

Southeast New England Program Steering Committee Meeting
May 14, 2018
Save the Bay (Providence, RI)

Draft Agenda

- 9:30am – 10:00am Arrival and Networking
- 10:00am – 10:05am Meeting Convenes- Welcome and Introductions (Mel Cote, EPA)
- 10:05am – 10:10am Overview of Today’s Meeting (MaryJo Feuerbach, EPA)
- 10:10am – 10:15am Public Comments
- 10:15am – 11:00am SNEP Project Highlights
- EPA PRB Site Characterization (Marcel Belaval, EPA)
 - Buzzards Bay NEP Projects (Joe Costa, BBNEP)
- 11:00am – 11:30am Update Since December 2017 Meeting
- Subcommittee Report Outs (Karen Simpson & Bryan Dore, EPA)
 - RAE RFP Status (Tom Ardito, RAE)
 - Policy Committee Report Out (MaryJo Feuerbach, EPA)
 - FY2018 Budget Status (MaryJo Feuerbach, EPA)
- 11:30am – 11:40am Break
- 11:40am – 12:50pm Working Lunch* and Discussion of Capacity Building (Ellie Tonkin, EPA)
- 12:50pm - 1:00pm Next Steps and Meeting Adjourns (Mel Cote, EPA)

*Please bring your own lunch.

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Meeting Summary

After an introduction by Mel Cote, Chief of EPA Region 1's Surface Water Branch, the meeting kicked off with two presentations that highlighted some of the ongoing work that has been funded through SNEP with technical assistance and grants. Marcel Belaval gave an overview of the effort to characterize Cape Cod sites that are appropriate for using permeable reactive barriers (PRBs) to intercept and control nitrogen inputs. This nitrogen-reducing technology has generated great interest among towns, including on Martha's Vineyard, as a technology with potential for addressing nutrient impairments at lower cost. Joe Costa gave an update of several projects that have been funded via SNEP through grants to the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program (NEP), including work with the Buzzards Bay municipalities that has led to likely changes in rules governing access to loans for I/A septic systems.

The Ecosystem and Monitoring Subcommittees will be working to organize one-day workshops that will identify current efforts and areas where gaps may exist in these two topic areas. Tom Ardito of Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) updated the group on the status of the RAE RFP, explaining that RAE had received 60 pre-proposals requesting \$20M; of these, 25 were selected to submit full proposals, with the deadline for submittal on June 8. RAE expects to select the final recipients by the end of July.

Policy Chair MaryJo Feuerbach recapped input from the Committee's April 9 meeting, noting a strong preference for focusing primarily on subawards for local projects. In light of that feedback, EPA is planning with FY18 funding to provide an additional \$3M to RAE for its RFP program, \$500K each to Narragansett and Buzzards Bay NEPs to enable large-scale CCMP implementation projects, and remaining funding for several regional technical assistance projects and to bring a graduate student fellow on board to assist in researching data needs for the two SNEP subcommittees.

The majority of the discussion focused on defining capacity building in the SNEP region. Most folks agreed that "capacity" is a combination of knowledge and the resources/interest to put that knowledge to work. A comprehensive definition of capacity building would include one or more of the following elements:

- Providing long-term opportunities to grow at all scales
- Providing information and technical assistance in order to make something easier to get done
- Addressing gaps in knowledge, skills and resources, and increased communication to exchange those skills and resources
- Providing the tools necessary to integrate projects so they can address multiple issues

The group agreed that building capacity requires attention to different target groups; i.e., those ready to engage around similar priorities, and those who are not interested but could become so. Approaches could include regulatory or non-regulatory incentives that help to "force" collaboration among municipalities, and between municipalities and potential partners; working first with those who have interest in improving the reach of the resources they already have; focusing on achieving specific projects that increase long-term ability rather than trying to create some global scale "capacity;" and creating and sharing tools that enable more efficient and effective work. To ensure that these tools are actually used, SNEP collectively needs to pay attention to consultation, attention to continuity, and the needs of the end users.

Future SNEP funding opportunities may focus on a capacity building theme so EPA is committed to considering this feedback regarding the definition and implementation of capacity building.