

**Attachment B: Program Narrative**  
**Narragansett Bay Estuary Program Support**  
*NEIWPCC Job Cost Code: TBD*

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**QA/QC Plan Required:** Yes

**Project Period:** October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019

**Resources Requested:** The total budget requested is \$1,200,000. Attachment A provides the budget summary and itemized budget for the total project cost.

**Federal Cost:** Current request: \$600,000

**Non-Federal Match:** The attached match documentation has the \$600,000 received by various partners for matching funds.

## **Background**

### New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission

The New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPC) is a non-profit organization established through an act of Congress in 1947. The agency serves and assists its member states individually and collectively by providing coordination, public education, training, and leadership in the management and protection of water quality in the New England and New York Region. It is a leader in forming strong bonds between the New England and New York State environmental agencies and is unique in its ability to bring diverse interest groups together, create forums, and educate with innovative multi-faceted curriculum.

The Commission is comprised of seven states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The 35-member Commission consists of five persons from each state including representatives from state health departments, water pollution control boards, and governor appointees who may represent municipal and industrial interests. NEIWPC's primary role is to integrate the state's individual efforts to improve and maintain water quality in the Northeast. Educating and training environmental professionals as well as communicating water quality concerns and needs to the public are key components of NEIWPC's mission.

### Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Narragansett Bay is one of 28 estuaries in the country designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an "estuary of national significance" under Section 320 of the 1987 amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act). The National Estuary Program was established in 1987 to protect and restore nationally significant estuaries threatened or impaired by pollution, development, and overuse. The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP or Estuary Program) was initially formed in 1985 and was formally included in EPA's National Estuary Program on March 11, 1988. The goal of the Estuary Program is to protect and restore Narragansett Bay and its bi-state watershed, which is shared by Rhode Island and Massachusetts, through collaborative action, sound science, and informed decision-making. The NBEP accomplishes this goal while working with a Steering Committee comprised of numerous stakeholders, representing citizen and environmental groups, academic institutions, and local, state, and federal governments.

In 1993, a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) was adopted for Narragansett Bay – a watershed-based plan that addressed a wide range of issues including nutrient enrichment, pathogens, management of special ecological areas, nonpoint source pollution, contaminated sediments, water resource management, living resources management, bay and watershed governance, and monitoring. This original CCMP was updated in 2012 (2012 CCMP) to promote a holistic approach to protecting, enhancing, and restoring the Narragansett Bay and its watershed through partnerships that conserve and restore natural resources, enhance water quality, and promote community involvement and stewardship.

The 2012 CCMP includes a large number of goals that are organized in four sections: Section 1) Protect and Restore Clean Water; Section 2) Manage Land for Conservation and Community; Section 3) Protect and Restore Fish, Wildlife, and Habitats; and Section 4) Manage Climate Change Impacts to Natural Systems. The Steering Committee approved a corrective action plan in 2013 that listed four strategic priority actions from the CCMP to provide a clear short-term focus for the Estuary Program:

- Improve understanding of both the changes in water quality occurring over the next several years in the Bay and its bi-state watershed, including those resulting from nutrient pollutant loadings reductions, and their effects on the Bay ecosystem;
- Facilitate the use of sound science in Bay watershed management decision-making;
- Build capacity among municipalities and local organizations to foster stewardship for environmental engagement with emphasis on the broader adoption of low impact development and improved stormwater management; and
- Facilitate habitat restoration in Narragansett Bay and its watershed, its coastal buffers, and its tributary rivers and streams.

## **Objectives**

NEIWPCCC proposes to assist and support the NBEP in implementing the 2012 CCMP and ongoing priority issues. The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program Guiding Principles for Program Management as approved will provide a framework for the proper and effective management of the NBEP. The specific tasks designed to support these objectives are outlined below:

### **Task 1: Program Management**

#### **Task 1a: NEIWPCCC Lowell Program Management**

NEIWPCCC proposes to continue supporting personnel time for NEIWPCCC Lowell staff to manage NBEP-related grants and contracts/subawards and supervise NBEP staff. Funding will mainly support a program manager, but also the Director of Water Quality Programs (for oversight of program management support) and the Deputy Director (for preparation of grant applications and paperwork). Specific tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Supervise the NBEP's Program Director, in consultation with the Executive Committee and Steering Committee.
- Coordinate the supervision of all NBEP staff, in consultation with the Program Director, the Executive Committee, and the Steering Committee.
- Coordinate with the Program Director in preparation of the annual work plan and budget.
- Prepare and submit grant applications to U.S. EPA.
- Lead hiring process for all staff positions.
- Set up and manage agreements with RI Department of Environmental Management (RI DEM) and MA Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regarding office space arrangements and technical support, as needed.
- Manage budgets in coordination with the Program Director.
- Execute and manage contracts/subawards in coordination with the Program Director. Submit monthly reports of contracts that have been executed in the previous month to the Federal Funding Accountability & Transparency Act Subaward Reporting System.
- Process invoices and travel reimbursements.
- Communicate with the Program Director and EPA Project Officer on a regular basis.
- Meet with EPA Project Officer annually to coordinate issues between NEIWPCCC, NBEP, the states, and EPA Region 1.
- Garner support for NEIWPCCC's NBEP commitments from EPA and the states.
- Facilitate coordination with other regional National Estuary Programs and NEIWPCCC activities.
- Prepare, with the assistance of the Program Director, and submit quarterly progress reports that describe NBEP activities and outputs.

While NEIWPCCC is responsible for managing the grant from EPA, administering contracts/subawards, completing fiscal, subaward, and administrative reports, and overall supervision of the staff, the NBEP Program Director will be the public point of contact for the program.

Task 1a will be accomplished through personnel time of NEIWPCCC Lowell staff and NBEP staff.

#### **Task 1b: Work Plan Development and Tracking**

NEIWPCCC Lowell Staff will:

- Jointly work with the NBEP Program Director and Executive Committee to implement the process and timeline for developing the annual work plans and budgets.
- Jointly with the Program Director, develop the FY18 work plan and budget for approval by the Executive Committee and Steering Committee in June 2018.
- Complete a final FY18 grant application for submission to EPA in July 2018.

The NBEP Program Director will work with NEIWPC Lowell staff to:

- Develop the FY18 work plan and budget for approval by the Executive Committee and Steering Committee in June 2018.
- Track and report on progress toward completion of work plan deliverables consistent with EPA's National Estuary Program grant requirements.

Task 1b will be accomplished through personnel time of NEIWPC Lowell and NBEP staff.

**Task 1c: Support of NBEP Oversight and Advisory Committees**

The Estuary Program's Management Conference includes three major committees: the Steering Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Science Advisory Committee. NBEP staff will support these three committees as well as any other advisory committees or subcommittees (presently there is a grants subcommittee, a communication subcommittee, and a nominating subcommittee) that may be developed as needed, as follows:

The **Steering Committee** serves as a forum for information exchange and a mechanism to enhance coordination among local, state, and federal programs. Membership of the Steering Committee consists of top-level environmental officials representing state government in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, federal agency representatives, environmental groups, academic institutions, and watershed groups. The Steering Committee is responsible for reviewing and providing guidance and direction for the implementation of NBEP program elements. The NBEP Program Director will participate in and serve as primary staff support to the Steering Committee. Staff will schedule quarterly meetings, develop agendas in coordination with the Chair of the Steering Committee, draft meeting minutes, prepare reports on recent activities, provide technical support, channel information, and present recommendations to the Steering Committee for their approval.

The **Executive Committee** is a designated subset of the Steering Committee that conducts the business of the NBEP between Steering Committee meetings and reports to the Steering Committee. The Executive Committee is comprised of the following members: the elected Chair of the Steering Committee, two senior management level staff from state environmental agencies, a non-profit representative from each state, one representative from EPA, one representative from NEIWPC (as the host institution), and the Chair of the Science Advisory Committee. The NBEP Program Director will participate in and serve as primary staff support to the Executive Committee. Staff will schedule monthly meetings, develop agendas in coordination with the Chair of the Executive Committee, draft meeting minutes, prepare reports on recent activities, provide technical support, channel information, and present recommendations to the Executive Committee for their approval.

The **Science Advisory Committee** is comprised of technical experts, researchers, and resource managers from universities, state and federal agencies, and non-profit agencies throughout the Narragansett Bay watershed. The Science Advisory Committee solidifies science as the foundation of the NBEP. The Science Advisory Committee provides an exchange of information among researchers, technical experts, and natural resource managers; provides valued guidance to the NBEP Steering Committee and staff; and identifies priority applied research needs. In support of the Science Advisory Committee, the NBEP will draw upon the region's considerable expertise, forge new partnerships, and pursue innovative sources of funding to support needed scientific work. The NBEP Program Director will participate in and serve as primary staff support to the Science Advisory Committee. Staff will schedule meetings, develop agendas, draft meeting minutes, provide technical support, channel information, and present recommendations to the committee.

Task 1c will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff.

**Task 1d: Program Leadership**

NBEP staff must remain up to date on regional and national developments relevant to NBEP mission, programs, and projects; represent NBEP in regional and national forums; and provide internal and external leadership for the Program, ensuring focus and progress on strategic priorities, as well as effective communication and collaboration with and

among partner agencies, organizations, academic institutions, etc. The Program Director will focus on ways to leverage NBEP resources, ensure best use of limited resources, minimize duplication of effort, and optimize public and community-based support.

The Program Director will work with the Steering Committee, the Executive Committee, and subcommittees to continue good governance for the program. Tasks will include:

- Continue to ensure consistency in NBEP’s engagement of stakeholders in a bi-state manner.
- Continue to develop partnerships within state, university, and non-profit community.
- Continue to explore public and private partnerships. Examine a range of grant opportunities with the Executive Committee and prepare up to three proposals during the fiscal year.
- Continue to capitalize on communication capacity of EPA, NEIWPC, the Steering Committee, and other partners as set forth in the draft 3-year communications plan. The draft communications plan will be finalized by the Communication Subcommittee. Quarterly reports to the Committee will track press releases, panels and speaking events, website updates and usage, message block content sharing with partners, and other communication activities.
- Continue to update the new website regularly to enhance communication efforts. The website will be updated on a continuous basis. It is expected to include the latest scientific publications, new science and policy reports, news, and other topics of interest.
- Continue to work with other programs in the National Estuary Program to collaborate and share information.

Task 1d will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff.

**Milestone Schedule for Task 1**

Task 1a: NEIWPC Lowell Program Management	October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019
Task 1b: Work Plan Development and Tracking	
Completion of FY17 Work Plan	June 2017
Work Plan Tracking	October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019
Task 1c: Support of NBEP Oversight and Advisory committees	
Steering Committee Meetings	Quarterly
Executive Committee Meetings	Monthly or as needed
Science Advisory Committee Meetings	Three Meetings Per Year
Task 1d: Program Leadership	October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019

**Environmental Outputs and Outcomes for Task 1**

Work Plan Activity	Deliverable(s) and Lead Staff	Target Date	Environmental Output	Environmental Outcome
Task 1a: NEIWPC Lowell Program Management	Grant applications; Quarterly progress reports (Program Director and NEIWPC Program Manager)	Ongoing	Produce quarterly reports to document progress on all program activities and ensure progress on commitments.	Improved water quality, habitat, and resources of Narragansett Bay documented.
Task 1b: Work Plan Development and Tracking	Annual work plan and budget (Program Director and NEIWPC Program Manager)	Ongoing	Program commitments are documented and tracked using quarterly reporting and SC/EC agenda updates.	Program management is improved.
Task 1c: Support of NBEP Oversight and Advisory Committees	Agendas and minutes (Program Director)	Ongoing	Committee meetings and decisions are	Program management is improved.

			documented through meeting minutes.	
Task 1d: Program Leadership and Governance	Grant proposals and quarterly reports to the Communication Subcommittee (Program Director and NEIWPC Program Manager)	Ongoing	CCMP policies are advanced through Grants Subcommittee and Communication Subcommittee update reports.	Program fiscal capacity and communications are improved.

**Task 2: Facilitate Sound Science to Protect and Restore Clean Water**

**CCMP: Section 1, Goal 6 and 6.1**

- Improve information, science and analysis that support management efforts necessary to restore and protect fresh and salt waters.
- Effectively manage, analyze, synthesize and make available data to support management decision-making, characterize environmental condition trends linked to ecological indicators, prioritize investments and communicate to the public. Continue development of data driven analytical tools, e.g., predictive models, biological indices, etc.

The NBEP provides an important forum for fostering both the synthesis of bay-related science, as well as effective communication on increasingly complex environmental issues involving Narragansett Bay. One of the NBEP’s most important roles is to champion and facilitate communication and cooperation with its partners throughout the watershed. NBEP’s most important recent focus has been the development of the *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report. This report provides an overview of research on environmental indicators on the status and trends in the health of Narragansett Bay and its watershed (in addition, the study area includes the Southwest Coastal Ponds and Little Narragansett Bay and their respective watersheds).

These indicators include a wide spectrum of issues that the Science Advisory Committee has included in three major categories:

**1. Bay and Watershed Stressors**

- 1.1 Landscape Stressors (Population, Land Use, Impervious Cover, Nutrient Loading, and Wastewater Infrastructure)
- 1.2 Climate Change Stressors (Temperature, Precipitation, and Sea Level)
- 1.3 Chemical Stressors (Legacy Contaminants and Emerging Contaminants)

**2. Indicators of Ecosystem Condition**

- 2.1 Bay Ecosystem Indicators (Seagrass, Salt Marsh, Benthic Habitat, Dissolved Oxygen, Chlorophyll, Water Clarity, and Estuarine Fish Communities)
- 2.2 Watershed Ecosystem Indicators (Stream Invertebrates, Freshwater Fish, Water Quality Conditions for Aquatic Life, and Open Space)

**3. Indicators of Public Health** (Marine Beaches, Water Quality Conditions for Recreation, and Shellfishing Areas)

In this upcoming fiscal year, the primary goal for protecting and restoring clean water is to build upon progress made in the development of the *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report and to continue to enhance NBEP’s role in estuary and watershed science. To achieve this goal, NEIWPC proposes to complete the following sub-tasks:

**Task 2a: Bay and Watershed Research Program**

This program would fund research needs identified through the *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report and will solicit research on issues we identified as critical gaps in understanding the watershed. This research funding would provide seed money that could potentially help secure more significant research proposals. The 2015 work plan

(NEIWPCCC JCC: 318) included contractual funds for the research grant program. Funding research projects will also help develop new and strengthen existing partnerships with entities involved scientific research and will increase the role that partners can play in watershed science and information. Funding under the Bay and Watershed Research Program will be awarded through a competitive process initiated and facilitated by NBEP and NEIWPCCC Lowell staff. Staff will develop and release a request for proposals and a review team will be formed to select projects for funding.

A request for proposals will be posted in August 2017 and selection will be announced in January of 2018. The following is a timeline for this task

- August 18 – Request for Proposals Published
- September 29 - Deadline for Submission of Pre-proposals
- October 16 – Grants Subcommittee Meeting - select those to submit full proposals
- November 22 – Deadline for Submission of Full Proposals
- December 13 – Grants Subcommittee Meeting - select proposals to fund
- January 2018 – Announcement of Awards
- Projects: March 2018 – March 2019 (short projects) or June 2019 (long projects)

Task 2a will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff, NEIWPCCC Lowell staff, and contractual services from this year and prior work plan funding.

#### **Task 2b: Bay and Watershed Story Maps**

The information developed in the *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report will be highlighted through a digital story map that highlights Narragansett Bay and its watershed. Story maps use pictures, maps, videos, and narrative to give a more complete picture of an issue. As examples, the University of Connecticut prepared an excellent [story map](#) of the changing landscape, URI's Environmental Data Center worked with the National Park Service to develop a [story map](#) on Superstorm Sandy, and the Padilla Bay Reserve also prepared a [story map](#) on eelgrass.

The 2016 work plan (NEIWPCCC JCC: 326) included contractual funds to help develop these story maps. This project would allow us to create a series of story maps on the issues in Narragansett Bay and its watershed by highlighting topics identified in the *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report. While the goal is to update the report every five years, the use of story maps will importantly provide NBEP with a vehicle to update Bay and watershed indicators as new information becomes available. In addition, it would allow us to take the GIS data and information gathered in the report and included in static maps and make this information available through ArcGIS Online maps on our website. This will allow the public to better navigate the maps and understand the results. Lastly, story maps provide a mechanism to humanize the often abstract aspects of environmental indicators by using stories and photographs to show how Bay and watershed resources have changed and are still important to us all. This task includes staff time to develop the story map on NBEP's website with contractor assistance and staff time to update the website, on a continuous basis, to include the latest scientific publications, new science and policy report, news, and other topics of interest. The website must be regularly revised to incorporate the latest tools for improving accessibility and visibility of information. It is envisioned that the story maps will be organized in the framework developed by the Science Advisory Committee in the Technical Report where the indicators are organized by stressor indicators (climate change, landscape and chemical), condition indicators (Bay and watershed) and public health indicators. As an example, one story map would address the three public health indicators (recreation, beaches, and shellfishing areas) and would illustrate the connection limiting pathogens in local waters and a story about stormwater improvements at Sabin Point beach.

Task 2b will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff and contractual services from prior work plan funding.

#### **Task 2c: Synthesis Paper**

The next major issue for the Science Advisory Committee is to develop a synthesis paper based upon the results of the *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report. A synthesis paper would allow the Estuary Program and

members of the Science Advisory Committee to reflect upon the results in the report. The synthesis paper will be submitted and anticipated to be published in an appropriate journal. It is important for the Estuary Program to publish results in documents designed for broad public consumption and to also publish these findings in academic journals. This project would provide an opportunity to coordinate a small group of researchers and develop a synthesis of our recent efforts. The selected researchers will consider synthesis topics to examine, length of the synthesis paper, and the appropriate academic journals to approach. The milestone schedule below is based upon the anticipated timeline to complete a paper for submission as the timeline for review and publication (if accepted) will depend upon the relevant journal.

Task 2c will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff, contractual services (from prior work plan funding), and the Science Advisory Committee.

**Task 2d: Watershed Science and Policy**

The *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report was designed to identify critical gaps in understanding the Bay and its watershed. For each indicator, we are identifying issues that need to be addressed through further scientific synthesis and policy analysis. For example, we would like to develop an estuarine water quality index that would combine various measurements (DO, water clarity, pH, etc.) to better track water quality improvements. In addition, there is a need for the further development of fine resolution impervious cover methods. While the Bay and Watershed Research Program will provide a mechanism to fund some of these efforts, we will be identifying important scientific initiatives that need to be advanced with NBEP staff analysis. For example, numerous partners have requested data and information developed by NBEP in the Technical Report and significant staff effort is needed to coordinate and compile information. Examples of these partnerships include: 1) The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop a Coastal Watershed Resilience Assessments for the Narragansett Bay watershed; 2) the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association formed a Wild and Scenic Study Committee to obtain national recognition of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of seven rivers; 3) Mass Audubon's partnership with URI to examine the ecosystem services of the watershed. In addition, there are policy implications that are emerging from the *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report that will require a similar effort on policy analysis. Our recent work has included extensive outreach with numerous partners to compile existing data and research on the environmental indicators. In terms of policy, a similar effort is needed to examine what policy and regulatory mechanisms are in place to address issues of concern, discuss these issues with the numerous partners in the study area, and develop a consensus on needed action. This work is needed in the development of goals and targets for water quality and aquatic habitat protection and restoration. Specific deliverables will include an estimate of two to three science and policy papers advanced through NBEP's committees. This staff effort will provide an opportunity to continue to help coordinate the science and policy issues in the Bay and its watershed.

Task 2d will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff.

**Task 2e: Priority Projects**

The priority project funding will allow the Executive Committee to provide funding to projects that were not anticipated during work plan development. This process allows for the consideration of new projects that align with CCMP goals where a summary of the project is submitted to the Executive Committee in writing for their consideration. The Executive Committee will make funding decisions based on project budget, amount of funding remaining for priority projects at the time of the request, alignment with CCMP goals and work plan priorities, availability of other funding sources, and timeframe in which funding is needed. Because it is expected that these projects will be time sensitive, it is anticipated that the Executive Committee will approve these matters in coordination with input from the Science Advisory Committee, where appropriate.

Task 2d will be accomplished through the Executive Committee and professional services.

**Milestone Schedule for Task 2**

Task 2a: Bay and Watershed Research Program	October 2017 – September 2019
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Task 2b: Bay and Watershed Story Maps	October 2017 – May 2018
Task 2c: Synthesis Paper	October 2017 – May 2018
Task 2d: Watershed Science and Policy	October 2017 – September 2018
Task 2d: Priority Projects	October 2017 – September 2018

**Environmental Outputs and Outcomes for Task 2**

<b>Work Plan Activity</b>	<b>Deliverable(s) and Lead Staff</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Environmental Output</b>	<b>Environmental Outcome</b>
Task 2a: Bay and Watershed Research Program	Contract deliverables (Program Director, NEIWPC Program Manager, Contracts and Grants Manager, QA Program Manager; proposal review – Staff Scientist and Watershed and GIS Specialist)	January 2018	Advanced research related to the issues in the Bay and its watershed. All research projects will be announced by January 2018.	Improved understanding of science.
Task 2b: Bay and Watershed Story Maps	Approved QAPP (QA Program Manager), Website enhanced with Story Maps (Watershed and GIS Specialist)	May 2018	Public education of ecological indicators for the Narragansett Bay watershed. The website will be updated to include approximately six story maps related to the indicator groupings.	Improved understanding of the ecological health of the Bay and its watershed.
Task 2c: Synthesis Paper	Approved QAPP (QA Program Manager), Submission of paper to an academic or relevant journal (Staff Scientist)	May 2018	Submission of at least one paper examining complex environmental issues in Narragansett Bay.	Improved understanding of the ecological health of the Bay and its watershed.
Task 2d: Watershed Science and Policy	Development of two to three science and policy papers (Staff Scientist and Watershed and GIS Specialist)	Ongoing	Advance at least two research papers related to the issues in the Bay and its watershed.	Improved understanding of science and policy issues.
Task 2e: Priority Projects	New projects that align with CCMP goals (Program Director)	Ongoing	At least one priority project will be selected for improved protection and restoration of the Bay and its watershed.	Improved commitment to protecting and restoring the Bay and its watershed.

### **Task 3: Manage Land for Conservation and Community by Building Local Capacity**

#### **CCMP: Section 2, Goals 6 and 5**

- Increase the role of watershed organizations and municipalities to serve as critical partners in watershed management.
- Improve science, information, and communication to support effective land use management

The management of its watershed lands influences the quality of Narragansett Bay. Achieving changes in the way land is developed, whether mandated or voluntary, requires an expanded effort to build the capacity of local governments as well as strengthen the role of watershed and other local organizations as partners in watershed management. Through enhanced outreach coupled with the provision of ongoing guidance and partnerships, it is envisioned that the NBEP can contribute to increasing local stewardship in a manner that builds upon its relationships with local entities including municipalities, watershed organizations and land trusts. Specifically, this includes the following sub-tasks:

#### **Task 3a: Watershed Counts Partnership**

Watershed Counts, a collaborative initiative co-facilitated by the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Institute and the NBEP, relies on over 60 partners in RI and MA to work together to evaluate the issues and conditions of the land and waters in and around Narragansett Bay. This collaborative considers the region's interwoven economic and environmental assets, examines the condition of the watershed, and communicates this information to the public and decision makers in order to inform and guide future management, protection, restoration, and development of the watershed. The Watershed Counts reports can be found at [www.watershedcounts.org](http://www.watershedcounts.org).

For 2016, the Watershed Counts partners decided to continue up the watershed and focused on the importance of headwaters and the people that are helping to protect and restore these important streams and surrounding habitats. For the 2017 report, the Coastal Institute staff is taking the lead to develop the report with a focus on climate change. For the 2018 report, the NBEP and Coastal Institute staff will work with the partners to identify the focus of the report, and will then participate in committee support, report development, and development of the communication strategy for the report.

Task 3a will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff and the Coastal Institute (as the co-coordinators), professional services funds to produce the report, as well as time invested by the Watershed Counts partners.

#### **Task 3b: Southeast New England Program**

EPA's Southeast New England Program (Program or SNEP) is a partnership made up of public and private stakeholders collaborating to create a broad ecological and institutional framework for protecting, enhancing, and restoring the waters along southeastern New England. The Program's vision is to restore the ecological health of southeast New England's estuaries, watersheds, and coastal waters and ensure access now and in the future to resilient, self-sustaining ecosystems of clean water, healthy diverse habitats, and associated populations of fish, shellfish, and other aquatic dependent organisms. The Program includes the coastal waters and watershed lands spanning from Westerly, Rhode Island to Pleasant Bay, Massachusetts. The watersheds of Narragansett Bay, Buzzards Bay, the islands, and southern Cape Cod face similar opportunities and challenges and the Program's focus on this geographic area is designed to develop innovative and effective approaches to preserve the region's critical resources.

Staff will continue to serve on the Work Groups which serves as a forum to discuss ideas for potential SNEP activities and priorities and leverage regional support, provide feedback on vision, goals, and future direction of the program, and share lessons learned from their experiences and their local regions that would be helpful for others to know. This involves meetings (approximately quarterly), occasional conference calls, and review of written materials as requested by EPA. In addition, NBEP staff and NEIWPC Lowell staff continue to assist partners in projects funded by SNEP.

Task 3b will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff and NEIWPCCLowell staff.

**Milestone Schedule for Task 3**

Task 3a: Watershed Counts Partnership	October 2017 – July 2018
Task 3b: Southeast New England Program	October 2017 – September 2018

**Environmental Outputs and Outcomes for Task 3**

Work Plan Activity	Deliverable(s)	Target Date	Environmental Output	Environmental Outcome
Task 3a: Watershed Counts Partnership	Watershed Counts 2018 Report (Program Director)	July 2018	One public focused report will be prepared along with press information to provide updates on issues in the Bay and its watershed.	Improved understanding of the Narragansett Bay watershed.
Task 3b: Southeast New England Program	Participation in meetings; input on written products (Program Director and NEIWPCCL Program Manager)	Ongoing	Participation in at least three meetings related to environmental issues in southeastern New England estuaries.	Partnerships are strengthened. Improved understanding of water quality and ecological issues impacting southeastern New England estuaries.

**Task 4: Protect and Restore Fish, Wildlife, and Habitats**

**CCMP: Section 3, Goals 1 and 1.1**

- Conserve existing natural landscapes that have been and will be adversely affected by development, climate change, and invasive species
- Focus resources and enhance land protection efforts by conservation agencies and organizations on less-developed areas, particularly areas threatened by new sprawl development in both states.

**CCMP: Section 3, Goals 2, 2.1, and 2.2**

- Restore degraded or lost habitats and habitat functions.
- Improve river connectivity and habitat by removing dams, upgrading culverts and creating structural fish ways to restore free-flowing rivers and anadromous fish passage; implement state fish passage plans.
- Create a coordinated bi-state habitat sustainability strategy with a restoration component and identification of priority projects, comprehensive management principles, and implementation targets for fresh and saltwater ecosystems.

The protection and restoration of coastal and riparian habitat is integral to the stewardship of the Narragansett Bay ecosystem and its associated watershed. The bi-state Narragansett Bay watershed has many partners that are working on restoring critical habitats such as saltmarshes, freshwater wetlands, anadromous fish runs, etc. The Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (MA DER), the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (RI CRMC), RI DEM, and MassDEP are all working to update coastal and freshwater restoration strategies. Building on the planning work conducted in both MA and RI, the NBEP is well positioned to integrate and articulate habitat priorities on a bi-state watershed basis. NEIWPCCL proposes to support facilitation of habitat protection and restoration in Narragansett Bay and its watershed by carrying out the following sub-task:

**Task 4a: Watershed Restoration and Protection Projects**

An important aspect of our CCMP (as well as our annual habitat reporting to EPA) is to track the acreage or stream miles of projects completed to protect and restore the watershed. Each year NBEP staff compile acres of open space lands preserved, stream miles of fish habitat restored, acres of wetlands restored, and other habitat protection or restoration projects. NBEP staff serves on the selection committee organized by RI CRMC to select grants under the Rhode Island Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration Trust Fund and also works with numerous partners involved in habitat restoration. For the *State of Narragansett Bay and its Watershed* report the NBEP has advanced efforts with numerous partners to examine fish passage and stream continuity and is assisting the New England District of the US Army Corps of Engineers in their Narragansett Bay Restoration Study. The needed next step is a compilation of projects completed over time to better represent the progress made to date. This project would include both the compilation of past and pending projects as well as GIS maps, using the ArcGIS Online platform, to show the restoration efforts retrospectively by location and highlight case studies of these projects. It would provide an update to a habitat portal developed with the leadership of RI CRMC and we would work with numerous partners (CRMC, Save The Bay, MA DER, TNC and others) to highlight habitat protection and restoration. This would be an expansion of NBEP research into past projects as well a new component of the NBEP website. Importantly, this would allow NBEP to promote the important work and investments of NBEP partners in habitat restoration and protection, and identify other potential restoration projects

Task 4a will be accomplished through personnel time of NBEP staff and contractual services from prior work plan funding.

**Milestone Schedule for Task 4**

Task 4a: Watershed Protection and Restoration Projects	October 2017 - July 2018
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**Environmental Outputs and Outcomes for Task 4**

Work Plan Activity	Deliverable(s) and Lead Staff	Target Date	Environmental Output	Environmental Outcome
Task 4a: Watershed Protection and Restoration Projects	Approved QAPP (NEIWPCC Program Manager and QA Program Manager); Development of on-line mapping and case studies of habitat protection and restoration projects (Watershed and GIS Specialist)	July 2018	The website will be updated with a new restoration and protection platform to highlight habitat projects.	Enhanced habitat protection and restoration in Narragansett Bay and its watershed.

**Non-Federal Match**

The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program’s Steering Committee includes many partners that are implementing projects that are directly implementing the CCMP. A summary of each non-federal match, to address the grant request of \$600,000, is provided below and match documentation is provided for each source of funds:

**Section 320 match of \$600,000**

1. Narragansett Bay Commission (Bay monitoring staff) - \$150,000
3. Rhode Island CRMC (habitat grants) - \$101,573
4. Rhode Island DEM (contractual) - \$100,000
5. Rhode Island DEM (BWRP grants) - \$168,917
6. Coastal Institute (staff) - \$79,510

**Appendix A: Contractual/Professional Services Projects**

Task	Project Title	Amount	Deliverable(s)	Procurement Type	Timeline
Task 2a	Bay and Watershed Research Program	\$47,000	Research projects to address Technical Report needs	Contracts (RFP to be posted)	October 2017-September 2019
Task 2d	Priority Projects	\$7,500	New projects that align with CCMP goals	TBD	October 2017 – September 2018
Task 3a	Watershed Counts	\$12,500	Watershed Counts 2018 Report	Professional Services (RFQs to be distributed)	October 2017- July 2018

**Appendix B: Grant Performance Report (CE96184201)**

In addition to the reports submitted quarterly to the EPA Region 1 Project Officer, this report satisfies the obligation to submit an annual performance report as required under the programmatic terms and conditions of the grant.

**Appendix C: Grant Performance Report (CE00A00004)**

In addition to the reports submitted quarterly to the EPA Region 1 Project Officer, this report satisfies the obligation to submit an annual performance report as required under the programmatic terms and conditions of the grant.

**Appendix D: Grant Performance Report (CE00A00127)**

In addition to the reports submitted quarterly to the EPA Region 1 Project Officer, this report satisfies the obligation to submit an annual performance report as required under the programmatic terms and conditions of the grant.

**Appendix E: Travel Report**

In addition to the reports submitted quarterly to the EPA Region 1 Project Officer, this report satisfies the obligation to submit documentation of Clean Water Act §320 Funds Used for Travel as required under the National Estuary Program Funding Guidance.

**Appendix F: Outreach Report**

In addition to the reports submitted quarterly to the EPA Region 1 Project Officer, this report supplements the previously mentioned reports above.