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# NVS

# UPDATE

Public Information Fact Sheet

## Natural Valley Storage Charles River SPRING 1979

In May 1972 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced its flood control program for the upper two-thirds of the Charles River Watershed. With this nonstructural project the Corps is now acquiring 17 of the watershed's most critical wetland areas (three of the areas are on the Charles River and fourteen are in tributary watersheds.) Acquisition of the critical wetlands was authorized by Congress in the 1974 Water Resources Development Act (PL 93-251), which requires all flood control studies to consider nonstructural alternatives and offers Federal cost sharing equal to that given for structural projects. These critical wetlands will be preserved in a natural state, allowing them to continue their age-old function of storing storm waters and serving as an effective flood control mechanism.

The buying or acquisition by easement of some 9,000 acres is expected to take about four years. Priorities for acquisitions have been established according to area location, volume of storage capacity, and degree of development threat.

Since acquisition began in May 1977, 1,053 acres have been acquired in fee (purchased outright) and 657 acres through restrictive easements. The easements permit Corps employees to inspect privately owned wetlands to ensure their use is not impairing their flood control function. A public meeting is scheduled in Sherborn for September 1979 when acquisition of wetlands in Sherborn and Holliston will be discussed.

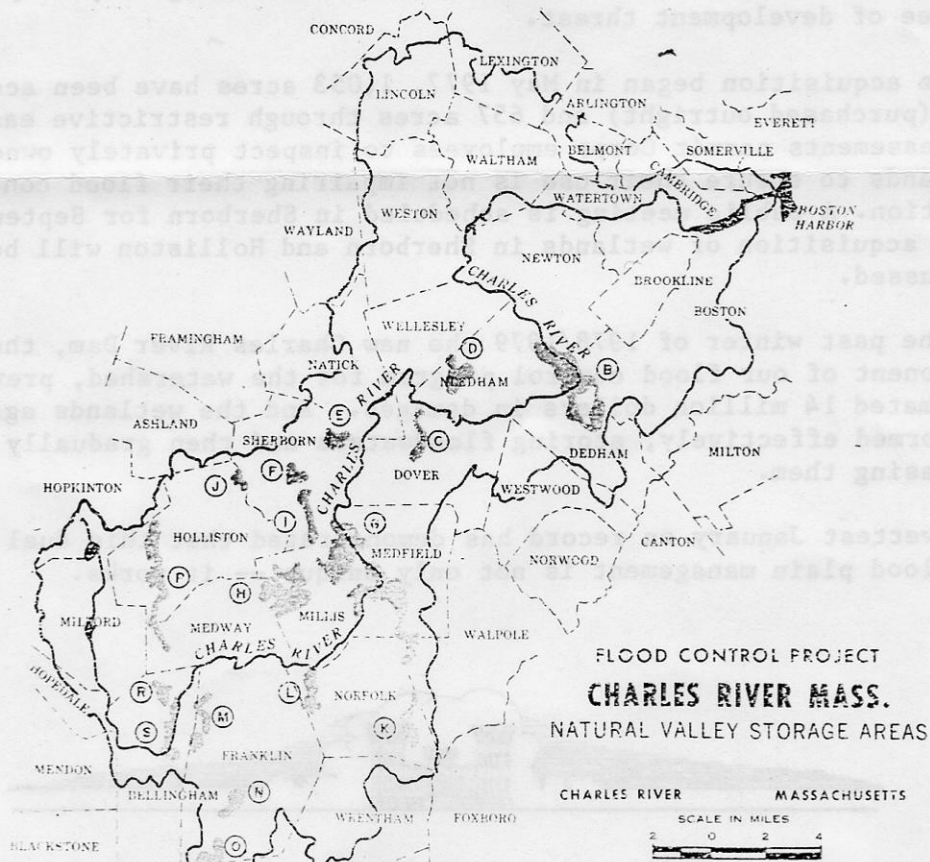
In the past winter of 1978/1979 the new Charles River Dam, the other component of our flood control program for the watershed, prevented an estimated 14 million dollars in damages. And the wetlands again performed effectively, storing floodwaters and then gradually and safely releasing them.

Our wettest January on record has demonstrated that this dual approach to flood plain management is not only unique -- it works.



NATURAL VALLEY STORAGE AREAS

PRIORITY	COMMUNITIES	Report Total	ACREAGE		5 June 1979 Sub-Total
			To Date Fee	Easement	
Listed in Order of Acquisition					
G	Medfield-Millis- Norfolk-Sherborn- Walpole	2,340	784	531	1315
H	Medway-Millis	907	168	59	227
K	Norfolk	395			
L	Norfolk	360	101	40	141
B	Boston-Dedham- Needham-Newton	1,029		27	27
C	Dover	250			
D	Needham	284			
E	Natick-Sherborn	234			
M	Franklin	395			
N	Franklin	150			
O	Franklin-Wrentham	266			
P	Holliston-Medway	704			
R	Bellingham	180			
S	Bellingham	400			
F	Sherborn	118			
I	Sherborn	280			
J	Holliston-Sherborn	130			
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>16 each</b>	<b>8,422</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>1,710</b>

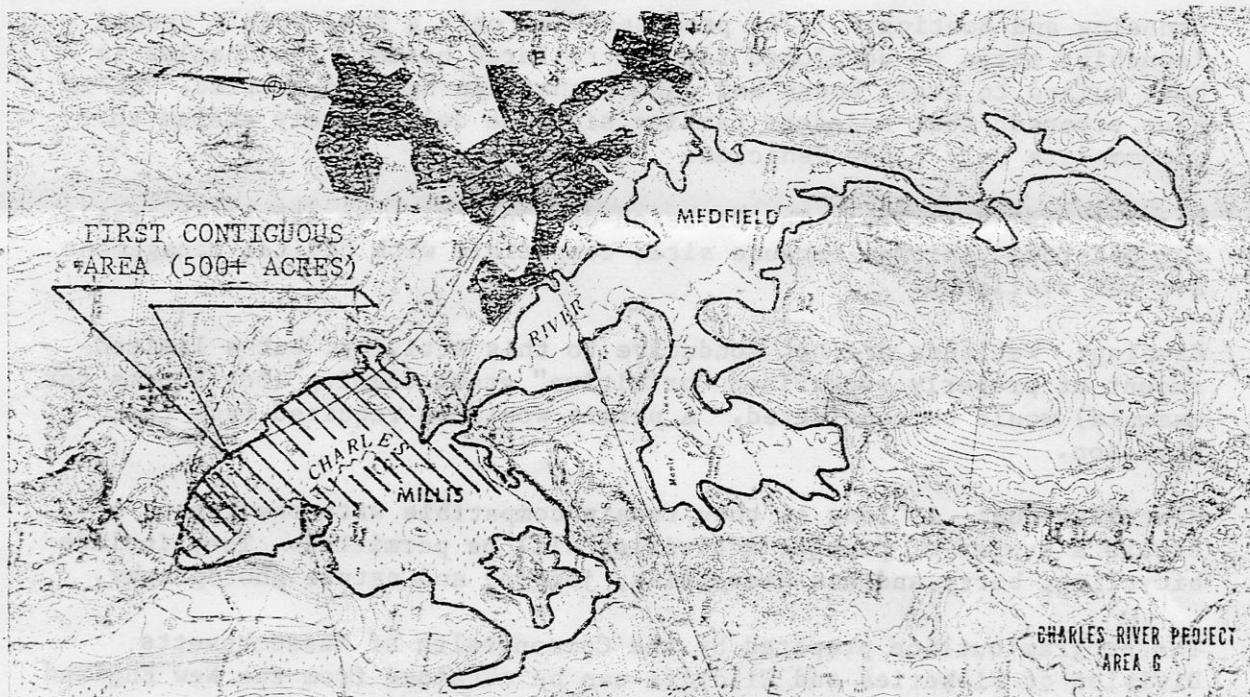


## MANAGEMENT

Our planning effort during the past year has focused on management of property purchased outright and, in a few cases, on land owned by other Government units. The critical wetlands will be left basically as they are now. On restrictive easements, activities such as farming and tree harvesting may be permitted.

Broad policy guidelines for uses of the Federally owned areas have been established by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), which was engaged by the Corps in 1977. MAPC recommended that the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife be asked to manage the wetlands, if substantial contiguous acreage could be acquired in fee. If not, MAPC suggested that the communities manage the critical areas within their boundaries. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has agreed to accept responsibility for large parcels, and it seems likely a mix of State-community management will occur. All management will be subject to Corps approval as it must be compatible with the project's purpose of providing natural storage for floodwaters.

Acquisition is furthest along in Area G, shown on the map below. To date, the Corps has purchased nearly 700 acres there, and is negotiating a management license agreement for the approximately 500 acres which are contiguous. During the four-year acquisition process the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has agreed to short-term acceptance of substantial increments. Eventually, as acquisitions of large blocks are completed, the Division will accept responsibility for a longer period, perhaps 20 years.



Area G on USGS Medfield Quadrangle

SUMMARY OF STATE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Representatives of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Corps will hold briefing meetings within each community to discuss the management plan. Habitat management, regulations, enforcement and personnel will all be the responsibility of the State agency.

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has proposed a variety of public recreation activities for NVS lands and waters, in cooperation with local governments, organized groups and interested citizens. Activities will be controlled to prevent overuse or despoilation. Recreation will be oriented to fish and wildlife, but a number of possible uses are addressed in the proposed plan.

**Fishing:** Division actions here would probably be limited to regulating harvests, stocking trout, restoring runs of migratory shad, and improving streambank access for shore fishermen.

**Hunting, Trapping, Shooting:** The demand for local opportunities far exceeds the supply. One possibility is establishment of a small skeet, trap and target shooting range for sportsmen and the teaching of fire-arms safety. Others are limited hunting or bow hunting only at suitable sites and release of game birds for training of sporting hunting dogs. The Division will explore these possibilities with local officials.

**Hiking and Skiing:** Development of suitable trails would be consistent with flood control and habitat management.

**Canoeing and Boating:** It is proposed that only a few, widely spaced launching sites be developed for nontrailered boats. The Charles is best suited to small boats and canoes that can be hand-carried. It is also proposed that adjacent parking sites be deliberately scaled to accommodate only a few vehicles.

**Recreational Vehicles:** The Division does not plan to establish trails for off-road vehicles because sites compatible with habitat management are not available.

**Camping:** Wetlands are not conducive to this activity, but a limited amount of properly supervised "primitive" group camping (Boy Scouts for example) would be considered. A permit would be required from the Division.

**Miscellaneous:** As long as they remain compatible with the rights of others a number of popular activities will be permitted. They include bicycling, berry and nut harvesting, jogging and nature photography.

The program outline prepared by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife can be obtained from the New England Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.