

Southeast New England Program Year in Review: 2024



Southeast New England Program

A Note from our EPA SNEP Manager: Welcome to 2025! I hope the Holiday Season brought you time to relax and connect with those you care about, and with renewed energy for the coming year I am excited to share highlights of work happening across southeastern New England through SNEP. We've taken steps to make monitoring data more accessible, brought scientists together to talk about and act on restoration needs, and we're supporting infrastructure improvements in communities. This year we will continue these efforts and more. Please email us to share your priorities and let us know how we can help at SECoastalNE@epa.gov.

-MaryJo Feuerbach; SNEP Manager, Watershed and Nonpoint Source Management Section



- PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES -

Bristol, RI: Panel Discussion on the SNEP Pilot Watershed Initiative during the June 12 SNEP Symposium at the Roger Williams School of Law. (left to right) Adam Reilly (moderator), Zenas Crocker (Barnstable Clean Water Coalition), Matt Dowling (Town of Charlestown, RI), Dan Goulart (Buzzards Bay Coalition), and Alicia Lehrer (Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council). This was the first time that PWI representatives met in-person and were able to share their experiences on the project so far. Representatives from the fifth pilot watershed on Martha's Vineyard were not able to attend. Photo courtesy of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

EPA-SNEP Hosts Bi-Annual Symposium. On June 12, EPA-SNEP hosted its third bi-annual (every other year) Symposium at the Roger Williams University School of Law in Bristol, RI. The event was well-attended with approximately 180 registrants, 21 podium presentations across three tracks, 32 poster presentations, an introduction from Regional Administrator David Cash, and a keynote presentation by former Save the Bay Director and EPA Region 1 Administrator, Curt Spalding. The event closed with a focused panel discussion on the SNEP Pilot Watersheds Initiative, which is now in its fourth year (of five) and has so far leveraged nearly **\$10M** in additional funding. All symposium materials and a recording of the keynote presentation is available on the <u>SNEP website</u>.

Annual Update to SNEP Equity Plan and EJ Web Application. The 2023 SNEP Equity Strategy was updated in February 2024 to reflect recent changes to the SNEP definition of disadvantaged communities. The strategy was approved by EPA Headquarters on April 13, 2023, and outlines how Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds will be used to sustain and increase investments and benefits in disadvantaged communities in the SNEP region. It describes SNEP's commitment to strive for equitable and fair access by all communities and organizations working within the SNEP region to gain the benefits of its vision and environmental programs.



SNEP Hosts Cranberry Bog Workshop.

On September 12, SNEP hosted an inperson workshop on cranberry bog restoration at the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Fifty-eight restoration practitioners attended to listen to case studies of completed and ongoing restoration projects on previously farmed cranberry bogs, and discussed ways to work together on planning, implementation, and monitoring of future restoration projects. Presenters, who are experts in their field, stressed the importance of considering what a specific project's goals are and gaining a thorough understanding of site conditions, species composition, and habitat use prior to restoration to guide monitoring and research questions. Key recommendations and discussion summaries can be found in the final workshop materials, posted on the SNEP website.



East Falmouth, MA: Jess Cohn from the MA Division of Ecological Restoration leading a breakout session discussing useful parameters for monitoring the successes of ecological restoration at previously farmed cranberry bogs at the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Discussion sessions followed eight presentations that covered case studies from completed and ongoing cranberry bog restoration projects throughout the state. Photo courtesy of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

2024 Staff Changes. Wishing our Colleague Well. On April 7, our team said goodbye to our Program Coordinator, Ian Dombroski, after he accepted a new position as the EPA Region 1 Regional Science Liaison. Ian worked with SNEP for six years and served as Program Coordinator for the last four years. Over his tenure, Ian helped SNEP grow into the program that it is today. When asked about his favorite memory/proudest accomplishment with the Program, Ian said "I'm proud to have been a small part of such an important Program and to have helped protect and restore our unique coastal ecosystem. To work with the SNEP Team and a genuinely dedicated group of regional partners has been such an enriching experience and a memory I won't soon forget. I'm excited to see where SNEP goes in the future!" Though we were sad to see him go, we wish him well on his next adventure and look forward to working with him in this new capacity.



Ian Dombroski (center) with EPA colleagues. Photo credit courtesy of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Increasing Data Availability and Accessibility in the SNEP Region. In 2023, SNEP's Monitoring and Ecosystem Services subcommittees provided the SNEP team with preliminary recommendations for a contractor-supported effort to help improve regional data availability and accessibility in the SNEP region. It was acknowledged that while environmental monitoring led by many of our partnering organizations is taking place throughout the region, our region was lacking a way to easily view and compare environmental metrics in a unified way.

Part of the challenge is all environmental data isn't collected in the same manner or recorded using standardized units. Regional organizations rightfully collect, store, and display their monitoring data in a way that makes sense for their organization; but this customization prevents an easy way to compare values at a larger regional scale. EPA's Water Quality Exchange (WQX) and Water Quality Portal was found to be well suited to help bridge this gap. WQX is an EPA tool designed to serve as a data clearinghouse. Critically, it can read an organization's data and translate a copy of that data into a standardized format without requiring any changes to that organization's data or how that organization continues to collect, store, and use their data. And further, once WQX is taught how to read a dataset, that data can be updated and added to over time with the simple click of a button. While WQX was felt to be well suited to the task, our partners expressed concern with the level of complexity and understanding that would be required to build these connectors. To address their concern, SNEP selected Comprehensive Environmental Inc. (CEI) through a competitive process to partner with five of our largest data partners that were not currently uploading their data to WQX to develop these WQX data connectors. The goal was for CEI to not only help develop data connectors for each partner, but to also ensure that our partners learned how to maintain and use their data connector so that they can continue to upload their data.

By October 2024, all five of our partners (Buzzards Bay Coalition, Buzzards Bay NEP, Blackstone River Coalition, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and the Cape Cod Commission) have a working data connector, which has allowed them to upload and publish their historical data to WQX; but now that their data is published, how to visualize and use it?

A concurrent effort with CEI supported by SNEP's Ecosystem Services Committee helped to answer that question. Modelled after the Ecohealth Tracking Tool developed by the MassBays program – a sister program to SNEP that focuses on Massachusetts Bay – SNEP worked with CEI to adapt the MassBays Ecohealth Tracking Tool for the SNEP region. The tool is designed to visualize regionally available data for select habitat and water quality metrics in EPA's Water Quality Portal and present it in an interactive web mapping application. The tool is developed and SNEP is working to soon make it publicly available on the SNEP website. Once published, the tool will display metrics for the extent of salt marsh, tidal flats, and eelgrass, as well as display the following water quality parameters where data is available: nitrogen, phosphorus, pH, temperature, turbidity, salinity, dissolved oxygen, enterococcus, Secchi depth, and chlorophyll-a. The SNEP Ecohealth Tracking Tool will be updated regularly to display new data as it becomes available in WQX. The SNEP team aims to publish the tool to the SNEP website by mid-2025.



Screen grab of the draft SNEP Ecohealth Tracking Tool, developed by Comprehensive Environmental Inc.



Finalized Salt Marsh Permitting Timeline. On February 20, SNEP worked with MassDEP, MA Coastal Zone Management, MA Division of Ecological Restoration, Woods Hole Group, Mass Audubon, EPA, and several regional contractors to finalize an Estimated Timeline for Salt Marsh Restoration Permitting in Massachusetts. This timeline was identified as a specific need during the salt marsh workshop that SNEP hosted in September 2023 and is now available on the <u>SNEP website</u>. The timeline is designed to conceptualize the estimated timelines for each potential step in the permitting process for coastal salt marsh restoration projects in Massachusetts and was the process of many dedicated hours shared between SNEP staff and partners. We are grateful to each of them for their contributions to this resource.

SOAR Fund Recompeted; Nearly \$1.1M Awarded. On October 25, the SNEP Team partnered with the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC) to host an in-person event to celebrate the first two years of the SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience (SOAR) Fund. During this event, EPA highlighted the ongoing work of the 2023 SOAR recipients and announced the new 2024 SOAR awardees. This was the first event that EPA has hosted in a dual language format (Spanish and English). Speakers included: Regional Administrator David Cash; Senator Jack Reed; Representative Seth Magaziner; Representative Gabe Amo; RIDEM Director Terry Gray; SOAR recipients and community program members.



Providence, RI: Senator Reed, Regional Administrator Cash, SOAR grantees, and program supporters at the SNEP funding announcement event on October 25. Photo courtesy of the U.S. EPA, Region 1.

SNEP Network Recompeted. Every five years, EPA recompetes its cooperative agreement for a grantee to facilitate the SNEP Network. This year, following a competitive application process, EPA awarded an **\$8.75M** cooperative agreement to the New England Environmental Finance Center, to continue facilitating the Network since the Program's inception in 2019. This new round of funding demonstrates a **\$2.75M increase** in investment compared against the initial investment of **\$6M** in 2019.

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- BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW FUNDING IN ACTION -

SNEP was allocated **\$15 Million** in additional funding over five years (beginning in 2022) to implement the mission of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – which is commonly known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). To date, EPA has awarded nearly **\$7M** to support a wide range of projects that promote jobs, improve habitat connectivity, install green infrastructure, and enhance climate resiliency of SNEP communities. In 2024, EPA continued to distribute infrastructure funds by recompeting the second iteration of the SNEP opportunity to Advance Resilience (SOAR) Fund – a program dedicated to improving climate resiliency in disadvantaged communities throughout the SNEP region. Through the SOAR Fund, SNEP has committed to investing at least **\$5 Million** in SNEP disadvantaged communities by 2027. The following are highlights of some ongoing BIL-funded SNEP projects.

SNEP Contributes to Westerly, RI's Resilient Riverfront Renewal. In April, the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District, partnering with Fuss & O'Neill and the Town of Westerly, received a **\$300,000** award through the SOAR Fund to complete designs for the Resilient Riverfront Renewal, which will renovate the Main Street streetscape in downtown Westerly, RI as part of a long-term renovation initiative.

This SOAR-funded project builds off previous SWIG and Network awards and will revitalize Main Street by: mitigating flooding and stormwater runoff flowing into the tidally-influenced Pawcatuck River; educate and engage community members about green infrastructure to then be involved in decision processes to install these; strengthen sustainable solutions by training youth with transferrable skills in long-term maintenance of naturebased stormwater management; reduce heat island impacts; reestablish recreational access to the River; and create safe passageways for residents and visitors to reach local businesses. The redesign encompasses community feedback from the public, local businesses, and private property owners along Main Street. The final design will be completed over the next two years and be proposed for permitting in the next project phase.

The SNEP Opportunity to Advance Resilience

(SOAR) Fund is a BIL-funded grant program designed to advance climate resiliency in *disadvantaged communities* and requires applicants to work with the community(ies) in the planning, implementation, and outreach components through an environmental justice lens. Integrating priorities and collaborating with communities ensures sustainable solutions. empowered locals, and enhanced capacity to further extend efforts that benefit overburdened areas *in the SNEP region.*



Westerly, RI (from right to left): 1) Beth Kirmmse guiding attendees along a walking tour of the project site; 2) Beth Kirmmse from Fuss & O'Neill, the engineering firm working with the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District, speaking with community members at an outreach event about the Resilient Riverfront Renewal project. 3) Gina Fuller, Executive Director of Southern Rhode Island Conservation District, collecting resident input on intersection selection and design concepts for the streetscape. Photo courtesy of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Building Saltmarsh Resiliency. As a 2023 recipient of the BIL-funded SNEP Stormwater and Natural Infrastructure Grant Program, Mass Audubon has been working on a project to protect Buzzards Bay saltmarsh from sea level rise and build resilience through action, knowledge transfer, and outreach. The effort builds on previous work and will aid in the planning, permitting, and implementation of 160 acres of saltmarsh and coastal upland restoration at sanctuaries on the South Coast of Massachusetts. As a continuation of a previous project, the team has worked with partners to permit and use runnels, which are shallow creeks or ditches, to drain areas of marsh where ponds have been expanding. Large, ponded areas of standing water can stress tidal marsh vegetation, which has been the case in areas at Allen's Pond in Dartmouth, MA. Additionally, the team has used novel techniques to treat about 60 acres of Reed Canary Grass, an invasive plant, at Great Neck saltmarsh in Wareham, MA. Over 160 volunteers helped with debris removal causing tidal restriction into uplands to help prepare the site for future marsh migration, as well as collected and planted native seeds and seedlings to restore coastal habitat at Audubon Sanctuary sites. Future work planned for the remainder of the project includes assessing the impact of invasive fiddler crabs, completing an inlet pond and barrier beach stabilization management plan, hosting knowledge sharing workshops, and providing education and community engagement programs for 15,000 students, youth, and community members. Direct beneficiaries of this project include residents and community members in the Buzzards Bay region with a focus on disadvantaged communities in New Bedford, Fall River, and Wareham.



Dartmouth, MA: Allens Pond saltmarsh with an area of ponded water on its surface, sometimes called a "salt panne." Mass Audubon is using a relatively novel technique called "runneling," achieved by digging or maintaining shallow ditches. Runnels help to drain large salt pannes, allowing the marsh to revegetate and these plants to trap more sediment and help the marsh maintain its elevation as sea levels rise. Photo courtesy of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Continued Partnership with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). EPA's SNEP has a long-established relationship with USGS. While several projects are still ongoing, this year, SNEP has allocated BIL funds to support a groundwater study in the salt pond region of Rhode Island. The study will help determine nitrogen loading rates and travel time through groundwater to surrounding waterbodies and will help determine the effects of sea-level rise on surface inundation and groundwater levels. The outcomes of this work will help SNEP and its partners identify priority areas for future decentralized wastewater improvements.

FY23 SOAR Grant Recipient Makes a Splash.

On May 24, the Rhode Island Department of Health joined local leaders in announcing a SNEP-funded effort to redesignate Crescent Park Beach as a licensed swimmable beach in East Providence, RI. Once complete, this will be the first time in over a century that the public will be able to safely access this beach for swimming. The project was featured in a segment by NBC 10 WJAR, which can be <u>accessed here</u>.



East Providence, RI: Crescent Park Beach. Photo courtesy of WJAR.

Restoring the Ecological Resilience of the Kickemuit River. The Bristol County Water Authority received SNEP funding to contribute to the Lower and Upper Kickemuit Reservoir Dam removals during the 2023 and 2024 construction seasons. The project has received significant support across a range of regional partners. **\$600,000 in SNEP BIL funding was added to \$3.3 Million in matching funds already secured by the Bristol County Water Authority.** The dam removal project will restore the estuarine habitat and water quality of the Kickemuit River by using nature-based solutions to increase the climate resilience of the restored watershed. The dam removals will improve the water quality of an impaired water body, restore a tidal estuary and salt marsh habitat, increase the salt marsh migration area under future sea level scenarios and carbon sequestration, and produce multiple benefits for the community, including increased community resilience and enhanced public access to this water body. The project is proceeding as scheduled and has already demonstrated significant ecological improvement through removal of the lower and upper Kickemuit Dam (effects of Lower Dam shown below).



Bristol, RI: Before and After photos of the Lower Kickemuit Dam removal. This project was undertaken by the Bristol County Water Authority and is partially funded through the 2023 SNEP Stormwater and Natural Infrastructure Grant (SNIG) program. The lower dam is now completely removed, and work will continue with the removal of the upper Kickemuit dam this summer. (Photo credit: Bristol County Water Authority).

- SNEP WATERSHED IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS (SWIG) PROGRAM -

SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants (SWIG) provides funding to municipalities, non-profits and other organizations throughout Southeast New England to implement the goals of the SNEP Strategic Plan. The program is administered by Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) in close cooperation with EPA, the SNEP Network and other SNEP partners.

In 2024, SWIG implemented the program's sixth year of grantmaking, awarding **\$2.8 million** for **12 high-priority**, **community-based restoration projects** in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. The innovative projects funded include clean water restoration and stormwater management, dam removal and river restoration, wetland and cranberry bog restoration, resilient coastal parks and invasive species control.

SWIG received more than **\$8.6 million** in applications this year, demonstrating the need for the program. SWIG utilizes a two-step application—an open Letter of Intent, followed by requested Full Proposals—to maximize accessibility and streamline the grantmaking process. Funding decisions are made by RAE in close consultation with EPA and a diverse, interagency Application Review Committee (ARC). The ARC represents federal, state and municipal government, non-profit organizations, private foundations and the private sector. With 20 members, the ARC provides expertise in all SNEP's funding areas throughout Southeast New England's geography.

A second and equally important area of focus for SWIG is providing oversight, administration and technical support for grants awarded in prior years. Since 2018, SWIG has funded more than **80 restoration projects totaling more than \$18 million**. Under its cooperative agreement with EPA, RAE is responsible for providing rigorous fiscal and programmatic review of all grants, from award to closeout.

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SWIG supports grantees in communicating experiences, successes and lessons learned, to inform the practice of restoration and build capacity throughout the SNEP region. For example, in October SWIG organized a discussion panel of young environmental justice leaders at the RAE National Coastal and Estuarine Restoration Summit in Arlington, VA. At the panel, staff of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council in Providence, Groundwork Rhode Island in Pawtucket, and Groundwork SouthCoast in Fall River and New Bedford, discussed the challenges and opportunities of working on climate resilience in front line communities.



SWIG is now gearing up for its 2025 grant cycle. The 2025 SWIG Request for Proposals (RFP) will be released in mid-February, with **\$2.8M** in awards anticipated. For more information on the SWIG program or individual SWIG projects visit <u>www.snepgrants.org</u>. To receive the new RFP, subscribe for updates on that page.

Project Highlight: Cold Water Stream Restoration in Rhode Island

There are more than 600 dams in Rhode Island, and Massachusetts has many more, large and small. Most of these structures are remnants of the mill era, from about 1650 - 1900, when waterpower was the primary form of industrial energy, powering everything from small grist and sawmills to enormous textile mill complexes. Today most dams in Rhode Island and Massachusetts have long outlived their usefulness, yet they continue to harm our river and stream ecosystems. The dams themselves prevent the natural movement of fish and wildlife, and the ponds or impoundments they create raise stream temperatures, attract invasive species, exacerbate flooding, and degrade water quality and habitat.

SWIG is funding several projects to restore cold water stream habitat through small dam removals in upper watersheds. Unlike the first generation of dam removal work in New England aimed at restoring habitat for migratory fish such as herring and shad, the goal of these projects is to restore freshwater wetlands and instream habitat, while improving downstream water quality. Such projects have the potential to restore populations of native brook trout, amphibians, rare wetland plants and other important species.

Two of these SWIG projects are underway in the Big River Management Area (BRMA) of Western Rhode Island, an 8400-acre natural area in the Pawtuxet River watershed, managed for water resources and outdoor recreation by the RI Water Resources Board (RIWRB) and RI Dept. of Environmental Management. This year, RI Trout Unlimited (RITU) successfully completed a design feasibility project, funded by a **\$41,000** SWIG grant in 2022, to remove Capwell Mill Dam, a small stone dam on the Carr River, a tributary of the Pawtuxet. In 2023 SWIG awarded **\$129,000** to RITU to design, permit and complete the removal of Sweet Pond Dam, another small stone dam on the same stream. The Capwell Mill Dam design is now under review for implementation by RIWRB, while the Sweet Pond Dam project is fully underway. Taken together, these small dam removals will contribute to the restoration of some of Rhode Island's most valuable water resources and native species.



A SWIG-funded project that began work this vear is the removal of Sweet Pond Dam, located in Rhode Island's Big River Management Area. Pictured at the dam (L-R) are Glenn Place of RI Trout Unlimited, and Greta Janigian and Sal DiCarli, of EA Engineering, Science, & Technology. Photo courtesy of Restore America's Estuaries.

- SNEP NETWORK -

The <u>SNEP Network</u> was formed in 2019 with a 5-year Cooperative Agreement from EPA Region 1 to the <u>New England Environmental Finance Center (NEEFC)</u>. On September 26, 2024, the SNEP Network celebrated five years of assistance to communities and Tribes in the SNEP region delivered by more than sixteen local SNEP Network partner organizations. From 2019 to 2024, the Network provided free technical assistance to more than **75** SNEP communities and two Tribes, completed **35** unique community assistance projects, responded to over **140** technical assistance requests, and helped secure over **\$5 million** to advance



projects toward implementation. The NEEFC was awarded a second round of funding to continue and expand on the Network's accomplishments from 2024 to 2029.

To celebrate its accomplishments, the SNEP Network 5 Year Celebration Event was held at the Roger Williams Park Casino in Providence, RI. The event, <u>"Better Together: Collaborative Action to Improve Water Quality and Build</u> <u>Resilience"</u> brought together community members, Tribal representatives, EPA, SNEP Network partners, state and local representatives, and representatives from Congressional offices. The focus of the day was to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of the communities and Tribes that we had the privilege to work with since the inception of the SNEP Network. At the event, communities were honored with awards in categories that recognized their achievements. <u>By clicking here</u>, you can see the categories of achievement, access the Program that describes the full array of community and regional projects, tools, and resources achieved in 5 years, and watch a fun video produced by SNEP Network partner, Save The Bay, that captures the energy and joy of the day.

During the fifth and final year of the first round of the SNEP Network, we provided training and technical assistance support to multiple SNEP communities. Notable trainings and projects included:

- *Providence, RI*: Throughout 2024, The SNEP Network and the NEEFC assisted the City of Providence with identifying sustainable financing for city-owned sewer and stormwater collection systems and supporting a public engagement process. The SNEP Network worked in collaboration with the City of Providence's Sustainability Department and the Office of the Mayor to form a Stormwater and Sewer Task Force. The Task Force members are currently attending facilitated meetings to provide feedback to the City and its consultants as they assess infrastructure needs and sustainable and equitable funding options. SNEP Network technical assistance for this project will continue into 2025.
- <u>Stormwater Planning Series 2024</u>: Through participation in the SNEP Network's <u>2023-2024 Stormwater</u> <u>Planning Series</u>, four communities (Coventry, RI, Hopkinton, RI, Swansea, MA, Westport, MA) developed conceptual designs for a small-scale nature-based stormwater retrofit to address stormwater flooding and/ or water quality issues. To help advance their projects toward implementation, the SNEP Network provided free design engineering services from our consultant pool to help communities complete the necessary site assessments and advance their conceptual designs to make them eligible for implementation funding.
- Property Owner Guide to Managing Stormwater: This summer, the SNEP Network developed a Property Owner Guide for Managing Stormwater on Commercial and Industrial Properties. The purpose of the guide is to provide a high-level introduction to 1) the problems associated with uncontrolled stormwater, 2) tested solutions for property owners to reduce stormwater volume by reducing impervious cover and infiltrating runoff where possible, and 3) solutions that reduce stormwater pollutants by routine good housekeeping practices and low-cost green infrastructure solutions. This guide can be useful for SNEP communities as well as beyond the SNEP region throughout New England.

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- <u>Great Cedar Swamp Restoration Project</u>: The SNEP Network's <u>Canoe River Aquifer Pilot Project</u> identified **16** clusters of projects to enhance the protection of the aquifer and supported the Town of Sharon's ongoing efforts to advance the Great Cedar Swamp project towards restoration. Through discussions held with the MA Division of Ecological Restoration, the SNEP Network discovered that Great Cedar Swamp had been designated as a MA Division of Ecological Restoration priority project. A collaborative partnership was formed to support project designs and <u>a report was developed</u> that documents the permit-level (75%) design process for a proposed flow control structure in the drainage ditch within the Great Cedar Swamp in Sharon, MA.
- <u>SNEP Network Trainings and Webinars</u>: This year, the SNEP Network offered 8 trainings and webinars to over **500 participants**. The topics covered included emerging stormwater technologies, prioritizing nature-based stormwater management projects, combined sewer overflow, and an introduction to the property owner guide to managing stormwater. In addition, the SNEP Network held its second annual virtual Massachusetts and Rhode Island funding workshops that featured program representatives who presented on key state, regional, and federal funding opportunities for water quality and climate resilience projects.
- <u>Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe</u>: The SNEP Network assisted the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's Natural Resources Department with the development of a Tribal nonpoint source pollution assessment and management plan. Upon completion of the Tribe's nonpoint source assessment and management plan, as well as EPA approval for *Treatment in a Manner Similar to States*, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe will be eligible to apply for EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 program funds to continue addressing nonpoint impacts.

2024 Articles, Case Studies, and Factsheets:

- <u>SNEP Network Celebration Event Program</u>
- <u>Case Study: Prioritizing Nature-based Stormwater Projects to Maximize Community Co-Benefits in the</u> <u>Buttonwood Brook Watershed</u>
- <u>Canoe River Aquifer Case Study: Protection through Regional Application of Nature Based Solutions</u>
- Bylaw Review Tool Factsheet
- Buffer Restoration Guide Factsheet



SNEP Network Award Recipients on September 26th, 2024, in Providence, RI. Photo courtesy of Save the Bay

Eyes on the Prize: 2025. In the coming year, SNEP will prepare and deliver its first State of the Region Report where our Program aims to work with partners to report on baseline environmental trends associated with each of our three SNEP goals. SNEP plans to report on the State of the Region at regular intervals to track environmental trends in our region over time in a consistent manner. Additionally, we are equally excited to revisit our SNEP Strategic Plan, and to host our Bi-annual Forum to identify new opportunities for our Program.

As always, our staff is incredibly grateful for the support and partnership that you have shown us this year. We look forward to continuing this important work as we enter an exciting new year together.

Wishing You a Very Happy and Healthy New Year! -The SNEP Team