



Department of Environmental Protection

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Site Assessment & Cleanup Project South Framingham, MA January 2015

The Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) established an Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy (<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/eea/ej/ej-policy-english.pdf>) to help address the disproportionate share of environmental burdens often experienced by lower-income people and communities of color who, at the same time, frequently lack environmental assets in their neighborhoods. The Policy is designed to help ensure that EJ communities are protected from environmental pollution as well as promote community involvement in planning and environmental decision-making to maintain and/or enhance the environmental quality of their neighborhoods.

As one of the agencies charged with ensuring that the underlying principles of the EJ Policy are met, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (MassDEP's) Northeast Regional Office will be devoting a portion of its staff in Fiscal Year 2015 to focus on environmental issues in South Framingham, Massachusetts, and in particular, on impacts to Beaver Dam Brook which flows through South Framingham. South Framingham contains two census tracts that meet several criteria of Environmental Justice communities (see Figure 1). It is hoped that by focusing on this area, particularly the areas in close proximity to Beaver Dam Brook, the sediment and water quality of Beaver Dam Brook and overall environmental quality of this portion of South Framingham may be improved.

As part of this focus effort on environmental issues in South Framingham, MassDEP intends to conduct the following types of activities:

Oil and Hazardous Material Locations - MassDEP staff will audit the results of prior testing and cleanup of waste sites in South Framingham which represent the greatest potential impact to Beaver Dam Brook. This area of Framingham contains the greatest density of waste sites that have been identified and reported to MassDEP to date for the entire town (see Figure 2). Several of the large waste sites in South Framingham are known to have impacted the sediments and/or water quality of Beaver Dam Brook. MassDEP's approach is two-fold:

1. *Continue involvement in two large waste sites that have or may have direct impacts to Beaver Dam Brook:*
 - a. the Mary Dennison Park on Beaver Street, which was constructed on a former dump used by the Town of Framingham and Dennison Manufacturing Company; and

- b. the former Commonwealth Gas manufactured gas plant site located on Irving Street.
2. *Evaluate other sites in South Framingham with the potential to impact Beaver Dam Brook.* This effort will involve mining the database of sites reported to MassDEP for having spills or historical contamination of soil or groundwater by oil or hazardous materials, and auditing those sites that are identified as having the potential to impact Beaver Dam Brook.

Wetland Resources - In addition to its review of waste sites in South Framingham, MassDEP staff can provide expertise regarding cleanups in wetland resource areas to ensure that the maximum level of cleanup can be attained with the least amount of damage to wetland resources, and also to help ensure the proper restoration of already damaged wetlands. MassDEP will also seek to identify any illegal wetlands filling that may have occurred in the Beaver Dam Brook area to help further improve water quality and potentially help mitigate local flooding issues in this area by creating additional flood storage capacity.

Beaver Dam Brook is the largest tributary to Lake Cochituate in Natick (see Figure 3), which is designated as an “impaired” water, and any illicit connections to the storm drain system could exacerbate the poor water quality in the Brook. MassDEP may identify whether there are any illicit connections to the Town’s storm drain system that may be causing water quality problems in Beaver Dam Brook. If such connections are discovered, MassDEP can require that they be eliminated.

Permits, Inspections, and Pollution Prevention - MassDEP also protects public health and the environment by ensuring that discharges and emissions, solid and hazardous wastes, asbestos abatement work, underground storage tanks, toxic chemical use, and the health risks associated with them are reduced to the maximum extent possible and, when pollution or waste cannot be prevented, that it is safely and effectively controlled or managed. MassDEP’s work includes permitting of various types of activities, compliance assistance when appropriate, and inspection and enforcement. Among other responsibilities, MassDEP staff conducts compliance inspections at facilities that are licensed to generate hazardous wastes or which have air quality permits or are otherwise regulated by MassDEP. During this initiative, staff may inspect facilities which have operations that may affect Beaver Dam Brook if they are not in compliance with applicable regulations. MassDEP may also provide compliance assistance as appropriate to help inform local businesses how to conduct their operations in compliance with laws and regulations, and thereby help to protect Beaver Dam Brook and its environs.

While this project is principally an evaluation of known or suspected waste sites in South Framingham, other programs and staff at MassDEP, including our Office of General Counsel and Office of Research and Standards, will play an important role in support of this initiative, and may initiate compliance and/or enforcement actions as appropriate. The Office of General Counsel provides legal support to MassDEP regulatory programs, and works with the Office of the Attorney General in any cases that are referred to them. The Office of Research and Standards provides MassDEP programs with expertise in evaluating risks to both human health and the environment.

MassDEP expects to be working closely with Town of Framingham officials during this project. In particular, MassDEP will work with Town officials to conduct outreach to any local interested parties, especially members of the EJ community, as well as holding a public meeting to present this project and solicit any input the public may have. It is MassDEP’s hope that by focusing on the portion of the Beaver Dam Brook sub-basin that is located in South Framingham, which has a long history of industrial and commercial activity, a meaningful improvement to water quality in the sub-basin can be accomplished through the coordinated efforts by the various programs at MassDEP.

Figure 1: Environmental Justice Sections of South Framingham

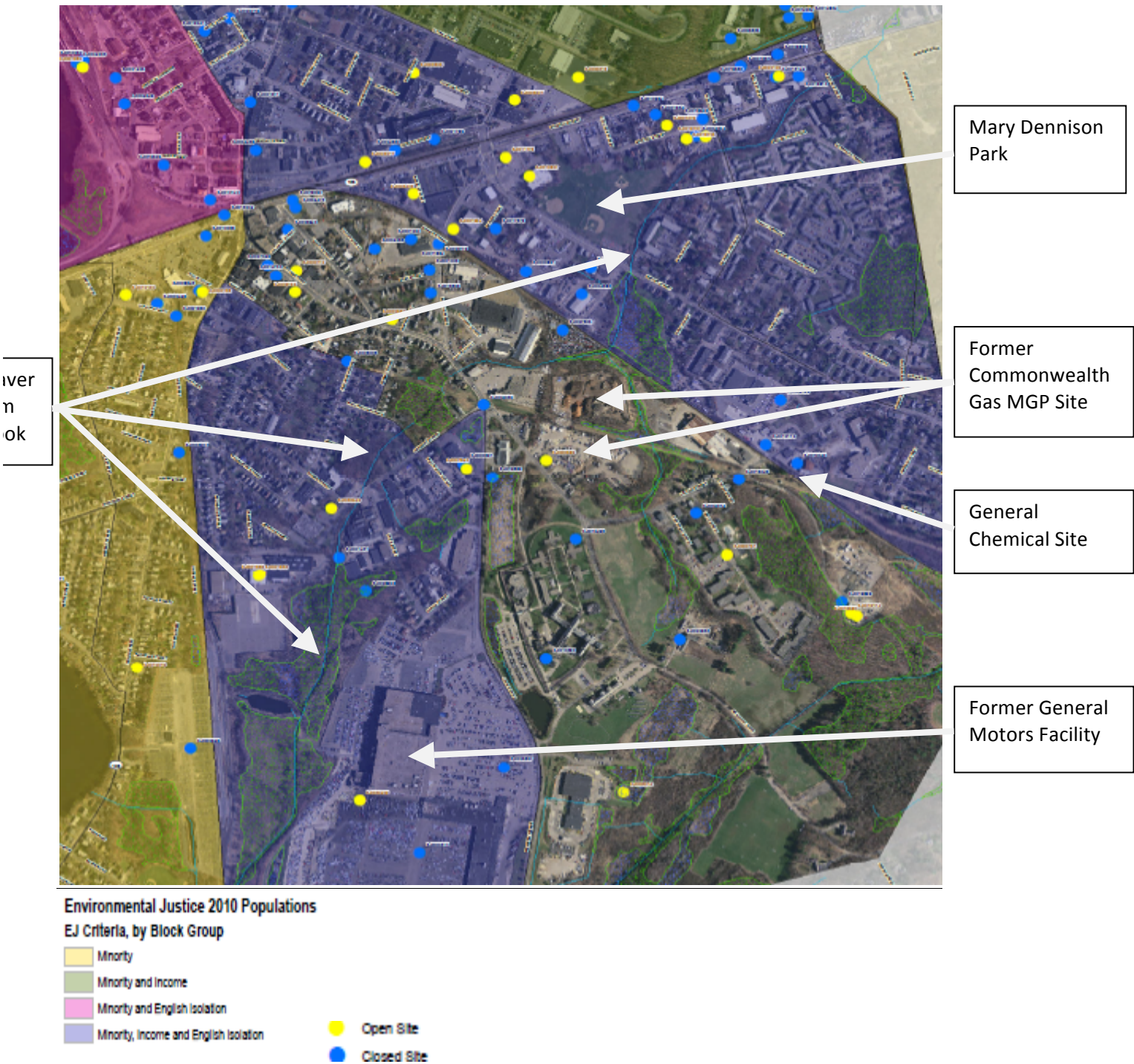


Figure 2: Disposal Sites in Framingham

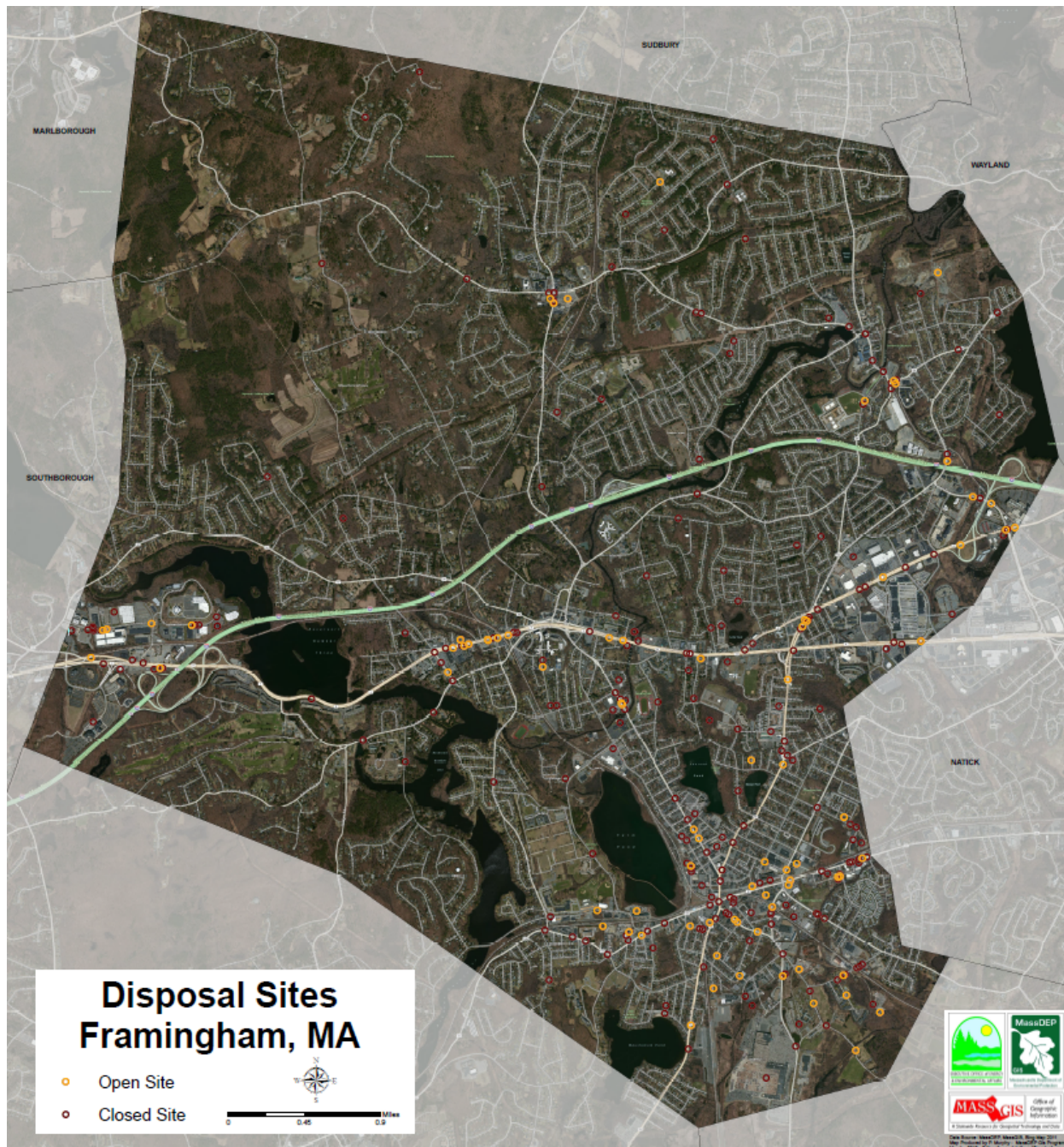


Figure 3: Lake Cochituate Sub-watersheds

