

HOUSATONIC RIVER NATURAL RESOURCES RESTORATION PROJECT  
CONNECTICUT SUBCOUNCIL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

**Part A: RESPONDER AND PROJECT SUMMARY FORM**

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INLAND FISHERIES

Please read "RFP: Overview of Selection Process" before completing this form.

Part A must be completed using Submittal Form A. Responses may be entered electronically using the Microsoft Word version of Part A of this form available on the Housatonic River Basin Natural Resource Restoration Project in Connecticut website (www.housatonicrestoration.org), saved and printed. Alternatively, the responder may print the form and complete it with black ink. An Adobe Acrobat version of the entire form (Part A and Part B) is also available on the Housatonic River Basin Natural Resource Restoration Project in Connecticut website

**Project Name** Provide a brief working name.

**Audubon Carse Brook Wetlands Restoration**

**Responder** – if there is more than one party involved in the project, please provide the information for the primary or lead party.

Scott Heth

Name

Center Director

Title

Audubon Sharon

Address

325 Cornwall Bridge Road

Address

Sharon, CT 06069

City State Zip

860-364-0520

Phone

sheth@audubon.org

Email

**Type of Entity**

Check the box that best describes the primary respondent.

- Private individual
- Non-profit organization
- Municipal government
- State government
- County government
- Federal government
- Tribal government
- Corporation or Business
- Academic Institution
- Other (explain)

**Project Implementation**

Does the responder plan to be the Project Sponsor and respond to the Request for Supplemental Information (RSI) pending approval of this Proposal?

Yes  No

If yes, please list any other project participants. \_\_\_\_\_

If the responder does **NOT** plan to be the Project Sponsor and does **NOT** intend to respond to the Request for Supplemental Information (RSI), is the responder interested in being a project participant and assisting a different Project Sponsor on this project?

Yes  No

**Request for Proposals:**

**Restoration Priority Funding Category** See Sec. 3 of "RFP: Overview of Selection Process" for category descriptions.

**Primary Restoration Category.** Check the restoration category that is the primary goal of the project.

Check one box.

- Aquatic Natural Resources Restoration/Enhancement
- Riparian & Floodplain Natural Resources Restoration/Enhancement
- Restoration/Enhancement of Recreational Uses of Natural Resources

**Secondary Categories.** Check all relevant boxes.

- Aquatic Natural Resources Restoration/Enhancement
- Riparian & Floodplain Natural Resources Restoration/Enhancement
- Restoration/Enhancement of Recreational Uses of Natural Resources

**List Specific Injured Natural Resources and/or Impaired Natural Resource Services to Benefit from Project**

Restoration of wetland habitat; improvement of wetland species, including Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers, and Black Ducks; nature trail restoration and protection from flooding; water quality improvement into Housatonic River; public education information to protect wetland habitats and species.

**Project Location** (if known) See directions and "RFP: Overview of Selection Process" for additional materials to provide (maps, aerial photographs)

Municipality/ies:

Sharon, CT

Longitude for approximate center of project area: 73° 24' W

Latitude for approximate center of project area: 41° 52' N

**Project Budget Estimate** (if known)

Total Project Cost Estimate: \$ 36,000

Housatonic River NRD Fund Estimate: \$ 36,000

*Audubon Carse Brook Wetlands Restoration Project*

**Item 1. –Project Narrative**

**1. Project Goals and Objectives**

The Emily Winthrop Miles Wildlife Sanctuary protects over 1,500 acres of wildlife habitat in Sharon, Connecticut. Over 100 acres and 2.5 miles of the Carse Brook Valley wetland complex, which empties into the Housatonic River, are within the sanctuary borders. Breeding wetland birds using this area include Wood Duck, Mallard, Black Duck, Hooded Merganser and American Bittern (State Endangered). Virginia Rail (State Endangered), Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Bald Eagle (Federally Threatened), Great Egret (State Threatened), Osprey and a whole host of songbirds have also been encountered there. Historically, upwards of 100 Wood Duck and Hooded Mergansers have been produced in the Carse Brook wetland annually, primarily through a nest box system maintained by wildlife managers. In addition to these species, a significant number of Black Duck and Mallards were produced annually as well.

The fact that the Carse Brook wetland is a beaver-enhanced wetland is critical because the beavers create optimum breeding habitat for ducks. However, it does present some management challenges. Large beaver dams cause fluctuation in water levels and present safety and environmental concerns, especially siltation and property damage should they breach. In addition, excessive flooding makes it difficult for managers to access the area and maintain nest boxes at an appropriate level from the water and hiking trails used by sanctuary visitors become inaccessible as well. Succession and invasive species including phragmites and invasive shrubs have altered the wetland composition to the detriment of the breeding duck population. Wetland edge shrubs such as high bush cranberry, willows, alder and dogwoods, are being out competed by invasive and overstory species which threaten the mix of open water and native shrub components necessary for breeding and foraging by many wetland bird species.

The goals of this project are to increase the number and diversity of breeding and foraging waterfowl (meeting criteria 3.2 of the CT SubCouncil) and to allow for visitor access and education (meeting criteria 3.3 of the CT SubCouncil) through the restoration and management of the Carse Brook Wetlands. In addition, through the control of water levels, the possibility of beaver dam breaches is abated, reducing the possibility of siltation caused by sudden water flow increases (meeting criteria 3.1 of the CT SubCouncil).

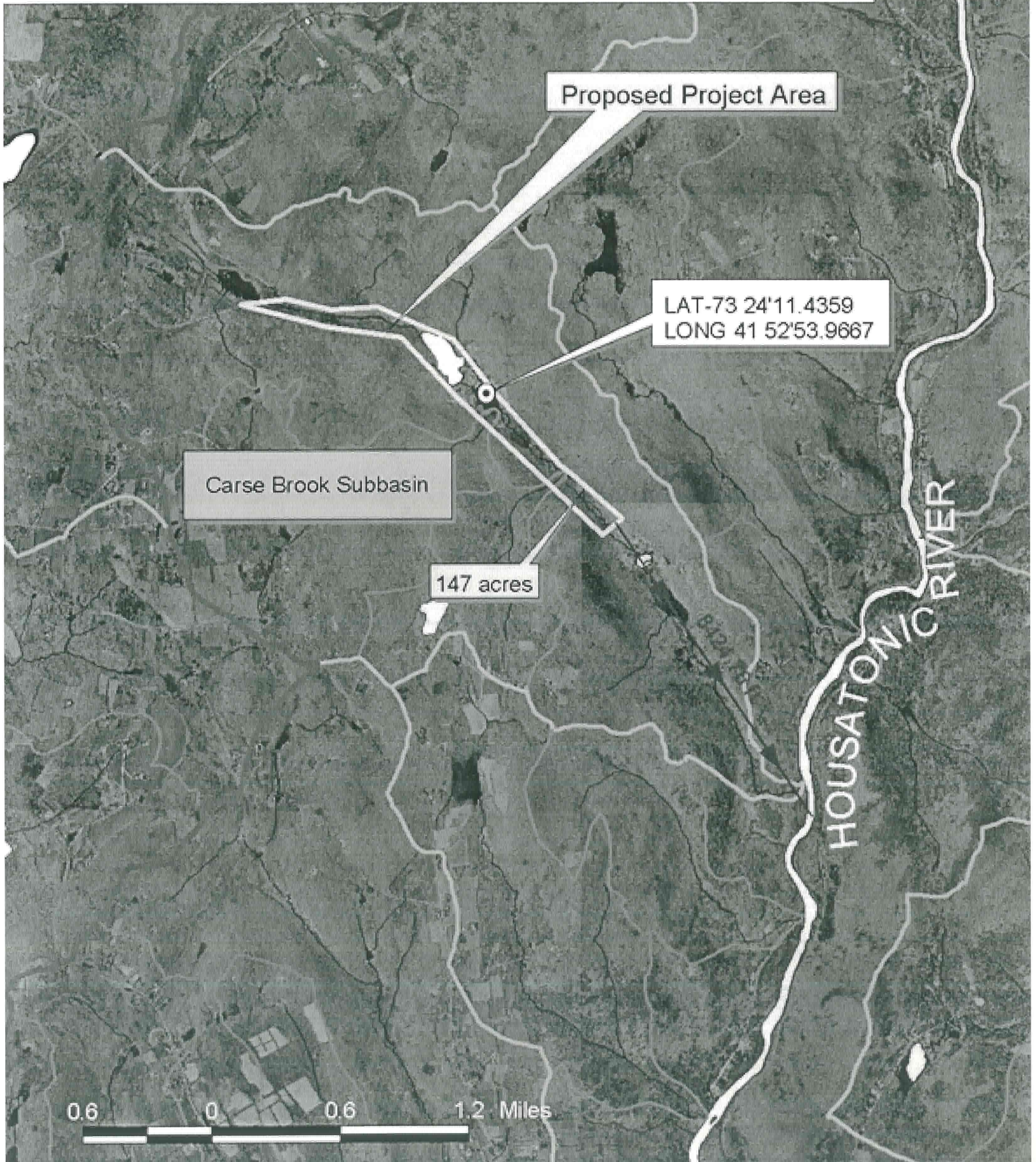
**2. Project Benefits**

The injured natural resources and/or natural resources services that would benefit from implementation of this project include waterfowl, wetlands and additional recreational opportunities. Waterfowl species and their associated habitats were significantly impacted by the release of PCBs into the Housatonic River. The Carse Brook Wetland system flows directly into the Housatonic River and the project area is approximately 1.5 miles from the river. This project will help produce waterfowl to replenish the void caused by this PCB release. These populations could eventually use habitats adjacent to the Housatonic River as they become healthier. In addition, the recreational and educational opportunities afforded by this project create positive public perception of habitat restoration and management. The direct link to the Housatonic River will augment efforts to restore the river itself. Lastly, maintaining a consistent water level reduces the possibility of siltation within the wetland and Housatonic River.

### 3. General Tasks

- To maximize consistent duck habitat and production in the Carse Brook Wetland, reduce trail flooding and to allow for uninterrupted public access, Audubon Sharon proposes to install a Clemson Pond Leveler or other beaver dam bypass system in up to three major dams. Through this installation, water would bypass these areas of beaver activity enabling managers to maintain optimum water levels for breeding ducks and other waterfowl while at the same time allowing the beavers to maintain Carse Brook as a wetland. These systems can also alleviate concerns by the Town of Sharon regarding road flooding that currently necessitates excavation invasive to important breeding areas.
- Approximately 10 acres of phragmites is proposed to be treated with herbicide. Phragmites is currently out-competing native wetland herbaceous and shrub species and is reducing viable wetland habitats. Similar treatment plans have been implemented on State-owned Roy Swamp.
- Remove encroaching successional hardwoods and invasive shrub species to restore wetlands and maintain native wetland shrub layer. Much of the wetland area is a red maple-alder-willow complex. Removing competition from successional hardwoods and invasives will help to maintain a healthy wetland with a good mix of native shrubs and open water; an ideal habitat for feeding and breeding of Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers and other waterfowl.
- Reevaluate and relocate duck nestboxes throughout the length of the wetland. Up to approximately 20 boxes will be needed to sufficiently cover the total area. These boxes will be maintained and monitored annually to evaluate breeding success of the ducks and placement of the boxes.
- Design and install an interpretive sign on the sanctuary's information kiosk describing the importance of wetland habitats, wildlife and restoration efforts. Include a map of the Carse Brook wetland and its proximity to the Housatonic River.

# Carse Brook Wetland Project Audubon Sharon



## Audubon Carse Brook Wetlands Restoration Project

### Item 3. Criteria Statements:

1. Does the proposal contain the information identified by the CT SubCouncil as set out in the “Instructions for the Preparation and Submission of Restoration Project Proposals”?
  - a. Yes
2. Does the Proposed Project restore, rehabilitate, replace, and/or acquire natural resources or natural resource services equivalent to those that were injured by the release of PCB’s or other hazardous substances from the GE facility at Pittsfield, MA?
  - a. Yes, this project proposes to restore wetlands habitat for Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers and Black Ducks and meets Restoration Priority Categories 3.2 Riparian & Floodplain Natural Resources Restoration/Enhancement through wetlands restoration, the select removal of invasive and non-native plants, installation of Wood Duck boxes; 3.1 Aquatic Natural Resources Restoration/Enhancement through the installation of water level control systems, and the remediation of potential water quality issues; and 3.3 Restoration/Enhancement of Recreational Uses of Natural Resources, as determined by the CT SubCouncil, through the protection and restoration of walking trails from flood damage and the installation of a educational interpretative signage to increase awareness of wetland habitat and declining species management.
3. Is the Proposed Project, or any portion of the Proposed Project, an action that is presently required under other federal, state, or local law, including, but not limited to, enforcement actions?
  - a. No
4. Is the Proposed Project inconsistent with any federal, state, or local law or policy?
  - a. No
5. Will the proposed project, or any portion of the proposed project, be inconsistent with any ongoing or anticipated remedial actions in the Housatonic River watershed?
  - a. No