

PUBLIC NOTICE

Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian A. Bowles will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, June 25, 2008 for a proposal to designate the Three Mile River Watershed Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) located within the municipalities of Dighton, Norton, and Taunton. The Secretary accepted the ACEC nomination for full public review on April 7, 2008 after it was submitted on February 27, 2008 by 11 citizen nominators including the Mayor of Taunton and a representative of the Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD) pursuant to 301 CMR 12.05. On May 15, 2008 a proposal to extend the previously submitted ACEC boundary was submitted to the Secretary by SRPEDD on behalf of the Three Mile River ACEC Planning Committee, and in accordance with the wishes of the Mayor of Taunton, Dighton Board of Selectmen, and the Conservation Commissions in Dighton and Taunton. The boundary extension was accepted for full review by the Secretary on May 19, 2008 and will be subject to public review and comment along with the original proposed boundary.

The Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs will hold the public hearing on:

Wednesday, June 25, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Benjamin Friedman Middle School, 500 Norton Avenue, Taunton

The purpose of this hearing is to receive public testimony to determine whether to designate the proposed Three Mile River Watershed ACEC pursuant to Section 2(7) of Chapter 21A of the Massachusetts General Laws. Written and/or oral testimony will be accepted at the hearing regarding the resources of the nominated area, the proposed boundary and extension, and the appropriateness of such a designation. Additional written comments may be submitted to the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs within ten days of the public hearing, by July 7, 2008, to:

**Ian A. Bowles, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Attn: Elizabeth Sorenson, ACEC Program
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 700
Boston, MA 02114**

or via email to Secretary Bowles c/o the ACEC Program at the email address: elizabeth.sorenson@state.ma.us

A public information meeting regarding the nomination, the recently proposed extension to the originally proposed ACEC boundary, and the effects of designation will be held on **Thursday, June 12, 2008 from 7:00 – 9:00 PM** at the Town of **Dighton Grange Hall**, 1111 Somerset Avenue (next to Town Hall), North Dighton, MA. Three public meetings were held in April in the three communities in the nominated area.

Including approximately 14,250 acres in Dighton (~150 acres), Norton (~5,400 acres), and Taunton (~8,700 acres), the proposed Three Mile River Watershed ACEC includes a wetland and stream complex tributary to the Taunton River and the headwaters of the Segreganset River. The resources of the nominated area include more than the minimum of four resource features required for nomination in the ACEC Regulations. The proposed boundary extension will include globally rare species habitat and fish habitat. The nomination further cites the presence of several factors listed under 301 CMR 12.09 as reasons for ACEC designation, including: threat to public health through inappropriate use; quality of the natural characteristics; uniqueness of the area; irreversibility of impact; imminence of threat to the resource; significance of adverse impacts; and supporting factors. The nomination also describes resource area stewardship goals and objectives.

Copies of the nomination and proposed boundary map have been distributed to municipal officials in the three affected communities, and to other interested agencies and individuals. The nomination boundary extension proposals may be reviewed at the municipal halls and public libraries, at the offices of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), 251 Causeway Street, Suite 700, Boston, or on the nominators' website at <http://www.ibiblio.org/virtualcell/acec/>. Further information regarding the ACEC Program is available at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/> or by contacting Elizabeth Sorenson, ACEC Program, at (617) 626-1394, or at the above DCR address or email.