

THE SPILL

On May 31, 2013, a 10,000 gallon tanker truck filled with red-dyed diesel fuel overturned at the rotary at the intersection of Mystic Valley Parkway and Medford Street. Approximately 9,600 gallons of fuel spilled from the tanker onto the roadway, where it flowed into storm drains and then directly into the Mystic River.

THE CLEAN-UP

The MassDEP Field Assessment and Support Team, along with the Arlington Fire Department and a Licensed Site Professional engineer, were on site within 2 hours of the spill conducting air quality analyses, staging booms to contain the oil, and deploying a skimmer to collect floating oil from the surface of the river. The Arlington Conservation Commission participated in site inspections, evaluated potential impacts to the Mystic River and its banks, and approved the final cleanup.

THE RESTORATION

To compensate for the harm to the Mystic River from the spill, MassDEP settled a claim for Natural Resource Damages. These funds support work that began in 2017 to restore a section of riverbank by removing a broken concrete headwall at the storm water outfall, repairing the drainage pipe, and stabilizing the river bank. The restoration also creates more flood storage capacity and improves water quality. A new footpath, granite bench, and native plantings complete the restoration. Local elementary school students helped in the community planting event to restore the riparian habitat.

TOWN/STATE COOPERATION

To address climate change resilience and the sustainability of the restoration, the Town of Arlington DPW implemented improvements upstream of the outfall to increase capacity to capture and infiltrate storm water expected from extreme weather events. MassDEP and DCR provided valuable input on the restoration plan and the town DPW engineer made significant improvements to the design of the outfall/swale after heavy rains washed out elements of the swale. This project is an example of how different agencies can work together towards common goals to benefit the environment and community.