For Immediate Release: October 13, 2026

EPA's Southeast New England Program Announces $2.3 Million to Support Vital Environmental Restoration in Rhode Island

Public Event: Wed., Oct. 14, 11 a.m.
Pawtuxet Depot Floodplain Restoration Site
230 Dartmoor Ave., Cranston, RI
Parking available on site

Contact: Tom Ardito, Restore America's Estuaries –
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Cranston, RI —On Wednesday, October 14, the Southeast New England Program (SNEP) will be joined by the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Senator Jack Reed, U.S. Representatives Seth Magaziner and Gabe Amo, Cranston Mayor Ken Hopkins** and additional state and local partners to announce $2.3 million in grants and technical assistance for local organizations working on high-priority environmental projects. EPA's SNEP program works to restore clean water, healthy ecosystems, and sustainable communities in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts.

The event will highlight six Rhode Island organizations receiving a total of $1.2 million for large-scale environmental restoration projects through SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants, and 11 Rhode Island organizations receiving a total of $78,000 for work in coastal and watershed stewardship through SNEP Restoration Capital Mini-Grants. Both grant programs are funded by EPA New England and administered through a partnership with Restore America's Estuaries, a national non-profit organization.

In addition to the grants, the SNEP Network, managed by the New England Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maine, will announce **eight new technical assistance partnerships with Rhode Island communities to reduce water pollution and conserve coastal ecosystems.**

Event Speakers:

- Cranston Mayor Ken Hopkins
- U.S. Senator Jack Reed
- U.S. Representative Seth Magaziner
- U.S. Representative Gabe Amo
- Regina Lyons, Deputy Director, Water Division, EPA Region 1
- Terrence Gray, P.E., Director, RI Dept. of Environmental Management
- Darcy Young, Executive Director, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
- Topher Hamblett, Executive Director, Save The Bay
- John Torgan, State Director, The Nature Conservancy Rhode Island
- Alex Gulachenski, Senior Program Manager, SNEP Network, New England Environmental Finance Center
- Tom Ardito, Director, SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants, Restore America's Estuaries

Following the announcements, the RI Dept. of Environmental Management will lead a public tour of the Pawtuxet Depot Floodplain Restoration Project in Cranston. The project will restore forest and wetland in a formerly developed area that was devastated by flooding on the Pawtuxet River in 2010, and will improve public access to the river by providing a new canoe launch, fishing area and walking trails. River flooding is a significant problem along the Pawtuxet as elsewhere in Rhode Island, and floodplain restoration projects such as this can reduce flooding impacts while restoring clean water, natural habitat and public access to the river. The project is the recipient of a $250,000 grant from SNEP this year.

The work in Cranston is just one example of SNEP's support for clean water, healthy ecosystems, and thriving communities throughout Southeast New England. Since 2012, SNEP has provided $70 million in funding and technical assistance to help municipalities, non-profit organizations, state and tribal governments, and other organizations accomplish these goals. By funding partnerships, promoting information-sharing, and helping to develop new technologies, SNEP is building capacity for better management of the regional environment while providing on-the-ground benefits for communities and ecosystems.

SNEP events are free and open to the public; all are welcome.

"I created the Southeast New England Program to protect and improve the health of Narragansett Bay and other tributaries and watersheds throughout Rhode Island. Through SNEP, more than $70 million in federal investments have flowed to locally-driven, community-based projects that deliver real results, like environmental benefits, economic development opportunities, and better quality-of-life for all Rhode Islanders," said **Senator Jack Reed**, a leading member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the author of the *SNEP Authorization Act*, which would formally codify the SNEP grant program. "As we welcome this $2.3 million in new SNEP funding for projects across our region, we also recommit ourselves to the work ahead advancing climate resilience, improving water quality, and expanding public access to our coastlines and rivers."

“Cranston knows firsthand the importance of protecting our waterways and addressing the challenges of flooding,” said **Cranston Mayor Kenneth J. Hopkins.** “We appreciate the continued support of our state and federal partners in helping communities like ours advance environmental restoration, protect our natural resources, and create more opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors.”

“Rhode Islanders deserve clean water and to be kept them safe from extreme weather,” said **Congressman Seth Magaziner.** “I will keep fighting to fund the EPA’s Southeast New England Program to make Rhode Island cleaner and more resilient for generations to come.”

"From restoring a Blackstone River tributary in Cumberland to creating a new green infrastructure park in Pawtucket, this funding will support water quality, improve ecological health, and preserve habitats across the state," said **Congressman Gabe Amo**. "I'm proud to work with Senator Reed and our federal delegation to deliver funding that will ensure a healthier, more sustainable future for Rhode Island’s waters.”

“Today’s announcement of EPA’s SNEP funding of $1.2 million helps communities reduce water pollution, conserve coastal ecosystems and support local economies around Rhode Island,” said **EPA Regional Administrator Mark Sanborn.** “The partnerships highlighted today continue to produce real and tangible results across Southeast New England.”

“Thanks to continued support from EPA’s Southeast New England Program, the SNEP Network will support 18 new projects this coming year. Since 2019, local partners have provided free assistance to communities and tribes on over 60 projects that resulted in enhanced local capacity to move projects toward funding and implementation, a uniform regional level of practice, and better water quality in the region” said **Martha Sheils, Director of the New England Environmental Finance Center and the SNEP Network.** “A particular area of focus this year is our new Watershed Protection Standard tool that guides community development in a way that maintains pre-development levels of water recharge and prevents increases in stormwater runoff and pollution.”

Attached:

- **2026 SWIG grants (10 grants, $2.1 M)**
- **2026 SNEP Restoration Capital Mini-Grants (26 grants, $212,000)**
- **2026 SNEP Network Partnerships (18 partnerships)**

For more on EPA’s Southeast New England Program, see www.epa.gov/snep
For more about SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants, see www.snepgrants.org
For more on the SNEP Network, see www.snepnetwork.org

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2026 SNEP Grant Announcement		
Rhode Island Event		
Contact:	Tom Ardito, Restore America's Estuaries, 401-575-6109, tardito@estuaries.org	
Purpose:	To announce more than $2.3 M in grants and technical assistance to support Rhode Island & Massachusetts communities working on clean water, healthy ecosystems and sustainable communities. Funding is through US EPA Region 1, Southeast New England Program (SNEP), working in partnership with Restore America's Estuaries and the New England Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maine.	
Run of Show -- Confirmed		
Date:	Wed. Oct. 14	
Time:	11 a.m.	
Location:	Pawtuxet Depot Floodplain Restoration Site, 230 Dartmoor Ave., Cranston, RI	
	(Just off Warwick Avenue next to Shaw's. Parking available on site.)	
Time	**Speaker**	**Notes**
11:00	Mayor Kenneth J. Hopkins -- Welcome	
11:05	Sen. Jack Reed	
11:10	Rep. Seth Magaziner	
11:15	Rep. Gabe Amo	
11:20	Regina Lyons, Dep. Dir. Water Div., USEPA Reg. 1	
11:25	Terrence Gray, P.E., Director, RIDEM	
11:30	Darcy Young, Exec. Director, NBEP	
11:35	Topher Hamblett, ED, STB	
11:40	John Torgan, Director, TNC/RI	
11:45	Alex Gulachenski, Sr. Prog. Mgr., NEEFC/SNEP Network	Announce 2026 Network Partnerships
11:55	Tom Ardito, Director, SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants	Announce 2026 SWIG Awards & 2026 SNEP Restoration Capital Mini-Grants
12:05	Photos	
12:15 - 12:45 PM	Grantees and partners available for questions and conversation. Grantees will display project information.	
12:45 - 1:15 PM	Pawtuxet Depot floodplain restoration site visit	

Logistical Support	**Organization**	**Resources**
	DEM	Site Preparation, 20 chairs
	Sen. Reed	Podium
	Pawtuxet River Authority	Pop-up tents, PA system, tables, volunteers
	All Grantees	Project posterboard, easel, wind control!

Notes Recognize Laura Fusco for Senator Whitehouse

2026 SNEP Watershed Implementation Grants (SWIG)
Summary of Awards -- Updated 8 Oct. 2026
"Total Project Cost" includes non-match leveraging such as other federal contributions.

RHODE ISLAND

Applicant	Project		Description	SWIG Award	Non-Fed Match	Total SWIG Budget	Total Project Cost
RI Dept. of Environmental Management	Pawtuxet Depot Floodplain Restoration	Cranston, RI	Restore 5 acres of former floodplain along the mainstem Pawtuxet River. SWIG will fund construction including removal of old foundations, pavement, fill and invasives; replanting; and other measures to create flood storage and wildlife habitat while improving public access.	$250,000	$403,000	$653,000	$653,000
Town of Cumberland	West Sneech Brook Culvert Upgrade for Habitat Connectivity and Climate Resilience	Cumberland, RI	Replace an undersized road culvert on West Sneech Brook, a tributary of the Blackstone River, in order to restore cold water habitat for brook trout, American Brook Lamprey and other aquatic species while reducing road flooding. SWIG to fund construction.	$245,000	$312,625	$557,625	$695,486
City of Pawtucket	Tidewater Stormwater Park	Pawtucket, RI	Create a new 5.4-acre green infrastructure park to treat stormwater flows from new and existing development, to restore clean water to the Seekonk River and Narragansett Bay. Park design was funded with a prior SWIG grant; this grant will fund construction. The project is part of a $30 million City resilience initiative along the Seekonk River in Pawtucket.	$250,000	$82,500	$332,500	$7,500,000
Rhode Island Trout Unlimited	Wood River: Prioritizing Water Quality Solutions	Exeter & West Greenwich, RI	Study to identify and prioritize sources of sedimentation and other water quality problems along 44 miles of forest roads within a 3500 acre area of the Wood River watershed, within Arcadia Management Area and URI's Alton Jones Campus. The project is a partnership between RI Trout Unlimited and RI Dept. of Environmental Management, which is committed to implementation.	$100,000	$33,300	$133,300	$133,300
Town of South Kingstown	Saugatucket Watershed Flooding and Stormwater Plan	South Kingstown, RI	Assess problems and prioritize solutions for clean water, ecological restoration and climate resilience throughout the 17-square-mile (10,560 acres) watershed of the Saugatucket River, the principal tributary of Point Judith Salt Pond.	$200,000	$66,000	$266,000	$266,000
RI Division of Fish and Wildlife	Galilee Salt Marsh Tide Gate Repair and Calibration	Narragansett, RI	Repair tide gates under the Galilee Escape Road, necessary to sustain the restoration of the 100-acre Galillee Salt Marsh. SWIG to fund construction.	$150,000	$84,381	$234,381	$334,381
				$1,195,000	**$981,806**	$2,176,806	$9,582,167

MASSACHUSETTS

Applicant	Project	Location	Description	SWIG Award	SWIG Match	Total SWIG Budget	Total Project Cost
Cape Cod Conservation District	Bayview Bogs Wetland Restoration	Yarmouth, MA	Restore 47 acres of former cranberry bogs to natural wetlands with connection to coastal waters, within a 90 acre conservation area. Permitting is complete; SWIG funds construction.	$250,000	$280,000	$530,000	$4,700,000
The Trustees of Reservations	The Trustees of Restervations	Chappaquidick, Martha's Vineyard	Nature-based restoration of 214 acres of salt marshes within the Cape Poge Bay and Pocha Pond ecosystem. Fund construction of work designed under prior SWIG grant.	$242,000	$81,640	$323,640	$700,000
Roger Williams University	Roger Williams University	Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard	Design & install permeable reactive barrier (PRB), an innovative technology to reduce nitrogen loadings from groundwater into Lagoon Pond. SWIG will fund design, installation and post-installation monitoring.	$249,990	$83,405	$333,395	$333,395
Town of Rehoboth	Beckwith Middle School – Bioretention System	Rehoboth, MA	Engineer & install a small stormwater system at Beckwith Middle School to treat parking lot runoff prior to entering the Palmer River, a tributary of Narragansett Bay. Educational component involves middle-school students.	$150,000	$57,420	$207,420	$231,420
TOTAL MASSACHUSETTS				**$891,990**	**$502,465**	$1,394,455	$5,964,815

TOTAL ALL SWIG AWARDS				**$2,086,990**	**$1,484,271**	$3,571,261	$15,546,982

Restoration Area: 14,431 acres

Expected 2026 SNEP Restoration Capital Mini-grants	
Rhode Island (10 grants)	$67,822
Massachusetts (16 grants)	$134,732
Total 26 Mini-Grants	**$212,615**

All SNEP/RAE grants 2026	**$2.3 million**

2026 SNEP Restoration Capital Mini-Grants
Updated 8 Oct. 2026
For more info contact Tom Ardito, tardito@estuaries.org

RHODE ISLAND		
Recipient Organization	**AWARD**	**Purpose**
Aquidneck Island Land Trust	$4,075	Native trees and supplies for tree planting
Audubon Society of Rhode Island	$9,988	Bacteria monitoring supplies
City of Pawtucket	$6,501	Watering equipment for urban trees and stormwater plantings
City of Providence	$4,600	Public Works Stormwater Project Documentation and Infrastructure Mapping Initiative
Groundwork Rhode Island	$10,000	Community Planting Support
Rhode Island Trout Unlimited	$9,825	Building Capacity for Watershed Site Prioritization
The Narragansett Indian Tribe	$9,919	Supplies for use in restoration and conservation
Town of East Greenwich	$8,210	Supplies for use in restoration and conservation
West Greenwich Conservation Commission	$1,942	Supplies for volunteer cleanups
Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council	$2,822	Supplies for use in restoration and conservation
Total Rhode Island	**$67,882**	

MASSACHUSETTS		
Recipient Organization	**AWARD**	**Purpose**
Blackstone River Coalition	$7,392	Water quality monitoring supplies
Center for Coastal Studies	$9,415	Water quality monitoring supplies
Falmouth Pond Coalition, Inc.	$9,078	Water quality monitoring supplies
Great Pond Foundation	$5,995	Water quality monitoring supplies
Groundwork Southcoast.org	$10,000	Routes to Resilience: Mobilizing Environmental Stewardship
Harwich Conservation Trust (HCT)	$8,575	Pre-Restoration Turtle Monitoring Equipment Purchase
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe	$9,997	Santuit Pond Nutrient Inactivation Treatment
Massachusetts Environmental Police	$9,826	Estuarine Conservation Monitoring Initiative
Popponesset Water Stewardship Alliance	$5,396	Expanding Water Quality Monitoring Capabilities and Cnidaria Research Along the Mashpee, MA Coastline
Southeast Massachusetts Chapter of Trout Unlimited	$10,000	HighTech Trout: Science, Stewardship, and Restoration
Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)	$9,504	Water Quality Monitoring Equipment for Permeable Reactive Barrier (PRB)
Taunton River Watershed Alliance	$9,993	Supplies for use in restoration and conservation
Town of Franklin	$1,899	Beaver Flow Device Materails
Town of Mansfield	$10,000	GPS equipment for invasive species management
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth	$8,200	Portable Field Sampling and Water-Access Equipment Package
Wareham Land Trust	$9,463	Conservation signs
Total Massachusetts	**$134,733**	

TOTAL ALL 2026 MINI-GRANTS	$202,615

SNEP Network Technical Assistance Awards 2026

State	Community	Project Description	SNEP Network Partner
MA	Town of Uxbridge	Will receive assistance progressing through the early stages of planning for dam removal at Whitin Pond Dam to prevent flooding, improve public safety, improve water quality and reconnect the Mumford River. Assistance will involve community engagement, planning, and seeking grant funding. This project builds upon a prior 2020 Mass MVP grant that identified Whitin Pond Dam a top priority for removal.	Blackstone Watershed Collaborative will partner with the Town of Uxbridge on this project.
MA	Pleasant Bay Alliance (Chatham, Orleans, Harwich, Brewster)	Three Cape Cod communities (Town of Orleans, Town of Harwich, and Town of Brewster), working with the Pleasant Bay Alliance, will receive assistance to update their bylaws and floodplain regulations to protect future development and enhance the resilience of existing natural resources. This effort builds upon SNEP Network assistance provided to the Town of Chatham in 2025-2026 to update their wetlands protection bylaw and develop a coastal resilience bylaw. The Chatham Conservation Commission adopted the regulations 2026 and they will now serve as a model for the Alliance.	Cape Cod Commission will partner with the Pleasant Bay Alliance and Towns of Orleans, Harwich, and Brewster on this project.
MA	County of Plymouth	Will receive assistance in the development of a Pilot Community Water Management Initiative to help address water quality concerns. This project will serve as a first step toward establishing a regional, voluntary Water Management Program that municipalities can opt into to access water quality monitoring support, planning assistance, education and watershed management resources. The assistance will include evaluating community needs, identifying priority services, and exploring sustainable program structures.	Danica Belknap Consulting will partner with the County of Plymouth on this project with additional assistance from Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center.
MA	Town of Mansfield	Will receive assistance to develop and implement a community outreach strategy to educate residents of the benefits of adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The CPA establishes a sustainable local funding source for purchasing and managing natural lands and can increase the Town's resilience by preserving native habitat, promoting stormwater infiltration and groundwater recharge, protecting water quality, reducing urban heat island impacts, reducing flooding and enhancing public recreation.	Danica Belknap Consulting will partner with the Town of Mansfield on this project with additional assistance from Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center and Groundwork Southcoast.
MA	Town of Seekonk	Will receive assistance to assess the feasibility of adopting a local stormwater utility to provide a sustainable source of revenue for managing stormwater infrastructure and protecting water resources. This effort builds upon the Town's prior stormwater utility work with the SNEP Network in 2023. Assistance will include an assessment of program funding needs, explore potential models for meeting those needs, and provide information for the Town and public to make an informed decision regarding whether to adopt a utility.	Danica Belknap Consulting and the New England Environmental Finance Center will partner with the Town of Seekonk on this project.
MA	Town of Westport	Will receive assistance to conduct a feasibility analysis and scope out potential restoration actions recommended for the lower Westport River to restore, protect and facilitate migration of salt marsh habitat. This project builds upon the prior SNEP Network assistance from Mass Audubon to assess the Westport River salt marsh conditions, identify risks associated with marsh island loss, and conceptualize nature-based solutions that slow marsh degradation.	Mass Audubon will partner with the Town of Westport on this project with additional assistance from The Nature Conservancy of Massachusetts and Save The Bay.
MA	Town of Acushnet	Will receive assistance to develop an Open Space Residential Design (OSRD) Bylaw to help reduce impervious surface cover and improve open space connectivity and stormwater infiltration during new subdivision development projects.	SRPEDD will partner with the Town of Acushnet on this project.
MA	Town of Marion	Will receive assistance to identify opportunities for improving stormwater management at Island Wharf Park to protect water quality in Sippican Harbor. The assistance will include holding a community visioning workshop for Island Wharf Park and developing conceptual designs for how stormwater and public use might be accommodated together on the site.	SRPEDD will partner with the Town of Marion on this project.
MA	Town of Middleborough	Will receive assistance to advance the Upper Nemasket Channel Restoration Project through the coming year of permitting, funding, and community-engagement work in order to position the project for implementation. This project will restore the channel to its natural bankfull width and reconnect the river to its floodplain, improving fish passage, habitat connectivity, recreational navigability, water quality, and flood resilience.	SRPEDD will partner with the Town of Middleborough on this project.

MA	Town of Tisbury	Will participate in the Stormwater Planning Series, a 6-month capacity building training and technical assistance program that leads communities through the process of designing and developing conceptual designs for stormwater retrofits and green infrastructure solutions. Communities will also receive engineering assistance to advance their designs up to 30%.	The following SNEP Partners will lead this training: UNH Stormwater Center, Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR), Save The Bay, Audubon Society Rhode Island/Stormwater Innovation Center, and NEEFC.	
RI	Town of Narragansett	Will participate in the Stormwater Planning Series, a 6-month capacity building training and technical assistance program that leads communities through the process of designing and developing conceptual designs for stormwater retrofits and green infrastructure solutions. Communities will also receive engineering assistance to advance their designs up to 30%.	The following SNEP Partners will lead this training: UNH Stormwater Center, Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR), Save The Bay, Audubon Society Rhode Island/Stormwater Innovation Center, and NEEFC.	z
RI	Narragansett Indian Tribe	Will receive assistance to complete a nonpoint source pollution assessment and management program plan for tribal lands and water resources. The completed plan will help them seek treatment as a state authorization from EPA for Section 319 grant funding for local water quality restoration and protection projects.	Danica Belknap Consulting will partner with the Narragansett Indian Tribe on this project with additional assistance from Kimberly Groff Consulting, Elizabeth Scott Consulting, and Save The Bay.	z
RI	Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council	Will receive capacity building support for strategic and organizational planning, developing a funding and financing strategy, and building a communications and outreach strategy.This assistance will help PRAWC expand their fundraising capabilities and expand their scope of watershed management operations.	Danica Belknap Consulting will partner with the Pawtuxet River Authority & Watershed Council on this project with additional assistance from The New England Environmental Finance Center, The Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center, and Save The Bay.	z
RI	Town of North Providence	Will participate in the Stormwater Planning Series, a 6-month capacity building training and technical assistance program that leads communities through the process of designing and developing conceptual designs for stormwater retrofits and green infrastructure solutions. Communities will also receive engineering assistance to advance their designs up to 30%.	The following SNEP Partners will lead this training: UNH Stormwater Center, Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR), Save The Bay, Audubon Society Rhode Island/Stormwater Innovation Center, and NEEFC.	z
RI	City of Cranston	Will receive technical assistance to assess the feasibility of implementing a stormwater utility fund by exploring overall cost of a stormwater program, utility rate structure, and projected rates. This project builds off of a previous regional feasibility assessment and will help the City understand and respond to current local needs, and share information with the public about how the fund can help improve stormwater infrastructure and address flood risks.	Danica Belknap Consulting and the New England Environmental Finance Center will partner with the Town of Seekonk on this project.	z
RI	City of Providence	The City of Providence will receive continued assistance to advance the next phase of its Sustainable Stormwater and Sewer Funding, a city-wide effort aimed at addressing long-standing stormwater and sewer system issues, water quality impairments, and climate-related vulnerabilities.This work builds upon the City's prior stormwater utility work with the SNEP Network from 2023-2026.	The following SNEP Network Partners will support the City of Providence with this work: the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Elizabeth Scott Consulting, the New England Environmental Finance Center, and Save The Bay.	z
RI	Town of East Greenwich	The Town of East Greenwich will receive assistance and training to assess the town's culverts using the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) culvert assessment protocol, which includes documentation on culvert condition, type, and other data relevant for planning, including flood mitigation.	Save the Bay will partner with the Town of East Greenwich to provide the technical assistance, and Blackstone Watershed Collaborative and Save The Bay will lead the NAACC training.	z
RI	Slacks Reservoir Association/Town of Smithfield	Will participate in the Stormwater Planning Series, a 6-month capacity building training and technical assistance program that leads communities through the process of designing and developing conceptual designs for stormwater retrofits and green infrastructure solutions. Communities will also receive engineering assistance to advance their designs up to 30%.	The following SNEP Partners will lead this training: UNH Stormwater Center, Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR), Save The Bay, Audubon Society Rhode Island/Stormwater Innovation Center, and NEEFC.	z