



Environmental League of Massachusetts



1%
for the
Environment

Green Budget

FISCAL YEAR 2018
February 2017

Green Budget Coalition

Meet the largest Green Budget Coalition yet, at over 100 members.

Non-Profit Organization Endorsers

Environmental League of Massachusetts	Friends of Leo J. Martin Skiing
Acadia Center	Friends of Alewife Reservation
All Dorchester Sports League	Friends of Pontoosuc Lake
American Farmland Trust	Friends of Robinson State Park
Appalachian Mountain Club	Friends of the Blue Hills
Arborway Coalition	Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
Association to Preserve Cape Cod	Friends of Myles Standish State Forest
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)	Friends of the Public Garden
Berkshire Grown	Friends of Upton State Forest
Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Friends of Wompatuck State Park
Better Future Project	Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts
Boston Harbor Now	Goldenrod Foundation
Boston Park Advocates	Greater Boston Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Brookline GreenSpace Alliance	Green Newton
Buzzards Bay Coalition	GreenRoots, Inc.
Charles River Watershed Association	Groundwork Lawrence
Charlestown Waterfront Coalition	Groundwork Somerville
Clean Water Action	Hilltown Anti-Herbicide Coalition
Climate Action Business Association (CABA)	Home Energy Efficiency Team (HEET)
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)	Hoosic River Watershed Association
Connecticut River Watershed Council	Hop Brook Protection Association
Conservation Law Foundation	Housatonic Valley Association
East Quabbin Land Trust	Ipswich River Watershed Association
Emerald Necklace Conservancy	Keep Massachusetts Beautiful
Environment Massachusetts	Kestrel Land Trust
Esplanade Association	Lakes and Ponds of Western Massachusetts
Essex County Greenbelt	LivableStreets Alliance
Franklin Land Trust	Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
Franklin Park Coalition	MA Congress of Lake and Pond Associations (MACOLAP)

Coalition continued on next page

Green Budget Coalition

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Non-Profit Organization Endorsers

Mass Energy Consumers Alliance

Massachusetts Association of
Conservation Commissions

Mass Audubon

Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition

Massachusetts Climate Action Network

Massachusetts Farm to School

Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network

Massachusetts Horticultural Society

Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and
Scientists (MOSES)

Massachusetts PipeLine Awareness Network

Massachusetts Rivers Alliance

Massachusetts Sierra Club

Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance

Massachusetts Society of Municipal
Conservation Professionals

Massachusetts Watershed Coalition

Merrimack River Watershed Council

Mothers Out Front

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

Mystic River Watershed Association

Nashua River Watershed Association

National Wildlife Federation

Neponset River Watershed Association

New England Mountain Bike Association

New England Wild Flower Society

New Marlborough Land Trust

North and South Rivers Watershed Association

OARS: For the Assabet, Sudbury and Concord Rivers

Parker River Clean Water Association

Project Green Schools

Save The Bay—Narragansett Bay

Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance

SuAsCo River Stewardship Council

Sudbury Valley Trustees

The Charles River Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy

The Trust for Public Land

The Trustees

The Trustees Collaborative for Parks and Open Space

Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA

Western Massachusetts Public Lands Alliance

Environmental League of Massachusetts Corporate Council Endorsers

Carpenter & Co.

Costa Fruit & Produce

Eastern Bank

EcoLogical Solutions

Grossman Marketing Group

Legal Sea Foods

Lyft

Saunders Hotel Group

Trillium Asset Management

Triumvirate Environmental

OUR MISSION

The Environmental League of Massachusetts is committed to combating climate change and protecting our land, water, and public health. By creating diverse alliances and building the power of the environmental community, we use our collective influence to ensure Massachusetts is a leader in environmental and economic sustainability.



Environmental League of Massachusetts

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MA DIVISION OF
ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

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INTRODUCTION

Can Massachusetts Lead the Nation?

With Washington in disarray, communities and states must lead the nation with innovative policies. No state is better situated to lead than Massachusetts, but it takes real investment.

1%
for the
Environment

Investing one penny of every state operating dollar to protect our environment is not too much to ask.

As a candidate, Governor Charlie Baker committed to allocating 1% of the state operating budget to support state environmental agencies. We applaud Governor Baker for committing to this level of funding—the agencies have not received 1% of the budget since 2001. Currently, only about ½ a penny of every dollar of the state operating budget goes toward protecting our natural resources, ensuring clean air and water, keeping our beautiful state parks open and well-maintained, and enforcing environmental laws.

The Green Budget Coalition is eager to work with the Governor, the Speaker, the Senate President, and the Massachusetts Legislature to restore the environmental budget that has suffered from years of disproportionate cuts. Without adequate funding, our agencies cannot fulfill their missions and we will continue to see environmental degradation. Our funding recommendations set the Commonwealth on the path to **1% for the Environment**.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Agency	Description	Line-Item	FY09 GAA	FY16 GAA	FY17 GAA	Our FY18 Recommendation
EEA	Climate Change Adaptation & Preparedness	2000-0101	N/A	\$300,000	\$150,000	\$500,000
MassDEP	Administration	2200-0100	\$36,272,524	\$29,520,620	\$25,037,437	\$37,556,156
MassDEP	Hazardous Waste Cleanup Program	2260-8870	\$16,662,923	\$14,409,902	\$12,330,404	\$16,029,525
DFG	Division of Ecological Restoration	2300-0101	\$650,000	\$592,915	\$680,889	\$885,156
MDAR	Administration	2511-0100	\$5,506,927	\$6,024,798	\$5,629,445	\$7,318,279
DCR	State Parks & Recreation	2810-0100	\$57,397,427	\$46,763,985	\$41,473,430	\$62,210,145
DCR	Retained Revenue	2810-2042	\$6,004,826	\$16,000,000	\$17,700,000	\$23,010,000
DCR	Watershed Management	2800-0101	\$2,060,310	\$1,120,149	\$954,975	\$1,344,000

GAA = General Appropriations Act

For historical context, we've provided budget numbers for Fiscal Year 2009, which preceded substantial cuts for many environmental line-items. We've also provided the two most recent funding levels allocated by the legislature. In December 2016, Governor Baker issued \$9.3M in 9C cuts to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and its departments.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Stewardship of our natural resources is a high priority for the Green Budget Coalition. Investing sufficient resources will enable those tasked with protecting our environment and health to carry out their missions. With adequate budgets and staffing, agencies can focus on:

- Increasing enforcement of our environmental laws.
- Collecting data and monitoring air and water quality.
- Improving water quality so we have clean water to drink and healthy rivers, lakes, and ponds for people and wildlife.
- Combating climate change and increasing the state's resiliency to climate change impacts.
- Protecting wetlands.
- Providing year-round programming in our parks for a broad array of visitors.
- Improving trail maintenance to provide safe, environmentally sound access to state parks and forests.
- Adding amenities to campgrounds to make them appealing and user-friendly for people of all ages.
- Restoring habitat to protect plant and animal species.
- Developing resource management plans for parks and forests so we can properly take care of our assets.
- Improving planning and engineering capacity so capital projects get built on time and on budget.
- Improving the permitting and leasing program for DCR properties to increase revenue and ensure the Commonwealth is getting a fair deal.
- Addressing the multi-billion dollar backlog of deferred maintenance in our state parks and forests.



Farm with solar panels in Northeastern MA

PHOTO BY ERICA MATTISON

BACKGROUND

Unintended Consequences

Economic Expansion

The quality of life Massachusetts offers is a key reason companies like General Electric are choosing to relocate here. It is anticipated that the move of GE's headquarters from Connecticut to Boston will bring 800 jobs to Massachusetts. Employees are eager for vibrant communities that have access to outdoor recreational opportunities and mass transit.

Tourism

In 2015, Massachusetts had a record-breaking 28.2 million visitors—many of them came to take advantage of our beautiful natural areas—be it the Cape, the Berkshires, or somewhere in between.

Tourism means direct spending, tax revenue, and jobs.

In 2015:

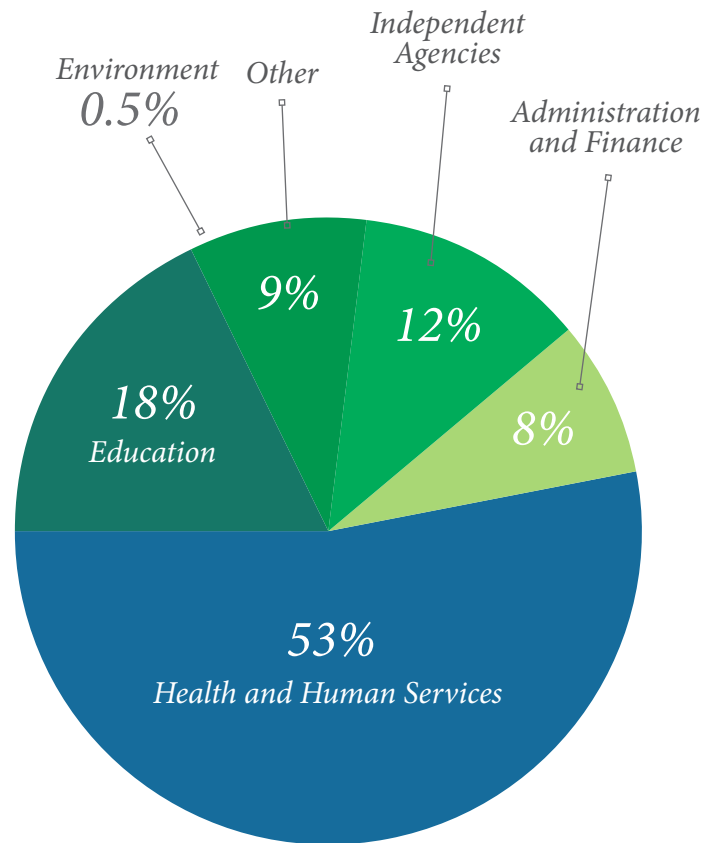
- Travelers to Massachusetts generated \$20.2 billion in direct spending, an increase of 3.8% from the previous year.
- Visitors generated \$1.3 billion in state and local taxes, an increase of 7.3% from the previous year.
- The state added 3,000 new tourism jobs for a total workforce of 135,000, an increase of 2.3% from the previous year.

By investing in protecting our natural resources, Massachusetts can outperform neighboring states and attract even more visitors to enjoy our parks, beaches, forests, campgrounds, and rivers. Underfunding puts this revenue source at risk.

Public Health

Failure to invest in protecting our natural resources means higher childhood asthma and obesity rates and other negative health impacts, which translate into more hospitalizations and higher health care costs. Health care costs rose by almost 4% last year, exceeding the 3.6% growth benchmark established by a 2012 cost containment law ([Boston Magazine coverage](#)). It is these high health care costs that are squeezing out funding for air and water protection and state park maintenance. Let's end this cycle by properly investing in safeguarding our natural resources, thereby fostering a healthier population. As one legislator put it, "up-front investment costs less than crisis management."

FY17 General Appropriations Act



Who Pays the Price?

Shrinking Staff Levels

How are Massachusetts residents impacted by cuts to our state environmental agencies? [A 2016 article by The New England Center for Investigative Reporting](#) documents how funding cuts are negatively impacting our natural resources and our well-being. From a lack of water quality monitoring, to a drop in inspections of contaminated properties, to dilapidated, understaffed state parks, budget cuts are degrading Massachusetts' environmental integrity.

In 2015, the Baker administration proposed an Early Retirement Incentive Program, which the legislature approved. This resulted in hundreds of long-time environmental agency staff vacating their positions, leaving agencies with a major loss of institutional knowledge, issue expertise, and long-standing relationships. Although about 30% of the positions have been refilled, the staff reduction and loss of long-time employees has been a major setback for environmental agencies.

Environmental Justice

When we neglect our environmental well-being, some pay more than others. Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by pollution. Leading national groups like the [Environmental Defense Fund](#) have partnered with the League of United Latin American Citizens to raise awareness and increase action on environmental issues that impact health, such as exposure to toxic chemicals, asthma and air pollution, and the dangerous effects of climate change.

On the statewide level, the Green Budget Coalition is eager for the full implementation of the Environmental Justice [Executive Order 552](#), which was signed in 2014 and directs all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety and environment for the most vulnerable residents of the Commonwealth. Resources are needed to ensure the executive order is carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner.

On the local level, organizations like Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) are engaged in awareness campaigns, for instance leading [Toxic Tours](#) to make more people aware that Roxbury has a children's asthma hospitalization rate that's nearly six times higher than the state average. We applaud the work of ACE and so many other organizations across the Commonwealth that are raising awareness about the connection between a healthy, just environment and healthy populations.

Access to high-quality outdoor experiences is not a given. For instance, along the Mystic River are eight of the most environmentally overburdened communities in Massachusetts (*Boston Magazine*, [A Tale of Two Rivers](#), Chris Sweeney, October 2016). The Mystic is surrounded by industrial sites and has suffered for decades from pollution from multiple sources. Thanks to the Mystic River Watershed Association, the Departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Recreation, along with affected municipalities, we are seeing water quality improvements, better riverfront access and new parks and green spaces. But, there is still a long way to go—more attention from lawmakers is needed to ensure that environmental justice communities in the Mystic River Watershed and throughout the Commonwealth enjoy convenient access to natural resources.



PHOTOS BY ERICA MATTISON

Mystic River, Somerville—Left: Fall 2016 Walk & Talk co-hosted by Environmental League and Mystic River Watershed Association; Right: Local schoolchildren and elected officials canoe the Mystic with Wilderness Inquiry

A Big Job that's Getting Bigger

From managing state forests in rural areas to remediating contaminated sites and rivers in Gateway Cities, Massachusetts has a broad array of environmental needs. Writing permits, collecting and analyzing data, enforcing our environmental laws, managing parks and parkways, and providing technical assistance to communities are all the responsibility of our environmental agencies—and the list goes on.

Here are a number of new responsibilities the agencies are undertaking:

- In 2015 the Baker administration issued a **regulatory reform executive order** ([Executive Order 562](#)), which has required substantial staff time at environmental agencies like the Department of Environmental Protection to review all existing regulations, propose changes, hold public meetings, accept and publish public comments, and determine a course of action for each regulation (i.e., rescind, amend, etc.).
- In May 2016 in [Kain et al. v. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection \(DEP\)](#), the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court affirmed the Commonwealth's obligations under the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) and **ordered the Commonwealth to create and implement regulations to meet its carbon emission reduction mandates**. A significant amount of work by state environmental agencies will be needed to ensure compliance with the court decision.
- For several months in 2016, more than half of Massachusetts suffered from an [extreme drought](#), which requires agency staff to monitor drought conditions and ensure Massachusetts agencies, residents, municipalities, and businesses are informed and responding appropriately through water conservation and other measures. Droughts pose threats to our public health, economy, and [ecosystems](#).
- In September 2016 the Baker administration issued a **climate change executive order** ([Executive Order 569](#)). The order calls for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to coordinate and ensure consistency of efforts across agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience for the impacts of climate change, as well as create a comprehensive energy plan within two years. The order also calls for the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to craft regulations to ensure the Commonwealth meets the 2020 emissions limit mandated by the Global Warming Solutions Act. In addition, EEA is to coordinate with other agencies in creating a Climate Adaptation Plan. Carrying out the Executive Order will require significant staff time at EEA and MassDEP.

Testimonial

“Groundwork Lawrence has worked closely with state environmental agencies on a number of projects. We can attest to the importance of funding these agencies so they have enough staff to meet statewide needs for engaging in meaningful, productive partnerships with community groups, municipalities, and businesses. Benefits include health, quality of life, and economic opportunity for residents of Gateway Cities including Haverhill, Lawrence, and Methuen. We urge robust funding for these crucial agencies.”

—**Heather McMann**,
Executive Director, Groundwork Lawrence



2015 Spicket River Cleanup

EXPLANATION OF FUNDING NEEDS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Climate Change Adaptation & Preparedness

(Line-Item 2000-0101)

FY18 Recommended Funding: \$500,000

FY17: \$150,000

FY16: \$300,000



Storm in Scituate

PHOTO COURTESY OF MA OFFICE OF COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

In 2016, Governor Baker signed Executive Order 569 (EO 569), which directs the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to enhance and integrate the Commonwealth's efforts to manage the impacts from climate change. The Order calls for EEA to take the following actions to reduce risks, avoid costs, and protect assets of the Commonwealth:

- Develop an Action Plan to observe and project trends and provide guidance on actions and policies.
- Provide a framework for state agencies and municipalities to assess vulnerabilities.
- Provide guidance and technical assistance for municipalities.
- Convene all state agencies to integrate efforts and adapt operations and assets.

EEA currently has a Climate Director managing all aspects of implementing EO 569. No one person could manage such a broad suite of activities. EEA needs additional capacity to achieve what's set forth in EO 569. Capacity and expertise is needed to conduct studies and planning activities, share information, provide guidance and technical assistance to municipalities and state agencies, and coordinate efforts across state government.

Across the globe, nations have taken a dual approach to climate change by reducing emissions and preparing for the impacts. While Massachusetts is one of the leaders nationally in energy policy to reduce emissions, we need a complementary approach on adaptation to enhance safety, reduce risks, and protect our infrastructure. [A 2013 study](#) ranked Boston the eighth highest metropolitan area worldwide in expected annual economic losses (\$237 million) due to coastal flooding. As [The New York Times recently reported](#), high tides combined with windy conditions are increasingly causing floods and wreaking havoc.

DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Administration

(Line-Item 2200-0100)

FY18 Recommended Funding: \$37,556,156

FY17: \$25,037,437

FY16: \$29,520,620



55 kW rooftop solar array in North Adams

PHOTO COURTESY OF MASSACHUSETTS CLEAN ENERGY CENTER

The Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has a broad set of critical responsibilities for public health and safety, including ensuring clean air and water, watershed planning and permitting, the safe management of toxics, enforcing environmental laws, reducing solid waste, the timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources. In addition, MassDEP fosters the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. The agency also plays a key role in preparing for the present and future impacts of climate instability. MassDEP regularly interfaces with municipalities and businesses to provide guidance on complying with laws and implementing best management practices. In addition to the central office in Boston, the agency is comprised of four regions:

- [Northeast Regional Office](#) in Wilmington
- [Central Regional Office](#) in Worcester
- [Southeast Regional Office](#) in Lakeville
- [Western Regional Office](#) in Springfield

Staffing

Deep budget cuts and staff reductions in recent years have jeopardized the ability of MassDEP to do its work. Over the past few years, MassDEP staff have been reduced by 30%. The current level of 660 full-time equivalent staff is one of the lowest staffing levels in the past dozen years. More than 100 MassDEP employees took advantage of the Early Retirement Incentive Program in 2015. Since then the agency has refilled 34 positions, almost half of which are water-related.

As a result, the agency is extremely limited in its ability to issue permits in a timely fashion, provide technical assistance, and enforce state law.

Key Needs for Fostering Healthy Communities

- **Clean Water:**
 - ♦ MassDEP is experiencing a greater than 50% reduction in watershed data collection. The agency has dramatically scaled back water quality monitoring statewide, and the regional monitoring program to collect bacteria samples and work with towns to eliminate pollutant sources has been all but eliminated. With additional resources, MassDEP would increase water quality monitoring and work with volunteer monitors to ensure standardized data collection.
 - ♦ Testing drinking water for lead and other contaminants is an urgent need, and the agency does not have sufficient resources to do this work. Schools that have recently tested water fountains have found lead contamination which is very concerning and needs to be addressed.



Marsh on Martha's Vineyard

- Protecting wetlands:** MassDEP has failed to update state regulations for coastal wetlands and stormwater management requirements, resulting in out-of-date and inadequate requirements for infrastructure and flood protection projects. Crucial agency positions, such as the wetland circuit rider positions in the Northeast and Southeast Regional Offices have remained vacant due to budget cuts, limiting the ability of conservation commissions to ensure effective implementation of the Wetlands Protection Act.
- Compliance and enforcement:** MassDEP's Environmental Strike Force partners with a range of agencies and others including the Attorney General's office, EPA and state and local police. Working together, teams investigate hundreds of cases of environmental damage and fraud. However, inspections are down 30% since 2009. A few years ago there were 200 staff conducting inspections, but that has been reduced to 150 staff currently. Enforcement actions are down 30%, which means increased risk to public health and safety. With the agency's reduced staffing levels, many regulations are not being reliably enforced. For instance, An Act Further Regulating Mercury Management ([M.G.L. Ch 196 in the Acts of 2014](#)) is not being implemented. With three additional staff the agency would be able to regulate the use and disposal of mercury products, helping to protect our water and safeguard us from exposure to this highly toxic substance.
- Waste reduction and recycling:** MassDEP staff work with municipalities and businesses to decrease trash and increase recycling and composting through technical assistance, education, and grants. Additional resources are needed to get the Commonwealth on track to meet the targets in the [2010-2020 Solid Waste Master Plan](#). For instance, currently there is only one waste ban enforcement officer per region, which is inadequate for ensuring widespread compliance.
- Reducing toxics:** In collaboration with the Toxics Use Reduction Program, MassDEP works with industry to reduce or eliminate the use of toxic chemicals. From 2000 to 2012, toxic chemical use in Massachusetts dropped 23%. Businesses have reaped cost savings and improved competitive advantage. With restored staffing more outreach and technical assistance would be available for companies and municipalities to help them improve health and reduce costs.

DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Hazardous Waste Site Cleanup

(Line-Item 2260-8870)

FY18 Recommended Funding: \$16,029,525

FY17: \$12,330,404

FY16: \$14,409,902



Emergency Response

The Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup ensures immediate and effective response to environmental emergencies, such as oil spills, as well as timely assessment and cleanup of sites that have been contaminated by hazardous waste.

- **Emergency response:** MassDEP's Emergency Response Units respond 24/7 to more than 600 spills and environmental incidents per year. With staffing down 25% over the past few years, staff are often pulled away from other work to ensure emergencies receive timely, thorough responses.
- **Cleanups:** On average, MassDEP oversees the cleanup of more than 1,000 contaminated sites annually. Since 1993, more than 35,000 sites have been remediated through the agency's Chapter 21 Program. These cleanups help make communities safer and make the sites available for redevelopment. The trend over the past few years has been toward self-certification, but insufficient staffing levels have meant a constrained ability to conduct audits. Compared to an average of the previous seven years, in FY15 audits to ensure compliance with hazardous waste site cleanup regulations were down 13%.
- **Restoring contaminated sites:** Since 1992, MassDEP has repaired damage to groundwater, rivers, wetlands, and coastal resources and recovered more than \$64 million on behalf of the public and the harmed natural resources, through its Natural Resources Damages (NRD) Program. The Program recently issued \$2.5 million in grants for projects to restore wetlands, streams, and fisheries and conserve habitats in the Housatonic, Sudbury, and Buzzards Bay watersheds.
- **Redevelopment and reuse of Brownfield sites:** The MassDEP Brownfields Program relies on a combination of state and federal funds to support the assessment and cleanup of properties where contamination is an impediment to redevelopment. MassDEP staff provides technical assistance to Brownfield project proponents.

Local Brownfields Redevelopment Example

The most significant brownfields redevelopment project completed in the Boston region in the past year is the Tropical Foods site at the intersection of Melnea Cass Blvd. and Washington Street—the gateway to Dudley Square. This collaborative effort involved multiple state and city agencies including MassDEP, MassDevelopment, Mass Department of Transportation, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, as well as the Boston Redevelopment Authority and Department of Neighborhood Development.

The ability to environmentally test, remediate and close-out this vacant parcel allowed for the relocation and expansion of a locally owned independent grocery store into a new 44,000 square foot facility, bringing expanded food options to neighborhood residents. This project is also providing for 30 units of mixed income housing. The overall investment in this site will be over \$55 million.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DIVISION OF ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Millie Turner Dam Removal, Nissitissit River, Pepperell. [Learn more](#)

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Division of Ecological Restoration

(Line-Item 2300-0101)

FY18 Recommended Funding: \$885,156

FY17: \$680,889

FY16: \$592,915

The Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) within the Department of Fish and Game is responsible for restoring and protecting our rivers, wetlands, and watersheds to improve streamflow, protect drinking water supplies, reduce flooding and storm damage, restore fisheries habitat, and create healthier, more resilient ecosystems and communities.



PHOTO CREDIT: DIVISION OF ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Timber Dam removal, Amethyst Brook, Pelham

Since its inception in 2009, DER has honed a community-based partnership model that has earned it praise from municipalities and project partners. DER’s collaborative programs benefit both the environment and the economy. The Division has substantial impact thanks to leveraging small state investments to secure millions of dollars from non-state sources. In 2015, for every state dollar invested in DER, staff secured four additional dollars, totaling over \$10 million raised from private and federal sources ([2015 Annual Impact Report](#)).

Currently, DER and its partners are managing over \$13 million in federal grants to remove obsolete dams, upgrade failing bridges and culverts, and support many other restoration actions that benefit local communities.

The Division and its partners have restored over 1,800 acres of degraded wetlands and reconnected over 200 miles of obstructed waterways. Increased funding will enable DER to manage and leverage additional non-state dollars, help more communities address important ecological restoration needs, and fill crucial technical positions within the agency.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Administration*(Line-Item 2511-0100)***FY18 Recommended Funding: \$7,318,279**

FY17: \$5,629,445

FY16: \$6,024,798

Massachusetts has a well-established agricultural sector with over 7,700 farms, 524,000 acres of farmland, and 61,000 jobs.¹ To support this industry and increase access to locally grown foods, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) must have sufficient resources.

*Sheep at River Rock Farm, Westport*

PHOTO BY ERICA MATTISON

Need for a Farmland Protection & Viability Plan

The recently created Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan notes the lack of reliable statewide data regarding farmland trends and the need to establish formal farmland protection goals and benchmarks so there is a roadmap for state investments in farmland protection. The increase recommended for this line item includes \$400,000 to determine the resources needed to improve data collection, establish a statewide baseline of land in active agricultural production, and set goals related to farmland protection.

Encouraging People to Buy Local & Connecting Schools with Locally Grown Food

With over 30 programs and services, MDAR helps consumers find Massachusetts-grown food and farm products and expands access to healthy, local food in communities where nutritious food options are limited. We recommend that the Buy Local funding increase from its current level of \$300,000 to \$500,000.

MDAR provides support to the Massachusetts Farm to School Project, a nonprofit organization that connects in-state farmers and institutions to improve access to locally grown foods and strengthen our agricultural economy. A recent survey by the Project revealed that 320 public school districts, private schools, and colleges in the Commonwealth prioritized serving local foods, over half of which have received assistance from the Mass Farm to School Project.

*Left: Ashmont/Peabody Square Farmers' Market, Dorchester; Right: Owners of Carr's Ciderhouse in Hadley*

PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN SUSTAINING AGRICULTURE

¹ Industrial Economics, *Economic Impacts of Massachusetts Ecological Restoration Projects*, 2012

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

State Parks & Recreation

(Line-Item: 2810-0100)

FY18 Recommended Funding: \$62,210,145

FY17: \$41,473,430

FY16: \$46,763,985

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is responsible for the stewardship, management and safety of our parks, beaches, forests, pools, skating rinks, and campgrounds. Overall, 450,000 acres of land come under DCR's purview, spread across more than 250 properties.



Neponset River Greenway, Dorchester

PHOTO BY JESSICA MINK, MASSPATHS.NET

Less Funding, Less Service

You may have heard that state agencies can do more with less. However, when we shortchange our state environmental agencies, we get what we pay for—an inadequate level of service. DCR has lost nearly 400 full-time positions (30% of its workforce) in the last seven years. Hard working staff throughout DCR strive to care for our state park system and provide an excellent level of service, but the agency lacks adequate resources. As a result, safety, quality of experience, and stewardship of natural resources are compromised. As the Chair of the DCR Stewardship Council, Whitney Hatch, wrote in an [opinion piece in *The Boston Globe* in 2015](#), our park system is falling apart, largely due to the fact that “adequate maintenance funding and full-time staff positions have slowly withered away.”

PHOTO BY ERICA MATTISON



Bicycling in the Esplanade along the Charles River, Boston

Current DCR Initiatives include:

- Expanding DCR's Universal Access Program so people of all abilities have high access to state parks.
- Identifying opportunities to incorporate energy efficiency within our parks (e.g., solar carport at Walden Pond, solar charging stations).
- Exploring a reporting tool for constituents to communicate maintenance needs to DCR.
- Studying entire parkway system for redesign and modernization.
- Surveying all playgrounds across the Commonwealth to identify and schedule needed repairs and maintenance.
- Increasing opportunities for transportation to DCR facilities.



Wading pool at Freetown-Fall River State Forest

PHOTO BY ERICA MATTISON

How does DCR measure performance?

- Percentage of assets (roadways, parkways, structures, etc.) that are in a “state of good repair.”
- Public use of DCR facilities.
- Tracking how many people use their facilities. This number is increasing every year. In the future DCR will also track data from parking payment machines and online camping reservations to better prioritize resource allocation.
- The amount of time facilities are staffed and open to the public.
- On-time performance and delivering on goals for construction and other projects.

Operating funds needed to ensure capital investments

This year, DCR is working on three dozen capital improvement projects, spending more than \$60M in capital funds. However, without adequate staff to manage the projects it is difficult to ensure they are completed in a timely fashion.

Examples of needs:

Campgrounds: DCR has a goal of increasing campground usage by 10%. To attract people from within and beyond Massachusetts to use state parks and forests, our facilities must be competitive with neighboring states. Many of our existing campgrounds would be more attractive for people of all ages, including families with young children, if they had more amenities. Given adequate funding, there are opportunities to create new campgrounds which would facilitate outdoor experiences for greater numbers of Massachusetts residents and tourists, as well as generate more revenue.

Resource Management Plans: State law requires DCR to develop Resource Management Plans (RMP's) for reservations, parks, and forests (M.G.L. Chapter 21: Section 2F). RMP's identify the most important natural resources at each site and how to protect them. An RMP is created after a lengthy public input process and if it is accepted by the DCR Stewardship Council, DCR is charged with its implementation. So far, of 32 clusters of properties, only four have RMP's, with



PHOTO BY HUGH MATTISON

New Visitors' Center at Walden Pond, Concord



PHOTO BY KRISTEN SYKES

Connecticut River Campsite

New Campsite

“Recently the Appalachian Mountain Club and DCR partnered to open the first campsite on the Connecticut River Paddlers’ Trail in Massachusetts, located in Whately. This campsite helps to fill an 85-mile gap in the Paddlers’ Trail and contributes to creating a contiguous paddling trail from New Hampshire to the Long Island Sound. With sufficient funds, DCR could create campsites and increase staffing and amenities, bolstering Massachusetts’ outdoor recreation economy and providing opportunities for more people to spend time in nature.”

—Kristen Sykes, Director of Conservation Strategies at the Appalachian Mountain Club and Director of Operations at the Bay Circuit Alliance

another four currently in progress. However, since 2015 the team responsible for developing the RMPs has lost a Geographic Information Systems staff person and a planner. This leaves the team with just one full-time and two part-time staff. This insufficient staffing level is hindering the agency's ability to craft these legally required plans. [Learn more](#)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ASSOCIATION TO PRESERVE CAPE COD



Top Left: There is no signage at the main entrance to Hawksnest State Park in Harwich; Bottom: Trails are not being maintained and official signage throughout the property is lacking

What an underfunded state park system looks like

Park advocates from across Massachusetts have shared how state parks and other properties managed by DCR suffer from budget cuts. A few examples:

“Elm Bank Reservation in Wellesley/Dover provides an example of a property that the state is not able to adequately care for, given the reduced budget and staffing. We rarely see DCR staff on the property, signage is needed to communicate which parts of the property are under state management, fallen tree branches are blocking trails and are not being cleared in a timely fashion, trash receptacles are not being emptied regularly enough to keep up with demand, and the maintenance for the entrance road is lacking.”

—**Katherine K. Macdonald, President, The Gardens at Elm Bank, Massachusetts Horticultural Society**

“The 236+ acre Hawksnest State Park in Harwich, which has been described as a ‘hidden jewel,’ has no dedicated DCR staff assigned to it. Lack of a staff presence has resulted in a rash of illegal uses at the park such as ORVs, illegal camping, vandalism and abutter incursions into the park property. DCR investment in increased staff presence and the addition of proper signage would go a long way.”

—**Don Keeran, Assistant Director, Association to Preserve Cape Cod**

- “Francis Parkman Drive in Jamaica Plain, Boston, is an example of a parkway that needs more attention. Fallen trees, invasive plants, and debris from illegal dumping lead to an overgrown, dilapidated parkway. Because there are no sidewalks on this parkway, it needs to be closed to traffic so that maintenance can be performed. This requires substantial labor, which DCR does not currently have the resources for.”

—Sarah Freeman, Arborway Coalition

- “Alewife Reservation suffers from poor water quality and lack of wildlife protection. There is an opportunity for DCR to partner with Cambridge, Belmont, and Arlington to ensure the reservation is better cared for and truly serves as a regional amenity. With more resources, DCR could add much-needed water quality signage and an informational up-to-date kiosk to facilitate awareness about the storm water wetland and the rare urban wild whose habitat should be protected first and foremost from huge residential developments now being built around the Reservation.”

—Ellen Mass, Friends of Alewife Reservation

- “The conditions at Holyoke Range are an illustration of what happens when we starve our state park system of resources. With far too few staff to cover the western part of the state, illegal and unsafe activities are commonplace. There are many maintenance needs, especially when it comes to caring for trails and enforcing policies. The visitor center is often closed due to insufficient staffing, and so many visitors to the park are not getting information that would help them have a safe and enjoyable experience. DCR staff has to spend a substantial amount of time driving between properties, because there is so much ground to cover and so few staff remaining. To care for our state parks and forests properly and to promote high-quality, safe experiences, Massachusetts needs to reinvest in its state park system.”

—Elisa Campbell, Member of the DCR Stewardship Council Member and Mount Holyoke Range Advisory Committee



PHOTO BY ERICA MATTISON

Closed park in Lynn



PHOTO BY ERICA MATTISON

Closed, dilapidated building at Carson Beach, South Boston

PHOTO BY MIKE MELENDEZ



Friends of the Fells' Babes in the Woods Program helps children connect with nature

- “Programming is an important part of what DCR does, and not just in the summer. In addition to working with hundreds of volunteers each year to conduct clean-ups and maintenance projects, DCR staff in the Middlesex Fells and Breakheart Reservations provide support for popular, free programs. These events are a valuable chance for families to bond and people to build skills and get physical activity, while breathing fresh air and learning about the beautiful natural surroundings that help make Massachusetts such an incredible place to live. Having adequate funding and staffing is crucial for DCR to ensure parks throughout the Commonwealth are accessible, well cared for, and inviting during every season.”

—Diana Lomakin, Friends of the Middlesex Fells

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND RECREATION**Retained Revenue***(Line-Item: 2810-2042)***FY18 Recommended Funding: \$19,200,000****FY17:** \$17,700,000
*(80% of \$22,125,000 cap)***FY16:** \$16,000,000

Retained revenue enables DCR to keep 80 cents of every dollar it generates, up to a certain cap. This year, DCR is projected to generate \$24 million. If the FY18 budget provides for a cap of \$24 million and enables DCR to keep 80%, this would allow \$19.2 million to stay within the agency.

DCR generates funds through parking fees, restaurants and concessions, vendor contracts, and partnerships. The retained revenue program has successfully incentivized the agency to increase its revenues. However, [as a recent article in *Commonwealth Magazine* points out](#), DCR is leaving money on the table because the agency doesn't have enough staff to manage its leases and permits effectively, not to mention having adequate staff to provide revenue-generating services in its facilities.

DCR needs to modernize its lease and permit practices to take advantage of revenue opportunities and make sure the Commonwealth is getting a fair deal for private use of public property. If adequate resources are provided to overhaul the lease and permit system, DCR would be able to generate additional revenue that would be reinvested in improving DCR's facilities and level of service.



Fall River Heritage State Park

PHOTO BY ERICA MATTISON



Horseneck Beach, Westport

PHOTO BY ERICA MATTISON

Retained Revenue funds are used for park supervision, forest fire control, visitor services, natural resource protection and park safety and cleanliness. The retained revenue cap needs to keep pace with the revenues DCR is generating so there continues to be an incentive for the agency to improve services. Retained revenue is not a replacement for funding the agency's other line-items—it is meant to be a supplement.

The Green Budget Coalition supports the DCR Stewardship Council's recommendation that would allow DCR to keep 50% of any revenue it generates over the cap.



Merrimack River, Haverhill

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Watershed Management

(Line-Item 2800-0101)

FY18 Recommended Funding: \$1,344,000

FY17:	\$ 954,975
FY16:	\$1,120,000

The Watershed Management Office conducts and helps fund critical research on water resources in Massachusetts. Its goal is to ensure the protection of the drinking water supply for approximately 2.5 million residents in the Commonwealth. It provides invaluable technical assistance to municipalities, working with over 336 Massachusetts communities assisting with floodplain management and ensuring compliance with the program requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program. It also works to protect and restore DCR’s 300 lakes and 51 freshwater swimming beaches, thereby enhancing both the ecological integrity and recreational opportunities of these resources. Other critically important program responsibilities include drought management, water needs forecasting, dam removals, and invasive species removal from lakes, ponds, and rivers.

The Watershed Management Office provides scientific information, policy guidance, technical assistance, and resource management through four program areas: The Flood Hazard Management Program, the Lakes and Ponds Program, the Water Resources Assessment and Planning Program, and the U.S. Geological Survey Cooperative Program. It also staffs the Water Resources Commission and provides technical expertise and resources to the state’s **Drought Management Task Force**. The expected impacts of climate change include longer periods of extreme drought and severe flooding, both of which will threaten our water supply. The services provided by this office are essential to maintaining strong science-based non-reactive policy development.



Westport River