



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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May 13, 2020

U.S. EPA/Office of Ecosystem Protection
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912
Attention: Ralph Abele

RE: Mystic River Alternative TMDL Phase II Report

Dear Mr. Abele:

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is pleased to acknowledge the completion of the *Mystic River Watershed Alternative TMDL Development for Phosphorus Management-Final Report* (“Alternative TMDL Study” or “Study”). This Alternative TMDL Study presents the results of a multi-agency effort to address water quality impairments in the Mystic River watershed, with major funding and coordination provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This Alternative TMDL presents a water quality restoration plan that is expected to achieve Massachusetts surface water quality standards more efficiently than through the development and implementation of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). This Alternative TMDL includes a restoration plan for the waterbody segments listed in Table 1 (see attachment to letter). Massachusetts has listed these segments as priorities for restoration under our program’s Clean Water Act *Vision*, which will be included in our proposed 2018/2020 Integrated List of Waters Report.

The Mystic River Alternative TMDL will address nutrient impairments in 18.7 river miles and 694.3 acres of lakes or impoundments in the watershed. MassDEP places a lower priority for preparing a TMDL for waterbodies that have an Alternative TMDL, or restoration plan. However, the Mystic River segments in Table 1 will remain in Category 5 (the Commonwealth’s 303(d) List of Impaired Waters Requiring Development of TMDL) until Massachusetts surface water quality standards are attained or a TMDL is developed for each impairment. If Massachusetts surface water quality standards for the nutrient related impairments associated with the Alternative TMDL Study are not achieved in a reasonable time period, a TMDL will be required. Note also that in 2019, MassDEP began a multi-year nutrient monitoring program for Spy Pond (MA71040), Wedge Pond (MA71045), and Horn Pond (MA71019) to collect data that may be used to develop TMDLs for these impaired ponds.

To begin implementation of the Alternative TMDL, MassDEP collaborated with EPA in a facilitated technical support process for stormwater management implementation activities. Six watershed communities have participated in the program to date, which has already resulted in measurable progress towards attaining SWQS. For example, the Town of Arlington installed 11 low-cost stormwater retrofits in municipal roadways in 2019. In other communities, critical

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.

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stormwater management information has been obtained and may be used to develop effective and affordable retrofit programs. The current outreach program for the Mystic River Alternative TMDL will be completed by June 30, 2020. MassDEP will continue our outreach with watershed communities through the implementation of the Stormwater permitting program and supporting the outreach efforts of the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA).

MassDEP will encourage the Mystic River Watershed communities to continue to pursue funding opportunities to assist with watershed management through MassDEP's Grant programs (604b, 319, MS4 Municipal Assistance Grants, and Water Quality Monitoring Grants), the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) StormSmart Coasts program, and Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grants.

The 2016 Massachusetts Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit, Appendix H-II, describes the requirements for regulated areas with discharges to water quality limited waterbodies where phosphorus is the cause of impairment. The permit requires additional or enhanced best management practices (BMPs), phosphorus source identification, and identification of potential structural BMPs by July 2023. The twenty communities in the Mystic River Watershed that discharge to phosphorus impaired waterbodies, or their tributaries, are included in Section 2.2.2.b.i. of the 2016 MS4 permit. The requirements of the MS4 General Permit will ensure that monitoring is conducted regularly and within a reasonable timeframe. Under the MS4 General Permit, permittees are required to implement an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Program to find and eliminate sources of non-stormwater discharges to within the municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) and implement procedures to prevent such discharges. Among the requirements of the permit is MS4 system mapping, a written IDDE program, assessment and priority ranking of outfalls and interconnections, and screening and sampling requirements. The sampling frequency and analyses are outlined in Section 2.3.4.7.b.iii of the permit and will be detailed in town specific Stormwater Management Programs.

Thank you for supporting MassDEP and providing funding for this important project. The Mystic River Watershed Alternative TMDL Development for Phosphorus Management-Final Report is posted on the web page for MassDEP's TMDL Program. If you have any questions please contact me at laura.blake@mass.gov or Barbara Kickham at barbara.kickham@mass.gov.

Sincerely,



Laura J. Blake
Director of Watershed Planning Program
MassDEP

Attachment: Table 1

CC: Ivy Mlsna, US. EPA
Barbara Kickham, MassDEP
Lealdon Langley, MassDEP
Laura Schiffman, MassDEP
Susy King, MassDEP
Kathy Baskin, MassDEP

Attachment 1

Table 1. Waterbodies to be addressed by the Alternative TMDL for the Mystic River Watershed. Descriptions and impairments as listed in the Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters 2016.

| Waterbody | Segment ID | Description | Size | Units | Nutrient Related Impairments |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|-------------|--------------|---|
| Aberjona River | MA71-01 | Source just south of Birch Meadow Drive, Reading to inlet Upper Mystic Lake at Mystic Valley Parkway, Winchester (portion culverted underground). (Through former pond segments Judkins Pond MA71021 and Mill Pond MA71031). | 9.1 | Miles | Dissolved Oxygen Phosphorus, Total |
| Alewife Brook | MA71-04 | Outlet of Little Pond, Belmont to confluence with Mystic River, Arlington/Somerville (portion in Belmont and Cambridge identified as Little River with name changing to Alewife Brook at Arlington corporate boundary). | 2.3 | Miles | Dissolved Oxygen Flocculant Masses Phosphorus, Total Transparency / Clarity |
| Lower Mystic Lake | MA71027 | Arlington/Medford. | 93.00 | Acres | Dissolved Oxygen |
| Malden River | MA71-05 | Headwaters south of Exchange Street, Malden to confluence with Mystic River, Everett/Medford. | 2.3 | Miles | Dissolved Oxygen Dissolved Oxygen Supersaturation Flocculant Masses Phosphorus, Total Transparency / Clarity |
| Mystic River | MA71-02 | Outlet Lower Mystic Lake, Arlington/Medford to Amelia Earhart Dam, Somerville/Everett. | 5.0 | Miles | Chlorophyll-a Dissolved Oxygen Supersaturation Phosphorus, Total Transparency / Clarity |
| Mystic River | MA71-03 | Amelia Earhart Dam, Somerville/Everett to confluence with Boston Inner Harbor, Chelsea/Charlestown (Includes Island End River). | 313.6 | Acres | Dissolved Oxygen Flocculant Masses |
| Upper Mystic Lake | MA71043 | Winchester/Arlington/Medford. | 176.00 | Acres | Dissolved Oxygen Dissolved Oxygen Supersaturation |