



Mass Audubon

Sackett Brook Education Project

Funded by the Natural Resource
Damages Fund of the Housatonic
Restoration as part of the settlement
with General Electric

So, What's it about?

BACKGROUND – DAM REMOVAL

Mass Audubon is planning to implement a riparian restoration project on Sackett Brook, an 8.5 mile tributary to the Housatonic River whose source is in the October Mountain State Forest, and which includes a section approximately 0.75 miles long that passes through Canoe Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary in Pittsfield, in the floodplain of the Housatonic. The confluence of the brook and the Housatonic lies in the southwest corner of the sanctuary.



Sackett Brook is a high-quality, sand and gravel-bottomed coldwater stream, but its natural flow is interrupted by the Gravesleigh Pond Dam, as the brook flows through hayfields on the sanctuary. Canoe Meadows, located just one mile from downtown Pittsfield, has three miles of trails that wind through 264 acres of scenic woods, fields, and wetlands that provide habitat for bobolinks, ospreys, great blue herons, beavers, and otters, among others.





The Gravesleigh Pond Dam was built on Sackett Brook in the early 1930s by the owner of the property at that time, Merle Graves, to provide for a small pond for his hunting and fishing lodge at the site. This cabin now remains as Mass Audubon staff housing. The dam's impoundment, called East Pond on some maps, is mostly silted in. According to the Massachusetts Riverways Program's Restoration Potential Model database, this dam on Sackett Brook ranks in the top 5% of dams in the state in terms of the benefit afforded by its removal based on the model. Significant factors include coldwater fisheries habitat, Living Waters supporting watershed in the area, low road density in the watershed, and the long length of connected stream network upstream and downstream.

What is the Project?

- This project is built around our plan to remove a deteriorating dam and bridge and to restore Sackett Brook in an environmentally sensitive manner, and utilize this opportunity to involve the schools and public in this project.



Who may participate?

- We are targeting students in the Pittsfield Schools and surrounding communities impacted by the ongoing Housatonic River Restoration.
- Funding is approved for school programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, including bus money and field trips.

When will this take place?

- Dam removal is currently in the permitting phase, with engineering and restoration studies currently underway.
- The education component will take place throughout the 2012 -2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

Where does this occur?

- The proposal calls for several in class sessions, followed by a field trip to Canoe Meadows at the elementary and middle school level.





- High School students will conduct independent environmental studies as part of a community service project at Canoe Meadows.
- Several Public programs are also planned.

How is this implemented?

- Mass Audubon educators meet with teachers from interested schools and plan the classroom sessions and the field trip. Lesson topics are designed to integrate with classroom work. All lessons are aligned with the Massachusetts Frameworks in Science and Technology and the ELA Common Core *for example*:
 - ELA Common Core- Grade 4
 - Reading Informational Text (RI)
 - *Key Ideas and Details*
 - CC.4. RI 3 Explain events, procedures, ideas, concepts in a historical, scientific or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
 - *Craft and Structure*
 - CC.4. RI 4 Determine meaning of general academic and domain specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

Why should my class participate?

- As part of this community, students should understand the natural and human history of the Housatonic and why we do restoration.
- Great opportunity to learn about the wildlife of the Housatonic watershed.
- Materials, readings, and equipment are included
- All costs are covered by the grant!

How do I Get Involved?

- Sign up your class today
- Agree to participate on a curriculum review committee (three meetings throughout the project)- educator stipends are available.
- Any questions? Contact Gayle Tardif-Raser
- gtraser@massaudubon.org