

## Program Report

To: Members of the Executive Committee  
 Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

From: Mike Gerel, Program Director  
 Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Date: March 4, 2019

Re: Update for March 6, 2019 Executive Committee meeting

Provided below for your review is the Program Report for the March 6<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting. Also provided are the draft minutes from the February 19, 2019 Executive Committee meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments. I can be reached at mike.gerel@nbep.org, 401.633.0552 (office), or 804.332.1197 (mobile). Thank you for your consideration of these materials.

## *Program Management*

### 1. Financials

- Overview of open EPA cooperative agreements.

FY15 (JCC: 318)	FY16 (JCC: 326)	FY17 (JCC: 332)	FY18 (JCC: 338)
10/1/2015 - 9/28/2019	10/1/2016 - 9/30/2020	10/1/2017 - 9/30/2020	10/1/2018 - 9/30/2021
SNEP Projects (\$115,456)	Contractual (\$85,000)	Research Grants (\$48,399)	2019 NBEP SNEP (\$606,000)
Clean Ocean Access \$15,456—review	Storymaps \$45,000	Pete August \$26,159	\$552,000—2-3 projects
East Providence \$100,000—review	Habitat map tool \$20,000	STORMTOOLS \$22,240	\$54,000—2-3 projects
Research grants (\$86,024)	Synthesis paper \$20,000	Communications (\$12,500)	FY18 Work Plan (\$531,774)
Dan Codiga \$29,040		Archive watershed Counts	FY19 Work Plan/Budget
Pete August (split 318, 332) \$8,841		Project communications	Indicator Updates
John King \$33,601		Priority projects (\$7,500)	Science strategy
Clean Ocean Access \$14,542		Photo RFP \$5,000	Blackstone event
2019 SNEP RFP (\$0)		Other TBD \$2,500	Finance Plan
\$152,000 combined with 338			Case Statement
			CCMP revision
			Grant writing
<b>ACTION:</b> EPA has approved our plan to pursue a no cost extension for this agreement. Future expenditure limited to existing contractual obligations.	<b>ACTION:</b> EPA has approved closeout plan. Confirming all money spent. Remaining tasks will continue in 338.	<b>ACTION:</b> Plan to assess personnel charges with March financials and switch to 338 soon.	<b>ACTION:</b> Will be charging travel and supplies here, and then shift to personnel within a few months.

- Budget “balance” as of 12/31/2018 across active cooperative agreements: ~\$1.6M (~\$995k if all ‘19 SNEP funds are obligated).

## 2. Staffing

- *Eivy Departure.* NBEP staff met as a group to discuss Eivy’s work and created prioritized spreadsheet of close-out tasks for her to complete before departure. Key items included spending time with Julia to bring her further up to speed on our GIS software, processes, and infrastructure; organizing and sharing GIS data location with staff, and updating Mike on the status and contacts for her projects. Everything is in place for a smooth transition. Eivy’s last day was March 1<sup>st</sup>. Thanks to Eivy for all her great work at NBEP and we wish her good luck in her new adventure with MassDER!
- *Kim Groff Replacement.* Mike has communicated with Lealdon Langley at MassDEP about the issue. MassDEP staff were meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss assignment of Kim’s tasks. Lealdon and Mike are scheduled to speak further on the phone on March 5<sup>th</sup>.
- *Priority Staff Tasks for Next Month.*

Gerel	Schmidt	Bancroft
Partner meetings	Finish Indicator Updates QAPP	GIS Management*
Draft GIS Position Description	Draft of Synthesis Manuscript	Blackstone Event
FY19 Work Plan & Budget draft	Science strategy/prioritization	Metadata
Review NBEP SNEP pre-proposals	FY19 Work Plan support	Habitat Mapping Tool*
RAE SNEP Pre-proposal	RAE SNEP ideas	Save The Bay Hundred Acre Cove*
April EC/SC meeting prep	Review NBEP SNEP pre-proposals	Website Updates
Finance plan outline development		

\*Interim until new hire

## 3. Organizational Planning.

- *FY19 Work Plan.* With Mike’s arrival in early February, discussion of NBEP’s work planning with the Executive and Steering Committee, which typically began in January is somewhat behind. To catch up so we can submit a complete grant application to EPA by June, Mike proposes to do two things. First, begin an initial conversation about the work plan with the Steering Committee later today. Second, NBEP will convene a special meeting of the Steering Committee in April where staff will present a list of priority tasks and associated budget informed by today’s discussion and then Mike will lead a facilitated process to take Steering Committee input and refine the list. Staff will subsequently create a final package that can be considered for approval by the Executive and Steering Committees in May/June.
- *Request for Match.* Mike sent out a request to Committee members and other partners to request projected match for the coming fiscal year. So far, the Narragansett Bay Estuary Commission has provided \$100,000. Response was requested by March 21<sup>st</sup>. A reminder email will go out next week.
- *MA NPS Management Plan Update.* Mike and Courtney met with MassDEP contractors to discuss their forthcoming update of the state’s NPS plan. The text in the old plan about NBEP is outdated and needs to be replaced. We obligated to provide a few paragraphs for inclusion in the new plan that describe our role in NPS reduction in MA, which would enable NBEP/partner projects to qualify for MA 319 funds in areas where watershed plans are in place.

- *Habitat Restoration Mapping Tool.* Eivy has been working with TNC, MassDER, and other partners via the Habitat Restoration and Protection Workgroup for some time to explore a local tool for the Taunton subwatershed, as well as a basin-wide tool for NBEP, to capture and map completed and planned restoration projects in the watershed. She has joined several meetings, provided technical advice, and created a list of next steps, including a proposal idea. Mike has reviewed and provided comments to NEIWPC on the QAPP for this effort, will read the extensive correspondence on this project, and then report back to the Executive Committee in April on whether/how this effort fits into our work moving forward.

**For discussion:**

- ✓ **Mike would like feedback on the proposal to hold a special Steering Committee meeting in April to accelerate development of the FY19 Work Plan and Budget to ensure that a final grant application can be submitted in June.**

#### 4. **Committee Updates.**

- *Science Advisory Committee.*
  - Mike meetings. Mike has met with John King (chair) and Sue Kiernan (vice chair) and will be visiting with other committee members prior to their next meeting.
  - Next Committee Meeting. NBEP will set a meeting with the SAC in late spring to introduce Mike, firm up the process for selection of a new Chair, and discuss documents, policies, and any other steps necessary to assure NBEP's implementation of the NEBP work plan, CCMP, and individual actions are always done in accordance with best available science.
- *Grants Subcommittee.*
  - NBEP SNEP RFP. The NBEP SNEP RFP was posted on the NBEP and NEIWPC websites on February 19, 2019. Here is a link to the [RFP](#). A total of \$606,000 is available in two categories: restoration projects (\$552,000) and planning and design for future restoration projects (\$54,000). 4-6 projects will likely be funded. Pre-proposals are due April 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Grant Reports. Initial comments on East Providence projects provided by subcommittee. Awaiting any comments on Clean Ocean Access project.
- *Finance Subcommittee.*
  - Finance Plan. Mike met with Jonathan Stone to discuss the development of the finance plan. They agreed that Mike would prepare the first draft and provide to Jonathan for review. They both felt with the new capacity that Mike brings that it would be appropriate to bring a solid draft document to the Executive Committee (perhaps in May), rather than forming and utilizing a Finance Subcommittee as previously discussed. Further, this approach would preclude the need to use \$15,000 set aside for this task to hire a consultant and free up this money for other efforts.
- *CCMP Revision Subcommittee.*
  - CCMP Revision Kick-off. Mike would like to form the CCMP Revision Subcommittee this spring to first develop a process for creating this document. The plan would be for the Subcommittee to begin meeting in June when the next EPA grant application has been submitted. In 2018 there was

discussion of this subcommittee meeting alternative months with the Executive Committee, which makes sense for June forward.

**For discussion:**

- ✓ **Mike and Jonathan would like feedback from the Executive Committee if they feel it is appropriate to bring a strong draft finance plan back to this Committee for discussion and review, rather than using the Finance Subcommittee at this time.**
- ✓ **Mike would like input on the timing of forming the CCMP subcommittee, beginning work on the revision in June, and whether the alternative month Executive Committee/CCMP Subcommittee approach is supported.**

## **5. Grant Writing.**

- *RAE SNEP RFP.* The Restore America's Estuaries SNEP RFP is for \$2 million (maximum request is \$500k) and was released on February 25<sup>th</sup>. Here is a link to the [RFP](#). Potential projects categories are quite broad, including watershed and ecosystem restoration, nutrients, partnerships, regional models, and building upon existing plans and programs. Pre-proposals are due April 5<sup>th</sup>. Some early project ideas are provided below.
- *EPA Supplemental Funding.* Caitlyn shared a supplemental funding opportunity from EPA for projects that address community resilience or nutrient reduction. Maximum funding amount is \$25,000. Project ideas are due March 18<sup>th</sup>. Some early project ideas are provided below.
- *Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund.* This is a partnership granting program between the Hewlett Foundation and the Doris Duke Foundation that Mike has been expecting to be released. This fund will focus specifically on building capacity for landscape conservation partnerships by investing in the backbone coordination of the collaborative process and in supporting key stepping stone activities necessary to achieve broad-based partnership support and conservation on the ground. The RFP for this program is expected on March 15<sup>th</sup>. At first blush this seems like an excellent funding source for NBEP's role in the watershed.
- *Potential Projects.* Staff met earlier this week to discuss potential projects for the RAE and EPA supplement funding opportunities.
  - One idea for the RAE SNEP funding would enable NBEP staff and outside consultants to build a tool to help define the data/restoration needs and prioritize those needs for action across the landscape. This tool would in part incorporate several projects that NBEP has already been discussing (e.g., Habitat Restoration Mapping tool, Science Strategy/Prioritization, and StewMap) and build them into a new comprehensive model. It's utility considering available data, simplicity of use, and availability via our website for partner use would be paramount. Further, first pursuing this as a pilot in a bi-state subwatershed may be the best route. More discussion of this idea is needed.
  - For the other EPA funds, we talked about two different convenings/technical transfer events:
    - NBEP would host municipalities in RI and MA to lay out the required steps to getting NPS BMPs installed in their community that address water quality, safety, aesthetic, and other priorities issues—from watershed plans, to project feasibility and design, to funding opportunities, to monitoring. Identification of a clear pathway and realistic means to follow it

(via adequate guidance and sufficient funding) is a need that has been identified repeatedly by EPA and local partners in both states.

- Another idea was for NBEP to bring together the RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative with colleagues in MA to discuss coordinated bi-state monitoring efforts. Greater coordination across state lines can lead to sharing of best practices, prioritization of monitoring types/location, and overall, the collection of more useful information for local and regional decision-makers.

**For discussion:**

- ✓ **Any feedback or new project ideas from members of the Committee? Are there other funding opportunities you are aware of that may work for NBEP or our partners?**

---

## Convening

---

- *Blackstone Workshop.* The Blackstone Workshop will take place April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center in Worcester. Invite letters signed by Mike went out to Federal, state, and municipal elected officials inviting them to speak and/or attend the event. By next week, Julia plans to send out the revised agenda to partners for comment and to follow-up with invited speakers. NEIWPC staff in Lowell will be pursuing sponsorships to cover food/drinks for the workshop.

---

## Data Management

---

- *New GIS Software and Storage.* ArcPro software is installed and functional. We are waiting to launch ArcEnterprise until we choose an option for long-term data storage. Further conversations with NEIWPC IT will take place this week.
- *New Photography.* Mike has a call into colleagues at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to get the inside scoop on how they were selected for the International League of Conservation Photographers' Rapid Assessment Visual Expedition (RAVE) program.

---

## Technical Transfer

---

Below is a summary of outreach and technical transfer efforts since the February 19<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting and those planned prior to the next meeting.

- February 20      MassDER NPS Plan development meet (Gerel, Schmidt)
- February 22      Resilient Taunton Watershed Network (Gerel, Monroy)
- February 25      EPA SNEP Stormwater technical assistance brainstorm (Gerel)
- February 26      Meeting with New England NEPs in Boston (Gerel)
- February 27      Leadership RI meeting (Schmidt)
- February 28      EPA-ORD GIS partnering (Bancroft, Monroy, Schmidt)
- March 12-14      EPA-NEP Training Workshop in DC (Gerel)
- March 28-29      NEIWPCC's All Staff meeting (Bancroft, Gerel, Schmidt)

---

## Implementation

---

- *Save The Bay/NBEP Hundred Acre Cove Project.* Eivy finalized data needs tracking sheet, sent all information to Save The Bay, and updated Julia on the project. Julia will be assuming Eivy's role on this project.
- *RICRMC Habitat Restoration Trust Fund.* Eivy reviewed eight full proposals and participated at the meeting to select proposals. Mike will be assuming Eivy's role on this committee.

---

## Upcoming Meetings

---

- Our next scheduled meeting will take place on April 3<sup>rd</sup> (9:30am – 11:30am) at a location to be determined.
- Mike will be working to set locations for Executive Committee meetings for the remainder of the year in March.