



## **SNEP Steering Committee Meeting**

### **Meeting Summary Memo**

**March 25, 2024**

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SNEP held a virtual meeting of the Steering Committee on March 25, 2024 from 2 pm – 3 pm. The meeting is summarized below.

#### **Agenda**

1. Roll Call
2. Workplan Overview
3. FY24 SNEP Budget Discussion
4. Input on SNEP Workshop Plans
5. EPA SNEP Updates
6. Summary and Adjourn

#### **Attendees**

Adam Reilly – EPA SNEP

Margherita Pryor – EPA

Ian Dombroski – EPA SNEP

Matthew Stamas – EPA

Mel Cote – EPA

Natalie Schafer – EPA

Adrienne Pappal- Mass OZCM

Andrew Osei- MassDEP

Andrew Gottlieb – APCC

Carrie Banks- MA DER

Christina Madonia – EPA SNEP

Danica Belknap – SRPEDD

Darcy Young - NBEP

Eric Boettger- RI NRCS

Haley Miller - EPA

Gerard Martin- MassDEP

Joe Costa- Buzzards Bay NEP

Laura Erban – EPA (ORD)

Martha Sheils – SNEP Network

MaryJo Feuerbach – EPA

Maggie Leary – MA DMF

Nicole Haggerty – CEI

Paul Barlow- USGS

Padmini Das - MassDEP

Phaeng Southisombath - NE Environmental  
Finance Center

Richard Friesner – NEIWPC

Sue Kiernan- RIDEM

Shervon DeLeon- MassDEP

Tom Ardito - SNEP Watershed Implementation  
Grants

Tim Pasakarnis – Cape Cod Commission

Topher Hamblett - Save the Bay

Emma Gildesgame - The Nature Conservancy

## Workplan Overview

- SNEP will create annual workplan to outline planned budget allocation and to scope annual work products - new format to use moving forward
  - Hoping for final budgets by October 2024
- SNEP Team identified this as a cleaner format to communicate planned and ongoing projects

## FY24 Budget Breakdown

- FY24 budget approved.
- SNEP is projected to be level-funded at \$7M for FY24. In addition to \$3M for BIL, total is around \$10M.
- EPA received ~10% cut; increased admin costs are still possible. Have not received final draft yet.
- Budget for existing projects:
  - Existing Pilots: Committed \$150k/year in Year 3 for all but 1 of 5 pilots
  - SNEP Network: Aim to recompete every 5 years. RFP out, closes in June. Planning to continue allocation of \$1.75M/year for next 5 years.
  - SWIG: For FY24, ~\$2.5M. Remainder of funding coming from FY23 budget.
  - SOAR: Funding both FY23 and FY24 projects from FY24 budget. Not able to announce awards yet, working through administrative delay. FY24 RFP out, open until June 7.
  - SNIG: Made selections, had ~\$6k leftover. Hoping to add to future allocation if SNEP decides to recompete.
  - NEPs: For Estuary Programs, \$500k
  - USGS Interagency Agreements: Ongoing monitoring work on the Cape, etc.
  - Planned FY25 Contracts: Generally covering a continuation of State of the Region Reporting and supported contractor efforts for subcommittees
  - Symposium Venue: Scheduled for June 12, 2024
  - Ecosystems Services Committee Contract: Ongoing work with contractor
  - Proprietary Stormwater Device: Already allocated
  - Mandatory costs for BIL and BASE Admin
  - **Remaining (unallocated) = \$471K**

## **Feedback on Budget:**

- FY24 base funding must be allocated by October 1, 2024. Bill funding is more flexible but has already been allocated.
  - Funds could be allocated to a contractor or would need to be competitive funds.
- **Invest further in pilot watersheds (6<sup>th</sup> pilot watershed)**
- Education/ Outreach
- Enhance post-restoration monitoring of salt marshes

- **New SNIG RFA** - even with BIL and SWIG funding, still a lot more demand for grants than able to meet
- Look at existing SNEP work, where could we provide a little more funding to meet project goals? Amplify existing work, **competitive round for existing SNEP grantees?** \*Potentially not allowed
  - Would be great to allocate funds to continue an existing effort rather than starting something new; Bring existing effort closer to implementation
  - If people wanted to supplement existing work, would need to be a competition that is open to any grantee that has received a SNEP award. Would have to talk to EPA lawyer.
- Not time to start a new pilot, building on existing is a better idea. Could you direct a portion of the money like the NEPs? Direct to the Cape and allow those processes to direct funds to projects?
  - Funding to Cape similar to NEPs- would have to talk to lawyer, potential **RFP for technical assistance provider for Cape and Islands**
  - Because the Cape is underserved? SNEP cannot directly fund the Cape like the NEP regions that get yearly, consistent allocations
- State of the Region Report: Data may be available that has not been synthesized or compiled for easy use; Potential need to invest in researchers to get info. Has enough been allocated?
  - Data synthesis is included in contract
  - Not part of contract to pull in data we don't already have- specific ideas? Data from the RI side that we haven't looked at yet? Could consider that.
- \*Poll offered to attendees to vote on bold choices above\*

**SNIG – 4**

**Competitive opportunity for existing grantees – 3**

**RFP for Cape and Islands – 3**

**6<sup>th</sup> Pilot Watershed – 6**

- **Next Steps:** SNEP to review input; Will consider anything that doesn't get FY24 funding for FY25

**Input on SNEP Workshop Topics**

- Workshop 1: Cranberry Bog Restoration
  - Date: TBD - latter half of May
  - Location: UMass Cranberry Station Carver, MA
- Potential Topics for Workshop 2
  - Technically amendable problem or clear sticking point?
  - **Follow up on Salt Marsh Workshop discussion?**
  - RI issue? Workshops have been focused on MA lately
    - Workshops in RI - concern with increased flooding along bigger rivers; Coordinated approach among municipalities (**Strategies That Work to Address Regional Flooding Risks** - focused on one of the RI rivers)

- May be too far for SNEP into FEMA world - but FEMA is on Steering Committee, would want to bring them in. Would want to bring in NRCS as well, has related projects underway on a watershed basis.
- Should bring in the financial piece as well. What are communities doing to go beyond traditional grants and financing, importance of insurance, etc.
- Might be more successful if focused on particular area rather than broad flooding solutions
  - Lack of institutional capacity in RI may be difficult
  - At least if municipalities were getting together, could generate some funding for a more coordinated approach.
  - Relevant municipalities would have to be willing to participate.
- **Technical Vetting of WQ Modeling for Narragansett Bay**
  - Send additional suggestions to Adam or MaryJo

### **EPA SNEP Updates**

#### **2024 Symposium: <https://ceiengineers.com/snep-symposium-2024>**

- June 12, 2024 at Roger Williams University Law School
- Topic: *Climate Resilience in Southeast New England – Thinking Regionally, Acting Locally*
- Call for Abstracts and registration are now open
  - Will use Abstracts to build out agenda

#### **2024 SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience (SOAR) Fund**

- Virtual Info Session: April 16
- Last Day to Ask Questions: May 1
- RFP Closing Date and Proposal Deadline: June 7
- Anticipating 5 rewards (one new applicant)- cannot announce yet
- Received 10 eligible applications
- Aiming to significantly increase outreach to first-time applicants. Keeping RFP open for longer period. Aiming to compete at least 2 more times.

### **Subcommittee Contracts**

- Monitoring Subcommittee:
  - Increase WQX Data Availability - working with partners to get data formatted/uploaded to WQX; developing Import Configuration Tools so partners can upload data without changing current format as recorded
  - Ecohealth Tracking Tool - data in WQX will be available for visualization with this tool
- Ecosystems Services Subcommittee:
  - Assessing benefits of salt marsh in the SNEP region. Discrete research question, aim to continue building on Integrated Ecosystem Services Framework (IESF).

## **Summary and Adjourn**

- SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants (SWIG) RFP now open- submit proposals at [www.estuaries.org](http://www.estuaries.org)
- Next meeting:
  - Potential agenda items:
    - FY25 Workplan
    - How can we regionally address climate resilience?
    - State of the Region Report?
    - Partner Updates
    - Others?
  - Date: TBD