



State of New Jersey

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Highlands Council To Fund Musconetcong River Streambank Stabilization Project *Grant Award to Roxbury Township Enables HAB Control Measures*

CHESTER, N.J. — At its May 20 meeting, the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council approved grant funding of \$89,500 for field and engineering analyses related to a streambank stabilization and restoration project along a portion of the Musconetcong River in Roxbury Township. The streambank project was identified as a key priority in a recently completed Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), which was also funded by the Highlands Council.

“The Upper Musconetcong WIP, completed last year by the Lake Hopatcong Commission, included a number of proposed projects to improve water quality within the watershed,” explained Lisa Plevin, Highlands Council Executive Director. “We’re happy to support Roxbury Township in its efforts to undertake this project which is expected to significantly improve conditions along the Musconetcong River and into Lake Musconetcong.”

The project, led by the Lake Hopatcong Commission with technical assistance from Princeton Hydro, LLC, aims to reduce sediment and nutrient levels in Lake Musconetcong by improving the condition of a key section of the Musconetcong River. The project area is located immediately downstream of the Lake Hopatcong dam, but upstream of Lake Musconetcong. The WIP indicates that approximately 67% of the total phosphorus introduced into Lake Musconetcong originates from this outfall of Lake Hopatcong. Both phosphorus and suspended sediments from erosion are key factors in the development of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs).

Designing an effective stabilization and restoration plan for this stretch of the Musconetcong River presented some challenges due to the winding and interwoven nature of the river path, and the heavily forested terrain. Traditional approaches to stabilization using heavy construction equipment would be

cost prohibitive and potentially harmful. As a result, the proposed approach relies heavily upon the removal of invasive species and planting of native vegetation that will stabilize the project area, enhance pollutant removal, and create and enhance existing habitat. When fully completed, the project is predicted to remove approximately 114 pounds of total phosphorus and approximately 1.3 million pounds of Total Suspended Sediments per year.

The Highlands Council grant to Roxbury Township for “Field Assessment and Engineering/Planting Design Plans” will provide the critical first step in this long-term project, which will require additional funding, permitting and approvals. The Lake Hopatcong Commission is also seeking a substantial grant from National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF) to complete much of the project.

Work to be funded using the Highlands Council grant includes a Topographic Survey, Field Assessments, Engineering Calculations and Planting Designs, Development of Plans, Identifications of Required Permits, and a Final Report. The final deliverable will include a full set of design plans and the final report for the project area.

“The Highlands Council’s first and highest priority is protection of the water in this region,” said Carl Richko, Chairman of the Highlands Council. “The project plan presented to us by Roxbury Township for restoration of this portion of the Musconetcong River is comprehensive. Providing funding to support the initial planning work will help ensure a solid foundation for the success of this project.”

All Highlands Council grants are contingent upon funding availability and approved scopes of work. The Highlands Council Plan Conformance grant program is reimbursement-based and only payable after final project deliverables are reviewed and approved by Highlands Council staff.

Actions taken by the Council at this meeting will take effect following the Governor’s review and consideration of the meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of the minutes. Materials related to this meeting including resolutions, presentations, audio and minutes will be posted at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/about/calend/ (click on May 20 meeting).

The Highlands Council is a regional planning agency, established in 2004 with the passage of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act and charged with implementation of the Act. More information is available at www.nj.gov/njhighlands.

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