



## The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Land Conservation Community

April 20, 2008

Volume 8, Number 5

### **ACTION ALERT! NO Funding for Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program!**

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"The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: 'What good is it?'  
... To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering."  
-- Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), American wildlife ecologist, from "Round River" 1993 --

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### **1) HOUSE DENIES FUNDING FOR NATURAL HERITAGE & ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM!**

**The Massachusetts House has refused to provide funds for the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program!**

***Call your legislator and write to the Chairman of House Ways and Means and ask that funding for Natural Heritage be restored to the budget.***

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw\\_toc.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw_toc.htm) ("Natural Heritage" for short) is responsible for the conservation and protection of hundreds of species that are not hunted, fished, trapped, or commercially harvested in the state. The Program's highest priority is protecting the 178 species of vertebrate and invertebrate animals and 264 species of native plants that are officially listed as Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern in Massachusetts [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species\\_info/esa\\_list/esa\\_list.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species_info/esa_list/esa_list.htm) .

The House Budget eliminates funding for Natural Heritage that was included in the Governor's Budget. Unlike hundreds of other state agencies, this significant program receives no monies from the General Fund, which leaves our important conservation work at risk. The Commonwealth's rare and endangered animals, plants and natural communities cannot be adequately protected without a sufficiently funded Heritage program.

### **ATTENTION LAND TRUSTS AND CONSERVATION GROUPS!**

We need to push House Ways and Means to restore funding by including Budget Amendment 458, filed by Rep. Steve Kulik. Please take the below letter, make it your own, and ***send it to Chairman DeLeo early this week, the earlier the better***. The House will debate the budget next week, but this is the week that staff review the amendments. Add a sentence or two about your membership, be it state-wide, regional, local, etc. ***Send a copy to your local legislator***. Don't know who your State Rep. is? Check here: <http://www.wheredoivotema.com> <http://www.wheredoivotema.com> . We would appreciate electronic copies, as we can forward them to the appropriate staff.

***We're only asking for your time because we think it will make a difference!***

We cleared a major hurdle in getting the Natural Heritage funded in the Governor's budget, and this is the next one! We need letters showing the breadth of support for Heritage and that the omission of the line-item registered.

Thank you!

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April 23, 2008

The Honorable Robert A. DeLeo  
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 243  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: House budget amendment 458, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

Dear Chairman DeLeo;

In 2004, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, was struck from the state budget, and it has not been restored. Reestablishing NHESP general operating funds is a top priority for (INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME). We urge you to support the amendment filed by Representative Kulik, and the line-item included in the Governor's budget, and provide \$250,000 in General Fund appropriations to the NHESP. These funds match federal monies and voluntary contributions, and will restore public trust in the Commonwealth's commitment towards endangered species recovery.

Since 1978, Heritage has gathered, managed, and distributed information about the Commonwealth's rare plant and animal species and their habitats, as well as other features of the state's biological diversity. The program's database contains over 14,000 records of rare species and unique habitats across Massachusetts, which are used to guide conservation planning, scientific research, and environmental impact review under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. The information provided by Heritage is critical in allocating resources, including capital funds for land protection.

We believe strongly that the protection of our most vulnerable species should be a fundamental responsibility of the Commonwealth. Investments from the General Fund are expressions of what we, as a Commonwealth, value. We urge you to restore funding to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(YOUR NAME)

(ADDRESS)

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Items of interest to the Massachusetts land protection community.  
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