

Program Report

To: Members of the Executive Committee
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

From: Mike Gerel, Program Director
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Date: August 4, 2019

Re: Update for August 8, 2019 Executive Committee meeting

Provided below for your review is the Program Report for the August 8th Executive Committee meeting. I am pleased that after six months as Director, NBEP has made the transition from triage and resolution of past issues into a period of forward-looking action. Except my own required organizational-focused duties, remaining staff have now largely been freed up to focus on the individual projects envisioned in their job description and articulated in their personal work plans. With the CCMP Update process underway and a robust FY19 Work Plan there is much on our plate, but I am confident we are up to the task.

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.

I. Report Highlights

1. NBEP financial status as of 3rd Quarter [Update]
2. **Committee leadership and expansion [Discussion]**
3. NBEP staff priorities [Update]
4. FY19 Cooperative Agreement Submittal [Update]
5. **Mike's proposed plans for next Steering Committee Meeting [Discussion]**
6. **CCMP Subcommittee Kick [Update and Discussion]**
7. Grant writing [Update]
8. Technical Report Synthesis Manuscript [Update]
9. GIS shop status [Update]
10. Funding and implementing external projects [Update]

II. Managing the Program

1. Financials

- NBEP funding status as of the 3rd quarter is included in the table below. Note that the contractual balances in yellow may be changed before the August 8th meeting.

- For NBEP’s FY19 Cooperative Agreement proposal pending before EPA, we asked for 9 months of funding for personal since we expect to have roughly 3 months of personal funds remaining at the close of FY18. At the close of FY19 we expect all FY18-FY19 personal funds to be spent out.

FY15 (JCC: 318) 10/1/2015 - 9/30/2020	FY18 (JCC: 338) 10/1/2018 - 9/30/2021
Personnel Balance	Personnel Balance
\$0	\$336,860
Subawards/Contracts Balances	Subawards/Contracts Balances
FY15 SNEP Projects (\$5,071)	NBEP SNEP (\$606,000)—includes \$152,000 from FY15
E. Providence \$5,071	\$131,260—Planning Projects Awarded
FY15 NBEP Research Projects (\$68,883)	\$250,000—NBEP staff for Blackstone Assessment*
Clean Ocean Access \$14,542	\$224,740—Project Support TBD
Pete August (split 318, 332) \$0	Project Support (\$5,000)
John King \$33,601	Open source availability for manuscript (\$5,000)
Dan Codiga \$21,280	FY18 NBEP Remaining Tasks
FY18 NBEP SNEP Projects (\$152,000)	Blackstone Workshop
\$152,000 for subawards remains (see JCC:338)	Synthesis Manuscript
FY15 NBEP Remaining Tasks	Prioritization Work
Complete	CCMP Update Kick-off
STATUS: Clean Ocean Access, August, and King projects are complete and should close in the next month. No cost extension until 6/30/20 approved for East Providence and pending for Codiga contracts.	Finance Plan
	Case Statement
	Little Narragansett Bay and Ponds Data Gathering
	Story Maps**
	Habitat Tool 1.0 **
	Development of Habitat Tool 2.0**
	STATUS: All costs are billed here now except the noted subawards remaining in JCC 318 and 332. An amendment has been submitted to EPA to reassign SNEP (\$250k) dollars (*) and remove three tasks (**).
FY16 (JCC: 326) 10/1/2016 - 9/30/2020	FY18 (JCC: 324) 10/1/2018 – 3/31/2021 <u>Save The Bay Project</u>
Complete.	
STATUS: Awaiting approval of agreement closure request.	
FY17 (JCC: 332) 10/1/2017 - 9/30/2020	
Personnel Balance	Personnel
\$0	~\$11,088
Subawards/Contracts Balances	Subawards/Contracts Balances
Research Grants (\$48,399)	\$0
Pete August \$26,159	FY18 NBEP Work Plan Remaining Tasks
URI STORMTOOLS \$26,964	GIS support for Hundred Acre Cove Project
Communications (\$12,500)	STATUS: Work is ongoing to support this joint Save The Bay/NBEP project.
Archive Watershed Counts \$253	
Project Communications Support \$12, 247	
Priority projects (\$7,500)	
New photos \$5,000	
Other priority \$2,500	
FY17 NBEP Remaining Tasks	
STORMTOOLS expansion to Mt Hope and Taunton	
STATUS: Funds remaining for Communications and Other Priority will be reassigned within this JCC in the future to cover a \$4,724 higher budget for STORMTOOLS and other contract activities TBD.	

2. Staffing

- *New Vice-Chairs.* Mike has not received any volunteers or potential names since the June Steering Committee meeting. A plan to fill these positions by this fall is needed.
- *Expansion of Steering Committee.* Prior to Mike joining NBEP, it was decided that Alison Hamel with RIDOT should be invited to attend Steering Committee meetings. She has attended a few meetings including our CCMP Subcommittee kick-off meeting last month. Mike has found her to be knowledgeable and forthright. At the CCMP meeting, she expressed interest in formally joining the Steering Committee. Per page 14 of NBEP’s Guiding Principles, the Executive Committee must nominate new members. Thus, a Committee member would need to nominate Alison. Mike would also like to discuss some other potential Steering Committee members encountered via partner outreach over the last first six months.
- *MA Representative on Steering Committee.* Laura Blake with MassDEP will be our new Executive and Steering Committee representation from a Massachusetts resource management agency. Welcome Laura!
- *Priority Staff Tasks for Next Two Months.*

Gerel	Schmidt	Bancroft	Twichell
Upcoming committee meetings (SC, CCMP)	Respond to Science Advisory Committee and Executive Committee comments on Synthesis Manuscript	Data management support	Data re-organization
Finance Plan		CCMP committee support	Data portal development
Allocation of remaining SNEP funds		Social science research	Synthesis manuscript figures and infographics
FY19 Fact Sheet	SNEP FY18 Project coordination	Website—grant mapping	Next indicator update
Case Statement	Next indicator update	New photos	Technical meetings
Partner Meetings	Technical meetings		

For discussion:

- ✓ **What steps should be taken to ensure the two Vice-Chair positions are filled ASAP?**
- ✓ **Is there a Committee support and a nominator to invite Alison Hamel with RIDOT to join the Steering Committee?**
- ✓ **Any opinion on Mike’s initial ideas for new Steering Committee members, or other folks we should engage?**

3. Organizational Planning

- *FY19 EPA Cooperative Agreement Submittal.* The FY19 Work Plan and Budget were approved by the Steering Committee on July 12th, and the full proposal to EPA to support our new Cooperative Agreement was submitted on July 24th. NBEP staff believe this work product is uniquely inclusive of staff and Committee input and sets the stage for how we will develop similar documents in the future.

- *FY16 Cooperative Agreement Closure.* EPA approval of the request to close out this agreement noted in table in Section II of this document is pending.
- *FY18 Work Plan Amendment.* EPA approval of the amendment noted earlier is pending.
- *Individual Staff Work Plans.* Mike developed a standard template, met individually twice with each staff member, and all staff (including Mike) completed a personal work plan for the next 15 months. These documents will help clarify responsibilities and expectations, enable clear discussions around workload and new projects, and support more thoughtful performance reviews.
- *Quarterly Report.* Mike completed and NEIWPC submitted to EPA a comprehensive report of 3Q activities and accomplishments by NBEP.
- *Office Space.* A final MOA between RIDEM and NEIWPC for 5-years of office space at no cost to NBEP has been completed and is awaiting some final processing at NEIWPC prior to execution.
- *Program Director partner engagement.* Mike continues to meet with NBEP committee members and key partners at a rate of about (2) two per week. Highlights during this reporting period included Janet Coit, RIDEM Director, Walt Galloway, RIRC, Shelia Dormady at RITNC, Rachel Calabro, RIDOH, and Jenny Pereira, Rhode Island Community Foundation.

4. Committee Updates

- *2020 NBEP Committee Meeting Schedule.* A schedule for 2020 Steering Committee meetings has been set—they will take place on the fourth Wednesday of every month beginning at 10:00am. The specific dates are: March 25th, June 24th, September 23rd, and December 23rd. Outlook invites have been sent out. Locations are to be determined and it is likely that the December date will be changed. In today's meeting setting next year's schedule for this committee and the CCMP Subcommittee will be discussed. The alternating months format for these meetings seems appropriate for next year if the committee concurs. In Mike's view, the Executive Committee meeting every other month is the right frequency; it makes best use of committee member and NBEP staff time.
- *Steering Committee.* NBEP hosted a productive Steering Committee on June 12th in Worcester, attended by 10 members. The Committee approved the FY19 Work Plan and Budget unanimously. Some insightful input was also provided on the upcoming CCMP meeting and process. Attendance was a bit low, especially for those local to Worcester, so Mike is interested in feedback on means to garner better attendance at Steering Committee meetings. Some ideas include holding meetings in the evening over food, enabling skyping/webcasting, or holding the meetings at the exact same place and time each quarter.
- *CCMP Subcommittee.* NBEP held a successful first CCMP Subcommittee meeting on July 16th in Providence, attended by 11 Steering Committee members, as well as Romell Nandi from EPA HQ's NEP Team. Judith and Mike set the theme of the day, Romell offered EPA expectations for CCMP Updates that stimulated excellent input from those in attendance. A small group process in the afternoon captured a lot of new input to inform our overall update process and immediate next steps. The next meeting of this group is September 19th in Worcester, where NBEP expects to hear from other NEP staff on their CCMPs, learn about the governance and CCMP process used by NEPs across the country, and otherwise firm up the document development process and timeline.

For discussion:

- ✓ Need to set dates for Executive Committee and CCMP Subcommittee meetings for next year. Does every other month still work?
- ✓ Are there any ideas for how to compel Steering Committee members who have not been attending meetings to attend more frequently?
- ✓ For the CCMP Subcommittee, what worked, what didn't work, what ideas do you have for upcoming meetings?

5. Grant Writing

- *Esri Conservation Grant.* NBEP applied to ESRI's Conservation Grant Program on July 19th in order to obtain discounted GIS licenses and "credits" for using their on-line systems. We are very happy to share that we were awarded the grant on July 25th. The products we received cost \$26,300, and we will be charged \$860. This is steep discount and is equivalent to \$25,440 of grant funding. Great work by the Julia's to obtain this award!
- *Rhode Island Community Foundation.* Mike had an excellent first meeting with Jenny Pereira at the Rhode Island Community Foundation on July 29th. Jenny was especially taken by the bottom-up process we have planned for development of the CCMP, and our interest in including vulnerable and underserved communities. She provided several great partner/funder contacts and perspective on needs in the region. The Foundation's organizational capacity and responsive grant program (each about \$10,000) seem a good match for NBEP. Both programs have rolling application deadlines. Mike promised to circle back and propose a project once he has completed additional partner outreach and engagement with NBEP committees. Thank you to Judith for the connection.
- *Narragansett Beer.* Mike and Courtney had a great meeting with Mark Hellendrung, President of Narragansett Beer. Mark is intent on connecting their business to "the water." They are very excited about the new brewpub they are building on Fox Point. Staff provided some ideas and contacts for pursuing a "water-friendly" design for the pub site. We also discussed a handful of other ideas, like the company offsetting their water use at the site through funding restoration projects in the watershed and holding a watershed "top-to-bottom" recreational event. Mike sees this as a potential excellent partnership, with long-term potential for financial support. Kudos to Courtney for connecting with Mark via Leadership Rhode Island.
- *Washington Trust Charitable Foundation.* Mike has an ask in for a meeting with Washington Trust's Vice President for Community Affairs. Proposals are due October 1st, with funding in the ~\$20,000 range. More to come if Mike can get a meeting.

III. Bringing People Together

- No NBEP workshops or other formal convenings beyond the NBEP committees noted in Section II of this document were completed during this reporting period.

IV. Synthesizing and Managing Data

- *Synthesis Manuscript.* Courtney has made excellent progress advancing the draft Technical Report synthesis manuscript through review. It was shared with the Science Advisory Committee and this committee on July 15th. Please provide any comments to Courtney by August 9th. Concurrently, EPA internal peer review is underway. The plan is to submit the piece to a journal by the end of this fiscal year.
- *STORMTOOLS in Massachusetts.* NBEP received a sound proposal from URI's Environmental Data Center and it was advanced to NEIWPCC contracting on July 31st. The plan is to have this work done by Spring 2020.
- *GIS Infrastructure Upgrade.* Julia Twichell has been combing through the existing NBEP data sets generated from the Technical Report to simplify the file structure for internal use and for data sharing via a public data portal website. Streamlining the database is making metadata creation more efficient and will make data navigation easier for all users. After talking with All Covered it was decided that an onsite PC/server will not be necessary to run data analysis. Both NBEP GIS laptops are running the software smoothly with fast connection to the shared Cloud folder containing the data.
- *New Photos.* After consideration of several options, NBEP has decided to release a request for qualifications (RFQ) to hire a freelance photographer this fall to obtain the additional photos we desire for our publications and website, namely, non-coastal areas and people going about their day across the watershed. We will consider a photo context in the future based on decisions in our upcoming Communications Strategy update about our need to reach a more general public office and need for a presence on social media.

V. Sharing Information

- Below is a list of NBEP's outreach efforts since the June 12th Steering Committee meeting.
 - June 12th Leadership Rhode Island (Schmidt)
 - June 14th Renewable Taunton Watershed Network (Bancroft)
 - June 18th SNEP Monitoring Subcommittee (Schmidt)
 - June 26th Anne Kuhn, EPA ORD (Bancroft)

- June 26th Leadership Rhode Island, Crime and incarceration (Schmidt)
- June 27th RAE SNEP Full Proposal Review Committee (Gerel)
- June 27th SNEP Ecosystems Services Subcommittee (Schmidt)
- June 28th Shelia Dormady, RI TNC (Gerel)
- June 28th Laura Blake, MassDEP (Gerel)
- July 2nd ANEP Board of Directors call (Gerel)
- July 8th NEIWPCC Branding Meeting (Bancroft, Gerel, Schmidt, Twichell)
- July 12th Walt Galloway, RIRC (Gerel)
- July 15th RIDEM re: Little Narragansett Bay data (Bancroft, Schmidt, Twichell)
- July 18th RIDOT Road-Stream Crossing Assessment Manual meeting (Bancroft)
- July 18th GIS Director at Cape Cod Commission on public data portal set-up (Twichell, Bancroft)
- July 24th Brooks Footwear introductory meeting (Gerel)
- July 24th Leadership Rhode Island (Schmidt)
- July 25th Meeting with Rachel Calabro, RIDOH to discuss climate health data (All NBEP)
- July 26th EBC New England Climate Change Summit (Gerel)
- July 31st Mark Hellendrung, Narragansett Beer (Gerel, Schmidt)
- August 1st Meeting with Save The Bay to discuss Hundred Acre Cove maps (Bancroft, Twichell)
- August 1st URI Coastal Institute Senior Fellows Day (Schmidt)
- August 6th NEIWPCC Tech Transfer meeting (All NBEP)

VI. Supporting External Projects

- *Save The Bay/NBEP Hundred Acre Cove Project.* NBEP has compiled, clipped, and reformatted GIS data for the Hundred Acre Cove (HAC) study area and delineated the HAC watershed using hydrologic modeling techniques. Work products are being developed for Save The Bay (STB) over two “tiers.” For Tier One, NBEP has created an interactive web mapping application to integrate and share data for land use, protected and unprotected open space, saltmarsh, population, housing, impervious cover, wastewater infrastructure, and sea level rise projections. Individual layers in the application can be toggled to facilitate visual analysis of focal areas requiring further research and data collection and/or management action. In a meeting with STB, NBEP staff discussed the watershed delineation, presented the data, and demonstrated use of a new map application developed that can be used in any browser or mobile device. STB may use the application internally for analysis as well as externally to communicate about the project. STB was pleased with this work product. Tier Two maps will be created based on additional data and feedback later this summer.
- *EPA ORD Story Maps Pilot.* NBEP developed and shared text with EPA ORD that should be included in the Story Map. The Story Map is based on the Population and Land Use chapters developed by EPA ORD for the Technical Report, framed in a way that describes the current issues, past, present, and future for our target audience of advocates for environmental-conscious land use and development. A

variety of specific results and facts will be highlighted from the Technical Report. EPA ORD staff offered kudos on the material and we expect their draft final product early fall.

- *FY17 Research Grant Status.* Draft final reports and deliverables were received from Clean Ocean Access on their bacteria at marine beaches project and URI on their benthic habitat and salt marsh mapping projects. A partial deliverable created by Dan Codiga focused on nitrogen was also submitted. Comments on all documents from NBEP staff and the Grant Subcommittee were shared with the grantees and final materials area expected back from all grantees except Codiga (to be extended until June 2020) by the end of August. The results are universally useful, and we look forward with sharing the new information with partners.
- *Use of Remaining NBEP SNEP Funds.* NBEP has had \$606,000 to share with partners. \$131,000 was awarded to five planning projects and final scopes of work and contracts are under development. \$250,000 has been reassigned to NBEP to pursue the Blackstone Watershed Needs Assessment project. This leaves roughly \$225,000 remaining to deploy. NBEP has drafted a “Request for Projects,” which will seek 2-3 very shovel-ready restoration projects (costing \$50,000 to \$100,000 each) that can be complete by June 30, 2020. Expenditure by this deadline will assure use of FY15 West Warwick money by its close date. Mike plans to send out this request to Steering Committee members in early August.
- *RAE SNEP Committee.* Mike served on the Restore America’s Estuary’s SNEP review committee. Of 50 full proposals submitted, 13 projects totaling \$2.3 million split between RI and MA were awarded funding. Awards will be formally announced in September. All told the suite of complementary projects awarded by NBEP (planning) and RAE (research and restoration) will advance the state of conservation in the Narragansett and neighboring watersheds.

VII. Upcoming Meetings

- Steering Committee: September 11th—10:00am-2:00pm, RIDEM, Room 300
- CCMP Subcommittee: September 19th – 10:00am-3:00pm, Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitors Center, Worcester (same place as Blackstone Workshop)
- Executive Committee: October 9th—10:00am-12:00pm, Worcester location TBD