



SNEP Watershed Grants Rhode Island Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Restore America's Estuaries
Providence, RI

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Sen. Jack Reed and Restore America's Estuaries Announce Grants for Coastal Conservation and Restoration

With the support of Senator Jack Reed, Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are awarding \$2.3 million in new funding to local organizations working for clean water and healthy coastal ecosystems in Southeast New England. On Sept. 23, elected officials and agency representatives will honor seven Rhode Island organizations that, collectively, will receive \$1.1 million for programs and projects that benefit the state's communities while restoring our environment.

The announcement event will take place at 10:00 a.m. at The Casino at Roger Williams Park. It will begin with a speaking program featuring Senator Reed and other members of Rhode Island's Congressional delegation, Mayor Jorge Elorza of Providence, and other federal, state and municipal officials (agenda attached).

The funding is provided under the 2019 Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Watershed Grants, a collaboration between RAE and EPA Region 1. The grant program builds and supports partnerships that tackle the region's most pressing environmental issues, such as nutrient pollution and coastal habitat loss.

For 2019, RAE selected 13 grant recipients in Rhode Island and Massachusetts through a rigorous competitive process. The awardees include municipalities, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions, each of which is leading an innovative, high-impact project of regional importance. The \$2.3 million in federal funding for the region will be matched by an additional \$800,000 in state and local dollars – providing, in total, more than \$3.1 million in funds to protect and restore Southeast New England's environment.

In Rhode Island, the 2019 SNEP Watershed Grants are providing \$1.1 million to seven local partnerships led by the following organizations:

- Audubon Society of RI to create a regional center for stormwater innovation at Roger Williams Park in Providence (\$177,534);
- City of Cranston to restore clean water at Spectacle Pond, with benefits to Roger Williams Park and the Pawtuxet River system (\$187,500);
- Groundwork Rhode Island to install stormwater improvements in Providence and provide job training for urban youth (\$198,891);
- City of Newport to implement an innovative approach to reducing urban stormwater by providing incentives to private property owners (\$108,750);
- Northern RI Conservation District to establish a manure management program for small farmers in the Scituate Reservoir watershed, reducing pollution to Providence's drinking water supply (\$113,976);
- Town of Warren to install innovative stormwater practices on waterfront streets to reduce pollution to Narragansett Bay (\$25,000); and
- Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council to install stormwater practices along the Woonasquatucket River Greenway, reducing pollution to the Providence River and Narragansett Bay (\$245,000).

The program is funding an additional \$1.2 million in Massachusetts projects, which will be announced at an event in East Falmouth, MA on October 11.

"We've come a long way in terms of cleaning up Narragansett Bay and improving water quality, but we still have a long way to go. It's crucial we keep these funds flowing so we can restore more coastal watersheds and support local communities," said **Senator Reed**, a senior member of the Appropriations Committee who created SNEP in 2013, and who has secured \$27 million for the program over the last seven years. "These grants will provide tangible benefits for our waterways and communities, and I am pleased they are being put to good use."

"In Rhode Island, we depend on our beautiful coastline and estuaries," said **Senator Sheldon Whitehouse**. "That's why we're lucky to have great local organizations working to combat pollution and protect our coastal habitat. I'm proud to fight for the funding that helps these groups do such important work."

"Rhode Island's coastlines are a national treasure. We must do everything we can to protect and restore these complex coastal ecosystems for generations to come," said **Congressman David Cicilline**. "I commend these outstanding organizations and municipalities who competed for this important investment of federal funding, and I look forward to seeing the tremendous progress that they make when they put it to use conserving our state's coasts."

"The bays, estuaries, and landscapes of Southeast coastal New England are the heart of our communities. Funding these projects and working with RAE to develop opportunities for collaboration and smart innovation continues to be a priority for EPA," said **EPA New England Regional Administrator Dennis Deziel**. "Today's funding will help protect clean water and build healthy watersheds vital to the ecological resiliency and economic vitality of our coastal communities."

"Rhode Island's 400 miles of coastline are vital—not only to our state's identity, but also to our economic and environmental future," said **Governor Gina M. Raimondo**. "I'm thrilled that \$2.3 million is being awarded to local organizations that are doing important work preserving our coastal ecosystems."

“By coming together as a community, we are advancing our shared vision of a more sustainable Providence,” said **Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza**. “It is thanks to our partners who continue to advocate for and prioritize this work that we can ensure clean water and green spaces for all of our residents. I look forward to our continued collaboration and the great work that is to come.”

“Our nations coasts and estuaries are the first line of defense against climate change impacts, and investments like this program are critical to helping these special places in Rhode Island remain healthy and resilient, protecting both people and property,” said **Jeff Benoit, President of Restore America’s Estuaries**.

By funding locally based partnerships that are working to reduce pollution and restore coastal habitats, the SNEP Watershed Grants program is helping to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for Southeast New England communities. For more about SNEP Watershed Grants, see www.snepgrants.org.

Restore America’s Estuaries (RAE) is a national nonprofit organization established in 1995. RAE leads a national alliance of ten coastal conservation organizations across the country dedicated to the protection and restoration of bays and estuaries as essential resources for our nation.