

# NARRAGANSETT BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM

## Program Report March 2022

This report covers activities completed by the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP) from December 17, 2021 to March 9, 2022. To assist with tracking and reporting, the fiscal year, funding source, and task number(s) for the NBEP Work Plan where the activities were billed are provided in parentheses after each update title. Further, hyperlinks ([blue-underlined text](#)) are provided for noted documents, organizations, and websites. Committee decisions since the last Steering Committee meeting are included as **red text**.

### I. HIGHLIGHTS

- March 2022 Financials, pages 1-3
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- SC Reappointments, page 4
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- Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation Funding, page 8
- Vision 2032 Progress, page 9
- Science Event, page 12 and 14

### II. WORK PLAN OBJECTIVE #1: ENSURE SOUND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

#### A. Financials

1. **Active Funding Sources** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1a and 1b). NBEP has funds remaining in three (3) EPA Cooperative Agreements (Clean Water Action Section 320 [National Estuary Program—NEP](#) and [Southeast New England Program—SNEP](#)). Figure 1 below provides an overview of our current funding sources.

Figure 1: NBEP Active Funding Sources

Funder	Vehicle	Grant#	Award*	Close Date	Administrator
EPA NEP, SNEP	Cooperative agreement	CE00A00393	FY18	9/30/22	NEIWPCC
EPA NEP	Cooperative agreement	CE00A00407	FY19	9/30/24	
EPA NEP, SNEP	Cooperative agreement	CE00A00967	FY21	9/30/24	RWU

\*Note that EPA uses the fiscal year when funds are delivered to name the award.

2. **March Financial Report Notes** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1a and 1b, [FY19](#) Task 1b, FY18 Work Plan Task 1a). NBEP’s financials as of March 9, 2022 are provided in Figure 2 on page 2. Approved budget, expenditure since October 1, 2021, and balance are provided for monies administered by [NEIWPCC](#), those held by [Roger Williams University](#) (RWU), and NBEP totals. In sum, NBEPs financials are sound, with sufficient funds in place to meet current obligations. Additional notes are provided on page 3 below:

**Figure 2: Estimated NBEP Funds Budget, Expenditure, and Balance (3.9.22)**

Expense Category	NEIWPCC <sup>(1)</sup>			RWU <sup>(1)</sup>			Total Budget	Total FY2022 Expenditures	Total Balance Remaining
	Budget	FY2022 Expenditures <sup>(2)</sup>	Balance (3)	Budget	FY2022 Expenditures <sup>(2)</sup>	Balance			
Personnel and Fringe	\$ 102,219	\$ 50,582	\$ 83,459	\$ 834,476	\$ 119,460	\$ 715,016	\$ 936,695	\$ 170,042	\$ 798,475
Travel	\$ (3,341)	\$ (1,197)	\$ (2,144)	\$ 12,750	\$ 291	\$ 12,459	\$ 9,409	\$ (906)	\$ 10,315
Supplies	\$ 10,178	\$ 4,475	\$ 5,703	\$ 6,200	\$ 489	\$ 5,711	\$ 16,378	\$ 4,964	\$ 11,414
Contracts	\$ 146,988	\$ 108,456	\$ 38,532	\$ 130,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 124,000	\$ 276,988	\$ 114,456	\$ 162,532
Other (breakout below)									
Subawards	\$ 161,102	\$ (17,658)	\$ 178,760	\$ 650,000	\$ -	\$ 650,000	\$ 811,102	\$ (17,658)	\$ 828,760
Other Administrative <sup>(4)</sup>	\$ (15,184)	\$ (980)	\$ (14,204)	\$ 32,892	\$ 1,303	\$ 31,589	\$ 17,708	\$ 323	\$ 17,385
Total Direct	\$ 401,962	\$ 143,678	\$ 258,284	\$ 1,666,318	\$ 127,543	\$ 1,538,775	\$ 2,068,280	\$ 271,221	\$ 1,797,059
Total Indirect <sup>(5)</sup>	\$ 42,796	\$ 12,592	\$ 30,204	\$ 120,833	\$ 23,892	\$ 96,941	\$ 163,629	\$ 36,484	\$ 127,145
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 444,758</b>	<b>\$ 156,270</b>	<b>\$ 288,488</b>	<b>\$ 1,787,151</b>	<b>\$ 151,435</b>	<b>\$ 1,635,716</b>	<b>\$ 2,231,909</b>	<b>\$ 307,705</b>	<b>\$ 1,924,204</b>

(1) On October 1, 2021, NEIWPCC held ~\$444,758 of FY18 and FY19 EPA Cooperative Agreement funds. On October 1, 2021, RWU was awarded \$1,787,151 via the FY21 EPA Cooperative Agreement, which includes all FY20 and FY21 funds.

(2) Note that expenditures for NEIWPCC are as of 1.31.22 and RWU are as of 3.9.22.

(3) Based on most recent NEIWPCC reporting, \$34,707 of NBEP funding remains unallocated at NEIWPCC. RWU has submitted paperwork to NEIWPCC to subaward \$33,507 to RWU (all remaining unallocated FY2018 money) to cover staff salary. Further, NEIWPCC will spend the ~\$1,200 (all remaining unallocated FY2019 money) to cover small bills for NBEP over the next few months. The only projects we expect NEIWPCC to administer into 3Q FY2022 are the Impact by Design (closes 5/30/22) and Clark University Blackstone (closes 9/30/22) subawards.

(4) Includes Phone, Outside Printing, Internet, Research Supplies, Catering/Meals, Rental Space, Equipment Rental, Event Hosting, Event Meals, NBEP Meeting Meals, Meeting Attendance, Professional Development, Advertising, and Computer Support.

(5) The RWU budget takes all indirect "off the top" at the beginning of the year, and does not report indirect charged per period or otherwise on an ongoing basis. Therefore, the indirect included in this table is an NBEP calculated figure based on 20% of charged personnel and fringe to date.

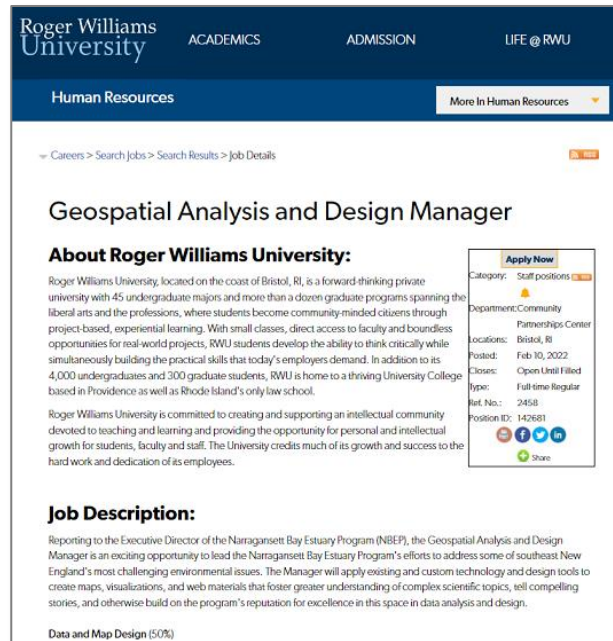
- *Budgeted Salary.* Current projections show us having funds to cover roughly 1-year of salary on October 1, 2022. This is an increase of roughly four months due to NBEP being at two staff since October, and the new funds in NEIWPC Subaward noted below.
  - *FY2015 and FY2017 Awards.* NEIWPC closed out the FY2015 and FY2017 EPA Cooperative Agreements in February.
  - *FY2018 and FY2019 Awards.* Based on the reporting from NEIWPC (as of January 31, 2022), \$34,707 of NBEP funding remains unallocated at NEIWPC.
    - NEIWPC approved a subaward on March 10, 2022 to provide all remaining *unallocated* FY2018 funds (\$33,507) to RWU. NBEP plans to use these funds for cover staff salary to ensure they are spent before they expire on September 30, 2022. FY2018 monies staying at NEIWPC are allocated to cover the Clark University’s Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Project and support subaward oversight and close out.
    - NEIWPC will spend all remaining unallocated FY2019 money (~\$1,200) to cover small bills for NBEP over the next few months. FY2019 monies remaining at NEIWPC are allocated for the DEIJ work being led by Impact by Design.
    - All NBEP funds remaining at NEIWPC will be fully spent and awards closed by September 30, 2022.
  - *2019-2020 SNEP Projects Complete.* All planning (5), shovel-ready (4), and capacity-building (5) subawards funded by NBEP with SNEP monies in 2019 and 2020 are now complete. The long-delayed Aquidnick Island Planning Commission Project (AIPC) is finished. The final reports and short blurbs for the planning and shovel-ready project are available on our website (AIPC will be added shortly).
3. **FY2021 Cooperative Agreement Amendment** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1a, 1b, and 1c). On March 9, 2022, EPA approved an amendment to the FY2021 Cooperative Agreement with RWU that revises the approved Work Plan and Budget to:
- Add the costs paid to staff for fringe benefits lost due to the transition from NEIWPC to RWU as approved by an August 25, 2021 EPA HQ memo (\$14K).
  - Re-program funds budgeted for Governance Support and travel to support a new community engagement task that will allow NBEP to compensate people up to \$650 for sharing their knowledge with NBEP (\$11K).
  - Adjust personnel costs to reflect 7-months with only two staff and a higher salary for the new Watershed Outreach Manager (compared to the Watershed Coordinator position) for the last 5 months of the fiscal year.
4. **New Green Infrastructure Planning Subawards** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 3a). NBEP released a [request for proposals](#) for green infrastructure planning projects on November 8, 2021. A total of 14 proposals were received. **An expanded NBEP Grants Subcommittee of 13 members, including several new folks with expertise in green infrastructure, met on January 21, 2022 and recommended 11 projects for funding (8 for full funding, 3 for partial funding) to the Executive Director.** Agreements were drafted over the last 6 weeks, and were sent out to all 11 entities by March 10, 2022 for final signature. See Figure 6 on page 13 of this report for further details on the projects. Special thanks to Peter Wong and Bob McCarthy with RWU Research and Special

Programs, Polla Mearns with RWU Finance, and Courtney Schmidt with NBEP for shepherding this effort and setting up a solid process for us to use for future awards. NBEP will be working with RWU Communications to develop a press release for these awards by late March.

## B. People

1. **New Staff Hires** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1a and 1b). NBEP worked with RWU Human Resources and Finance to develop and submit job descriptions, announcements, and other paperwork needed to post our two open positions on February 10, 2022. The two positions are:

- [Geospatial Analysis and Design Manager](#)—This position will apply existing and custom technology and design tools to create maps, visualizations, and web materials that foster greater understanding of complex scientific topics, tell compelling stories, and otherwise build on the program's reputation for excellence in this space. The position builds on Julia Twichell's job description by adding design elements she brought to the position. As of March 9, 2022, we have seven applications for this position.



The screenshot shows the job posting page for the 'Geospatial Analysis and Design Manager' position at Roger Williams University. The page includes the university's navigation menu (ACADEMICS, ADMISSION, LIFE @ RWU) and a 'Human Resources' section. The job title is prominently displayed, followed by an 'About Roger Williams University' section. A sidebar on the right contains an 'Apply Now' button and job details: Category: Staff positions, Department: Community Partnerships Center, Locations: Bristol, RI, Posted: Feb 10, 2022, Closes: Open Until Filled, Type: Full-time Regular, Ref. No.: 2458, and Position ID: 142681. The 'Job Description' section states that the position reports to the Executive Director of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP) and involves leading efforts to address environmental issues. A 'Data and Map Design (50%)' tag is visible at the bottom of the job description.

- [Watershed Outreach Manager](#)—This position will create and communicate the work of partnerships and cultivate projects that help achieve NBEP's mission. The position replaces Julia Bancroft's coordinator position with a higher-level position that will lead community engagement and writing for Vision 2032 at the outset. We have received 15 applications for this position.

*Through March 24<sup>th</sup>, please send anyone who may be interested in these positions to our website ([www.nbep.org](http://www.nbep.org)) where the links to the job announcements pop-up automatically on the home page. We expect to review applications and schedule first interviews over Zoom for the positions in early April 2022. Right now, Mike Gerel and Courtney with NBEP, Allen Hance with RWU, and Regina Lyons with EPA make up the interview committee.*

2. **Future Interns** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1a and 1b). NBEP staff have clarified the process for bringing on interns from RWU (hire them through RWU Career and Professional Development) or from other schools (pay them as consultant). Mike spoke to faculty at RWU Biology, Marine Biology, and Environmental Science (BMES) and the broader university about NBEP to spark interest in internships, research, and other collaborations. Courtney Schmidt with NBEP will work directly with Career Development and faculty to pursue at least one summer intern from RWU to support NBEP or a partner. SC members with intern needs should contact Courtney at [courtney.schmidt@nbep.org](mailto:courtney.schmidt@nbep.org).

3. **SC Reappointments** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1g). The following eight members terms were up as of 12/31/21, and are up for reappointment:

- Richard Carey, MA Department of Environmental Protection
- Rob Johnson, Clark University
- Cristina Kennedy, MA Division of Ecological Restoration
- Jim McCaughey, Narragansett Bay Estuary Commission (NBC)
- Bill Napolitano, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
- Tom Kutcher, RI Natural History Survey
- Cassius Spears, Narragansett Indian Tribe (term ended 12/31/20)
- Susan Sullivan, NEIWPC

Richard, Rob, Cristina, Bill, and Tom each indicated they would like to be reappointed. NBC and NEIWPC recommended new people, Eliza Moore and Richard Friesner, respectively. Short bios for the two new folks are provided below:

- *Eliza Moore* is the Senior Environmental Scientist at the Narragansett Bay Commission, Rhode Island's largest wastewater treatment agency. Ms. Moore has worked in the wastewater industry for over 10 years, finding a niche that satisfies her interests in coastal ecology and data management with her drive to improve environmental health and community well-being in the region. Ms. Moore received a bachelor's degree in biology (marine science focus) from Northeastern University in 2005 and is an alumna of the Three Seas Program. She earned a master's degree in biology (marine ecology focus) from San Diego State University in 2008.
- *Richard Friesner* joined NEIWPC in 2016 as Director of Water Quality Programs. Richard works on a variety of projects including wetlands, monitoring, water quality standards, nutrients, TMDLs, mercury, harmful algal blooms, and aquatic nuisance species. He serves as the NEIWPC representative on the Management Committee for the Long Island Sound's TMDL. Richard joined NEIWPC with 10 years of experience in the environmental science and policy field and most recently worked at the George Mason University's Office of Admissions. He holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science and Public Policy from George Mason University, an M.S. and B.S in Environmental Science from the University of Kansas.

Cassius Spears with the Narragansett Indian Tribe has not been in contact with the program for nearly four years, and has not responded to any inquiries during that period. Cassius' term expired last year but the SC suggested giving it one more year to reach him or the tribe to discuss a replacement. While NBEP had some initial conversations with tribal members during that time, due to COVID and other challenges, staff believe we are not at a place to seek a replacement for Cassius. Staff further felt that the most respectful approach at this time was to send Cassius a note indicating his term has expired, thanking him for his service, and sharing our desire to engage with the tribe in the future. The DEIJ Organizational Assessment that will be complete by late spring can guide our next actions, including stepping back and working with regional tribes to develop a land acknowledgement for NBEP.

The Nominating Subcommittee met on February 4, 2022 to discuss these reappointments. The group recommended sending the seven reappointments noted above to the EC for discussion at their next meeting and supported the approach noted above for the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Note that the subcommittee suggested holding a seat for NBC, as Eliza had not been designated as NBC's nominee in time for the meeting. Finally, the subcommittee decided not to

recommend any new members this cycle due to the current SC membership of 33 people and the need to focus on completing NBEP bylaws.

At their meeting on February 8, 2022, the Executive Committee (EC) supported the recommendations of the Nominating Subcommittee and sent the seven reappointments to the SC for approval and echoed the approach noted above for the Narragansett Indian Tribe. At the [March 17, 2022 SC meeting](#), these reappointments will be discussed and considered for formal approval.

4. **Individual Staff Work Plans** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1d). Mike and Courtney developed and obtained approval in January 2022 of Individual Work Plans for FY2022. Our two new hires will complete similar plans using our standard template within 60 days of hire.

### C. Organizational Governance and Planning.

1. **NBEP Committee Meetings** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1f). Since the SC last gathered, the EC met on [February 8, 2022](#), the Nominating Subcommittee on February 4, 2022, and the Grants Subcommittee on January 21, 2022.
2. **Host Transition** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1a and 1b). NBEP’s transition from NEIWPC to RWU is nearly complete. Staff expense reimbursements processes are now in place and the office phones were connected on March 11, 2022. The final tasks are RIDEM execution of NBEP’s office space agreement and completion of bylaws.
3. **NBEP Bylaws** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1e). Per the terms and conditions of RWU’s FY2021 Cooperative Agreement with EPA for Section 320 NEP funds, NBEP must approve formal bylaws to replace the existing Guiding Principles. A [first draft](#) was discussed by the EC and SC at their meetings on December 16, 2021 and a [final draft](#) was reviewed by the RWU Office of General Council by the EC along with a supporting [PPT](#) on February 8, 2022. In total, 10 sets of written comments were received on the final draft. The five substantive changes noted in Figure 3 below are now included in the final version.

Figure 3: Bylaw Revisions Since December 2021

Issue	Change	Reasoning
(1) Standing Committees	Replaced the term “Management Conference” with “Standing Committee”	Management Conference is a term from the Clean Water Act (CWA). The CWA origin of the program is noted in Section 2 of the bylaws, so retaining the language for that purpose is not necessary. Reviewers felt the Management Conference terminology was confusing and dated.
(2) Term Limits	Added a narrow exception to term limits that may occur with a 2/3 vote of the SC.	There was a desire to cover extenuating circumstances where there is simply no other person on staff at a key stakeholder to replace a termed out co-worker.
(3) SC Approval of Workplan & Budget Amendments	Added language that defined major amendments that require SC approval as (1) new tasks not in the Workplan and (2) Individual	Want to balance host primacy on personnel issue, appropriate SC oversight and use of their time, and flexibility for



Figure 3: Bylaw Revisions Since December 2021

Issue	Change	Reasoning
	Budget line item revisions that exceed 10% of the year’s CWA §320 allocation.	the NBEP Executive Director to make decisions.
(4) EC Membership	Added language that specified that the EC must include a rep from RIDEM, MassDEP, and a non-government organization (NGO) from RI and MA.	Feeling was it is vital that the EC include the CWA implementing agencies, and as a balance, include one NGO from each state.
(5) Science Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting Frequency	Added a requirement that the SAC meet at least three times a year.	Want to ensure this important committee remains engaged and active via regular meetings.

At their meeting on February 8, 2022, the EC recommended sending the final draft bylaws to the SC for consideration for approval at their next meeting.

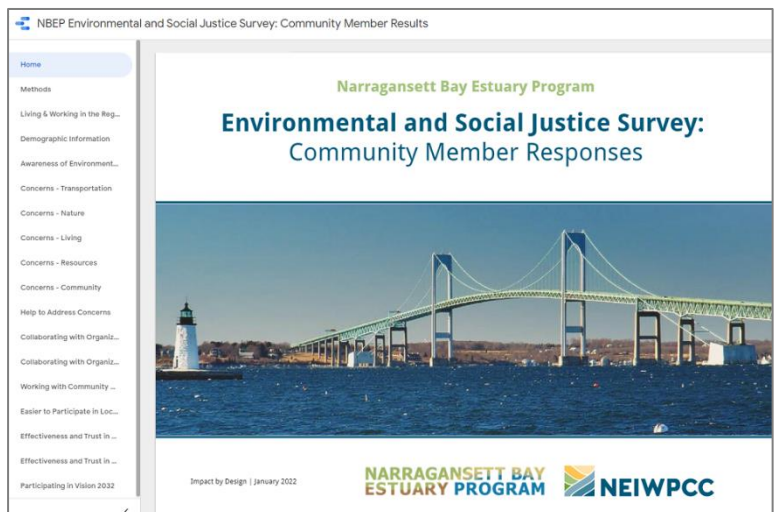
Subsequent to this meeting, two changes for clarity were included in the final version to be presented to the SC:

- *Term Limits.* Circumstances justifying an exception for term limits must be documented and submitted in writing to the SC for consideration.
- *EC Membership.* The language was clarified to indicate that there are six standing seats and one at-large seat. A provision was added that in the event that existing EC seat holders are unable to fill the Chair and/or Vice-Chair positions, by a 2/3 vote of the SC, an EC standing seat or seats may be converted to at-large for a given term to accommodate existing SC members willing to fill vacant officer positions.

At the [March 17, 2022 SC meeting](#), the final version will be discussed and considered for formal approval.

4. **DEIJ Organizational Assessment** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1a). NBEP continues to work with our consultants ([Impact by Design](#), IbD, and [Resolve Conservation](#)) to complete a DEIJ assessment of the NBEP partnership. This assessment is especially important for our study area based on the high number of environmental justice (EJ) communities and requirement that new federal funds better serve these communities. To date, IbD has completed an [assessment](#)

[roadmap](#), [developed pre-survey interview questions](#) to inform final [survey questions](#), and compiled dashboards of survey results from [community members](#) and [SC members](#). 182 community members and 17 of 50 SC and SAC members completed the survey, offering a wealth of useful information. NBEP is working with the consultants to plan



a workshop in April to share the results with the SC/SAC and explore appropriate concrete actions the NBEP partnership can take to elevate and amplify DEIJ in our day-to-day work. A final written assessment is due by the end of May 2022. Overall, NBEP staff is very pleased with the progress and outcomes of this project so far, and looks forward to discussing the results and becoming a more active ally in this space. SC members are encouraged to peruse the results in advance of the workshop.

5. **DEIJ Pilot Actions** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#)). While the DEIJ Assessment has been ongoing, NBEP staff have proactively pursued the activities below on a pilot-basis to respond to insights to date and stimulate thinking and action by our partners:
  - i. *Education*. Educating ourselves and others on the scope and scale of the inequities and burdens faced by underserved communities in our study area by creating and presenting story maps ([Environmental Justice in the Narragansett Bay Region](#) and [How Do We Use Our Coasts?](#)), a new online [EJ mapping tool](#), and NBEP's emerging DEIJ approach to EPA's National Estuary Program Environmental Justice/Diversity Equity and Inclusion Workgroup, [Northeast Arc Users Group](#), [Rhode Island Sea Grant webinar](#), and directly to partners and other NEPs.
  - ii. *Action Development*. NBEP has committed via our [Vision 2032 Blueprint](#) and *Action Planning Worksheet* (noted on page 10 of this report) to review all actions considered for Vision 2032 through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
  - iii. *Staff Recruitment*. Position recruiting, including the two newly posted jobs, include a provision in the announcement that education and experience requirements may be excepted where the candidate can demonstrate an equivalent combination of qualifications preparing the candidate for success in the position.
  - iv. *New Staff Job Description*. Hiring a new Watershed Outreach Manager, who among other tasks, will work to broaden our engagement with and services to new interests, including those working in underserved communities.
  - v. *Project Selection*. Scoring used in our green infrastructure planning request for proposals provided points for projects located in or that beneficially impact underserved areas.

#### **D. Grant Writing and Fundraising**

1. **Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL) Funding** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1h). BIL funding arrived at EPA Region 1 on March 9, 2022. NBEP is slated to receive \$909,857 each year through 2026. Draft BIL funding guidance indicates that climate and equity projects are priorities. NBEP/RWU will need to prepare and seek SC approval of a BIL Annual Work Plan and Budget and submit all required paperwork to EPA this spring-summer to obtain the funds. BIL NEP Funding Guidance is in draft, so exact rules and timing are pending. Here are a few notes:
  - At the February EC meeting, Mike indicated that since NBEP has sufficient Section 320 and SNEP funding to cover staff salary and other obligations, we will be able to re-grant *all* of these new funds to external partners in 2022. He also noted that ideally NBEP will fund no more than 5-7 awards due to the existing workload associated with the 11 new green infrastructure awards.
  - Based on lots of outreach by NBEP staff over the last few months, it is clear that the highest and best use of these funds is for local capacity-building and planning to support future acquisition of BIL and other funds for future implementation projects.



Municipalities, NGOs, and state agencies in our study area are tapped out, and not sufficiently equipped or coordinated to pursue and deploy the significant BIL funds on the way. All told, lack of capacity for problem/solution identification, proposal writing, and grant management are top barriers to getting more BIL funds on the ground.

- Figure 4 below offers some preliminary projects ideas for NBEP BIL funds for 2022. There is a mix of direct and competitive funding. Note that EPA and RWU permit non-competitive subawards if external parties benefit from the funds and the concept is included in the approved Workplan. At the next SC meeting on [March 17, 2022](#) staff will present these project ideas and members will be asked to provide feedback on them or offer their own ideas. Depending on EPA deadlines, we expect the SC will need to review and approve a BIL Workplan and Budget for a final list of projects at an earlier special meeting or their next meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Figure 4: 2022 BIL Funding Preliminary Ideas

Capacity-Building
<a href="#">One Square World/Providence Racial Environmental Justice Committee</a> Providence, RI \$100K to hire full time staff to help the community implement the <a href="#">Providence Climate Justice Plan</a> .
<a href="#">Groundwork Southcoast</a> Fall River, MA \$75K to help hire a dedicate staffer to build the planned resilience district in Fall River, which emulates the existing district operating in New Bedford, MA.
<a href="#">Save The Bay</a> RI and MA Up to \$100K to help hire new staff to support development of local projects, modeled after Wenley Ferguson’s role and the <a href="#">National Fish &amp; Wildlife Foundation circuit rider/liaison program</a> .
Targeted Planning
<a href="#">The Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island</a> Pawtucket and Central Falls, RI \$300K to augment existing state bond funds and help pay for fish passage design for the four lower dams on the Blackstone River creating the conditions to acquire BIL funds from NOAA for construction.
Habitat-Climate Planning Request for Proposals
Planning for Habitat Restoration and Preservation Projects That Improve Climate Resilience RI and MA \$335K to support 2-3 planning projects TBD.



### III. WORK PLAN OBJECTIVE #2: PROVIDE WATERSHED ANALYSIS & PLANNING SERVICES

- A. **Vision 2032** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 2c). Work on Vision 2032 has continued since public meetings were paused in August 2021. Over the last six months, based on feedback so far, NBEP staff made decisions and drafted documents to shift planning from a predominately remote and on-line to in-person later this spring as COVID hopefully recedes. Some highlights of preparation work include:
- **Stakeholder Input.** NBEP has completed considerable outreach to diverse interests across the study area to inform Vision 2032, including some organizations and people historically not engaged by the program. Some metrics about our outreach activities to date:

- Hosted 15 meetings attended by 111 individual attendees supported by an active MailChimp mailing list of 232 members.
- Maintained a Vision 2032-specific website, which describes the purpose of the plan in plain language, offers meeting updates, and lists ways to get involved.
- Successfully launched two surveys that captured hyper-local perspectives, including a Vision 2032 survey that was completed by 169 individuals, and a related DEIJ survey that was completed by 199 people, which included 100 responses from BIPOC.
- Offered 25 formal presentations completed 187 one-on-one meetings/conversations contributing to Vision 2032 since March 2020.

In short, despite COVID, we are pleased to have already solicited, compiled, and integrated into the planning process more input from more diverse sources than anytime in our past. While we believe the data obtained is sufficient to allow us to move on from ‘planning to plan’ to the drafting phase, we will pursue further purposeful action-targeted outreach driven by the *Action Planning Worksheet* described below.

- **Draft Goals and Objectives.** Staff carefully compiled and considered input from the Vision 2032 Subcommittee and Planning Groups to date to draft the 3 goals and 12 objectives listed in Figure 5, which offer a framework for planning. We expect these goals and objectives to be tweaked as the plan is developed.

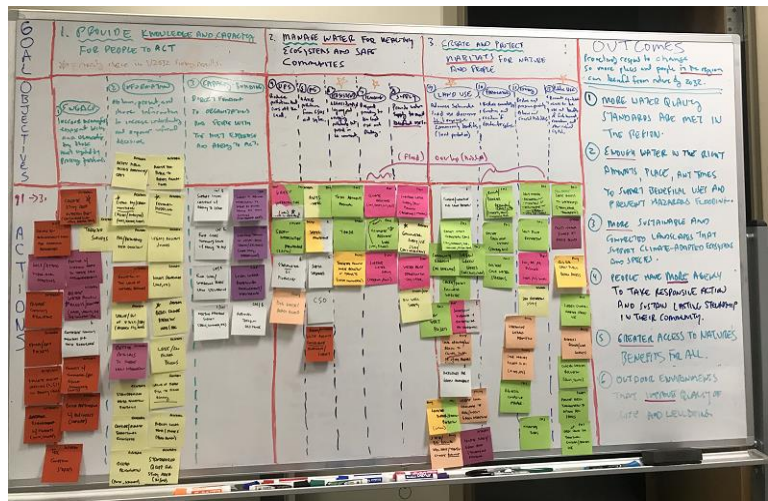


Figure 5: Vision 2032 Final Draft Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Provide knowledge and capacity for people to act.

- Objective #1: Engagement—Increase meaningful engagement with and ownership by those most impacted by proposed actions.
- Objective #2: Data—Obtain, preserve, and share information to increase understanding and empower informed decisions.
- Objective #3: Capacity—Direct funding to organizations and people with the expertise and agency to act.

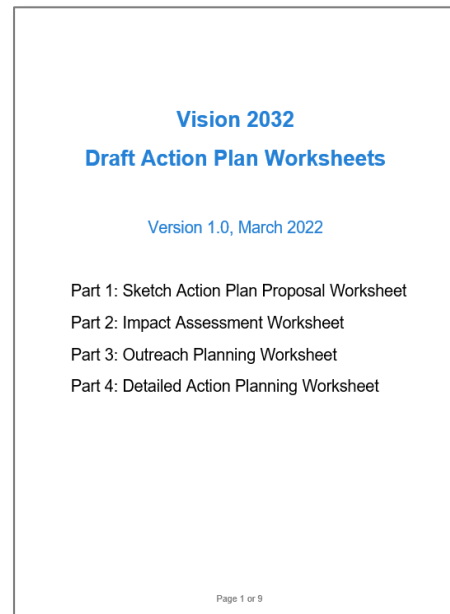
Goal #2: Manage water for healthy ecosystems and communities.

- Objective #4: Nonpoint source pollution—Reduce pollution that runs off the land.
- Objective #5: Point source pollution—Reduce pollution from CSOs and septic systems.
- Objective #6: Persistent pollutants—Address legacy, emerging, and trash pollution.
- Objective #7: Flooding—Respond proactively to sea level rise and flooding.
- Objective #8: Water supply--Provide water supply to meet beneficial uses.

Goal #3: Restore and protect habitats that support natural processes and people.

- Objective #9: Land use—Advance land use decisions that emphasize public benefits.
- Objective #10: Freshwater living resources—Restore connectivity, function, and resilience of freshwater systems.
- Objective #11: Estuary living resources—Restore and preserve priority estuarine and coastal habitats.
- Objective #12: Public Use—Provide equitable access to the use and benefits of fish harvest, recreation, and other natural capital.

- **Action Planning Worksheets.** NBEP staff dug in since last fall to study other planning processes around the country and respond to the effectiveness of processes NBEP has deployed so far to finalize an *Action Planning Worksheet*, which will be used to draft the Action Plans that will form the core of Vision 2032. The worksheet includes a “sketch” action plan (pages 1-5), impact assessment (page 6-7), outreach planning (page 8), and detailed action planning (page 9). This worksheet is currently under review by a few volunteered SC members. Staff plan to create sketch action plans for ~30 actions over the next 6 weeks so they can be discussed at the next Vision meeting this spring and set the stage for deeper action planning this summer.



- **Vision 2032 Completion Date.** The new target date for completing Vision 2032 is now June 2023.
- **Re-start of Vision 2032 Subcommittee Meetings.** Expect a meeting invite in April for an in-person subcommittee in May to vet our internal work and restart the public planning process.

B. **Science Working Group Meetings** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 2a and 2b). NBEP’s [Science Working Groups](#) remain active. These specific purpose-driven groups are convened at the request of partners to address vexing or unaddressed scientific issues. Here are some highlights since December:

1. **Salt Marsh Restoration, Assessment, & Monitoring Program (RAMP).** This group last met on [January 12, 2022](#) to identify projects for upcoming funding opportunities and to explore NBEP/RAMP hosting a salt marsh science event (the topic has since changed to plastic pollution).
2. **Social Science Working Group.** NBEP has drafted a 2-pp document informed by the group’s work to date that describes priority social science metrics (three at this point) and how they fit with the existing environmental science indicators. NBEP staff will build on this piece through this summer to create social indicators for inclusion in the next Status and Trends Report.
3. **Water Clarity Working Group.** NBEP has drafted a 2-pp document that responds to group discussions by analyzing existing water clarity data to create a revised water clarity indicator for the next Status and Trends Report and perhaps future monitoring and management applications.
4. **Fishers Ecological Knowledge Working Group.** NBEP created a Fishers’ Ecological Knowledge (FEK) Working Group to host continued work to explore integration of data collected by commercial fisherman to assess conditions, guide research and management, and drive greater collaboration between fisherman and resource managers. The advisory panel assisting this project met on January 28, 2022 to review a next steps plan created by our consultant, [Shining Sea Fisheries Consulting](#). Potential actions include a meeting with commercial fishers to refine a future Phase 2 project and hiring of a professor/student (i.e. BU) to lead such an effort.

C. **Blackstone Initiative** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 2d).

1. **Lower Blackstone Dams Fish Passage Project.** Since the last fish passage Core Team meeting in November, NBEP has hosted one-on-one meetings between RIDEM and key stakeholders (Old Slater Mill Association, National Park Service, NOAA, Army Corps, City of Pawtucket) to identify solutions to the highest priority barriers to progress. The ultimate goal is to create a viable consensus path by early summer for designing, funding, constructing this decades-stalled project. A sampling of positive outcomes includes:
  - Engaged 14-member Core Team is now convened that includes all key stakeholders necessary to move the project forward. NBEP staff has pursued persistent diplomacy with members of this group, which has resulted in growing trust in our role.
  - RIDEM commitment to lead the Core Team and pursuit of funding for design and construction of the project.
  - Following a meeting at Old Slater Mill with RIDEM Director and Fisheries lead, RIDEM has been invited to the Old Slater Mill Association’s next Board meeting to pursue an approach to land control at the site that enables passage (RIDEM purchase or easement).
  - After a long period of inadequate coordination, two meetings between RIDEM and the Army Corps has opened up channels of communications, resulting in the exchange of two potential designs for passing the dams at Main Street and Slater Mill and productive conversations about the best role for the Corps.
  - Extension of a contract between RIDEM and TNC, which enables ~\$800K in state bond funds held by TNC to be used to hire consultants to advance the project.
  - Leveraged progress generated by the new Core Team to engage NOAA to explore significant forthcoming BIL fish passage funding to cover construction costs for this effort.
  - Strategic engagement with Senators Reed and Whitehouse’s staff that has them speaking to agencies about the Blackstone River and poised to support the project in the future.

#### D. New NBEP Science

1. Science Event (Task 4a). Based on the Salt Marsh RAMP’s current focus on prioritizing projects for funding, NBEP pivoted our science event to focus on plastic pollution. The topic is still broad—from micro to macro pollution, from cradle to grave, from private to public actors. Brand-new research indicates plastics are a significant problem in Narragansett Bay. Courtney has been meeting with many national and regional experts to plan an event at RWU.
2. Science Corner ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 2a). NBEP published a new Science Corner Update titled, “[Into the Woods: Solar Fields in the Forest.](#)” Courtney worked with Clark University, URI, MassDEP, RIDEM, and Mass Audubon to create this piece to stimulate discussions to address lingering questions about how to balance energy needs with forest benefits when it comes to ground-mounted solar arrays in the Narragansett Bay region. Clark is working to create solar field maps to assist future work.



## IV. WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES #1-#3: NBEP FUNDED PROJECTS

- A. **NBEP Funded Projects** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Task 3a and 3b). See Figure 6 on page 13 for an overview of the 14 active NBEP-funded subawards and contracts (collectively, “projects”).

Figure 6: NBEP Funded Projects

Funding Source	Project Type	Recipient/Location	Funded Amount	Balance	Short Project Description	Update as of March 9, 2022	Closing Date	
FY18	SNEP	Capacity	Clark University, MA*	\$95,000	\$85,150	Hire Blackstone River Watershed Manager to form a Blackstone Watershed Collaborative and implement the Needs Assessment	Manager hired September 7, 2022 and Collaborative has met 5 times.	9/30/22
FY19	NEP	Research	Shining Sea Fisheries Consulting	\$10,000	\$3,500	Analyze existing FEK data that informs future collection and use of fishers' data that can help assess Bay conditions and guide decisions.	Submitted "next steps" document to NBEP to guide future work.	4/30/22
FY19	NEP	Research	Impact by Design	\$34,375	\$25,782	Develop DEIJ Organizational Assessment, including interviews, surveys, workshop, and assessment to guide NBEP's efforts.	Summarized results and drafted plan for spring workshop.	5/31/22
FY21	NEP	Outreach	Association of National Estuary Programs	\$4,000	\$4,000	Create simple and compelling infographics and other communications materials that speak to the value of estuaries.	Contract in place and awaiting work products.	9/30/24
FY21	NEP	Outreach	Tanager Creative	\$6,000	\$0	Provide domain, hosting, software, fonts, and on-call technical assistance for Vision2032.org website.	Created framework for new resource library on site.	9/30/22
FY21	SNEP	Planning	Audubon Society of RI	\$73,000	\$73,000	Conduct low-cost effectiveness monitoring of green infrastructure projects in Roger Williams Park and across Providence.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	SNEP	Planning	Town of Barrington, RI	\$33,700	\$33,700	Complete stormwater drainage system geodatabase to identify opportunities to retrofit existing or install new green infrastructure.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	SNEP	Planning	Town of Bristol, RI	\$70,818	\$70,818	Develop 10% concept designs for up to three green infrastructure projects in the Sowams and Annawamscutt neighborhoods.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	SNEP	Capacity-Building	Clark University, MA	\$25,000	\$25,000	Work with municipal decision-makers in Woonsocket and Worcester to create conditions for installation of nature-based solutions.	Agreement executed March 10, 2022.	9/30/24
FY21	SNEP	Planning	City of East Providence, RI	\$45,000	\$45,000	Develop conceptual plans for stormwater management in Runnins River watershed, including design and permitting for 1 green practice.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	SNEP	Planning	Groundwork Rhode Island, Providence, RI	\$92,099	\$92,099	Advance renderings of green infrastructure projects at the south end of Blackstone Boulevard to 75% design and public engagement stage.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	SNEP	Capacity-Building	Groundwork Southcoast, Fall River, MA	\$25,000	\$25,000	Launch Resilience District model in Fall River that will create and maintain green open spaces that benefit the community	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	NEP	Planning	Narragansett Bay Reserve, Prudence Island, RI	\$50,015	\$50,015	Complete conceptual designs, plans, costs, and permitting for at least 4 green infrastructure practices on reserve property.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	SNEP	Planning	Southern RI Conservation District, Westerly, RI	\$75,000	\$75,000	Develop a master plan with three concept designs and outreach for green infrastructure consistent with MRP/Comprehensive Plan.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	NEP	Planning	Town of South Kingstown, RI	\$99,000	\$99,000	Complete designs, permitting, and outreach for 4 private sites that builds on existing engineering designs for Green Hill Pond watershed.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24
FY21	SNEP	Planning	Woonasquatucket River WC, Providence RI	\$60,410	\$60,410	Engage engineers and residents to create effective, community-supported 30% designs for green infrastructure on Salmon Avenue.	Agreement at awardee awaiting execution.	9/30/24

\*These three projects will be managed by NEIWPC until completed. Balances as of 1/31/22.



## V. WORK PLAN OBJECTIVE #4: DELIVER TARGETED TECH TRANSFER

- A. **Website Updates** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#) Task 4d). Staff continually update the NBEP.org and Vision2032.org websites with new meeting information, news, Science Updates, and reports.
- B. **Outreach** ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#) Task 4c and 4d). NBEP staff has been busy participating in regional and national workshops, trainings, committees, and one-on-one meetings to share our work, learn skills, and build partnerships. Outreach since the last SC meeting includes:
- 12/21/21—[Center for Youth & Community Leadership in Education](#) (CYCLE) re: com engage.
  - 1/5/22—Pew Charitable Trusts re: Bay shellfish restoration planning.
  - 1/5/22—URI re: solar arrays
  - 1/6/22—Clark University re: solar arrays.
  - 1/7/22—Narragansett High School students re: youth and Bay health video.
  - 1/10/22—RWU Economics faculty re: value of the Bay/Vision 2032.
  - 1/11/22—[Southern California Coastal Water Research Project](#) re: CERF, plastics.
  - 1/11/22—ANEP Executive Committee re: BIL funding.
  - 1/11/22—SNEP Network Advisory Committee meeting.
  - 1/13/22—Fuss & O’Neil re: Vision 2032/barriers to local projects.
  - 1/14/22—EPA AECD re: microplastics.
  - 1/19/22—ANEP External Communications & Legislative Committee re: BIL funds.
  - 1/20/22—RWU Executive staff re: [URI Blue Economy Initiative](#).
  - 1/20/22—RIDEM re: plastics.
  - 1/20/22—Save The Bay re: interview upon joining Lower Blackstone Core Team.
  - 1/20/22—RWU Communications re: website, social media, and partnering.
  - 1/20/22—RWU faculty re: plastics.
  - 1/21/22—URI Coastal Institute re: plastics
  - 1/25/22—URI CRC/GSO re: plastics.
  - 1/25/22—RIDOH/Health Equity Zones (HEZ) re: community engagement.
  - 1/26/22—Brown University re: take-over of “Insomniac” monitoring cruise.
  - 1/28/22—EPA Region 1 NEPs re: BIL funding.
  - 1/28/22—Clark University re: FY2023 Blackstone Watershed Manager funding.
  - 1/31/22—[Peconic Estuary Partnership](#) re: lost fringe benefits solutions.
  - 1/31/22—URI Foundation re: RI Blue Economy Initiative.
  - 2/1/22—SNEP Network leadership re: Vision 2032/barriers to local projects.
  - 2/2/22—HEZ Learning Community re: presentation on climate justice work.
  - 2/3/22—EPA re: trash free waters and plastics event.
  - 2/4/22—RWU Engineering re: intern and research collaboration.
  - 2/4/22—RWU Law School re: plastics event.
  - 2/7/22—RI Aquaculture SAMP meeting.
  - 2/7/22—Clark University re: solar array data.
  - 2/9/22—Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council re: Vision 2032/barriers to local projects.
  - 2/10/22—STB Waterkeepers re: plastics event.
  - 2/10/22—Groundwork Southcoast re: Vision 2032/barriers to local projects.
  - 2/10/22—NBC re: plastics event.
  - 2/11/22—EPA AECD re: microplastics.

*Continued below*



- 2/11/22—Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank re: Vision 2032/barriers to local projects.
- 2/14/22—NEERS re: bi-annual meeting planning.
- 2/14/22—Save The Bay leadership re: Vision 2032/barriers to local projects.
- 2/15/22—Providence Racial and Environmental Justice (REJC) Committee re: BIL funding.
- 2/15/22—Syracuse University re: [Envision Resilience Narragansett](#).
- 2/16/22—ANEP External Communications & Legislative Com re: Tampa meeting, BIL funds.
- 2/18/22—RI Housing Works re: community engagement.
- 2/18/22—RWU Foundation and Corporate fundraising re plastics event.
- 2/22/22—RIDOH re: Vision 2032/barriers to local projects.
- 2/28/22-3/4/22—Bay Area Scientific Information Symposium.
- 2/28/22—URI Coastal Institute re: plastics event.
- 2/28/22—[Providence Environmental Sustainability Task Force](#) meeting.
- 3/1/22—EPA Region 1 re: QAPP requirements.
- 3/1/22—EPA re: planning for RI part of Resilient Coastal Wetlands event.
- 3/1/22—Chair of HAB session at Bay Area Scientific Information Symposium.
- 3/2/22 – Chair Shellfish session at Bay Area Scientific Information Symposium
- 3/2/22—Sustainable marinas group (Curt Spaulding) re: partnering.
- 3/3/22—Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor re: trash.
- 3/8/22—SNEP Policy Committee meeting.
- 3/8/22—ANEP EC meeting re: BIL funding.
- 3/10/22—RWU re: Envision Resilience Narragansett.



## VI. UPCOMING ACTIVITIES & MEETINGS

### A. Priority Activities ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#)).

Figure 7: Staff Priorities Through May 2022

Mike Gerel	Courtney Schmidt
New Hires	Green Infrastructure Planning QAPPs and Presser
Vision 2032 Action Planning Worksheets	SAC Meeting
2022 BIL Workplan and Budget	Water Clarity and Social Science Indicator Updates
Lower Blackstone Fish Passage meetings	Fishers Environmental Knowledge Phase 2
NBEP Committee meeting prep	Summer Interns

### B. NBEP meetings ([FY21 NEP Work Plan](#), Tasks 1f, 2b, 2c, 2d).

- Lower Blackstone Fish Passage Core Team meeting, April-May 2022 TBD
- DEIJ Assessment Workshop, May TBD
- NBEP Executive Committee meeting, [May 10<sup>th</sup>](#), 1:00-3:30pm
- Vision 2032 Subcommittee Meeting Re-boot meeting, May 2022 TBD
- NBEP Steering Committee meeting, [June 16<sup>th</sup>](#), 12:30-3:30pm