

## Herring River Restoration Project – Chronology of Key Events

### 2005

#### August 2005

Cape Cod National Seashore (CCNS) and Town of Wellfleet Board of Selectmen entered into an MOU (MOU I) to review and summarize the scientific and technical information on the Herring River systems and study whether restoration of Herring River is feasible.

Pursuant to MOU I, the Wellfleet Board of Selectmen appointed the Herring River Technical Committee (HRTC) to carry out the feasibility study. HRTC included representatives of CCNS, MA Coastal Zone Management's (CZM) Wetlands Restoration Program, the Wellfleet Conservation/Health Agent, Wellfleet Open Space Committee, Wellfleet Shellfish Advisory Committee, Wellfleet Shellfish Constable, Wellfleet Herring Warden, Wellfleet Natural Resources Advisory Committee, the Chequessett Yacht and Country Club, the Truro Board of Selectmen, the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Restoration Center, the Barnstable County Health and Human Services Department, and the Chair of the Herring River Stakeholders Group.

A Herring River Stakeholders Group was appointed and charged with conveying public input about the restoration to the HRTC. The Group met separately and consisted of representatives of the towns, CCNS, potentially affected landowners, the shellfish/fishing community, the Cape Cod Mosquito Control Project, the MA Division of Marine Fisheries, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

#### October 2005

The first HRTC and Stakeholders Group meetings were held on October 12, 2005. The HRTC held five additional meetings in 2005, including a joint meeting with the Stakeholders Group. The Stakeholders Group met three more times in 2005.

### 2006

#### January 2006

A Full Report of the HRTC was submitted to the Wellfleet Selectmen, finding that tidal restoration of the Herring River salt marsh is feasible and would provide substantial public benefits.

The HRTC met thirteen times throughout 2006 to continue work in developing the plan, including meetings with consultants, local stakeholders, property owners and local boards.

#### August 2006

A public informational meeting was held with landowners in or near the 100-year flood plain on August 21, 2006.

Members of the HRTC provided updates to the Wellfleet Non-resident Taxpayers Association and Wellfleet Conservation Trust.

#### September 2006

Members of HRTC provided an update to the Wellfleet Conservation Commission.

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### October 2006

Representatives of The Nature Conservancy were given a tour of the site by HRTC, MA Coastal Zone Management, NOAA, and local officials.

Senator Kennedy and Congressman Delahunt addressed restoration partners at the Herring River Dike on their efforts to obtain funding.

## 2007

HRTC met eight times in 2007 to continue technical work, including meetings with staff from NOAA, Cape Cod National Seashore, USFWS, Mass Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, local Departments of Public Works and project consultants.

### March 5, 2007

Members of HRTC provided an update to the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission.

### July 2007

The National Park Service committed funding to prepare the draft and final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/EIR).

Woods Hole Group was selected to undertake two-dimensional modeling with a grant from NOAA to the Town of Wellfleet.

### August 13, 2007

HRTC met with Mill Creek abutters to discuss sensitivity of water supply wells.

### October 2007

The HRTC completed the Herring River Conceptual Restoration Plan (CRP), which describes several possible ways to restore the estuary.

### November 2007

MOU II was signed by CCNS, Truro and Wellfleet to accept the CRP and move forward with a detailed restoration plan. HRTC, having fulfilled its charge, was dissolved and the Herring River Restoration Committee (HRRC) was formed to develop the detailed restoration plan and oversee the environmental review process under the National and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA and MEPA). Members include representatives of the Towns of Wellfleet and Truro, CCNS, USFWS, the MA Division of Ecological Restoration (MA DER), NOAA's Restoration Center and NRCS.

From 2008-2016 HRRC conducted monthly 1-2 daylong meetings to review technical studies and develop project plans for the environmental assessments.

## 2008

### 2008 – 2016

Representatives of the Project participated in and placed informational displays at Annual *State of Wellfleet Harbor* conferences.

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### June 2008

The MA Secretary of Environmental Affairs approved a Special Review Procedure to allow a coordinated environmental review process between federal and state agencies.

### July 2008

On behalf of project partners, HRRC submitted an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) to the MA Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs pursuant to the MA Environmental Policy Act, to determine whether the Project requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and, if so, specify the scope. A public comment session was opened until October 2008.

### August and September 2008

Two public scoping sessions were held to explain the planning process and solicit public comments on the Project. Additional written comments (43 letters containing 288 separate comments) were submitted following the scoping sessions.

### November 2008

MA Secretary of Environmental Affairs issued a Certificate on the ENF outlining the required scope for the Draft Environmental Impact Report, requiring evaluation of four different restoration alternatives, including no action.

### November 2008

Friends of Herring River (FHR) was formed as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to restoring the ecological integrity of the Herring River watershed.

### 2008-2012

Project partners contracted with the Woods Hole Group to develop a detailed hydrodynamic model of the Herring River estuary. The Final Woods Hole Group Modeling Report was delivered to HRRC in 2012 and its findings incorporated into the Draft EIS/EIR.

## 2009 - 2013

### August 18, 2009

Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at Wellfleet Council on Aging facility featured a presentation by members of the HRRC on the progress of the joint state/federal Environmental Review Process. Each member explained their agency's role and presented information on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) processes. A demonstration was provided on the hydrodynamic model showing sample tidal effects in the estuary.

### August 18, 2010

Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at Wellfleet Council on Aging facility featured a presentation by a HRRC member on alternatives to return a tidal flow to the river.

### August 16, 2011

Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at Wellfleet Council on Aging facility featured a presentation detailing the benefits of the Herring River restoration to the community, water quality, and health of Wellfleet Harbor and Cape Cod Bay. A panel of HRRC members participated in a question and answer session.

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### August 21, 2012

Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at Wellfleet Council on Aging facility featured a presentation of the historical, environmental, and cultural impact of the Herring River on Bound Brook Island and the vibrant community that once existed there.

### October 2012

The Draft EIS/EIR was released; a 60-day public comment period commenced. HRRC sent a letter to all private landowners who abut the Herring River estuary prior to the hearing, describing the Project and potential impacts to private properties, and inviting landowners to contact the HRRC for further information.

### November 2012

MEPA and the Cape Cod Commission held a public hearing in Wellfleet on the DEIS/EIR. Over 100 people attended and 43 pieces of correspondence with 161 separate comments were received following the hearing.

### 2013

NOAA awarded a three-year grant of \$3 million to FHR to prepare design/engineering plans and conduct scientific analyses for the Herring River Restoration Project.

### 2012-2016

HRRC and FHR contracted with Woods Hole Group for additional hydrodynamic and sediment modeling, and contracted with the Louis Berger Group to develop survey plans and engineering designs for structurally affected private properties.

HRRC and FHR contacted, and in many instances met directly with, over 100 property owners to discuss their questions and concerns about the project and to seek permission for survey work on specific properties. This work is on-going.

### August 2013

Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at Wellfleet Council of Aging included a presentation on project plans and a presentation by Bill Burke, the Cape Cod National Seashore Historian about the history of the Herring River Estuary and nearby uplands based on a recently compiled park service archeological report.

## 2014

### 2014-2017

The Consensus Building Institute facilitated discussions between HRRC and Chequessett Yacht and Country Club (CYCC) to enable restoration of the Herring River ecosystem, including Mill Creek, while providing necessary flood protection for CYCC's golf facilities. The Project funded surveys, engineering, land planning and appraisals needed to develop a golf course protection plan for CYCC.

### August 2014

Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at Wellfleet Council of Aging featured a presentation on the Conceptual Design for Chequessett Neck Road Dike.

## Herring River Restoration Project – Chronology of Key Events

### October 2014

MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs awarded the first of a series of grants to FHR for Project design and engineering and environmental assessments.

### October 2014 and November 2015

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Adaptive Management Team held two stakeholders meetings to explain the adaptive management process for the Restoration Project and engage stakeholders in developing the adaptive management plan.

## 2015

### February 4, 12 and 25, 2015

Public forums on roadway alternation for the Herring River Restoration Project were held in Wellfleet (Low roads and High Toss Road).

### June 2 and 24, 2015

Public forums on Low-lying roadway alterations for the Herring River Restoration Project were held in Wellfleet (Low roads and High Toss Road).

### August 18, 2015

Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at Wellfleet Council on Aging facility featured a presentation by the Association to Preserve Cape Cod; a look at river herring experience in the estuary by the Wellfleet Herring warden; a report on changes to Chequessett Neck Road Bridge Plans, including kayak portage access provisions in response to public comments solicited during public meetings; and planned funding.

### October 22, 29 and November 5, 2015

*The Herring River – a journey through history from our past to the present* seminar series was presented at the Wellfleet Public Library.

## 2016

### February 11, 2016

A public meeting on High Toss Road marsh crossing was held in Wellfleet.

### March 2016

The Wellfleet Board of Selectmen received additional comments on High Toss Road marsh crossing.

### April 14, 2016

Friends of Herring River held a public informational meeting in Wellfleet prior to the Annual Town Meeting. The plan for removing High Toss Road was overwhelmingly approved by a vote of the Town Meeting.

### June 2016

The Final EIS/EIR was published in the Federal Register and the Massachusetts Environmental Monitor.

## **Herring River Restoration Project – Chronology of Key Events**

The Cape Cod Commission held a Joint Review hearing with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Unit to review the Final EIS/EIR. More than 100 people attended the hearing and 12 comment letters were submitted following the hearing.

### **July 2016**

The MA Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs issued a Certificate on the Final Environmental Report (FEIR) finding that it adequately and properly complies with MEPA, and establishing a new Regulatory Oversight Group (ROG) for the Project.

### **July – August 2016**

Friends of Herring River hosted a summer program series at Wellfleet Public Library to explore facets of the restoration project including: Herring River Tidal Restoration Effects: Current and planned monitoring projects; Salt Meets Fresh: Tidal seawater, fresh groundwater, and the Herring River restoration; Tidal Water: A History of Wellfleet's Herring River; horseshoe crab research; and marsh birds of Herring River.

### **August 2016**

Cape Cod Commission opened a public hearing (procedural only) on the Herring River Restoration Project as a Development of Regional Impact. This public hearing was continued.

### **August 16, 2016**

Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting at Wellfleet Council on Aging facility featured a project update, announcement of the publication of a book on the history of Herring River, a summary of current conditions and rationale for restoration including social, economic and ecological benefits.

### **September 2016**

The Record of Decision on the Final EIS/EIR was signed by the National Park Service Northeast Regional Director.

### **September 2016**

MOU III was executed by Wellfleet and Truro Boards of Selectmen and the NPS Northeast Regional Director, setting forth the management structure for the next phase of the Restoration Project. MOU III called for the creation of the Herring River Executive Council (HREC) to provide Project policy direction and coordinate Project implementation.

## **2017**

The HREC met four times in 2017 (January 9, March 9, June 7 and September 25). During this time the HREC appointed the Herring River Stakeholder Group. (HRSG) to provide advisory input on key implementation issues. The HRSG consists of nineteen members representing broad interests in the community: shellfish/fisheries, conservation/environmental protection, flood plain property owners, businesses, navigation, recreation, mosquito control, and the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission.

The HRRC continued monthly meetings to advance project design and permitting activities.

The ROG will meet in January to review permitting issues.

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### February 2017

A briefing for Senator Cyr and Representative Peake was held at Friends of Herring River office.

### March 2017

Friends of Herring River and Wellfleet Shellfish Advisory Board hosted a forum on the science behind the benefits of tidal restoration for shellfish resources.

The Herring River Restoration Committee (HRRC) made a recommendation to the Herring River Executive Council (HREC) that the permit applications seeking authorization to implement the Restoration Project not include the use of any herbicides in the Herring River Restoration Project area. These permit applications will specify other non-chemical methods of *Phragmites* control. The HREC unanimously supported this recommendation.

The newly designed Friends of Herring River website was launched, including up to date information about meetings held by the HRRC, HREC and HRSG, and also new reports and public informational materials.

### April 2017

Wellfleet Town Meeting rejected one petitioned warrant article which sought to stop permit applications for improving Herring River, and indefinitely postponed another article with a similar purpose.

Truro Town Meeting rejected a petitioned warrant article which sought to stop permit applications for improving Herring River.

A public presentation on the Herring River Restoration Project was held in the Truro Town Hall.

A new project brochure was mailed to all households in Truro and Wellfleet.

### May 2017

The HRRC and Chequessett Yacht & Country Club (CYCC) executed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to advance the Herring River Restoration Project. The MOU spells out the flood protection measures the project will provide to CYCC before tidal flow is partially restored in the Mill Creek sub-basin.

### June – August

Friends of Herring River sponsored monthly summer field trips to explain the effects of tidal restoration and restriction.

In August, Friends of Herring River Annual Meeting featured a presentation on “Blue Carbon” the carbon storage benefits of salt marsh restoration.

### November - December

Friends of Herring River published a newsletter explaining Phase 1 of the project, which was mailed to all households and businesses in Truro and Wellfleet. Individual letters were sent with the newsletter to all 300+ property owners in the Herring River flood plain.

## Herring River Restoration Project – Chronology of Key Events

2018

The HRRC continued monthly meetings to advance project design and permitting activities.

### March 2018

Friends of Herring River co-sponsored a forum on monitoring to protect shellfish resources with the Wellfleet Shellfish Advisory Board.

Friends of Herring River co-sponsored a forum on Blue Carbon, the carbon storage benefits of salt marsh restoration with Climate Mobilization Outer Cape Mobilization.

A new video entitled *Herring River Estuary: Restoring and Ecological Treasure* was released and premiered at the Cape Cod Natural History Conference.

### May 2018

Friends of Herring River co-sponsored a forum on wildlife in Herring River and habitat changes resulting from restoration with the Wellfleet Conservation Trust, Wellfleet Natural Resources Advisory Board, Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.

The HREC met on May 16 to launch the HRSG.

The HRSG held its first meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

### July – August

Friends of Herring River sponsored monthly summer field trips to explain the effects of tidal restoration and restriction.

2019

### January 2019

Town of Wellfleet files an application with the Cape Cod Commission for a Limited Scope Decision.

### March 2019

March 7, 2019, public hearing on Limited Scope application before the Cape Cod Commission Regulatory Subcommittee. Following the public hearing the subcommittee voted unanimously to ratify the proposed Limited Scope Decision. The decision was issued March 7, 2019.

### June 2019

Herring River Stakeholder Group meets.

A fourth Memorandum of Understanding (MOU IV) is signed by the Town of Wellfleet and Cape Cod National Seashore MOU IV becomes the new governing document for project implementation.



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### July-August 2019

A newsletter containing updated project information is mailed to all households and homeowners in Wellfleet and Truro.

Friends of Herring River Board members meet with various neighborhood associations and civic groups to update them about the project.

### September 2019

Town of Wellfleet submits Development of Regional Impact application to the Cape Cod Commission.

**2019 - 2023 *details forthcoming***

### 2019 - 2023

Extensive, collaborative planning ensued, including major research and modeling activities. Permitting and grant administration became a major focus of Friends of Herring River's support activity. Multiple federal and state agencies committed funding for Phase 1 construction, which begins in 2023.