



12/9/2020

SNEP Steering Committee Meeting

The purpose of this document is to summarize feedback on the attached presentation presented during the Steering Committee meeting held on 12/9/2020. The member organizations and their representatives in attendance were as follows: Association to Preserve Cape Cod - Andrew Gottlieb; Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program – Joe Costa; EPA Office of Research and Development (ORD) – Tim Gleason and Walter Berry; EPA Region 1, MaryJo Feuerbach, Mel Cote, Ian Dombroski, Bryan Dore, Adam Reilly, Margherita Pryor, David Morgan (ORISE), and Shasten Sherwell (ORISE); Martha’s Vineyard Commission – Adam Turner; MassDEP – Drew Osei; NEIWPC – Susan Sullivan and Richard Freisner; New England Environmental Finance Center – Martha Sheils; The Nature Conservancy – Alison Bowden; U.S. Geological Survey – Jeff Barbaro; Restore America’s Estuaries (RAE) – Tom Ardito, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Larry Oliver

Agenda:

- Introduction and Roll Call **(9:30)**
 - Mel Coté, Chief, Surface Water Branch, EPA Region 1
- Five-Year Strategic Plan (draft) presentation and discussion **(9:45)**
 - SNEP Staff
- Pilot Watersheds Initiative Presentation and Discussion **(10:05)**
 - SNEP Staff
- Technical Assistance Network Report Out **(10:30)**
 - Martha Sheils, Director, New England Environmental Finance Center
- Watershed Grants Program Report Out **(11:00)**
 - Tom Ardito, Program Director, SNEP Watershed Grants Program
- Budget Review FY20-21 and Discussion **(11:20)**
 - SNEP Staff
- Upcoming Passthrough RFA Presentation and Discussion **(12:00)**
 - SNEP Staff
- Adjourn **(by 12:30)**



Feedback on SNEP 5-year strategic plan

- What is the crosswalk between research priorities like harmful algal blooms (HABs) and the Watershed Implementation Grants Request for Assistance (RFA) solicitation?
 - We will try to focus RFA priority project types on these research topics.
 - HABs will also be a priority in the Pilot Watershed Program
 - How are you going to track the success of the program?
 - Using the metrics and indicators that are currently under development in our SNEP Regional Monitoring Strategy.
 - We also are working on a SNEP project evaluation contract that will look back at projects we have already funded in order to guide future projects. As a part of this we may require grantees to submit more information as a grant condition in the future.
 - Additionally, we are developing a dashboard of funded projects to keep track of funding and project success.
 - Good to hear about the SNEP project evaluation contract. It would be good to include some examples of accomplishments in the 5-year report.
 - We will highlight accomplishments, or what needs to be worked on in the communications section of our 5-year report.
 - Would be good if SNEP can create a pipeline of resources for other funding sources
 - Can you talk for a minute about what you mean by a regional monitoring plan? Or will that be determined when you figure out your monitoring strategy?
 - This plan is under development by a contractor. It will help create a holistic strategy to determine the impacts SNEP, and it's partners, are having on the region and environment. We will keep our partners updated as the process continues.
 - The monitoring strategy is something that has been recommended for a while by the policy committee. It will help us understand which projects are working and evaluate success of efforts and funding. Also, to understand what innovative or pilot projects are successful.
- **Pilot Watersheds Initiatives Presentation and Discussion**
 - SNEP is preparing to fund an initiative for four 5-year pilot watershed-level projects that address specific challenges facing that watershed. Our aim to is bolster interdisciplinary and interagency partnerships (state, federal, local, NGO, business, etc.) and collaboration. We anticipate funding these projects for five years and aim to fund one project in each of the four SNEP regions: Narragansett Bay subwatershed, Buzzards Bay subwatershed, Cape Cod, and the Islands provided that one project from each region meets the requirements of the RFP, which we hope to be released within the next few months (early 2021). Issuance of this RFP will be contingent on funding availability.



- **Questions on Technical Assistance Network Report Out**

Presented by Martha Sheils, Director, New England Environmental Finance Center

- What is the capacity and overall demand for on-call Technical Assistance?
 - Second call for participants goes out in April. Current capacity is for immediate needs only but we will continue growing over the next year. State liaisons field direct calls and usually are directed to funding applications and other existing resources. Needs are usually addressed in one phone call.
- Is the stewardship mapping project (STEW-MAP) available for us to use? Are the projects funded by RAE and SNEP Network in Warren working in tandem?
 - The STEW-MAP project is ongoing. Anything gleaned will be shared.
 - Not currently but working with RAE on how to collaborate better. The Warren project is an extreme example (redevelopment in one project, retreat on the other.)
- Is the number of organizations represented in STEW-MAP a sizeable portion of the total organizations?
 - I imagine so, but the nature of STEW-MAP is to find gaps, so it's not really possible to know yet.
- Narragansett Bay Estuary Program is forwarding inquiries to SNEP Network for Technical Assistance.

- **Questions on Watershed Grants Program report out**

Presented by Tom Ardito, Program Director, SNEP Watershed Grants Program

- Will there be language in RFP advising past grantees they're less likely to receive funding?
 - No, as that's never been part of the program. Past applicants are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. The criteria are as given. Move to Letter Of Intent (LOI) is meant to reduce time spent on applications, but acceptance of LOI still does not guarantee funding.
 - We are committed to added clarity in decision-making criteria and process.
- Will Environmental Justice (EJ) be part of the focus?
 - Yes, we've tried to emphasize EJ in the past and funded some projects with that focus. We'll do better outreach this year and work with the TA network in hopes of increasing applications from EJ areas
- In light of EJ community capacity, consider informal status, need for fiscal sponsors, etc. in application process
 - Will follow up on that issue and EJ in Blackstone corridor in general



- **Budget Review FY20-21 and discussion**

- We are in a Continuing Resolution; budget for FY21 is still unknown. Hoping for at least level funding.
- Total funding for FY20: \$5.4 million
 - Interagency Agreements -\$410k
 - Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) fellowships
 - USGS Nitrogen loading to the Cape Rivers: study to measure patterns of Nitrogen (N) loading on Cape Cod. Results will be used to prioritize N reduction efforts. Draft report expected within the next few weeks. Continued funding would be applied to temporal monitoring and development of tool for future monitoring.
 - USGS Maravista Monitoring: studying effects of sewerage on groundwater (GW) nitrogen levels. Monitoring efforts ongoing since 2016. Draft report currently in peer-review, publication expected 2021. Future funding would allow for expanded monitoring on surface water (SW) and GW.
 - USGS Wickford: pre/post-sewerage monitoring in partnership with ORD. This project has just begun and a draft Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is currently in development.
 - Contracts - \$667k
 - SNEP Technical Assistance
 - Webinars (4) and Workshops (2) for FY21
 - Update grants tracking database. A grants “dashboard” to be published online once completed.
 - Evaluation of previously funded SNEP projects and determine how to improve future awards and metrics development.
 - Monitoring Strategy
 - Strategy for compilation of collection of data to assist with future State of the Region reports, project evaluation, and trends assessment.
 - Flow Duration Curve
 - Impervious cover disconnection.
 - Using flow duration curves to determination impact of development on watershed to determine changes to nutrient output and hydrogeomorphology
 - Grants - \$4.3M
 - RAE SNEP Watershed Grant, final year remaining of agreement (\$2.3M)
 - SNEP Network funded for second year (\$1.5M)
 - NEP Buzzards Bay (\$250k)
 - NEP Narragansett Bay (\$250k)
 - Service Fees - \$18k
 - ORISE fees
 - EPA Headquarters



- The bulk of our funds go to grants for projects. Strategic plan aims to assign 80% of funding to grants.
- FY21 Proposed Budget - \$5.4M - \$6M
- FY21 Continued Projects:
 - Interagency Agreements
 - ORISE
 - USGS Nitrogen Loading and USGS Wickford and Maravista
 - Contracts
 - Cape Stormwater BMP Monitoring for one additional year
 - Flow Duration Curve – proof of concept this year, application to a watershed in year 2
 - Webinar and Workshop Assistance
 - Grants
 - Same as FY20
 - Service Fees
 - Same as FY20
- Proposed New Projects for FY21
 - Pilot watersheds initiative
 - Pilot watershed pre/post implementation monitoring
 - PhyloChip Additional Data Analysis
 - Integrated Ecosystem Services Framework (IESF) Implementation/Continuation
 - Other Applied Research
 - If we receive greater than continued funding, we have further research projects ready for implementation.
- Additional funding will be added to Contracts for pilot watersheds monitoring if more funding is available.

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