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Memorandum

Diadromous Fish Restoration Meeting

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*), in collaboration with the owners of the High Street Dam, Town River Fishery Committee, the Nature Conservancy, and other project partners, invites interested parties to a meeting to plan for the advancement of a restoration project to improve fish passage at the High Street Dam on the Town River in Bridgewater.

High Street Dam. The Town River is a major tributary of the federally designated Wild and Scenic Taunton River. River herring and other sea-run fish historically could migrate more than 53 miles from Narragansett Bay into the 350-acre Lake Nippenicket. In 2003, the fishway at the High St. dam passed 300,000 river herring indicating the high potential productivity of this system. From 2000-2015, river herring passage averaged 65,000 fish, with counts declining in recent years. The *Marine Fisheries* diadromous fish restoration priority list ranks the High Street dam 10th among more than 200 locations in the Southeastern Massachusetts region.

The High Street dam, also known as the Stanley Iron Works dam, was constructed by David Perkins as part of an iron mill, after approval by the colonial government of Massachusetts in 1694. By the mid-19th century, the iron works was a major producer of iron in the country. Prior to European settlement, the area was important to Native Americans, who valued the river for transportation, food, and water. The High Street dam presently has features in poor condition. The fish ladder and water control functions of the dam crest and side sluice are degraded. The current exterior of the dam is made of concrete and wood, with a spillway height of 10 feet and width of 61 feet. The dam does not generate power or provide water supply or flood control operations. The initial fish ladder installation is undocumented, but a ladder is referenced in fishway surveys conducted by *Marine Fisheries* in the 1910s and 1960s. The removal of the dam would resolve fish passage limitations and mitigate the risk of downstream flooding due to catastrophic failure.

Marine Fisheries has been meeting with the High Street Dam owner, APC Corporation, since 2012 to discuss options for improving fish passage at this location. This process has to date resulted in cooperative repairs to the diversion wall at the fish ladder entrance and a draft Operation and Maintenance Plan for the fish ladder. *Marine Fisheries* received a letter from APC in November 2015 supporting the initiation of a study to evaluate the feasibility of fish passage improvement at the High Street Dam with the acknowledgement that *Marine Fisheries* currently recommends dam removal as the preferred option.

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform interested parties of the intention to begin a fish passage improvement feasibility study and to hold a meeting to launch the project on November 17, 2016 from 6:30-8pm at the Academy Building, Town Council Chamber, Room 203. The meeting will chart out a process for advancing the study, and discuss the funding of an environmental engineering firm to conduct the study in 2017. Please contact Sara Turner (*Marine Fisheries*) at 508-990-2860, x106 for additional information.