Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs ■ MEPA Office

ENF Environmental Notification Form

For Office Use Only
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
EOEA No.: 12877
MEPA Analyst: Nicholas Zavolas
Phone: 617-626- 1030

The information requested on this form must be completed to begin MEPA Review in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, 301 CMR 11.00.

Project Name: Silk Mill Dam Removal Project		
Street: Main Steet – Route 8		
Municipality: Becket	Watershed: Westfield River	
Universal Tranverse Mercator Coordinates:	Latitude: 42° 19' 41.7"N Longitude: 73° 05' 03.4"W	
Estimated commencement date: 11/1/02	Estimated completion date: 12/1/02	
Approximate cost: $150,000	Status of project design: 100 %complete	
Proponent: Town of Becket		
Street: 557 Main Street		
Municipality: Becket	State: MA	Zip Code: 01223
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this ENF May Be Obtained: Jeffrey F. Collingwood, P.E.		
Firm/Agency: Foresight Land Services	Street: 1496 West Housatonic Street	
Municipality: Pittsfield	State: MA	Zip Code: 01201
Phone: (413) 499-1560	Fax: (413) 499-3307	E-mail: jcollingwood@foresightland.com

Does this project meet or exceed a mandatory EIR threshold (see 301 CMR 11.03)? ☒Yes ☐No

Has this project been filed with MEPA before? ☐Yes (EOEA No._____) ☒No

Has any project on this site been filed with MEPA before? ☐Yes (EOEA No._____) ☒No

Is this an Expanded ENF (see 301 CMR 11.05(7)) requesting:

a Single EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.06(8))	☐Yes	☒No
a Special Review Procedure? (see 301CMR 11.09)	☐Yes	☒No
a Waiver of mandatory EIR? (see 301 CMR 11.11)	☒Yes	☐No
a Phase I Waiver? (see 301 CMR 11.11)	☐Yes	☒No

Identify any financial assistance or land transfer from an agency of the Commonwealth, including the agency name and the amount of funding or land area (in acres):
Summary of Grant and Matching Fund Sources (*pending and/or unconfirmed sources in italics)*

GRANT

$50,000/NOAA Community-Based Restoration

MATCH

$27,000/Town of Becket
$4,300/DFWELE (purchase of assay kits)

$11,000/DEM (through Joint Funding Agreement to USGS)
Total: $42,300

$50,000/National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

$10,000/Riverways Small Grant
$22,500/Northeast Utilities Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership
Total: $32,500

$30,000/Fish America Foundation

Match preferred but not required

$10,000/*Trout Unlimited Embrace-A-Stream*

$10,000 ($4,000 volunteer in -kind and $6,000 cash)

$10,000/US Fish and Wildlife Service (through a Cooperative Agreement with River Restore)

Are you requesting coordinated review with any other federal, state, regional, or local agency?
☒Yes(Specify_See Permitting Agencies below_____) ☐No

List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals:
Order of Conditions- Becket Conservation Commission dated 8/21/02
Cat. II – Mass PGP – US Army Corp of Eng. Permit dated 9/6/2002
401 Water Quality Certification Filed on 8/6/02
Chp-91 Waterways permit application Filed on 8/15/02
Chp-253 Dam Safety Permit issued July 8, 2002
MHC Project Review dated 7/3/02 & 7/17/02
MHD Access Permit dated June 28, 2002

Which ENF or EIR review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03):

☐ Land
☐ Water
☐ Energy
☐ ACEC
☐ Rare Species
☐ Wastewater
☐ Air
☐ Regulations
☒ Wetlands, Waterways, & Tidelands
☐ Transportation
☐ Solid & Hazardous Waste
☐ Historical & Archaeological Resources

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total	State Permits & Approvals
LAND				☒ Order of Conditions ☐ Superceding Order of Conditions ☒ Chapter 91 License ☒ 401 Water Quality Certification ☒ MHD or MDC Access Permit ☐ Water Management Act Permit
Total site acreage	0.33			
New acres of land altered		<0.33 acres disturbed during breach, 0.2 acre feet of; impoundment to be eliminated.		
Acres of impervious area	0	0	0	

Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		Increase of about 1000 sf	
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		Decrease of about 1000 sf	
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways		0	
STRUCTURES			
Gross square footage	NA	NA	NA
Number of housing units	NA	NA	NA
Maximum height (in feet)	NA	NA	NA
TRANSPORTATION			
Vehicle trips per day	NA	NA	NA
Parking spaces	NA	NA	NA
WATER/WASTEWATER			
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	NA	NA	NA
GPD water withdrawal	NA	NA	NA
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment	NA	NA	NA
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	NA	NA	NA

☐ New Source Approval
☐ DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit
☒ Other Permits (*including Legislative Approvals*) – Specify:

Chp. 91 Permit
Chp. 253 Dam Safety Permit
MHD Access Permit
CAT II Mass PGP Permit

CONSERVATION LAND: Will the project involve the conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

Will it involve the release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

RARE SPECIES: Does the project site include Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

HISTORICAL /ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Does the project site include any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

If yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN: Is the project in or adjacent to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern?

☐Yes (Specify_____) ☒No

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project description should include **(a)** a description of the project site, **(b)** a description of both on-site and off-site alternatives and the impacts associated with each

alternative, and **(c)** potential on-site and off-site mitigation measures for each alternative (*You may attach one additional page, if necessary.*)

a. Description of The Project Site

The Silk Mill Dam is located on Yokum Brook on the easterly side of State Highway Route 8 in Becket, Massachusetts. (See locus plan, Figure 1.) The dam is an old run-of-the-river mill dam, now abandoned, and consists of stone masonry and cement concrete approximately 93 feet in length and 15 feet at its maximum height. The easterly embankment of the dam, which forms the shoulder of Route 8, is mostly dumped riprap and earth materials. (A photo summary of the site is provided in Appendix A.) The existing dam structure closely matches the available 1926 plan titled "Concrete facing wall for stone dam at Collingbourne Silk Mill Pond" (see Appendix B). A photo of the silk mill dam, taken after the 1927 flood, is provided in Appendix B.

A heavy rainfall event in June 2002 eroded away sediments and uncovered a previously unknown 36-inch culvert upstream of the dam. This changed the flow path of the brook. A significant volume of sediments (over 50 cubic yards) has eroded and been deposited downstream from the dam. The old masonry on the easterly side of the dam is now exposed. The easterly side of the dam along the shoulder of Rt. 8 had previously breached and the shoulder was filled with dumped riprap. Continued flow along the shoulder area will destabilize the eastern shoulder of Route 8 and could eventually cause the subgrade of the roadway to fail.

b. Alternatives

The Town of Becket had already been proactively planning to remove the abandoned Silk Mill Dam to restore Yokum Brook to free-flowing condition to improve fish habitat. The town is working with the state's River Restore Program on this project and other future projects in town. As a result of the current safety issues caused by the erosion and in order to protect public safety, the town has accelerated its plans and hopes to complete the removal of the dam and plugging the old culvert during the fall of 2002.

The proposed alternative is complete removal of the dam. This is the most beneficial alternative for both the restoration of the fish habitat and for protection of the adjacent highway embankment. The existing dam does not have a low flow control weir. Presently, low flows are passing through the easterly embankment. It is anticipated that future storm events will accelerate the failure of the dam and highway embankment, causing a serious safety situation on Route 8 and potentially harming downstream wetland resources. A plan showing the proposed breach is provided in Figure 2.

Other alternatives considered included a partial breach and No Action. Neither of these alternatives is considered acceptable. A partial breach was quickly dropped from consideration since it would cost as much as a full breach, require additional work to stabilize the shoulder of Route 8, and would not provide benefits to the fisheries habitat. No Action is not feasible due to safety considerations.

c. Mitigation Measures

The complete dam removal provides the best solution to protect public safety along State Highway Route 8, improve flow conditions along Yokum Brook and restore the "Run-of-River" for fish passage and habitat.

The project has already been extensively reviewed by various state and local agencies, and has received an Order of Conditions from the Becket Conservation Commission, a Ch. 253 Dam Safety Permit, MHD Access Permit, U.S. Army-Mass PGP Category II permit, and Mass. Historical Commission

review. Applications for Ch. 91 Waterway Permit and 401 Water Quality Certification have been submitted and approval is pending completion of the MEPA process.

d. Waiver Request

The Town of Becket is requesting a waiver of the mandatory EIR for the project. A mandatory EIR is required for a "structural alteration of an existing dam that causes an expansion of 20% or any decrease in impoundment capacity" (301 CMR 11.03 (3) (A) 4.) The proposed project will result in a very small decrease of impoundment capacity, approximately 0.2 acre-feet.

Due to the potential safety hazard caused by the continued erosion of the dam face and embankment of Rt. 8, immediate action to remove the dam and stabilize the highway embankment is necessary. The town has concurrently advertised for public bids for the work, pending MEPA approval and the remaining permits. Preparing an EIR would delay the project, increase the risk to public safety, cause an undue hardship to the town in terms of increased costs, and would not serve to avoid or minimize damage to the environment. The small amount of impoundment lost will not cause damage to the environment; in fact, it will improve the fisheries habitat and reduce potential for storm damage, erosion and sedimentation. The work is designed to be accomplished quickly with minimum impact on the brook. Erosion and sedimentation controls will be implemented. Very little if any remaining sediment will need to be removed.

Copies of the permits issued to date are enclosed in Appendix C. Supporting documents are enclosed in Appendix D.