**Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration**

**Department of Fish and Game**

Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program

For the Replacement of High Ecological Culverts

**Question and Answer**

**Q1: Where can I find additional details about how the Massachusetts Wildlife Climate Action Tool’s *Maintain Habitat Connectivity: Retrofit or Replace Culverts* map was created? Is all that I can get a dot on the map or is there more info available for each crossing?**

A: The Massachusetts Wildlife Climate Action Tool’s *Maintain Habitat Connectivity: Retrofit or Replace Culverts* webpage provides information on priority culverts, specifically the top 5%, 10%, and 15% of culverts in need of replacement, due to climate change impacts and the vulnerabilities of fish and wildlife and their habitats.

The data was developed by the University of Massachusetts in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and state agencies as part of the Critical Linkages Phase I Project (2016). Additional information about the data and maps can be found here: <http://umasscaps.org/applications/critical-linkages.html>.

The Top 5% and 10% Coldwater Stream Crossings (blue dots and triangles on the Massachusetts Wildlife Action Tool Map) are from a specialized run of Critical Linkages for coldwater streams (summer mean temperature < 16C) conducted in 2017.

See ***Appendix C: DER’s Tools to Evaluate Environmental Benefits of Culvert Replacements*** of the grant materials for links to additional online decision support tools which may contain information regarding potential environmental benefits associated with the crossing.

**Q2: Does a culvert need to appear on the list of potential locations listed on the website – Massachusetts Wildlife Climate Action Tool?**

If your culvert is not showing up, it may not rank within the top 15% of culverts for ecological restoration; *however, data on the map are not real-time and the replacement of your proposed culvert may have other environmental benefits that are not identified by the Climate Action Tool*. **If a culvert does not appear on the map, it is still eligible to be considered for funding.**

**Q3. We have a culvert which buries a stream for several hundred feet and it needs to be replaced. Would this project be eligible for this program?**

A. The goal of this grant program is to assist Municipalities in replacing structures which can meet the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards. Structures which reroute a significant portion of a stream underground beyond the road crossing, particularly structures under buildings, parking lots and adjacent properties, are typically complex projects with many site constraints and may not be highly competitive projects for this grant program.

**Q4: Are culvert removal projects eligible for funding?**

A. Projects where a municipality seeks to completely remove a culvert or bridge **and** decommission the road are eligible for funding. As the grant application is geared toward projects where culverts will be replaced, some of the sections may not be applicable to a project proposing complete removal of the road-stream crossing (e.g. some of the surveys and analyses included in the proposed work checklist may not be required for a culvert removal project).

**Q5. Is there a webpage containing information on the towns that were awarded funding and how much funding was awarded in previous years?**

A. You can find the list of previously funded Town projects under the “Related” section at the bottom of the grant program webpage here: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/culvert-replacement-municipal-assistance-grant-program>.

**Q6: Is there a maximum grant amount the program can award an applicant?**

A. Awards may range from $25,000 to $200,000, depending on the project phase and work proposed. For example, a typical award for field data collection for new projects may be approximately $25,000, whereas awards for design and permitting may range from $40,000 to $75,000. Construction awards are not anticipated to exceed $200,000. Applicants may request funding o support tasks from multiple project phases, based on the status of the culvert replacement and need.

**Q5: Are these funds only for construction projects?**

A. No, funding will support work toward any phase(s) - from planning through construction. Typical project phases for culvert replacement include planning and data collection, engineering and design, permitting, preconstruction activities and construction.

**Q6: What types of waterbodies must a culvert cross to qualify? It appears the stream crossing standards are looking for freshwater stream culverts, not tidal culverts, correct?**

A. Eligible projects must cross a **natural freshwater, non-tidal river or stream channel.** The stream channel may be either intermittent or perennial. Projects must intend to meet the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards. One of the goals of these design standards is to replace stream crossings with structures that facilitate fish and wildlife movement and reconnect freshwater stream networks. Funding is not intended for temporary crossings such as temporary logging roads, or for drainage systems designed to convey storm water or wastewater.