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Date: January 18, 2007

For Immediate Release

Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program awards \$112,000 in grants to nine communities in the Buzzards Bay region

The Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program (NEP), a planning and technical assistance unit of the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), announced it would award \$112,000 in grants and support to nine municipalities for their efforts to protect and restore Buzzards Bay. The grants will help these communities map stormwater discharges, treat stormwater discharges that are closing shellfish beds, protect and restore wetlands and habitat, and update computer database maps of town parcel boundaries to help local officials manage permits and track natural resources.

“These communities are on the front line of improving protecting water quality and habitat in Buzzards Bay and surrounding watershed, and we are happy to help any way we can,” said Dr. Joe Costa, Director of the Buzzards Bay NEP. “By providing technical expertise and funding for these projects, we can help open shellfish beds, ensure cleaner swimming beaches, and protect habitat in and around the bay.”

The awards to the South Coastal and Cape Cod communities include:

- The Town of **Marion** will receive up to \$15,000 in support for engineering designs to treat stormwater discharges in the northern portion of Sippican Harbor. This area of the harbor is on the State’s 303d list for list of polluted sites for pathogens, resulting in shellfish bed closures. The site is home to diamondback terrapin, a threatened salt water turtle species, and important coastal habitat. The discharge is on town-owned land.
- The Towns of **Carver** and **Plymouth** will receive grants to map their storm drain systems. Carver was awarded \$3,840 for their project, while Plymouth will receive \$10,785. These grants complement a Buzzards Bay NEP grant last year where the towns received a tablet PC and geographic information system (GIS) software through the Buzzards Bay Action Committee for this type of work.
- The Town of **Westport** will receive up to \$15,000 for engineering designs to treat stormwater runoff from two discharge pipes on the west side of the river at the Head of Westport. This area of the Westport River is on the State’s list of polluted sites for

pathogens and nutrients (nitrogen), and swimming and shellfishing are prohibited. The town will partner with the Westport River Watershed Alliance to collect water samples from the stormwater discharges in conjunction with this project. The town has previously received Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection grant monies to treat stormwater pollution on the east side of the river at this same location, and this new grant is a continuation of that project.

- The Town of **Rochester** will receive \$5,500 to hire a professional engineering firm to prepare a Conservation Restriction Plan for a 9-acre property on which the owners have offered to place a permanent conservation restriction. The property is located within the Mattapoissett River watershed, contains bordering vegetated wetlands and an intermittent stream, and provides significant wildlife habitat.
- The City of **New Bedford** will receive two grants. The first will provide up to \$15,000 to prepare engineering designs to correct problems associated with a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) at Ricketson Street in outer New Bedford Harbor. This CSO is located below the water line and tidal flow washes contaminated debris out of the pipe. The city will retrofit and modify the discharge to prevent this problem. The second grant for \$20,000 will enable the city to update parcel maps in its GIS database. The city has partnered with UMass Dartmouth and proposes to hire three college-level engineering (or similar discipline) interns for GIS data acquisition, data entry, and field surveys. The interns will work under the direction of the city's Engineering Department.
- Two other towns will also receive grants to update and improve the accuracy of their parcel map GIS database. The Town of **Fairhaven** will receive \$6,500, and the Town of **Mattapoissett** will receive \$3,375. These updates of parcel boundaries in the town's geographic information mapping system will help planners and town departments better track development and the issuance of permits, and better protect areas with wetlands and important natural resources. Both towns will hire a consultant to complete this work.
- The Town of **Bourne** will receive \$17,000 to hire a contractor to perform field investigations to assess the feasibility of installing a larger culvert under Circuit Avenue to improve tidal flushing and coastal wetlands habitat at Conservation Pond. Bacteria builds up in the pond and contributes to the closure of approximately 17 acres of shellfish beds in Hen Cove. This area has recently been the subject of a major stormwater remediation project funded by CZM's Coastal Pollution Remediation program and this award is an extension of that project.

The announcement was made at a Transfer of Development Rights workshop sponsored by the Buzzards Bay Action Committee, CZM, EOEA, and the Buzzards Bay NEP. At the workshop, state and municipal planners described a planning tool to help municipalities protect open space and sensitive environmental areas by transferring development to planned receiving areas. This approach also protects aesthetic values of a community and reduces infrastructure burdens to taxpayers.

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