

An aerial photograph showing a large, calm blue pond in the upper center, surrounded by dense green and yellowing trees. A stream flows from the bottom right towards the pond, featuring several large, flat rocks that create small cascades. The surrounding landscape is lush with vegetation, indicating a well-restored natural environment.

**Restoring an Urban River:
The Acushnet Sawmill
Ecological Restoration Project**

Historic Impacts on the Acushnet River: an Urban Waterway

- **Dams** (1738, Head of Tide)
- **Filling of Wetlands** (1700's – 1900's)
- **Industry** (whaling capital of the world, textiles, fishing, metalwork)
- **Sewage** (pop. 121,000)
- **PCB Contamination**
(1950's-1970's)

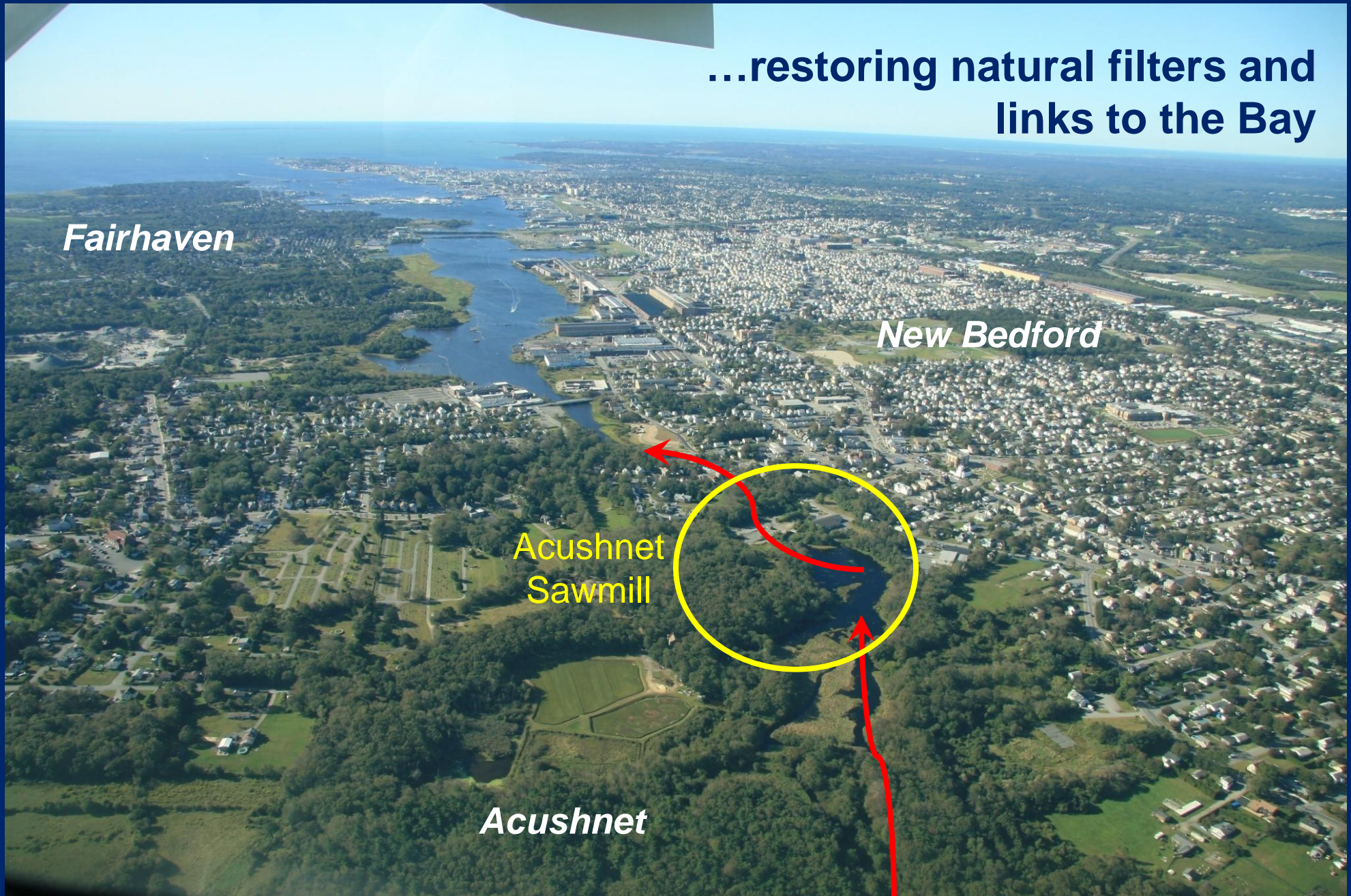


Textile Mills along the Acushnet River, New Bedford

Lower Acushnet River

- 16,750 ac (26 sq. mi.) watershed
- River drains to New Bedford Harbor

...restoring natural filters and links to the Bay



Fairhaven

New Bedford

Acushnet
Sawmill

Acushnet

Former Acushnet Sawmill



 Boundary of CR

- 1700's – 1950's:
Various mills – Sawmills, grist, wool-carding, cotton, paper
- 1950's-2007 – light industrial

**Spring 2007 -
Purchased by Coalition for:**

- Permanent protection
- Restoration
- Public access

**Funding –
PCB Penalty Funds**

- NB Harbor Trustee Council established to rank & disburse funds for projects injured by or in proximity to the injured resources.

Fish Passage Restoration – late 2007 into early 2008

- **Natural rock ramp fishway installed**

Sheppard, J.J., S. Block, H.L Becker, and D. Quinn, 2014. **The Acushnet River Restoration Project: Restoring Diadromous Populations to a Superfund Site in Southeastern Massachusetts.** Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Technical Report Series, TR-56.

2014 Distinguished Project Award by the Int'l Conference on Engineering & Ecohydrology for Fish Passage

- **Partners:**
 - NOAA
 - MA DMF
 - USFWS
 - NBHTC
 - Coalition



**April 2014 – 10,144 fish counted
(27x increase)**

April 2007 – 381 fish counted











But, there was still LOTS of work to do!





Design Team:

- EA Engineering
- Bioengineering Group

Construction Contractor:

- SumCo Eco-Contracting

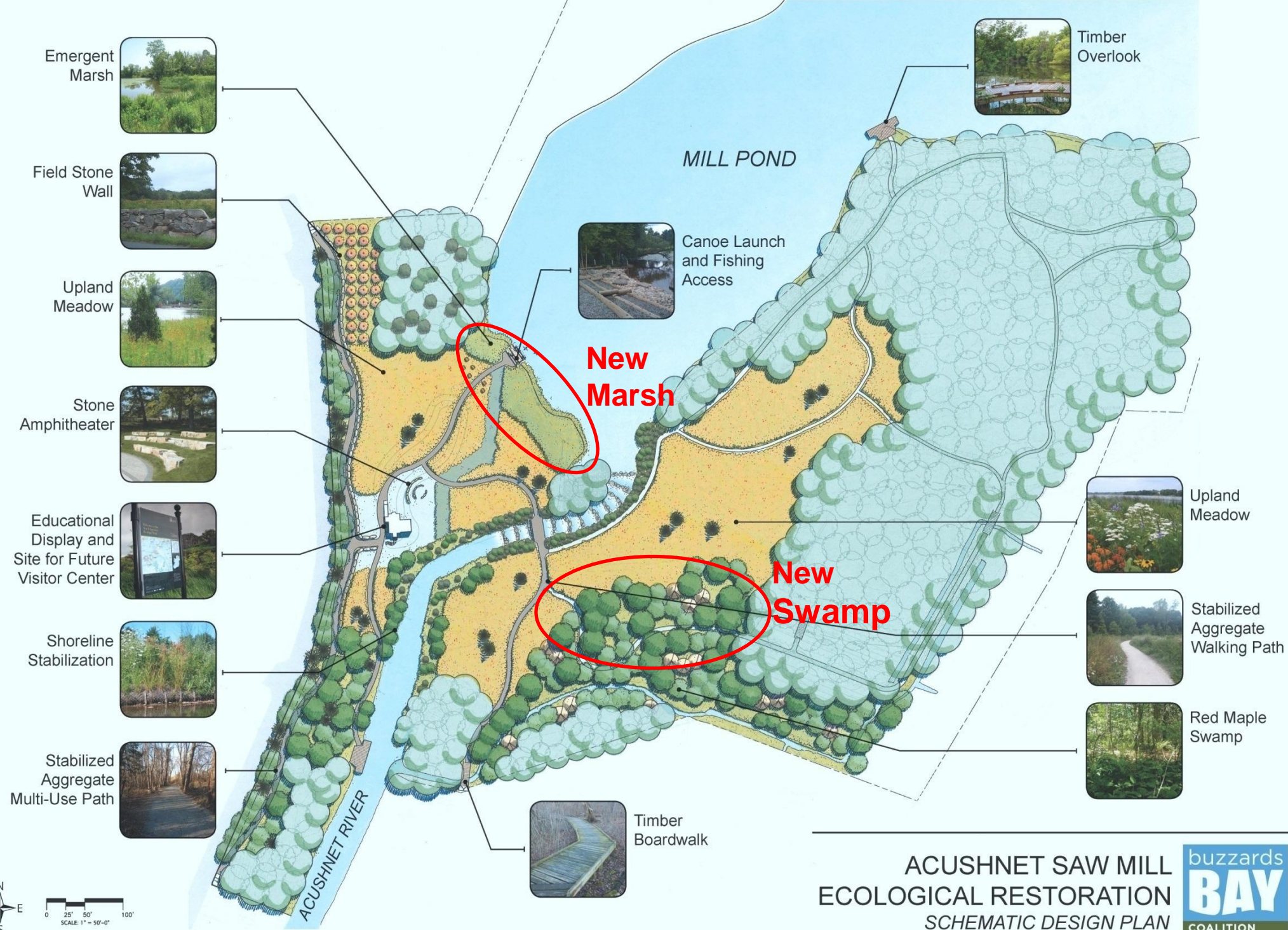
ACUSHNET SAW MILL: EXISTING VIEW FROM MILL ROAD

Permitting (2013)

- MA Historical Commission
- MEPA – Expanded Environmental Notification Form
- WPA - Order of Conditions
- Chap. 401 Water Quality Certificate
- Chap. 91 Waterways License
- US Army Corps 404 Permit



ACUSHNET SAW MILL ENTRY: AFTER



Emergent Marsh



Field Stone Wall



Upland Meadow



Stone Amphitheater



Educational Display and Site for Future Visitor Center



Shoreline Stabilization



Stabilized Aggregate Multi-Use Path



MILL POND

Canoe Launch and Fishing Access



New Marsh

New Swamp

Timber Overlook



Upland Meadow



Stabilized Aggregate Walking Path



Red Maple Swamp



Timber Boardwalk



ACUSHNET RIVER

ACUSHNET SAW MILL
 ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION
 SCHEMATIC DESIGN PLAN



Demolition:

- Industrial buildings
- Pavement
- Concrete

Demo Partner:

City of New Bedford's
Department of Public Infrastructure



Salvage:

- small office building
- granite blocks
- lumber

January 2014 – River Bank Restoration

- Removing concrete walls
- Eliminating 1 of 2 bridges
- Expanding floodplain wetlands

April 2007



June 2016



Restoring Native Meadow and Building a Red Maple Swamp

September 2008



June 2016



Managing Invasive Species and Rebuilding Native Forest



2007



Fall 2015 – Grand Opening

Photo by Paul Curado

2007



2016



06.23.2016 13:36

2014



2016



06.23.2016 13:49



2007



2016

06.23.2016 14:07

Public Access Improvements

Canoe Launch



Re-use of bridge with new railings





Hawes Family Learning Center

A community-service learning project by vocational high school students.

Amphitheater





River Overlook

Entrance Kiosk



Welcome to the Acushnet River

The Acushnet River is a beautiful waterway that flows through the heart of the Acushnet Sawmill site. It is a great place to enjoy the outdoors and learn about the history of the area. The river is home to a variety of fish and wildlife, and it is a popular spot for fishing and canoeing. The Acushnet River is a special place that offers a unique experience for everyone.

Explore Your Acushnet Sawmill



Rules of Use

- 1. Follow all posted signs.
- 2. Stay on designated paths.
- 3. Do not feed wildlife.
- 4. Do not litter.
- 5. Do not use firearms.
- 6. Do not use off-road vehicles.
- 7. Do not use ATVs or motorcycles.
- 8. Do not use motor vehicles.
- 9. Do not use bicycles.
- 10. Do not use golf carts.
- 11. Do not use snowmobiles.
- 12. Do not use personal watercraft.
- 13. Do not use motorboats.
- 14. Do not use outboard motors.
- 15. Do not use inboard motors.
- 16. Do not use jet skis.
- 17. Do not use water skis.
- 18. Do not use wakeboards.
- 19. Do not use tubing.
- 20. Do not use inner tubes.



A Former Sawmill Finds New Life

The park was once home to a large, bustling lumber yard owned by the Acushnet Sawmill Company. From 1880 to 1985, the Acushnet Sawmill was one of the largest forestry companies in the world. As an old sawing mill, you could walk from Fall River to Plymouth without ever leaving the mill site.

After a series of fires in the mid-1980s, the Acushnet Sawmill Company closed its doors. The company had owned the land for over 100 years, and the land was in need of a new purpose. The Buzzards Bay Coalition stepped in to help restore the land to its natural state.

The Bay's Special Places, Protected

The Sawmill is a special place that protects clean water and wildlife habitat, and offers you a beautiful view of the Acushnet River. The Sawmill is a special place that offers a unique experience for everyone.

The Coalition is a nonprofit organization that works to protect the environment in our area and restore special places. Whether you want to hike, paddle, fish, or simply enjoy the outdoors, you can discover the outdoors at our special places. Visit www.baycoalition.org for more information.





Photo by Paul Curado

Project Partners

- New Bedford Harbor Trustee Council
- NOAA Restoration Center
- City of New Bedford
Department of Public Infrastructure
- Town of Acushnet
- Old Colony Regional Voc. Tech. H.S.
- Greater New Bedford Voc. Tech. H.S.
- MA Department of Marine Fisheries
- MA Department of Conservation
& Recreation
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Buzzards Bay Garden Club
- Gurney's Sawmill
- Hawes Family

Thank you!



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To Acushnet Sawmill
(32 Mill Road, Acushnet, MA)
from
Elm Street Parking Garage

- From Elm Street, use the left 2 lanes to turn left onto MA-18. (1.5 mi)
- Turn right onto Coggeshall St. (0.2 mi)
- Turn left onto Belleville Ave. (1.7 mi)
- Turn right onto Tarkiln Hill Rd. (300 ft)
- Turn left onto Mill Rd. (500 ft)
- Turn left into the parking lot across from the visitor center. If full, continue onto Mill Rd. (1-way) and take the next left onto Mazeppa St., the next left onto Belleville Ave., and the next left onto Jireh St. Ample parking is available along Jireh St.

