

## Program Report

To: Members of the Executive Committee  
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

From: Mike Gerel, Program Director  
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Date: June 3, 2019

Re: Update for June 6, 2019 Executive Committee meeting

Provided below for your review is the Program Report for the June 6<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee (Committee) meeting. Attached are the draft notes from the May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Executive Committee meeting. Please give your attention to any action items assigned to you during the May meeting that have not been completed.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments. I can be reached at [mike.gerel@nbep.org](mailto:mike.gerel@nbep.org), 401.633.0552 (office), or 804.332.1197 (mobile).

Thank you for your consideration of these materials.

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## *Report Highlights*

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- ✓ FY18 Work Plan Amendment [Update]
- ✓ Ideas for new Committee Chair [Discussion]
- ✓ GIS/Watershed Specialist hire [Update]
- ✓ Ideas for next Steering Committee and CCMP meetings [Discussion]
- ✓ NBEP SNEP funding [Update]
- ✓ Synthesis manuscript, Indicator QAPP, GIS Data storage [Update]
- ✓ GIS storage solution [Update]
- ✓ Good progress on four previously stalled implementation projects [Update]
- ✓ FY19 Work Plan discussion—6 new tasks, 3 ongoing tasks to be removed [Discussion]

## Program Management

### 1. Financials

FY15 (JCC: 318)	FY16 (JCC: 326)
10/1/2015 - 9/30/2020	10/1/2016 - 9/30/2020
Personnel Balance as of 2Q	Personnel Balance as of 2Q
\$0	\$0
SNEP Projects (\$5,071)	Contracts
E. Providence \$5,071—extended until 6/30/19	\$0
Research grants (\$71,482)	
Clean Ocean Access \$14,542—closes 6/14/19	
Dan Codiga \$29,040—closes 8/31/19	
Pete August (split 318, 332) \$8,841—closes 6/30/19	
John King \$33,601—extended until 8/30/19	
2019 SNEP RFP (\$152,000)—June 30 <sup>th</sup>	
\$152,000 for subawards remains	
<b>STATUS:</b> No cost extension until 9/30/20 to satisfy remaining contractual obligations for research grants.	<b>STATUS:</b> Awaiting EPA approval of agreement closure request.
FY17 (JCC: 332)	FY18 (JCC: 338)
10/1/2017 - 9/30/2020	10/1/2018 - 9/30/2021
Personnel Balance as of May 17 <sup>th</sup>	Personnel Balance as of 2Q
\$22,953	\$338,936
Research Grants (\$48,399)	2019 NBEP SNEP (\$606,000)—includes \$152,000 from FY15
Pete August \$26,159	\$126,260—Planning projects
STORMTOOLS \$22,240+	~\$250,000—Blackstone Needs Assessment*
	~230,000—Project support TBD
Communications (\$12,500)	FY18 Work Plan (\$5,000)
Archive Watershed Counts \$253	Story Maps**
Project communications Support TBD \$12,247	Habitat Tool 1.0 **
Priority projects (\$7,500)	Synthesis Manuscript \$5,000
New photos \$5,000	Case Statement
Other priority \$2,500	Finance Plan
	CCMP Revision Kick-off
	Little Narragansett Bay and Ponds Data Gathering
	Priority Science Strategy
	Development of Habitat Tool 2.0**
	Blackstone Workshop
<b>STATUS:</b> Beginning early summer we expect to only charge contractual and subaward expenses here. A future amendment may reassign some contractual dollars to other tasks under this JCC.	<b>STATUS:</b> We charge travel and supplies here now, and then will shift all costs to this agreement early summer. An amendment is being pursued to clarify new use of SNEP funds (*) and remove tasks (**) that are no longer viable.

## 1. Staffing

- *New Committee Vice Chairs Needed.* Judith Swift announced at the last Committee meeting that she intends to step down as Chair at the end of calendar year 2019. The Committee felt it would be wise to appoint a Vice-Chair to take Nick Wildman’s position starting this summer, who would then assume the Chair role in 2020. Further, a new Vice-Chair will be required at the outset of 2020. Candidates will be discussed today and at the forthcoming Steering Committee meeting.
- *GIS/Watershed Specialist Position.* Two finalists received second interviews in Providence on May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 3<sup>rd</sup>. References will be checked for the top candidate and an offer made within the next week or so. We are very excited about the potential hire. The Committee will be notified when a formal hire is made.
- *Priority Staff Tasks for Next Month.*

Gerel	Schmidt	Bancroft
NBEP Committee coordination	Synthesis manuscript figures and updates per subcommittee comments	GIS data management
FY19 Work Plan and Budget complete and submitted to EPA	NBEP SNEP—Contact awardees to discuss project comments/suggestions	NBEP Committee support
FY19 Work Plan Summary	Indicator QAPP edits	STB Hundred Acre Cove GIS
Finalize GIS/Watershed Specialist hire	Complete SAC meeting action items	EPA ORD story map pilot
Partner meetings	Metadata	Metadata

## 2. Organizational Planning

- *FY19 Work Plan.* Mike revised the work plan based on internal NBEP and NEIWPC discussions. No written comments were received from this Committee since the last meeting. He also prepared a spreadsheet version of the work plan. Pending discussions between EPA and NEIWPC will determine some final content and format decisions for the plan and budget. Based on feedback at the last Committee meeting, Mike plans to develop a 2-pp work plan summary that will cover the application package and will be suitable for the Steering Committee and other audiences that provides a snapshot of NBEP and its activities for the next year. The final version of the work plan, budget, and summary will be provided to the Steering Committee for review and approval at their June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- *FY18 Work Plan Amendment.* As noted in the table on page 2 of this document, further work will not be pursued on story maps (beyond the current pilot), the habitat restoration mapping tool, and envisioned restoration strategy mapping tool. An amendment of JCC: 338 has been drafted to formally pull these three tasks, reassign contractual dollars for these tasks, and shift SNEP funding for the Blackstone Needs Assessment to NBEP. The amendment will be submitted to EPA soon.
- *Program Director partner engagement.* Since the last Committee meeting, he met with John O’Brien, William Helt, Heather Kinney, and Kevin Ruddock, TNC RI; Karen Bradbury, Senator Whitehouse local staffer; Chuck LaBash and Chris Damon, URI; Sue Sullivan with NEIWPC, and Jonathan Stone and Mike Jarbeau, Save The Bay. Mike expects to finish one-one-one meetings with all Steering Committee members by August.

## For discussion:

- ✓ **Any suggestions for candidates for the Chair/Vice-Chair positions?**
- ✓ **SAVE FOR NEXT AGENDA ITEM: Any final feedback on the draft FY19 Work Plan and Budget? Any suggestions on content and format for the work plan summary?**

### 3. Committee Updates

- *Science Advisory Committee.*
  - Notes from the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting have been completed and pursuit of action items is ongoing.
- *Grants Subcommittee.*
  - SNEP Full Proposals Receipt. All five full proposals submitted to NBEP were selected for funding by the subcommittee on May 21<sup>st</sup>. A total of \$126,260 will be awarded. The Award letters went out by May 29<sup>th</sup> and individual calls will be held the first week in June to provide comments and suggestions from the subcommittee. NEIWPC will pursue contracts with each awardee this month. The selected projects are:
    1. Broad Meadow Brook Restoration, MassAudubon.
    2. Watershed Restoration Planning for Anadromous Fish Passage at Pontiac Dam, Pawtuxet River Authority.
    3. Mill Brook Bogs Restoration Project, MADER.
    4. Beaver River Watershed Restoration Planning Assessment, Town of Richmond, RI.
    5. Planning and Design for a Stormwater Management Master Plan at Mt. Hope High School, Town of Bristol, RI.
- *Steering Committee and CCMP Subcommittee*
  - The next SC meeting is June 12<sup>th</sup> and the first CCMP Subcommittee is July 16<sup>th</sup>. Mike would like to obtain some feedback on the proper participants, content, approach, etc. for these meetings before he drafts the agendas.

## For discussion:

- ✓ **Any specific ideas for the upcoming SC and CCMP kick-off meetings?**

### 4. Grant Writing

- *NBEP SNEP Remaining Funds*

NBEP and NEIWPC met with EPA NEP and SNEP staff to clarify the appropriate use of the approximately \$220,000 that the program will have on hand after funding the five external planning projects noted above and the internal Blackstone River Needs Assessment project. All agreed that a priority will be placed on funding next steps for the planning projects of needs

identified in the Blackstone. Mike has also put the word out to NGOs that funding for small projects that are shovel-ready may be available. EPA was not supportive of funding additional Bay monitoring equipment or deployment with these funds. NBEP will continue to thoughtfully consider means to deploy this money so it provides the greatest lift for the watershed by the June 2021 closing date.

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## Data Synthesis and Management

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- *Synthesis Manuscript.* Eight sets of comments were received on the manuscript from the Synthesis Subcommittee. Comments have been generally positive, with most suggestions debating the merit/means to include the beaches discussion, requesting more details on the collaborative process used to develop the report to offer lessons learned, and offering suggests for condensing the document. Courtney will respond to comments and then send the manuscript to the SAC and this Committee for further vetting by July 1. The plan is to submit the manuscript to a journal by the end of the fiscal year.
- *Indicator Update QAPP.* NBEP received modest comments from NEIWPC and EPA on this document. Courtney addressed all comments and returned to NEIWPC for final review and then routing for signatures.
- *GIS Infrastructure Upgrade.* NBEP has finalized its initial plan for upgrading its GIS storage approach. NEIWPC's IT consultant All Covered will be assisting NBEP in transferring all GIS files currently on Eivy's old laptop to an integrated, Microsoft OneDrive Cloud back up folder. The migration of files is set to take place the first week of June. With that, NBEP will have upgraded its software (ArcPro, and ArcGis online) and storage capability in the last three months. The new hire will work with Julia and NEIWPC to begin to organize the existing data and decide whether an onsite PC (as opposed to working from the cloud) will be necessary to accommodate planned GIS projects.

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## Outreach

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Below is a summary of NBEP's outreach efforts since the May 20<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting.

May 20 <sup>th</sup>	EC4 meeting (Schmidt)
May 21 <sup>st</sup>	NBEP Grants Subcommittee for Full Proposals review (Gerel, Schmidt, Bancroft)
May 21 <sup>st</sup>	Habitat Restoration Project conference call (Bancroft)
May 21 <sup>st</sup>	Meeting with Senator Whitehouse's RI Staff (Gerel)
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Meeting with TNC RI (Gerel)
May 24 <sup>th</sup>	Climate Adaptation and Resilience Information Sharing Group meeting (Gerel, Schmidt)
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	STORMTOOLS expansion meeting with URI (Gerel)
May 30 <sup>th</sup>	SNEP Funds/FY19 Work Plan/FY18 Amendment meeting with EPA Region 1 (Gerel)
May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Boat Tour of Upper Bay with Jonathan Stone and Mike Jarbeau, Save The Bay (Gerel)

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## Implementation Support

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We have made excellent progress advancing some previously stalled projects:

- *STORMTOOLS in Mt Hope Bay and the Taunton River.* Mike met with URI's Graduate School of Oceanography and Environmental Data Center to walk through the necessary steps and timeline to expand STORMTOOLS into Mt Hope Bay and Massachusetts water up to the salt line near Taunton. All are excited that this effort will extend STORMTOOLS cover to the entire Bay. Mike expects a formal proposal for this work in July, with work to be completed by the end of the calendar year. The FY17 Work Plan included \$22,240 for this task; it is likely additional budget will be needed to cover creation and approval of a QAPP.
- *Save The Bay/NBEP Hundred Acre Cove Project.* Julia completed an assessment of the extensive list of 50 data sources provided by NBEP to STB for this project last year. STB was left unsure which data sources were essential or even available. Julia reviewed all the data sources and categorized them as 'available,' 'useful,' or 'both.' At this stage, it appears about 20 data sources were judged to be available and useful, and thus, will be used for the final maps. A meeting will be scheduled to review the final data layer list with the STB team, agree on a final dataset, and then assign next steps, including downloading of any missing layers to the Google Drive and defining exactly what maps NBEP will generate for the project.
- *Habitat Restoration Mapping Tool.* Julia met with TNC MA, RISD, and SRPEDD on May 21<sup>st</sup> to discuss next steps on this project. It was unanimously decided that NBEP will not have any further role in the project. While NBEP has expended considerable time on this effort to date, the bottom line is NBEP is simply not allowed to collect the new data necessary for this tool to remain useful in the future. There is enough technical support from the listed partners to continue the project should they chose to do so.
- *EPA ORD Story Maps Pilot.* NBEP staff met last week to re-envision the narrative for this pilot story map that is intended to show the implications of land use and related population dynamics on the watershed. They defined the audience, goals, content (draft text and potential pictures), and framework for the map. New materials provide a clearer purpose, is more in line with the data and key findings in the *State of the Narragansett Bay and Its Watershed* report and is specifically designed to stimulate sharing of information and new conversations about this important issue. Revised materials were sent to EPA ORD and they have promised to have the map complete by August 2019.

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## Upcoming Meetings

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- Our next scheduled meeting will take place on August 8th (10:00am – 12:00pm) at RI DEM Room 340C, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI.
- NBEP plans to develop and share a 2020 meeting schedule by the end of June, which includes meeting dates, time, cities, and potential locations. Keep your eye out for an email/poll testing standard weeks of the month and days of the week for 2020.