

## Program Report

To: Members of the Executive Committee  
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

From: Mike Gerel, Program Director  
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Date: March 27, 2019

Re: Update for April 3, 2019 Executive Committee meeting

Provided below for your review is the Program Report for the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Executive Committee meeting. Also provided are the draft minutes from the March 6, 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. Remaining budgets under each agreement will be available in mid-April when NEIWPCP publishes 1<sup>st</sup> quarter financials.

| 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 (\$100,000)  | Contractual (\$85,000)   | Research Grants (\$48,399)  | 2019 NBEP SNEP (\$606,000)   |
| East Providence \$100,000— in review   | Storymaps \$45,000   | Pete August \$26,159  | \$552,000—2-3 projects   |
| Research grants (\$71,482)   | Habitat map tool \$20,000  | STORMTOOLS \$22,240   | \$54,000—2-3 projects  |
| Dan Codiga \$29,040  | Synthesis paper \$20,000   | Communications (\$12,500)   | FY18 Work Plan (TBD)*  |
| Pete August (split 318, 332) \$8,841   |  | Archive watershed Counts  | FY19 Work Plan/Budget  |
| John King \$33,601   |  | Project communications  | Indicator/QAPP Updates   |
| 2019 SNEP RFP (\$0)  |  | Priority projects (\$7,500)   | Science strategy   |
| \$152,000 combined with 338  |  | Photo RFP \$5,000   | Blackstone event   |
|  |  | Other TBD \$2,500   | Finance Plan   |
|  |  |   | Case Statement   |
|  |  |   | CCMP revision kick-off   |
|  |  |   | Grant writing  |
| <b>ACTION:</b> EPA has approved our no cost extension. 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. |

\*When 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter financials are available budget balances will be available.

## 2. Staffing

- *GIS/Watershed Specialist Position.* The job description and announcement to fill Eivy’s former position is complete. The primary changes emphasize “advanced” GIS skills, and the need for project management experience, as with our current staffing levels this position must operate with considerable autonomy. The announcement is expected to be posted by NEIWPC by the first week in April. We will share the announcement with Steering Committee members when available.
- *MassDEP Representative on Steering Committee.* MassDEP has indicated that Barbara Kickham, who has been the Section Chief for TMDLs/Watershed Planning Program at MassDEP, will be their new representative on the Steering Committee. It is unclear when she will formally join.
- *Priority Staff Tasks for Next Month.*

| Gerel   | Schmidt                               | Bancroft                     |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Partner meetings  | Synthesis Manuscript                  | Blackstone Workshop          |
| NBEP Committee Coordination   | Indicator Updates QAPP                | GIS Management               |
| Develop and submit RAE SNEP and Landscape Catalyst Fund Pre-proposals | Review NBEP SNEP pre-proposals        | Habitat Mapping Tool Support |
| Review NBEP/RAE SNEP pre-proposals                                    | Reconvene SAC                         | Metadata                     |
| QAPP Review   | Science strategy/prioritization/needs | Website Updates              |
| Work Plan and CCMP development process                                |                                       |                              |

## 3. Organizational Planning

- *FY19 Work Plan.* The Steering Committee completed a productive initial work planning discussion at their March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mike presented a 1-page summary of this year’s work plan (with one year and recurrent annual tasks distinguished) to illustrate capacity for new tasks and led a brainstorming session to collect initial ideas for FY19. This discussion resulted in eight (8) ideas to consider. Both the Executive and Steering Committees gave the go ahead for NBEP to hold two special Steering Committee meetings in April—one each in RI and MA—where Mike will lead a facilitated discussion to obtain additional input and refine the list of tasks. An agenda and meeting support materials will be distributed prior to each gathering. Staff will use this information create a FY19 Work Plan and budget that can be considered by the Executive and Steering Committees in May/June.
- *Request for Match.* So far, the Narragansett Bay Commission obligated \$100,000 and CRMC will provide \$175,000. A reminder email to others went out last week. Mike will reach out to RIDEM and MassDEP as they have been the other two major providers of match in recent years.
- *Habitat Restoration Mapping Tool.* NBEP staff has further explored whether we should continue to participate in the development and consider hosting of a Habitat Restoration Mapping Tool that would capture and map completed restoration projects. This effort was included in our FY16 work plan. Two concerns have surfaced for NBEP after Eivy’s handing off the project: (1) TNC-MA is leading data collection and is focused only on the Taunton, and (2) NBEP may not have the ability to “collect” additional data to expand the tool to the entire watershed and complete periodic updates so the tool remains useful beyond year 1. This is especially vital if the map is to reside on our website. Mike explored with EPA staff the viability of using NBEP’s annual request for NEPORT reporting information from watershed partners to update the tool. So far, EPA has not expressed any concern with this approach. Staff met with TNC-MA to get an up-to-date project status, and

learned they have begun to receive data from their solicitation, that this data will need significant vetting and clean-up before it can be entered into GIS, and that they are going to talk to TNC-RI who has expressed interest in the tool for RI. Next steps are for Mike to revise the draft QAPP per this conversation, Julia to stay engaged with TNC-MA as they continue to collect data, and for TNC-MA to talk with their colleagues in RI. As of now, it looks like this is good project for NBEP to continue to support. More to come in the next update.

**For discussion:**

- ✓ Any advice from the Committee on the Steering Committee work planning meetings.
- ✓ Any feedback on our current path for the Habitat Restoration Tool?

#### 4. Committee Updates

- *Science Advisory Committee.*
  - Next Committee Meeting. The SAC meeting will take place on May 9<sup>th</sup> at RIDEM in Room 280.
- *Grants Subcommittee.*
  - Next Subcommittee Meeting. Meetings have been scheduled to review SNEP pre- and full proposals. The meetings will take place at the NBEP office in Providence, on April 11<sup>th</sup> for pre-proposals and May 21<sup>st</sup> for full proposals. Mike will be sharing the pre-proposals and a copy of the agenda with Subcommittee members prior to each meeting.
  - Grant Reports. Comments have now been received on all submitted grant reports for FY15 projects. The Jamestown and Clean Ocean Access projects are now closed.
- *Finance Subcommittee.*
  - Finance Plan. Mike received a copy of a draft Finance Plan dating to 2007, which will be considered in the drafting of a new Finance Plan later this spring.
- *CCMP Revision Subcommittee.*
  - CCMP Revision. Both the Executive and Steering Committees approved Mike's proposal to form a CCMP Subcommittee that will begin meeting this summer, alternating months with Executive Committee meetings. A compilation of highly-regarded CCMPs, engagement with potential consultants, and mapping out of a robust plan development process that includes internal and external input is underway. Volunteers for this subcommittee will be solicited later this spring.

#### 5. Grant Writing

- *RAE SNEP RFP.*
  - NBEP is considering submittal of a proposal by the April 5<sup>th</sup> deadline that refines an idea shared with the Executive Committee in the last report. Instead of creating a needs assessment tool for use basin-wide, NBEP instead is exploring the idea of building off our upcoming Blackstone Workshop by bringing together stakeholders from across the subwatershed via series of facilitated meetings to complete a focused, bottom-up needs assessment just for the Blackstone. Such a process would ultimately create a document that includes a list of priority needs and corresponding actions to address them. This document would provide immediately actionable information for local NGOs, government officials, and funders that informs their selection of capacity-building, data development, on-the-ground restoration, and other projects. This approach could serve as a template for our CCMP development and other community-

- driven, collaborative needs assessments across the larger Narragansett Bay watershed. So far, Blackstone partners are very supportive and excited about the idea. NBEP will share a 1-pager with the Executive Committee within the week should we decide to pursue submission of a pre-proposal.
- NBEP was approached to continue a partnership with URI, Save The Bay, Mass Audubon (and others) via a SNEP proposal to investigate the utility of installing floating wetlands in retention basins and other ponds to reduce nonpoint source pollution and improve aesthetics. Courtney has obtained feedback from several SAC members and other partners so far.
  - *EPA Supplemental Funding.* NBEP submitted a \$25,000 funding request to EPA on March 18<sup>th</sup> to support hiring of a consultant and staff time to complete an assessment of opportunities to install living shorelines in the Providence-Seekonk River systems that improve coastal resilience and safety. This project would provide actionable information by informing the best combination of practice type and location for addressing hardened and/or eroding shorelines in this area. There is no specific timetable for award.
  - *Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund.* Mike plans to submit a pre-proposal for this grant opportunity provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Hewlett Foundation by the April 25<sup>th</sup> deadline. We expect our request to be \$25,000 over two years to support internal capacity-building activities and otherwise strengthen the program, including funding of activities that cannot be supported by CWA 320 dollars. Here is a link to the [RFP](#). Mike will provide a 1-pager for Committee consideration in April.

**For discussion:**

- ✓ **Any feedback or project ideas from the Committee? NOTE that time has been set aside in the April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting to discuss these project ideas and our current process for seeking Committee proposal input and approval**

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## Convening

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*Blackstone Workshop.* The Blackstone Workshop will take place on Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center in Worcester. We have added a Member of the Town Council as an opening speaker, and the panels have now been filled out with excellent local leaders. NEIWPC is covering snacks and drinks for the workshop. Julia has posted the agenda and registration page and has shared the link far and wide. One day after posting the link we have 15 people signed-up, so we are confident we will reach the 80-person capacity quickly. Please share this link with your networks: <http://nbep.org/blackstone-watershed-workshop/>

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## Data Management

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Several activities are ongoing to update our GIS infrastructure and update new watershed photographs, but there are no specific updates currently.

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## Technical Transfer

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Below is a summary of outreach and technical transfer efforts since the March 6th Executive Committee meeting and those planned prior to the next meeting.

- February 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting with EPA-ORD regarding GIS partnering (Bancroft, Monroy, Schmidt)
- March 8<sup>th</sup> Sue Kiernan, RIDEM (Gerel)
- March 8<sup>th</sup> Caitlin Chaffee, CRMC (Gerel)
- March 12-14<sup>th</sup> EPA-NEP Training Workshop in DC (Gerel)
- March 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting about student visit with John Stachelhaus, Bryant University (Bancroft, Gerel)
- March 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting with TNC-MA about Habitat Restoration Tool (Bancroft, Gerel, Schmidt)
- March 20<sup>th</sup> Nicole Rohr, Coastal Institute (Gerel)
- March 21<sup>st</sup> Mass Audubon in Worcester (Gerel)
- March 25<sup>th</sup> RI EC4 meeting (Gerel, Schmidt)
- March 27<sup>th</sup> 2019 RI Clean Water Legislative Summit (Gerel)
- March 27<sup>th</sup> RI Sea Grant Lecture: How Oysters Alter Coastal Waters (Bancroft)
- March 28-29<sup>th</sup> NEIWPC's All Staff meeting (Bancroft, Gerel, Schmidt)
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> Bob Stankelis, Narragansett NERR
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> ANEP Board of Directors meeting (Gerel)

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## Implementation

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- *STORMTOOLS*. Following Eivy's departure, Mike has followed up with URI, CRMC, and MA CZM about the task in our FY17 work plan to extend the STORMTOOLS flood inundation tool to Mount Hope Bay and up to the salt line near the City of Taunton. This project has been on hold pending a commitment from URI to participate, which we now have, and discussions with MA CZM to get their buy-in to extend this tool into MA waters—especially since MA has their own tool that may provide different results, which would be confusing to managers, towns, and property owners. Mike will update the Committee in the future as this effort develops.
- *Save The Bay/NBEP Hundred Acre Cove Project*. Julia is setting up a meeting with STB staff to confirm NBEP remaining obligations for this project.

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## Upcoming Meetings

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- Our next scheduled meeting will take place on May 1st (9:30am – 11:30am) at RIDEM room 340C.
- Mike will be scheduling/rescheduling meeting by April to accommodate decisions made at the March Executive and Steering Committee meetings.