

USDA RCPP

2024 Grant Award Overview

Friday the 13th, December 2024



Building Resilience in the Connecticut River Watershed of Massachusetts

\$25M

USDA Award

5 Year

Grant Period

\$22.4M

Partner Contributions

Funding Type: Alternative Funding Arrangement (AFA)

Funding Pool: Critical Conservation Area (NE Forests & Waters)

Funding Source: Farm Bill

Project Goals & Objectives

Project Goals:

1. Protect 10,000 acres or more of forest, riparian and wetland habitats through conservation easements
2. Restore at least 100 acres of riparian and wetland habitats through land management activities. Parcel selection for entity-held

Project Objectives:

1. Address and measure four critical environmental outcomes
2. Deploy new monitoring and measurement technologies, particularly for greenhouse gas monitoring and outcomes reporting that benefit the Northeast region and beyond
3. Deploy creative and efficient methods for entity-held easements

Outcomes

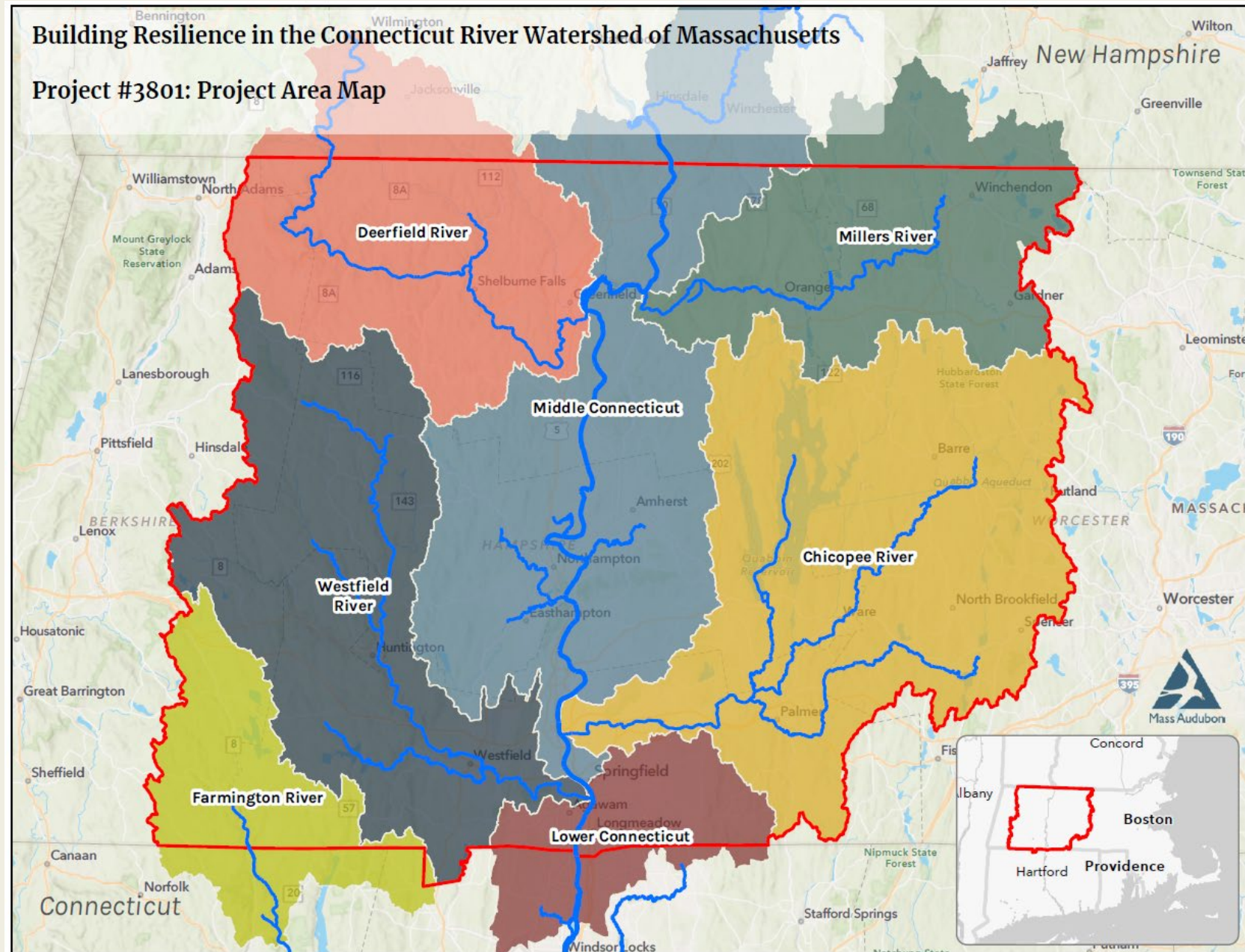
Primary Resource Concern:

OUTCOME #1: mitigate and improve inadequate **habitat** for fish, wildlife, and invertebrates

OUTCOME #2: permanently store **carbon**, avoid carbon emissions through forest conversion.

OUTCOME #3: enhance climate resilience for local and regional communities by improving **flood resilience**

OUTCOME #4: model **water quality** improvements from land protection and management activities across the sub-basins of the Connecticut River in Mass.



Core Partners

Land Protection

Kestrel Land Trust

East Quabbin Land Trust

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

Hilltown Land Trust

Restoration/Land Management

Connecticut River Conservancy

Trout Unlimited

Measurement

Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

“RCPP funds will be used to purchase entity-held easements on prioritized parcels owned by eligible non-industrial private landowners. These easements will protect forest and agricultural lands from development or conversion, preventing landscape fragmentation and supporting healthy, resilient terrestrial and aquatic habitats”

Easement Details

Entity-held Easement

Reimbursement rate: 40%; 65% for Historically Underserved

No Right of Federal/Third Party Enforcement

Easement Deed Terms includes Minimum, Moderate, Highly Restrictive

Land Uses Types: Forest, Wetlands, Riparian Areas, Grasslands, Grazing lands

Easement Acquisition-Related Items
(e.g., appraisal, survey, title, recording, etc.)

Not Eligible for Reimbursement



Project Ranking

Easements will be prioritized based on:

- forest and/or floodplain connectivity
- biodiversity value
- carbon quality

Land management project selection will be based on:

- aquatic resilience score
- project readiness

A photograph of a small blue and white bird perched on a thin branch in a forest. The bird has a blue head and back, a white breast, and a black throat. The background is a soft-focus green forest. The text of the slide is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Next Steps

- Negotiating project details and budget – PPA draft in January
- Develop Supplemental Agreements with Core Partners
- Define process for adding additional partners/projects
- Keep MLTC members updated on progress

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