





## 2021 ENVIRONMENTAL MERIT AWARDS

## A LETTER FROM EPA'S ACTING REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR



Congratulations to the 2021 EPA Environmental Merit Award Winners! It is my pleasure to honor each of you in recognition of your efforts to protect and improve the environment across New England.

Collectively, your work represents significant progress toward addressing the climate crisis, advancing environmental justice, improving water and air quality, reducing waste, cleaning up and restoring or reusing contaminated land, reducing exposure to harmful substances and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to your dedication, stewardship and passion to make change, people across the New England region enjoy a safer and healthier environment.

This year's EPA Environmental Merit Awards Program provides an opportunity to celebrate all of you. We will be honoring community leaders, citizen activists, business leaders and tribal and public officials. Indeed, we have a lot of environmental progress to celebrate.

On behalf of my colleagues at EPA New England and myself, thank you. Your work is making a real difference in communities across New England and helping achieve EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

Congratulations!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah A. Szaro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

*Deborah A. Szaro*  
*Acting Regional Administrator*  
*EPA, Region 1*



*Ira W. Leighton, Jr.  
1945-2013  
Dedicated EPA public servant  
since 1972.*

*A true friend, a mentor and a  
lover of New England.  
He is missed.*

## IRA LEIGHTON "IN SERVICE TO STATES" ANNUAL AWARD

The Ira Leighton "In Service to States" Environmental Merit Award is a tribute to our long-time colleague and friend, Ira Leighton, who passed away in 2013, after serving 41 years at the U.S. EPA. Ira's dedication and passion for protecting the environment was evident to all who knew him. He was a constant presence in New England, a force who took ideas and made them actionable tasks that resulted in measurable improvements.

*Initiated by:*

- *New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC)*
- *Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM)*
- *Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA)*
- *New England state Environmental Commissioners*
- *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1 (EPA)*



**SALUTING THE IRA LEIGHTON  
“IN SERVICE TO STATES”  
ANNUAL AWARD RECIPIENT**

**JANET COIT**

Janet Coit, former director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, has been a leader in finding ways for the New England states to work as a team. This is evidenced by her nomination for the Ira Leighton Award by commissioners of New England’s state environmental agencies.

As other leaders joined and left the Northeast Committee on the Environment, Janet provided consistency throughout her decade-long tenure at RIDEM. Her commitment to the work of such regional efforts has made a real difference. She readily engaged in regional environmental challenges, including addressing PFAS, responding to climate change, improving water quality, and addressing equity and justice issues.

The longest serving chief executive in RIDEM’s history, Janet made major improvements to its culture and operation. From her appointment by Gov. Lincoln Chafee in 2011, she insisted RIDEM focus on customer service. Her accomplishments led to her reappointment by both governors Raimondo and McKee. In 2021, she was appointed assistant administrator for Fisheries at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and serves as NOAA’s acting assistant secretary of commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and deputy administrator.

In Rhode Island, Janet focused on improving natural resource conservation, promoting locally grown food and addressing the climate crisis. Janet’s work as RIDEM director not only involved leading the state’s environmental protection efforts, but also the natural resources and agriculture programs, including fisheries and fishing ports. Before joining RIDEM, Janet was state director for The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island for 10 years. Before that, she was counsel and environmental coordinator for the late Sen. John Chafee and, subsequently, then-Senator Lincoln Chafee. Janet also was counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works.

Janet set an outstanding example that motivated RIDEM’s employees and her colleagues across New England.

## environmental merit awards | lifetime achievement



**YVONNE BOLTON**

*Marlborough, Connecticut*

Through reserved, respectful leadership, Yvonne Bolton created a legacy of achievements while at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Beyond her individual accomplishments, she contributed to a culture of integrity within the state and through her roles with NEIWPC and the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association, and her service on municipal boards and commissions. Yvonne improved virtually every program in the department, protecting natural resources, serving the regulated community, and inspiring colleagues.

Yvonne joined DEEP four decades ago as an environmental attorney from the University of Vermont. Among her first roles, she worked to develop regulations and shepherd them through the legislature. Her understanding of science, policies and the various constituencies was key to the department's success. Yvonne modernized and streamlined the state's environmental regulatory programs, from coastal management to water and waste, enforcement, pesticides, and recycling. She established the department's first data and geographic information system, improving access to information and leading to better decisions.

As chief of the Water and then Materials Management Bureaus, she led efforts to maintain funding for and improve management of wastewater treatment plants; establish appropriate water quality standards; improve emergency response to spills; update the state's solid waste management plan; and adopt and revise the state's first FEMA approved disaster debris management plan. Knowing the importance of public outreach, she launched the Solid and Hazardous Waste Advisory Committees.

Yvonne has been a member of NEIWPC's executive committee since 2003, helping develop its water resources priorities. As a member of the NEWMOA board of directors since 2006, she was instrumental in developing the organization's strategic plans and advancing its priorities. Yvonne has long been a trusted advisor. She cares, listens, and thoughtfully considers all sides in problem-solving and decision-making.

## environmental merit awards | lifetime achievement



**DAVID BURNS**

*Augusta, Maine*

David Burns retired in Spring 2021 after 38 years with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. After graduating from the University of Maine Orono in 1983, David began his career in the Bureau of Water Quality Control reviewing wastewater treatment facilities. Soon after, David shifted to the engineering aspects of solid waste projects and landfill operations. He advanced to senior environmental engineer, supervising others in the Solid Waste Engineering Unit and in 2015 became director of the Division of Technical Services. In 2016, David was named director of the Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management, the agency's largest bureau.

Among his many accomplishments at DEP, David played a key role in drafting Maine's secure landfill regulations. These rules changed the landscape in Maine from open dumps to highly engineered and designed landfills.

David also provided technical assistance on challenging remediation projects, including the major landslide of a landfill that led to the movement of a million cubic yards of waste and some of the clay soils underneath. David worked with consultants to understand the causes of the landslide and extent of damage, then developed a plan that included construction of a lined landfill to which the waste was transferred.

In the early days of managing PFAS, David became an expert and encouraged DEP and other state agencies to tackle the problem. He has worked with agencies and stakeholders, non-profit organizations and citizens, the legislature, Maine's Congressional delegation, and DEP staff to address PFAS contamination.

After joining the board of directors of the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association in 2016, David provided leadership on PFAS and solid waste issues. He was NEWMOA's treasurer in 2018 and vice chair in 2021.

Maine's environment has benefited from David's tremendous technical skills and attention to detail, as well as his steadfast leadership even in the most difficult situations.

## environmental merit awards | lifetime achievement



**CHUCKIE GREEN**  
*Mashpee, Massachusetts*

Chuckie Green retired in January 2021 as natural resources director of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, having benefited his tribe and community since his teenage years. Motivated to make a difference in the lives of others, Chuckie served on the Mashpee, Massachusetts board of selectmen from 2000 through 2009. In 2008, he became chair of the board of selectman, a position not filled by a Mashpee Wampanoag tribal member in 30 years.

Chuckie also served as a leader in the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe as vice chairman from 1993 to 1996 and as tribal historic authority director and preservation officer from 2006 to 2012. Chuckie was on the Mashpee Conservation Commission and was district supervisor for the Barnstable County Conservation District, both from 1992 to 2000. He became district supervisor again in 2010. Through all these roles, protecting the tribe's natural resources was a priority, but Chuckie's greatest gift to the environment was forming the tribe's Natural Resources Department in March of 2008 using an EPA grant. Chuckie served as director and assistant director of the department.

In 1995, Chuckie helped establish the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge partnership involving eight conservation landowners. From 2000 to 2012, he served on a board overseeing the Superfund cleanup of the former Otis Air Force Base. In 2008, he established the Mashpee Water Collaboration in partnership with the tribe, the town and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth to monitor water quality of nearby waterways. In 2012, Chuckie established a project addressing nitrogen-loading and fish kill in the Mashpee River and Popponesset Bay system. And in 2012, he started an environmental science camp for tribal youth.

Since 2010, Chuckie has partnered with the US Army Corp of Engineers to mitigate algal growth and restore habitat in Santuit Pond. Chuckie's lifetime investment in environmental leadership and cultural preservation will have a lasting impact on Mashpee Wampanoag tribal members.

## environmental merit awards | lifetime achievement



**RICHARD SKARINKA, P.E.**

*Wolfeboro, New Hampshire*

In June 2021, Rick Skarinka retired from his job as manager of the Engineering and Survey Section of the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau in the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, where he worked for 31 years. In this job, Rick managed drinking water engineers, sanitary surveyors, the operator certification program and was responsible for overseeing 2,500 public water systems in New Hampshire. Rick also played a key role in developing and administering the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan program throughout his career. He often led efforts to respond to natural disasters impacting water systems, ranging from droughts, and floods to widespread power outages associated with ice storms.

Rick was a regulator who understood that communication is key to ensuring safe and reliable drinking water. An analogy he shared is that regulation is a moving train and community leaders can choose any of three options: wave as it goes by, hop on board, or stand in front of it. He approaches difficult conversations with respect and a desire to understand where people are coming from. He believes that working hand-in-hand with communities leads to better outcomes.

A hallmark of his efforts with his colleagues at NHDES and water systems is to always encourage long-term thinking to ensure decisions made now will improve the long-term sustainability and reliability of public water systems. Rick always put in the effort to mentor new staff and collaborate with other agencies and programs. He consistently worked with managers of water systems to ensure that local and state elected officials were educated on the challenges and needs of water systems in order to identify options and facilitate solutions.

Rick's lifetime achievements at NHDES have and will continue to improve and protect the health of New Hampshire citizens by ensuring an adequate quantity and quality of drinking water.

## environmental merit awards | lifetime achievement



ANGELO LIBERTI III, P.E.

*Providence, Rhode Island*

A life-long affinity for being on the water provided strong motivation for Angelo Liberti III, who is retiring after 30 years as administrator of the Surface Water Protection Programs in the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

Angelo's degrees in marine biology and civil and environmental engineering laid the foundation for a successful career. He led the surface water programs during a time when wastewater and stormwater management were evolving. He advanced water quality-based permitting for discharges and under his guidance, permits were modified to require advanced treatment. This went a long way toward improving water quality in Rhode Island's rivers and in Narragansett Bay.

A boater, scuba diver and recreational shell fisherman, Angelo has deep knowledge about Narragansett Bay, knowledge he applied in 2003 serving on panels established by the governor to make recommendations related to what was known as the Greenwich Bay Fish kill, involving the death of a million fish due to lack of oxygen. Angelo was instrumental in shaping the bi-state strategy to reduce nutrient pollutant loadings from 11 wastewater treatment facilities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island tied to problems in upper Narragansett Bay.

Angelo is RIDEM's leader on eliminating combined sewer overflows, work that has reduced discharges and opened areas for shellfishing that were closed for over 75 years. Angelo's expertise and ability to act under pressure were incredibly valuable in 2016 when an outbreak of algae bloom closed major portions of the bay to shellfishing.

Angelo ensures that decisions are scientifically sound and protect the public interest. His depth of knowledge, attention to detail and analytical skills have directly benefited the state's environment. Rhode Island's waters are healthier because of Angelo's service.



GREG GERRITT  
*Providence, Rhode Island*

Greg Gerritt has devoted his life to protecting the environment and preserving natural resources. He grew up in New York City, but developed an early appreciation of the woods and nature, visiting the Bronx Zoo and American Museum of Natural History.

Greg organized his high school's first Earth Day and has been immersed in the greening of America ever since. He studied evolutionary biology and anthropology, and ultimately decided on working with nature over an academic career. He has built an award-winning solar house and has run a successful social carpentry business.

For the past 20 years, Greg has worked part-time for the Environmental Council of Rhode Island. Throughout his career, he has organized events, spoken in schools, and coordinated efforts to build community support for environmental preservation. Among his numerous accomplishments, he started and for many years coordinated the Buy-Nothing Day coat exchange in Providence. He started and coordinated the Rhode Island Compost Conference to raise awareness of food recycling and build a compost industry. He started a watershed organization for the Moshassuck River and organized clean ups, tree plantings and other stewardship activities.

Recently, Greg restored a small stormwater drain in the North Burial Ground in Providence to a small wetland habitat area. He obtained permission from the city and permits through RIDEM and through Greg's perseverance, the project became reality and serves as a small oasis for amphibians in the cemetery. Greg has filmed small creatures being born and passing through the site, then posted the videos online.

Throughout his career, Greg has advocated for protection of our environment and the need to respond to climate change. His advocacy is focused on fairness and justice and making sure everyone shares in the joys and benefits of our environment.

## environmental merit awards | lifetime achievement



ANNETTE DESILVA

*Narragansett, Rhode Island*

Annette DeSilva is being recognized for her 30 years of outstanding and sustained stewardship of the Pettaquamscutt Estuary, known locally as the Narrow River.

In 1992, Annette, with Veronica Berounsky and others, founded Narrow River Preservation Association's River Watch Program in concert with the University of Rhode Island's Watershed Watch program. Monitoring water in the estuary allows the association and local officials to identify problems and find remedies.

Since the start of the River Watch program, Annette has been coordinator of the all-volunteer program, supporting over 200 volunteers who spent over 8,800 hours at the Narrow River taking over 47,400 field measurements and obtaining more than 13,700 water samples.

Under Annette's leadership, the program has expanded to 13 sites, which includes streams and stormwater outfall pipes. Having found high bacteria counts that could not be explained by processes within the river, Annette advocated adding new sites so inputs could be examined. Shortly after the program started and one test site showed high bacteria counts, an outhouse along Gilbert Stuart Stream was removed, resulting in clean water samples within weeks.

Since then, countless projects informed by River Watch data have been installed. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service needed water monitoring done in 2015, it came to the association because of its reputation for reliable river monitoring.

Annette and colleague Veronica Berounsky have presented detailed findings, trends, and summaries of decades of River Watch data. These show improvements in water quality and identify problematic areas that require more research and mitigation. Having served on the association's board of directors from 1990 to 2018, Annette is now an advisory board member.

Annette's 30 years of commitment to the River Watch program has resulted in improved water quality in the estuary. This well-established program will continue to lead to improvements for decades to come.

## environmental merit awards | lifetime achievement



### DR. VERONICA BEROUNSKY

*Narragansett, Rhode Island*

Dr. Veronica Berounsky is being recognized for her 30 years of outstanding and sustained stewardship of the Pettaquamscutt Estuary, known locally as the Narrow River. As both a board member and vice president of the Narrow River Preservation Association, Veronica's environmental advocacy has led to environmentally responsible development and the protection of the watershed.

A powerhouse of energy and dedication, Veronica was instrumental in creating the association's River Watch program in 1992, which has directly led to better water quality in Narrow River.

In 2018, after high bacteria was found in two spots on the river, Veronica secured the funds then organized and oversaw an innovative program that uses trained dogs to detect human bacteria. The failing septic systems the dogs identified now are being repaired.

Veronica works to involve the public in protecting the health of the watershed. She has led educational tours for students and visiting academics, teaching them about the estuary's ecology. She also led a program to educate teachers on teaching students about watershed ecology. Veronica founded "Art on the River," inspiring artists and families to create art along the river's edge. She also began "What Lives in the River," an event inviting families to discover the creatures in the Pettaquamscutt Estuary area with volunteer experts on hand. In 2005, Veronica led the creation of the "Narrow River Turnaround Swim," a fundraiser highlighting the river's excellent water quality. In 2020, she initiated a swim that had participants swimming the six miles from a tributary to the mouth of Narrow River.

Veronica has shared her talents with other organizations, serving as chair of Rhode Island Rivers Council since 2013, contributing to the Coastal & Estuarine Research Foundation and New England Estuarine Research Society, and working with the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography.

Veronica's sustained, consistent, and outstanding efforts have directly led to better water quality in the Pettaquamscutt Estuary.

## environmental merit awards | lifetime achievement



CHUCK SCHWER

*Jericho, Vermont*

For more than three decades, Chuck Schwer devoted his career to the environment, moving up through the ranks at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to a position of leadership while supporting the growth of the team around him. Chuck's efforts greatly improved waste management practices in the state and region.

Chuck started with the DEC in the mid-1980s in the new and evolving leaking underground storage tanks program. Over the years, the program has prevented countless releases of hazardous materials. One of the earliest members of the Vermont Hazardous Materials Response Team, founded in 1996, Chuck remained on the team as deputy crew chief.

Chuck grew into a supervisory role, managing staff as well as contaminated sites and the Vermont Petroleum Cleanup Fund. During Chuck's tenure as fund manager, he developed important relationships and showed that industry and government can be partners for success. In addition, he was instrumental in helping to procure state funding for brownfields. Chuck was actively involved in the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association for many years and served on its board for seven years, including one year as chair. Chuck was also involved in the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials since the 1990s, serving as subcommittee chair and regional representative.

Chuck's most important contributions may be around PFAS contamination. He managed staff on sites in Bennington, Pownal, and at the Rutland airport, responding to public concerns and providing safe drinking water supplies. In Bennington, he helped make sure almost 700 homes sampled for PFAS had clean drinking water.

Throughout his career, Chuck demonstrated a commitment to resolving waste issues. Furthermore, he empowered staff, leaving a legacy of competent leaders to continue to guide DEC.

## INDIVIDUAL

### THOMAS MAGUIRE

*Boston, Massachusetts*

Thomas Maguire, from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Wetlands Program, has served as its chief resource for stormwater for over 20 years. His expertise in hydraulics and hydrology was recognized in 2019 with a promotion to a newly established position, senior analyst for climate resiliency and hydraulic and hydrologic support. Due to increased precipitation and revisions to federal stormwater permits, MassDEP's Stormwater Handbook and regulations needed updating. Precipitation estimates used to design stormwater control measures did not reflect reality. Also, the MassDEP needed to align its regulations with the federal permit. Therefore, Tom initiated a study to determine how the standards for stormwater should be updated, employing his regulatory experience and expertise in statistical modeling and analysis. Based on Tom's study, the MassDEP is revising critical regulations. Rather than using the median rainfall amount, the MassDEP proposes to rely on the upper range reflect the higher end of extreme storms now seen. This approach is intended to prepare Massachusetts for future conditions. Tom also is participating in the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook update, which supports the wetlands stormwater regulations. These changes to stormwater management will result in long-term improvements to water quality. The standards will be used by municipalities and developers statewide and available to other states through the handbook.

## GOVERNMENT

### COVID-19 RESPONSE: ASSISTING NEW ENGLAND'S WATER SECTOR

*Connecticut Department of Public Health; Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection; Maine Drinking Water Program - Centers for Disease Control; New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services; Rhode Island Department of Health; Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation; Connecticut Water and Wastewater Response Network; Maine Rural Water Association; Maine Water and Wastewater Response Network; Massachusetts Water Works Association; Massachusetts Rural Water Association; Massachusetts Water and Wastewater Response Network; Rhode Island Water and Wastewater Response Network; Rhode Island Water Works Association; Vermont Water and Wastewater Response Network; Vermont Rural Water Association; New England Water Works Association; and Rural Community Assistance Program*

Fifteen million people in New England get water from 2,700 community systems. With heroic dedication during the COVID-19 pandemic, New England's state drinking water programs, state water and wastewater agency response networks and other water sector associations ensured the safe operations of water utilities. Water system managers and operators faced staff and chemical shortages, restricted access to assets, and health and safety challenges. In the midst of this, drinking water programs created new guidance around flushing, hydrant sampling, tap sampling and Legionella control and designed new protocols that enabled state staff to perform remote sanitary surveys of water utilities. The programs also issued email newsletters; helped with virtual meetings with the state drinking water staff; developed virtual training opportunities; and offered professional training to keep certified operators up to date. While the New England state drinking water programs worked to address the regulatory, policy, and technical assistance challenges of the pandemic, the state water and wastewater agency response networks worked to protect the health and safety of water system managers and operators. When EPA New England was allotted 300,000 masks for water utilities, these organizations brought together hundreds of volunteers to distribute them. Because of their efforts, drinking water in New England remains safe and plentiful, even during a pandemic.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
PFAS TEAM

*Boston, Massachusetts*

Staff in the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection have worked above and beyond over the past year to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, chemicals known as PFAS. The MassDEP PFAS team has made tremendous progress in addressing PFAS issues by helping communities impacted by contamination, putting in place protective regulations, gathering data to determine the extent of contamination, and assessing PFAS in other media. The MassDEP has designated the equivalent of 13 full time staff to address PFAS over a one-year period. This team has worked extensively with communities where PFAS were detected, reviewing treatment options, helping with permits, and providing the public with information on the health effects of PFAS. The MassDEP also promulgated a stringent drinking water standard, monitored water supplies in search of contaminated sites, provided free lab analyses for water systems, and developed sampling programs. The MassDEP also created a new grant program to support PFAS treatment design, awarding \$5 million to support 27 communities. With \$2 million in state funding, they created a program to help impacted public water supply systems provide safe drinking water to their users.

## ENVIRO, COMMUNITY, ACADEMIA & NONPROFIT

### FOOD LINK MA

*Arlington, Massachusetts*

Food Link, a non-profit in Arlington, is made up of volunteers who rescue food that would have been wasted and deliver it to community organizations. Food Link's goal is to provide fresh, nutritious food to low-income individuals. In 2018, EPA estimated about 63 million tons of wasted food was generated, which represented about a fifth of municipal solid waste. Since 2012, Food Link's efforts have supported EPA's sustainable management of food, reduced the amount of wasted food entering the solid waste stream and provided food to communities. In 2020, Food Link rescued over 1.2 million pounds of food, which is the equivalent of one million meals. The rescued food is distributed to more than 100 agencies that serve at-risk youth, individuals with disabilities, families, veterans, seniors on fixed incomes, and the homeless. Food Link has partnered with more than 100 local grocers, distributors, and farms to rescue fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy, bread, and prepared foods that might have ended up in landfills. In 2021, Food Link opened a new building which can receive large food deliveries, provide an indoor sorting space for volunteers, provide expanded cold storage, all of which lets Food Link rescue more food to distribute to people in need.

### CHELSEA GREENROOTS

ROSEANN BONGIOVANNI, MARIA BELEN-POWER, JOHN WALKEY

*Chelsea, Massachusetts*

GreenRoots, a community organization dedicated to improving the environment and public health in Chelsea, Massachusetts, works to empower a region that has long been underserved and disproportionately polluted. Working with community members, youth, other organizations and government, GreenRoots has succeeded in protecting and improving the environment of Chelsea, one of the most polluted cities in New England with high rates of asthma, heart disease, lung disease and cancer. Just as importantly, GreenRoots brought to the table residents who in the past lacked a voice. In the last year, historic inequities have been exacerbated by the pandemic as Chelsea experienced the highest rate of COVID-19 infections in the state. In 2020, GreenRoots was key to obtaining funding for the Mystic River Watershed, air monitors for the City of Chelsea, and COVID-19 protections for residents. Over the years, GreenRoots has helped restore urban salt marsh, create new parks, increase public access to the waterfront and improve water quality in Chelsea Creek. Recently, GreenRoots engaged the community in the NPDES (sp out) permitting process for petroleum storage facilities at Chelsea Creek and Logan Airport. As government agencies seek to increase engagement with communities disproportionately impacted by pollution, they can look to GreenRoots for examples of successful community collaboration and environmental protection.

## NUESTRA COMUNIDAD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND WINDALE DEVELOPERS

*Roxbury, Massachusetts*

The historic Dudley Square neighborhood of Roxbury has seen more than its share of job loss, environmental degradation and environmental justice concerns. Bartlett Yard, a former train and bus maintenance facility, occupied a city block in a mostly residential neighborhood and contributed to concerns about air quality, asthma rates, heat island effects, lead paint, asbestos, and contaminated soils. Thanks to a partnership between Nuestra Comunidad Community Development Corp. and Windale Developers, the story of this 8-acre site is one of renewal and how redevelopment can be done in way that meaningfully addresses the concerns of the local community. Now called Bartlett Station, this former brownfield site will have 166 for-sale homes, 214 rental apartments, and 30,000 square feet of commercial space. Two-thirds of the housing will be reserved for low to moderate income residents and commercial space is targeted to include a grocery store to provide affordable and healthy food. Nuestra Comunidad bought the property from the MBTA in 2010 and was able to secure funding for assessment and cleanup of the site from MassDevelopment and EPA's Brownfields program. Nuestra Comunidad and Windale, a local minority-owned developer with experience in housing, leveraged state and federal funding totaling more than \$32 million. Bartlett Station will be a net energy producer, incorporating features such as passive solar heating, geothermal heat pumps, rain and gray water recycling, and renewable materials. Nuestra Comunidad and Windale have gone above and beyond transforming a blighted and vacant brownfield into a true asset for the local community.

## RACIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEMBERS MONICA HUERTES AND VATIC KUUMBA

*Providence, Rhode Island*

The Racial and Environmental Justice Committee in Providence, RI, is dedicated to ensuring that communities that have been disproportionately affected by pollution and historically excluded from decision-making take the lead in making decisions affecting them. The committee, made up of 11 community members and local residents, has become the voice and ears of many Providence communities with environmental justice concerns and has helped bring a racial equity lens to the city's Office of Sustainability. The committee, through trainings and advocacy, has helped citizens and government officials better understand the disproportionate environmental harm historically faced by communities of color and other populations. The committee is a model for communities building support starting from the ground up, showing that training is central to raising awareness and gaining political will and public support needed for change. The committee developed recommendations that were adopted in the city's Just Providence Framework in 2017. And the committee drove the creation of three Green Justice Zones in Providence, which aim to ensure residents have a voice in development and use decisions, and which are incorporated in the city's 2020 Climate Justice Plan. The committee, through its work with front-line communities, has emerged as a key group consistently speaking up for residents whose voices were historically not heard in decision-making processes.

## BUSINESS

### AGRI-MARK/CABOT CREAMERY COOPERATIVE

*Waitsfield, Vermont*

Agri-Mark transportation is reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by using less fossil fuel. To do this Agri-Mark has created a Green Team at each of its facilities to put in place local and companywide initiatives. First it addressed transportation equipment and dispatching practices. It is outfitting trucks and trailers with the most energy efficient options and is routing trucks for top efficiency. For example, all trucks are equipped with aerodynamic body modifications and low rolling resistance tires, which increases fuel economy. In addition, sleeper trucks are equipped with a hybrid electric power unit that avoids unnecessary idling. Idle time and gas efficiency is posted in a friendly competition between drivers and the company has put an emphasis on training dispatchers and drivers in efficient routing. The company now requires itself to maintain SmartWay certification and improve yearly. It requires new transportation partners to be SmartWay certified and aims to have existing non-SmartWay partners become certified. Agri-Mark has improved fuel economy by more than a mile per gallon, a savings of roughly 60,000 gallons of fuel annually. It has decreased idle time from 300 hours to 100 hours. The company estimates its changes have led to an overall decrease in greenhouse gas emissions by 5 percent yearly.

### FARM FRESH RHODE ISLAND

*Providence, Rhode Island*

Farm Fresh Rhode Island recently completed construction of a 60,000-square-foot Food Hub on a 3.2-acre brownfield site in Providence's Valley neighborhood. The facility houses key programs of Farm Fresh, including distribution of locally grown food and produce, farmers markets, job training, and nutrition education. Ten related businesses share the space with Farm Fresh as well, creating a stronger local and regional food system that dovetails with the increased awareness of the importance of sustaining local agriculture. This \$17 million project, completed in fall 2020, re-purposed a former industrial site and incorporated numerous good environmental stewardship practices. The site, 100 feet from the Woonasquatucket River, was raised two feet to improve climate change resiliency. A half-acre of open space is open to the public and a rooftop solar array will provide half the facility's electricity demand. During construction, large quantities of marble were found underground, a reminder that all of the marble for the Rhode Island State House was cut here. Over 30 pieces of marble were incorporated into the landscape. The Farm Fresh RI development is a model in "smart growth" with its focus on re-using an abandoned urban manufacturing site and re-purposing it for the 21st century.

## HANNAFORD SUPERMARKETS

*Scarborough, Maine*

Hannaford operates 183 supermarkets in New England and New York. In April 2021, Hannaford reached its goal of “Zero Food Waste to Landfills,” a remarkable achievement for a large supermarket chain operating in five states. Hannaford invested in food waste recycling before it was mandated under state laws and made it a mission across its territory. In doing so, Hannaford built a network of partnerships with local businesses and non-profits. Hannaford worked through many complexities and remained committed to EPA’s Food Recovery Hierarchy that prioritizes reducing waste, feeding the undernourished, and sustainably managing what remains. Hannaford partners with local food banks and farmers to ensure that it maximizes the value of unsold food by feeding people first, while also helping protect the environment. Agri-Cycle, a Maine-based food waste collection service, has managed 100 million pounds of food waste from Hannaford over the past five years, food that would have otherwise ended up in landfills. Hannaford is a sustainability champion, demonstrating how to effectively manage and reduce food waste.

## REGENCY TRANSPORTATION

*Franklin, Massachusetts*

In collaboration with EPA and others, Regency Transportation helped increase understanding of heavy-duty truck emissions by equipping their trucks with data loggers over 100 days of real-world operation. Heavy-duty trucks contribute 42 percent of on-road vehicle NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in the United States and little real-world operation and emissions data are available in the Northeast. This data collection project succeeded in helping to address that gap. The data collected are being evaluated by a variety of organizations, including the EPA, Climate Change Canada, Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management, and the Ozone Transport Commission with the goal to use the data to improve emissions models and help inform policy decisions. The project has provided researchers, policy makers, regulators and national labs with a one-of-a-kind data set of real-world truck operating conditions and NO<sub>x</sub> and carbon dioxide emissions in cold weather and other conditions typical in the Northeast. The data sheds light on the need for more stringent regulation and new requirements that will substantially reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions and provide long term health benefits, especially in overburdened communities where older trucks often operate.

## CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

### NORTHEAST ENERGY EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP

*Lexington, Massachusetts*

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership envisions the transformation of the region's homes, buildings, and communities into efficient, affordable, low-carbon, resilient places to live, work, and play. Focused on collaborating to form more energy efficient buildings, it has worked since 2002 on promoting high performance schools. To encourage energy efficiency and healthy learning environments in schools, the organization helped schools incorporate sustainable measures by bringing together architects, engineers, facilities managers, states, utilities, contractors, and other organizations. As they design, build and maintain schools, they take into consideration the environmental health of students and teachers. The partnership has helped develop building criteria for schools that prioritize indoor environmental quality like acoustics, lighting and air quality. It has worked directly with states and school districts, organizing several conferences on high performance schools and holding 10 regional school summits since 2009. As a result of its work, three schools in Concord, New Hampshire, for example, designed their buildings to be more sustainable and better learning environments, which resulted in decreased absenteeism in all three schools. In the words of one educator, "We are using our buildings as a teaching tool in our schools so the next generation is exposed to the impact of buildings and how they can reduce the use of energy in the buildings."