NARRAGANSETT BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM

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FY2026 Workplan

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Year 5

Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

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QA/QC Plan Required:	Yes
Project Period:	October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2031
Resources Requested:	This is a new award. Total budget is $909,800. Attachment A provides the FY2026 budget summary and itemized budget for this award.
Federal Cost:	Current request: $909,800 (FY2026 funds)
Non-Federal Match:	None (waiver granted)
Abstract:	This Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP or program) Narrative Workplan (workplan) includes 1 objective and 1 task that will be undertaken with this FY2026 allocation of funds to its host Roger Williams University (RWU) from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The agreement has a 5-year project period (October

1, 2026–September 30, 2031). This "NBEP IIJA Workplan" for FY2026 will fund partners to advance projects that address pollution, degraded habitat, and other priority issues identified in the NBEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). This plan includes efforts that the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program has the authority, capability, and funding to complete, has been approved by the NBEP Steering Committee, and will advance NBEP's mission and CCMP for the program's study area of Narragansett Bay, Little Narragansett Bay, and Coastal Ponds, and their watersheds in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

SHORT SUMMARY

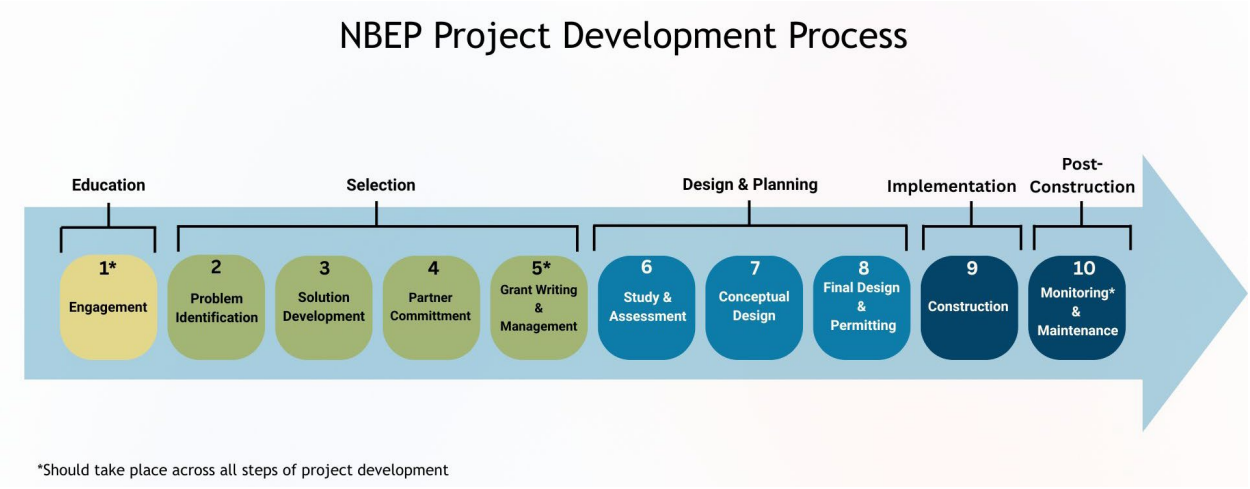
This workplan includes 1 objective and 1 task that align with NBEP's mission, CCMP, capabilities, and funding. Through this plan, NBEP will provide funding to partners with the local expertise and trust to develop high-quality projects that reduce pollution and restore habitat.

Summary of NBEP FY2026 (Year 5) IIJA Workplan

Objective	Task	Location	Funding
1. Support **development of projects** consistent with our CCMP.	a. Fund project development through use of at least one Request for Proposals that is responsive to progress in Years 1-4 and is aligned with the NBEP CCMP.	Narragansett Bay, Little Narragansett Bay, Coastal Ponds and their watersheds.	$877,400

CONTEXT FOR PLAN OF WORK

For decades, NBEP has funded a wide range of projects—from staffing to research to planning to on-the-ground projects. Based on the results of extensive outreach over the past five years, progressing outward from Steering Committee members to interests and people we have historically not engaged, a lack of local capacity was viewed as the single biggest barrier to new project development in our study area. For the purposes of this workplan, "projects" are those that reduce pollution and restore habitat. "Project development" is the process of advancing projects through the 5-phase, 10-step process from problem to construction described in the graphic below.



Many municipalities and community groups lack staff, time, and expertise to pursue funding for project development (e.g., State Revolving Fund, Clean Water Act 319, MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program, RI Municipal Resilience Program). While the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island have recently hired new technical assistance staff to help fill these gaps, the need for capacity still outstrips the availability. Simply put, our study area is not prepared to get its fair share of state and federal financial resources and resulting improvements to environmental and socioeconomic health.

NBEP directly addressed local capacity-building needs with direct awards to multiple organizations across the watershed with Years 1 and 2 of IIJA funding. NBEP used Years 3 and 4 of its IIJA funds to boost project development by providing direct and competitive subawards for site-specific projects to partners with the proven knowledge and agency to act locally. Note that staff time at NBEP and RWU to develop and manage subawards will be covered by §320 funds under a separate workplan.

Completion of an activity that advances a project at least 1 step forward in the 10-step project development process will constitute a "project advanced" for the purposes of this workplan. In addition to project-specific deliverables including studies, plans, and permits, "number of projects advanced" and "steps advanced" are primary outputs/metrics for tracking progress under NBEP's IIJA subawards. For subawardees where what is meant by projects advanced is not clear at the start, a Project Development Framework (see Appendix B) will be a required deliverable. This Project Development Framework will specify what comprises project advancement for each project (by describing the starting and expected finishing step) and anticipated next steps to get the effort to implementation. The collective outcomes expected from this workplan are described in the table below. Outputs and outcomes by task are provided later in this plan.

Term	Outcomes
Short (2 years)	60 percent designs and permitting for one culvert replacement and one dam; up to 14 quality projects advanced closer to implementation.
Medium (5 years)	A more secure network of local staff and expertise.
	Conditions in place to bring in more federal funds and implement more projects in the study area.
Long (10+ years)	More high-quality projects are constructed and maintained in the region.

NBEP will continue to evaluate success achieving outputs and outcomes to inform whether to maintain this approach or make refinements during or after the project period to assure we are truly assisting and accelerating project development.

OBJECTIVE

The sole objective in this work plan is to provide funding through subawards to partners with the local expertise and trust to advance development of projects that reduce pollution and restore habitat. **With this fifth year of IIJA funds, NBEP intends to continue support for project steps focused on planning, design, and permitting (steps 6-8) with the potential to fund a small number of projects in the construction stage (step 9).** NBEP's Executive and Steering Committees will provide guidance on RFP topics that are most responsive to current needs and our CCMP (either our 2012 CCMP or our 2025 CCMP Revision, pending EPA approval).

OBJECTIVE 1: FUND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT CONSISTENT WITH CCMP.

Primary 2012 CCMP Goals Addressed:

Section 1: Protect and Restore Clean Water

- Goal 1.4: Reduce the impacts of residential and commercial septic systems on water quality by implementing inspection, maintenance and financial assistance programs, and promoting adoption of more effective treatment technologies.
- Goal 1.8: Determine areas where advanced septic system treatment systems should be required to protect sensitive waters and other resources.
- Goal 2: Reduce pollution from stormwater sources.
- Goal 2.1: Provide enhanced funding and technical assistance to municipalities in key areas of stormwater management – operations and maintenance, assessment, illicit detection, stormwater system retrofits, public communications, and financing.
- Goal 2.2: Prioritize retrofitting of BMPs to areas most affected by stormwater impacts, using LID and including physical and habitat restoration where feasible to achieve water quality goals.
- Goal 2.7: Ensure that data systems capture information on stormwater BMPs to assess effectiveness and track performance.
- Goal 3.3: Identify and implement LID and urban green infrastructure programs and practices that will optimize the performance of CSO abatement projects.
- Goal 4: Manage estuaries, rivers, streams and lakes to prevent degradation and restore beneficial uses.
- Goal 4.2: Fully utilize watershed-based plans, such as stakeholder-based plans, NPS plans, TMDLs, and special area management plans to coordinate prioritized actions to protect, restore and manage the land and water (including groundwater) resources within watersheds.
- Goal 4.3: Build and increase capacity of nongovernmental organizations in implementing protection and restoration actions.
- Goal 5.5: Develop mechanism (e.g., regional workgroup) to examine local capacity to implement required environmental programs; examine regional solutions; report on funding issues related to local capacity to implement.
- Goal 6: Improve information, science and analysis that support management efforts necessary to restore and protect.
- Goal 6.1: Effectively manage, analyze, synthesize and make available data to support management decision-making, characterize environmental condition trends linked to ecological indicators, prioritize investments and communicate to the public. Continue development of data driven analytical tools, e.g., predictive models, biological indices.
- Goal 6.3: Support and develop volunteer monitoring programs where appropriate, building on existing volunteer monitoring programs; where feasible ensure resulting data helps fill gaps and has adequate quality assurance / quality control parameters to be used for state purposes.

Section 2: Manage Land for Conservation and Community

- Goal 1: Implement low impact development.
- Goal 1.1: Develop and adopt state and local policies, regulations, and ordinances as needed to fully implement low impact development approaches to development and redevelopment.
- Goal 1.2: Provide technical assistance to municipalities to identify and implement green infrastructure and LID techniques; agencies should assign designated staff as point of contact on LID issues (permits, training, technical assistance, etc.).
- Goal 2: Preserve open space and natural systems.
- Goal 2.1: Identify and prioritize areas for acquisition, protection and restoration on an interstate basis; target acquisition of priority areas.
- Goal 2.2: Prioritize and permanently protect open space areas in both states that are now under non-permanent protection status (time-limited development rights, etc.).
- Goal 2.3: Provide technical assistance, grants and financial and permitting incentives to expand use of conservation development designs and ordinances.
- Goal 3.3: Enhance existing or develop new mechanisms to provide planning resources to communities.

- Goal 4: Increase and maintain regional recreation opportunities and public access to shorelines and waterfronts.
- Goal 4.1: Increase public access to watershed resources by developing public water and land trail systems that enable a range of user opportunities.
- Goal 4.3: Continue to plan and develop public fishing piers, boat ramps and other forms of public access to fresh and salt waters in the Narragansett Bay Region.
- Goal 5: Improve science, information and communication to support effective land use management.
- Goal 5.1: Use communications and outreach efforts to promote important watershed resources and ways in which citizens and governments can protect and restore the value of these resources.
- Goal 6: Increase the role of watershed organizations and municipalities to serve critical partners in watershed management.
- Goal 6.2: Provide technical assistance to local NGOs and watershed groups to support local implementation of environmental improvement projects; include structuring state and federal funding opportunities in ways that facilitate participation by those groups.
- Goal 6.6: Support bi-state cooperative work by nongovernmental organizations like the Blackstone River Coalition and the Taunton River Watershed Alliance.

Section 3: Protect and Restore Fish, Wildlife, and Habitats

- Goal 1: Conserve existing natural landscapes that have been and will be adversely affected by development and invasive species.
- Goal 1.2: Improve and coordinate both state and federal habitat protection and restoration policies.
- Goal 2: Restore degraded or lost habits and habitat functions.
- Goal 2.1: Improve river connectivity and habitat by removing dams, upgrading culverts and creating structural fish ways to restore free-flowing rivers and anadromous fish passage; implement state fish passage plans.
- Goal 3: Manage habitats to sustain and enhance habitat function.
- Goal 3.6: Educate land owners, resource users and the public regarding habitat and wildlife conservation.
- Goal 3.7: Identify and protect cold water fishery streams/headwater areas using Clean Water Act tools, state, federal, and non-profit land acquisition programs and other strategies.
- Goal 5: Improve science, communication, and information to guide management of habitats and biodiversity.
- Goal 6: Build capacity to implement ecological restoration at state and local levels and improve interstate coordination.
- Goal 6.4: Maintain and expand state-wide and regional mapping of critical watershed and coastal habitats including biodiversity hot spots; use data to support restoration, conservation planning, and enhanced enforcement.

Task 1a: Support development of projects consistent with CCMP.

Fund project development (Steps 1-9) that is responsive to Years 1-4 efforts described in previous workplans (IIJA Years 1 and 2 workplan, IIJA Years 3 and 4 workplan) and our CCMP. With this fifth year of IIJA funds, NBEP intends to continue support for project steps focused on planning, design, and permitting (steps 6-8) with the potential to fund a small number of projects in the construction stage (step 9). NBEP will develop at least one Request for Proposals (RFP) based on Management Committee topic prioritization, utilize the Grants Subcommittee to review and select projects, and issue up to 8 subawards (individual awards likely from $50,000 to $250,000) that advance projects in line with both local priorities and our CCMP. Task 1a will be accomplished through subawards.

Objective 1 Contacts, Target Completion Dates, Outputs, and Outcomes

Task and Staff	Target Completion Date	Outputs*	Outcomes
Task 1a: Project Development RFP(s) and Subawards (NBEP Executive Director, NBEP Staff Scientist, NBEP Staff Ecologist, RWU Research and Sponsored Programs)	September 2031	One or more Request for Proposals documents. Up to 8 scopes of work, budgets, and agreements. Up to 16 projects advanced.	More projects are poised to seek implementation funding.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: NEW SUBAWARDS USING FY2026 (YEAR 5) IIJA FUNDING

Task	Project	Amount	Outputs	Procurement	Funding Close
Task 1a	Subawards to entities for project development in the NBEP study area based on response to one or more Requests for Proposals.	$877,400	One or more Request for Proposals documents. One or more final lists of selected subawardees. Up to 8 scopes of work, budgets, and agreements. Up to 16 projects advanced.	Subawards	September 30, 2031

APPENDIX B: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The ten (10) steps in NBEP's Project Development Process are included in the graphic on the page 3 of this document. This framework is intended to help NBEP and those developing projects communicate what is expected pre-subaward, what is actually delivered when the subaward is closed, and in turn, assure required outputs in project paperwork reflects these expectations. For each project developed, please enter the project name, the development step occupied by the project at start, the development step expected at the end of the subaward, and proposed next steps to get to full project implementation. If you do not have specific information at project start, include as much information as you are able to assist in tracking against required outputs in your scope of work (e.g., number of projects advanced, specific deliverables provided). Complete and submit this framework at the start of the project with your scope of work and at project close with your final report.

Project Name	Starting Step	Finishing Step	Proposed Next Steps to Get to Implementation

Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
FY2026 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Funding and Expenditures
Revised: 10/14/2025

GRANT FUNDING	
Description	**Total**
FY2026 IIJA U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Cooperative Agreement	$909,800
Total Grant Funding	**$909,800**

EXPENSES					
Category	**Notes**		**FY2026**	**Total**	**Match**
Personnel	**Position**	**Full/Part**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Darcy Young	Executive Director	Full-time	-	-	-
Courtney Schmidt	Staff Scientist	Full-time	-	-	-
Danielle Moore	Watershed Outreach Manager	Full-time	-	-	-
Mariel Sorlien	Geospatial Analysis and Design Manager	Full-time	-	-	-
Jennifer Rogers	Ecologist	Full-time	-	-	-
Undergraduate Intern	RWU Interns	Part-time	-	-	-
Fringe	**Notes**		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
			-	-	-
Travel	**Notes**		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
			-	-	-
Supplies	**Notes**		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
			-	-	-
Contracts	**Notes**		**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
			-	-	-
Other	**Notes**		**$877,400**	**$877,400**	**$0**
Project Subawards to Advance the CCMP	RFP (assume up to 8 subawards)		$877,400	$877,400	-
Total Direct Costs			**$877,400**	**$877,400**	**$0**
Indirect Costs*	16.2% on salaries, fringe, travel, supplies, consultants, and first $25K on subawards. Does not include participant support costs.		**$32,400**	**$142,139**	
Total Expenses			**$909,800**	**$909,800**	**$0**
Match (0%)			**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Total Project	Total Expenses + Match		**$909,800**	**$909,800**	**$0**

*Assume up to 8 subawards via RFP.