

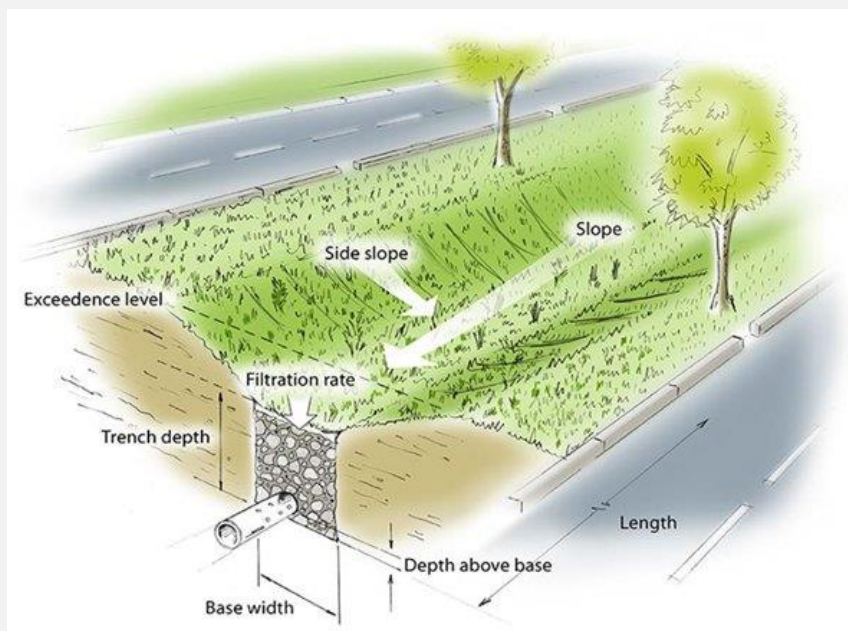
SNEP Network Boosts Support to Southeast New England Communities to Protect and Restore Water Resources



The SNEP Network recently announced its award of direct technical assistance to twelve communities in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. The Network offers technical assistance and training to communities across the SNEP region to build local capacity and expand sustainable financing opportunities to manage stormwater and undertake watershed management interventions.

“These awards demonstrate that despite shutdowns and other Covid-19 related difficulties and revenue shortfalls, communities remain committed to making environmental improvements. The SNEP Network technical assistance awards, announced in June 2020, come at a critical time,” says Martha Sheils, Director of the SNEP Network.

The Rhode Island communities and organizations selected for SNEP Network assistance in Rhode Island include the Towns of Portsmouth, Charlestown, Warren, and Bristol, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council. Massachusetts towns and organizations include the Towns of Bourne, Wareham, and Mendon, the Pleasant Bay Alliance, the Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District, and Mass Audubon. The Network’s assistance will enable these communities to advance their use of low impact development techniques, nature-based solutions, climate resiliency strategies, and sustainable financing approaches. A number of these communities will also receive specialized one-time technical assistance through free services from the SNEP Network pre-approved consultant pool. A summary of each project can be found on the SNEP Network website and [here](#).



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“Southeast New England’s coastal economy depends upon clean water and healthy coastal systems to support water-dependent jobs, recreation, and tourism,” said EPA Region 1 Administrator Dennis Deziel. “As communities work to reopen businesses closed due to Covid-19, EPA is especially pleased to support the SNEP Network’s efforts to provide expert assistance to help a dozen communities take steps to protect and restore the water resources that maintain the economic and ecological vitality of the region.”

The Network is also undertaking two watershed pilot projects in communities selected to showcase regional or watershed approaches to remove obstacles to implementation. The first is ongoing work on the Maidford River Restoration project on Aquidneck Island in Rhode Island. The project will assist the Town of Middletown and the Aquidneck Land Trust in planning and preliminary design for nature-based solutions to restore water quality and mitigate flooding. The Project Team, which includes local partners, is working with property owners to evaluate different techniques to increase the river’s flood storage capacity and to promote restoration of its riparian buffer. The second pilot project will be launched in October 2020 in the Canoe River Aquifer in the towns of Easton, Mansfield, and Norton, Massachusetts. The goal of this project is to foster regional collaborations on local nature-based solutions to protect groundwater quality and quantity.

Finally, Network partners are also advancing two additional efforts that have broad application to stakeholders throughout the region. The first is the Stormwater Retrofit Manual led by the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center to develop a technical manual detailing stormwater management retrofit techniques. The manual incorporates recent research findings and innovations to guide local officials and others looking to retrofit existing drainage infrastructure and utilize nature-based solutions to reduce water quality impacts on the region’s built environment. The second is the Stewardship Mapping (STEWMMap) project led by Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design. Partners leading the STEWMMap project have developed a detailed survey to be sent to local stewards, and watershed and environmental groups to better understand who is doing what and where. The results of the survey will be used to create a visual tool that depicts SNEP regional entities engaged in stormwater management, habitat restoration, and climate resiliency initiatives. This information will help the SNEP Network to highlight local success stories, leverage its resources to aid local entities, and identify regional needs.

For additional information and resources visit www.snepnetwork.org. To request assistance from SNEP Network partners please visit our [online portal](#).

