



Working for a Clean, Healthy Ocean that is Accessible to All

Date: July 31, 2023

Project Name: Land to Sea Speaker Series - sharing knowledge and experience for healthy coastal ecosystems

Subaward Number: #SNEPWG21-7-COA

Subaward Period: December 31, 2021 - December 31, 2023

Subawardee Organization: Clean Ocean Access

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Executive Summary

Clean Ocean Access hosted a six series Land to Sea event speaker series that took place virtually via Zoom, including a few in person components) with a primary focus on watershed features, highlighted the benefits of watershed stewardship that positively impacts adjacent saltwater bodies including Sakonnet River, Mount Hope Bay, Narragansett Bay, and Rhode Island Sound. Additional scopes of work included locations of the entire SNEP region that initiated peer to peer learning opportunities across the SNEP region working in partnership with the SNEP team.

These multi month series of community building peer to peer learning events were meant to build partnerships within the communities of Newport County and foster a multi-generational conversation and sense of collaboration regarding watershed stewardship. Speakers presented on past, present, and future work funded by SNEP and included post presentation discussions and question and answer sessions with stakeholders and practitioners.

A significant threat to the watershed of Newport County with a focus on Aquidneck Island is stormwater runoff carrying pollutants into the drinking water supply and nearshore ocean recreation zone. The resultant impact in freshwater ponds is elevated nutrient levels that result in harmful algae growth and/or requires significant advanced drinking water treatment methods. Stormwater also conveys bacteria from wildlife, domestic pets, and faulty residential and municipal infrastructure to the nearshore zone and can result in beach closures. This threat is made possible due to impervious surfaces and high usage of the island by residents, tourists, and industry, and the lack of information on ways to mitigate the sources. The Land to Sea Speaker Series project sought to make a contribution for the solution of the problem by informing, educating, inspiring, and empowering the community and mobilizing impactful ways that individuals and community members local and beyond can take action that results in collective impact to reduce the pollutant loading on the island's water bodies and beyond. The Land to Sea learning events facilitated individual actions not limited to conserving water, reduce lawn sizes, fertilizing smart, reducing use of pesticides, reducing runoff, not draining swimming pools into watershed, taking care of your septic system, not feeding the ducks, scooping the poop, washing vehicles on lawn, installing rain barrels or gardens or permeable pavements, applying compost to create healthier soils, exploring green roofs, disconnecting downspouts, and planting more trees.

The Land to Sea Speaker Series work plan and deliverables achieved the scope of work to host six peer to peer learning events from January 2022 to July 2023. Each peer to peer learning event followed a similar recipe of principal tasks working with project partners that conveyed striking presentations featuring SNEP funded work or similar efforts, and marketed and communicated the Land to Sea speaker series events to the entire community before each event and shared the results afterwards. The



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schedule was initiated and planned mostly during the first few months of the year during the Fall of 2021 and then engaged stakeholders and the community at each event and then to develop relationships and partnerships between each event with discussions and field visits continuing through spring 2022. Subsequently, the second part of the Land to Sea Speaker Series was planned during the fall months of 2022 and was initiated during the early winter months of 2023 in January, February, and March. The proposed work addressed the problem of stormwater carrying pollutants into drinking water bodies and adjacent nearshore zones. The peer to peer learning aimed to reduce the pollutants by enhancing existing relationships or forming new relationships within the community and inspired and educated the local and broader community to take action through environmentally responsible behaviors. The deliverables of the Land to Sea Speaker Series consisted of six peer to peer learning events across Newport County with an expected attendance of hundreds of people. The Land to Sea Speaker Series was held presentation wise virtually via the platform of Zoom. Clean Ocean Access is confident that sharing this unique approach for peer to peer learning allowed us to perform additional work to initiate similar peer to peer learning opportunities across the SNEP region working in partnership with the SNEP team.

As the main project partner in the Land to Sea Speaker Series, Clean Ocean Access performed all planning, logistics, marketing, communications, grant requirements, and facilitated all subsequent project partners to achieve the project goals of this grant funded project. The main resources to perform the work on this project were the Clean Ocean Access staff, captained by Executive Director, Pamela Cook, who lead staff resources with assisting with SNEP grant requirements and parameters in the scope of work to expand the peer to peer learning outside of the Newport County and Aquidneck Island region and performed an oversight role for the actual project. Eva Touhey, Director of Sustainability, Casey Tremper, Program Manager, and Rebecca Chace, Director of Marketing and Events, all worked diligently to make this series the success it was intended to be and helped it to be well attended and received in the community and beyond. The project partners have expressed willingness and interest to advance the Land to Sea Speaker Series and Clean Ocean Access intends to proceed with this series as a signature event for the organization and a source of income through sponsorships. The role of each partner was to create a presentation that shared results or goals of past, present, and future work funded by SNEP (or other sources with related outcomes), participated in the panel discussion with stakeholders and practitioners, and promoted the learning event with their constituents.

The marketing and outreach plan of the project publicized the Land to Sea Speaker Series through learning events via a complete calendar shared with local media outlets and across the greater New England Region. Each event was promoted beforehand and included social media and digital sharing with project partners. To inform the public officials, events were included in the consent calendar of local government council meetings, which hopefully lead to additional press coverage. We shared the learning



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events during the summer months as part of zero waste event sustainability efforts where we interacted with over 50,000 per season from across the region, and we aimed to leverage this outreach to then assist with the SNEP partners to expand the peer to peer learning program to communities outside of Newport County. The target audience included the residents, visitors, elected officials, and other decision makers and stakeholders on Aquidneck Island that were involved with Rhode Island water quality efforts. The key stakeholders were broad in the sense that Aquidneck Island residents and visitors shared an amazing natural resource and a unique characteristic that everyone in all three communities' lives in the watershed that produces the water we drink. We communicated with the community, professional groups, and regional audiences by posting the learning events on our website and cross promoting the website and learning events with our project partners.

The impact of the work is that we expected to impactfully engage a large number of participants and create an informed community that resulted in a higher degree of understanding of the watershed challenges facing Aquidneck Island and beyond and instill a knowledge base of actionable steps for reducing the harmful effects of stormwater runoff. By connecting the residents of Aquidneck Island and beyond with each other, we built social networks including students and their families to participate together and pollinate ideas and interest and turned weak ties into strong ties and built relationships that will persist over time with an underpinning of working together to take action to improve and protect the health of the water in the watershed. While quantitative improvements were desirable in terms of measurement of grant performance, the informed community will have immediate impacts for an improved understanding of the complex topic of watershed health and allow for more informed decision making as each community grapples with long-term decision makings for the health of our island watershed.

Thank you for the opportunity to host the Land to Sea Speaker Series.



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Project Narrative

Six Land to Sea Speaker Series events took place and were held virtually via Zoom.

- Ghost Gear with David Bethoney, Executive Director of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, January 25, 2022
 - 25 event attendees, 36 YouTube views
 - This event was supplemented with an in-person Dock Talk in Newport* (*matching grant covered supplemental in person portion of series)
- Dune Grass Restoration at Fogland Beach Tiverton with Wenley Ferguson, Director of Habitat Restoration at Save the Bay, and Brian Janes, Town of Tiverton, March 8, 2022
 - 28 attendees, 30 YouTube views
- Green Infrastructure with Amelia Rose, Executive Director of Groundwork Rhode Island, April 5, 2022
 - 4 attendees, 21 YouTube views
 - This event was supplemented with an in-person visit to Rhode Island Stormwater Innovation Center in Providence* (*matching grant covered supplemental in person portion of series)
- Greenhill Stormwater Management with Zach Henderson, Practice Leader, Woodard & Curran, March 20, 2023
 - 35 event attendees
- Stormwater Management at Public Boat Ramps with Jordan Mora, Restoration Ecologist, Association to Preserve Cape Cod, February 21, 2023
 - 76 event attendees
- Mt. Hope Bay Water Quality Monitoring with Nicole Flecchia and Riley Secor, PhD Students URI School of Oceanography, January 31, 2023
 - 36 event attendees

These speaker series events were well thought out, planned, and executed by Clean Ocean Access staff. Attendees and post event viewers took part in the informational presentation by local professionals in their fields of expertise and were able to interact with speakers and staff during question and answer sessions.



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Project Results

Three Land to Sea Speaker Series events took place to date in 2022 and three in 2023. The informed community of participants gained an improved understanding of the topics covered.

Compliance

N/A

Next Steps Recommendations

Thank you for the opportunity to host the inaugural Land to Sea Speaker Series. Clean Ocean Access looks forward to continuing this series with the support of new funders, sponsors, and unrestricted opportunities to host a more diverse panel of hosts and topics.

Project Partners

- Island Foundation - Matching grant
- Save the Bay - Speaker
- Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District
- Aquidneck Island Land Trust
- Town of Tiverton - Speaker
- Groundwork RI - Speaker
- RI Department of Environmental Management
- RI Dept. of Transportation
- Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
- Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corp
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Stormwater Innovation Center (Providence)
- Woodard & Curran
- URI School of Oceanography
- Association to Preserve Cape Cod

Volunteer and Community Involvement



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- Speakers provided their time voluntarily (honorarium offered).
- Community participants attended the series.

Compliance

N/A

Outreach & Communications

Social media, constant contact, eventbrite, emails, newsletters, flyers, etc.

Project Budget Report

The Land to Sea Speaker Series was an event series that educated our community on impactful topics aligning with our mission. The scope of work was labor intensive in regards to planning and staff time, set up, execution, and implementing supplemental programming. Travel costs and supplies are absorbed into fringe.

Summary Budget Table

See attachment.

Supporting Materials

N/A

Invoice Cost Table Format

Budget Category	Total Budgeted Funds	Total Budgeted Match	Grant Funds Expended This Period	Grant Funds Expended Cumulative	Match Funds Expended Cumulative	Match Source (note cash or in-kind)
Personnel	13620	5000	6645	13,620	5000	
Fringe	1362		664.50	1,362		
Travel						
Equipment						
Supplies						
Contracts						
Other		5000			5000	
Total Direct	14982		7309.50	14,982		
Indirect						
Total	14982		7309.50	14982	10000	



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Certification

The undersigned verifies that the descriptions of activities and expenditures in this final report are accurate to the best of my knowledge; and that the activities were conducted in agreement with the grant contract. I certify that the matching fund levels established in the grant contract and reported here have been met.

Grantee Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela Cook".

Name: Pamela Cook

Job Title: Executive Director

Date: July 31, 2023

Organization: Clean Ocean Access