

Introduction

Lynne Hamjian (EPA) kicked off the meeting by thanking the Work Group for all of their hard work so far, and sharing that EPA is anxious to ensure this effort works and meshes well with other successful, existing programs. Diana Bowen from Senator Reed's office joined the meeting by phone, and expressed excitement and willingness to help secure future funding.

FY2014 Funding Approach

Johanna Hunter (EPA) provided an overview of the funding approach for FY2014, and briefly touched on FY2015 where \$5 million has been requested in the President's budget. For FY2014, the two NEP's will serve as critical funding vehicles for projects in Buzzard's Bay and Narragansett Bay. Johanna proposed that each NEP will receive \$300K for program and project building and a variable amount up to \$600K for implementation projects. In addition, up to \$500K will go into contract funds for Cape Cod. These contract funds will be in the form of technical assistance where the federal government will benefit from the project. All projects, regardless of geographic area, will have the same priorities and expectations.

Conflict of Interest Policies

In order to remove bias and preference for projects, a conflict of interest policy that aligns with each NEP's procedures will be implemented. Those groups that participate in developing specific criteria for the RFP will not be able to participate on the project selection committee. These selection committees will be populated by the NEPs after the project proposals are submitted.

Project Theme for 2014: Nutrients

There was a widely shared view that for the first year, the theme should be narrowed to focus on nutrients. By emphasizing nutrients, this effort will be set apart from other funding sources that focus on habitat restoration. There was some discussion of the need for testing innovative technology and their ability to remove nutrients and the importance of developing suitable monitoring protocols.

Monitoring

The group noted that monitoring is a very important aspect of this program, but it could be very expensive. One possible solution to cut down the costs would be to choose different cases or types of projects that are representative rather than monitoring them all. Another solution would be to have a separate monitoring group with its own pot of money to monitor actions over time. We can also explore the possibility of a regional monitoring program. For example, the NEPs in Florida share a regional monitoring program with much efficiency. This approach gives them the ability to input and extract data in order to tell a story about the system as a whole.

Designation of funds for 2014

The afternoon discussion kicked off with a proposal for allocating the \$2 million in FY14; as outlined in the table below, this proposal would include approximately \$300K for program and project building to each NEP and a variable amount up to \$600K for implementation projects. Final funding for these two types of projects will depend on the proposals that are submitted. In addition, up to \$500K is

anticipated for technical assistance on the Cape. At least one large project (up to \$450K for each project) is anticipated for each NEP in response to the importance the group placed on having on-the-ground projects in each state. Program and project development will include feasibility, design, planning and collaboration with partners.

	Geographic Region		
<u>Funding Track</u>	<u>Buzzards Bay and Narragansett Bay NEPs</u>	<u>Cape Cod</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
Program and Project Development	Up to \$600K	-	Up to \$600K
On-the-ground Project Implementation	Up to \$900K	-	Up to \$900K
Technical Assistance	-	Up to \$500K	Up to \$500K

Project categories and ideal factors for project selection

Some commented that EPA should avoid the term “capacity building” because of its association with organizational development; rather than focus on small or large, the group proposed using “on-the-ground implementation” and “program and project development” to describe the types of projects that could be funded under this effort. Participants identified several factors that together make projects unique under the SNECWRP effort, including **innovation, scalability, collaboration, transferability, and addition to existing knowledge base.**

The Path Forward

Participants emphasized the importance of work in FY14 in shaping the future of the program and in providing projects that can serve as the basis of subsequent efforts. Many also stressed that we don’t lose sight of the other priority themes (habitat restoration and water quality) initially discussed for FY15 and beyond. Joe Costa and Tom Borden will work together develop the RFP for NEP funds, while EPA will work closely with representatives from Cape Cod to determine how FY14 contract funds are spent. The final RFP for NEP funds and the Letter of Intent for contract funds are expected to be released by June 2014.