

## **Press Release/Web site Posting Re: North River Project**

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) awarded a 604b Water Quality Management Planning Grant to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to conduct a Fluvial Geomorphic and Habitat Assessment of a portion of the North River Watershed.

Rivers alter their course by erosion of their banks and the deposition of sediments. This natural process can be accelerated by human activities that increase the velocity and volume of stormwater runoff, alter the structure of the river banks, or destroy the vegetation that helps to stabilize the soil of the banks. Eroding banks can result in the loss of riparian vegetation and the deposition of sediment into the water, which can degrade aquatic habitat. Valuable farmland and infrastructure, such as bridges, roads and houses, can be threatened by eroding river banks.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments has hired Field Geology Services, Inc. and Cole Ecological, Inc. to conduct the study of the East Branch North River, which will provide information on the causes of erosion, channel instability and habitat degradation. Once these factors are understood, long-term cost-effective solutions can be identified that will minimize the need for further costly river bank and infrastructure repairs and improve aquatic habitat. This project will provide conceptual restoration designs for 4 reaches and a final engineering design for the highest priority restoration site.

Field work will begin this month and continue through October and November so you may see the consultants wading in the river and near the river banks. The consultants may also need to cross private property to gain access to the river. *If you own land along the East Branch North River or along the North River below the confluence of the East and West Branches, please contact the town if you have concerns about allowing the consultants to walk across your land to access the river.*

The FRCOG will be working with the consultants to inform residents about the relationship between river channel dynamics, land use activities, and water quality to generate community cooperation and support for future restoration and river bank stabilization projects.

A Project Kick-off Meeting will be scheduled soon so if you'd like to have your name added to the project mailing list or you'd like further information about the project, please contact:

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