

*Town of Weymouth  
Massachusetts*

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# Press Release

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## **Weymouth Receives \$200,000 Grant for Dam Removal Project**

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**Weymouth, MA** – Mayor Hedlund and the Weymouth Conservation Department are pleased to announce the Town of Weymouth has received a \$200,000 grant from the State of Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) for the Sediment Nutrient Uptake Pond dam removal project. The Sediment Nutrient Uptake Pond (SNUP) consists of a dam on the Old Swamp River that was designed to divert river water into a series of small treatment ponds before discharging back into the Old Swamp River just before it reaches the South Cove of Whitman's Pond.

"Removal of the SNUP dam has been a long-time goal of the Conservation Commission and builds off the continued efforts of the Hedlund Administration to reverse historic neglect of the town's natural resources," said **Assistant Conservation Administrator Andrew Hultin**. "We are very grateful for the continued support of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game."

The Old Swamp River is a perennial river running 4.4 miles from its headwaters in Rockland to the South Cove of Whitman's Pond. The River is designated a cold-water fish resource, meaning it has a state recognized population of native brook trout. It also provides spawning grounds for river herring that annually migrate up the Back River and into Whitman's Pond.

The SNUP was constructed in the late 1980s with the goal of reducing phosphorus and other nutrients entering Whitman's Pond via the Old Swamp River. The SNUP consists of

a dam on the Old Swamp River that, when functioning as designed, diverts river water into a sediment basin for the settling of suspended sediments, followed by a nutrient uptake pond for the removal of phosphorus and other nutrients. Unfortunately, the SNUP never functioned fully as intended and required frequent maintenance of the sediment basins to be effective.

Recognizing the adverse impacts of the SNUP, the Weymouth Conservation Office, with the support of Mayor Hedlund, the Weymouth Herring Wardens and the Department of Public Works, applied to the Division of Ecological Restoration's (DER) Priority Ecological Projects Program in 2021. The Priority Ecological Projects Program provides technical assistance and funding for "projects that advance the mission to restore and protect the Commonwealth's rivers, wetlands, and watersheds for the benefit of people and the environment. Projects are selected through a competitive process for Priority Project designation (DER, 2021)."

The Town and DER's phase two hydrologic and hydraulic modeling and permit level design work is now underway. Phase three, utilizing the \$200,000 DER grant funding, will consist of permitting and construction and will begin in the fall of 2023.

The SNUP project comes on the heels of improvements Mayor Hedlund and his administration have made to other significant ecological resources in town, including: the daylighting of the Smelt Brook and improvements to the walkway, the replacement of failed flood control gates at the Herring Run, the repair of the Puritan Road culvert and restoration of the adjacent Salt Marsh, the demolition and removal of the incinerator and the creation of a fish ladder to help restore marine habitat at Pond Meadow.

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