gov	Nipmuc Nation (Hassanamisco Nipmucs)	Indigenous Org	none
John Peters, Jr.	Executive Director	(617) 573-1292	john.peters@mass.gov	Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA)	Indigenous Org	none
Melissa Ferretti	Chair	(508) 304-5023	melissa@herringpondtribe.org	Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe	Indigenous Org	none
Patricia D. Rocker	Council Chair	Not Provided	rockerpatriciad@verizon.net	Chappaquiddick Tribe of the Wampanoag Nation, Whale	Indigenous Org	none
Raquel Halsey	Executive Director	(617) 232-0343	rhalsey@naicob.org	North American Indian Center of Boston	Indigenous Org	none
Cora Pierce	Not Provided	Not Provided	Coradot@yahoo.com	Pocassett Wampanoag Tribe	Indigenous Org	none
Elizabeth Solomon	Not Provided	Not Provided	Solomon.Elizabeth@gmail.com	Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag	Indigenous Org	none
Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe	Historic Preservation Manager	(413) 884-6048	THPO@Mohican-nsn.gov	Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe	Federal Tribe	none
Melissa Langley	Lab and Monitoring Coordinator	Not Provided	mlangley@ctriver.org	Connecticut River Conservancy	Local CBO	none

No supplemental community contacts were identified