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Baker-Polito Administration Awards Grants to South Coast Region for Habitat and Water Quality Protection and Restoration

Over \$130,000 in federal funds awarded to three towns and a non-profit in the Buzzards Bay watershed

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BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced \$135,000 in federal grant money for land protection projects and water quality monitoring in Buzzards Bay. The funding includes three grants to help towns in the Buzzards Bay watershed protect important habitat, including an Atlantic white cedar swamp, and funding to support long-term monitoring efforts in Buzzards Bay. All three land-protection projects are in the Mattapoisett River Valley watershed, which provides drinking water to four municipalities. The grants are being matched by \$65,700 in municipal and private contributions that will support the water quality monitoring effort, help permanently protect important habitat and promote passive recreation for the enjoyment of natural resources.

“Our administration is pleased to help these South Coast towns protect their water, maintain their natural landscapes and improve their overall quality of life,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “The funding being awarded today will enable important projects that protect the important natural resources in Buzzards Bay.”

“Projects like protecting important wetlands for water quality and rare species habitat and supporting local, volunteer water quality monitoring will make a real difference at the local level,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “I congratulate Acushnet, Mattapoisett and Rochester and thank them for their contributions to the future of Buzzards Bay.”

“Acushnet, Mattapoisett and Rochester are to be commended for their continued efforts to protect open space and the natural resources of the South Coast,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “Through the important contribution of the Buzzards Bay Coalition and their volunteers, water quality monitoring in Buzzards Bay has taken place for over 25 years, and the data collected has proved immensely useful to state agencies and municipalities in their efforts to manage pollution to coastal waters.”

The grants are being awarded by the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program through the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), with funding from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

“CZM’s National Estuary Programs continue to support federal, state and local partnerships that have significant long-term benefits for our coast,” **said CZM Director Bruce Carlisle**. “Land conservation efforts meet many CZM program goals, ranging from water supply protection to preservation of wildlife habitat, and water quality monitoring is essential for targeting limited state and federal funds to areas where they are needed most.”

“Water quality improvement and monitoring is vital in our region,” **said Congressman Bill Keating**. “The Buzzard’s Bay Coalition has been a tireless leader in organizing a regional approach towards wastewater and environmental issues on the South Coast. And I commend Acushnet, Mattapoisett, and Rochester for their commitment to protecting our national resources.”

“I’d like to thank the towns and the Buzzards Bay Coalition for developing these projects, and working toward their success,” **said Joe Costa, Executive Director of the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program**. “Our Congressional delegation continues to support water quality restoration and habitat protection efforts in Buzzards Bay, and our partners deserve all the credit for their continued accomplishments.”

The following grants were awarded:

The **Town of Acushnet** will receive \$35,000 to work with its partner, the Buzzards Bay Coalition, to protect 38-acres in the Towns of Acushnet and Fairhaven. The project will protect land that benefits water resources associated with Tripps Mill Brook and the Mattapoisett River. It will also protect wildlife habitat, expand trail-based recreational opportunities and protect a large contiguous undeveloped block of forest.

The **Town of Mattapoisett** will receive \$35,000 to work with its partners, Mattapoisett Land Trust and Buzzards Bay Coalition, to protect a 53-acre property, also in the Mattapoisett River Valley, designated as habitat for rare species. The property also contains an old historic quarry with deep ties to New England history and culture. The Town and its partners intend to use the property for environmental and historical educational purposes.

The **Town of Rochester** will receive \$35,000 to work with its partners, Rochester Land Trust and Buzzards Bay Coalition, to permanently protect a 78.6-acre property, which contains extensive wetlands, including an Atlantic white cedar swamp. The property, located in a large undeveloped forest area near the dividing line of the Mattapoisett and Sippican River watersheds, will provide trail-based recreational opportunities for the public.

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The **Buzzards Bay Coalition** will receive \$35,000 to support an additional season of monitoring of the Baywatchers program. Baywatchers is a comprehensive volunteer-based water quality monitoring program, which has been in existence for 25 years. With the help of trained volunteers, basic water quality measurements of dissolved oxygen, temperature, salinity and water clarity will be made at approximately 150 stations in and around Buzzards Bay. The water quality data collected will be used to track nutrient pollution effects and will be made available to federal, state and local decision makers.

The Office of Coastal Zone Management is EEA's lead policy and planning agency on coastal and ocean issues. Created in 1985, the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program provides grants and technical assistance to South Coast and Cape Cod communities to protect and restore water quality and natural resources in Buzzards Bay and its surrounding watershed and is one of 28 similar programs designated by the EPA.

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