

SALT MARSH

RAMP

**RESTORATION, ASSESSMENT
& MONITORING PROGRAM**

Using a **RAMP** to move quickly and efficiently towards resiliency

Courtney Schmidt, NBEP
RAMP members

25 May 2022 EPA Resilient Coastal Wetlands & Coastal Communities

**NARRAGANSETT BAY
ESTUARY PROGRAM**

The Management Problem

- **Need** to understand the threats to salt marshes
- **Need** to explore adaptation, migration, mitigation, and creation of salt marshes
- **Need** a coordinated effort that reaches beyond political boundaries

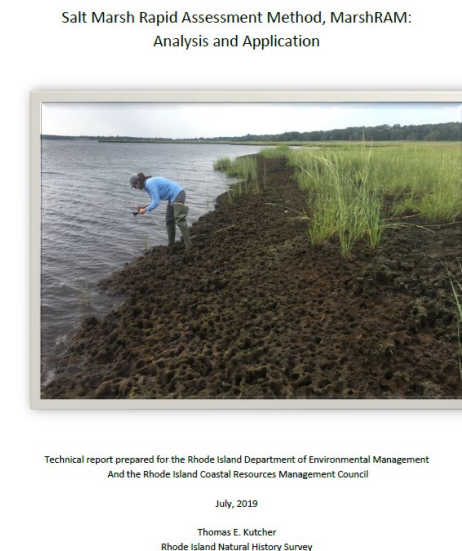
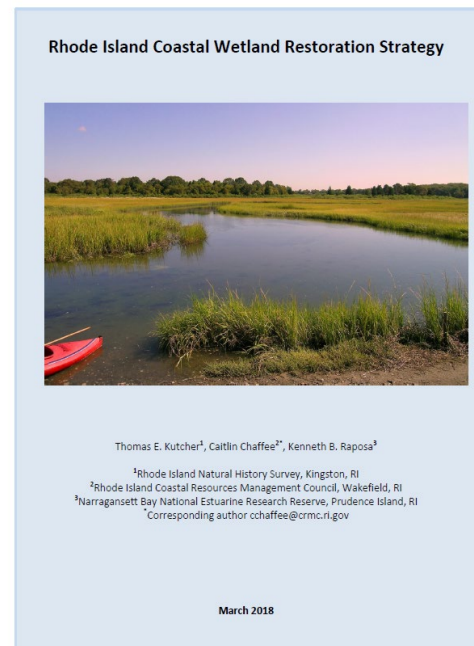
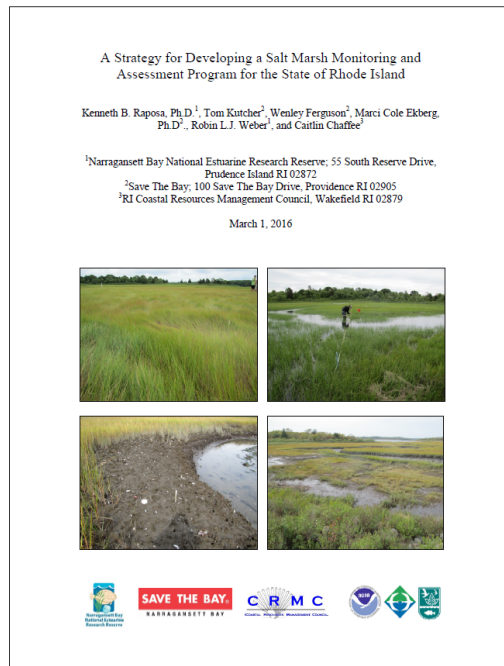
1. Background—The Management Problem: Marsh degradation and loss due to human influences

1. Inundation stress from sea-level rise
 1. Ponding/drowning
 2. Crab proliferation
 3. Edge erosion
2. Direct disturbances
 1. Filling
 2. Impoundment
 3. Historic ditching
 4. Nutrient loading
 5. Vegetation cutting
 6. Invasive species
3. Impediments to Landward Migration
 1. Development
 2. Shoreline protection
 3. Elevated land



How RAMP started...

- Started with **massive** individual organizational efforts to assess salt marshes and understand the threats to salt marshes
 - Efforts were largely separate
 - And efforts are still ongoing {hint.. now more coordinated!}
- Save the Bay led with “Salt Marsh Assessments” (2012) which started to unite individual efforts



What is RAMP

Salt Marsh RAMP formalizes **decades-long cooperation** between federal, state, local, non-profit, and academic groups.



Regional Strategy

Implement statewide monitoring and restoration strategies



Standardized Methods

Establish methods, protocols, and best management practices



Prioritization Systems

Identify impactful restoration and marsh migration projects



Information Exchange

Curate and share data, technical resources, & educational content

Why formalize the collaboration?

- Save the Bay was leading the way and developing more integration using research pointing to the state of the salt marshes
- Developing prioritization schemes to complete research
- Coastal Wetlands Restoration Strategy calls for:



SYSTEMATIC
APPROACH
(HAPPENING AS
GROUPS WORK
TOGETHER)



NEED A
CLEARINGHOUSE TO
SHARE
INFORMATION AND
EQUIPMENT



FIND DEDICATED
FUNDING;
FIGURE OUT NEXT
PROJECTS



MINIMIZE WETLAND
LOSS THROUGH
COORDINATION

Rhode Island Coastal Wetland Restoration Strategy



Thomas E. Kutcher¹, Caitlin Chaffee^{2*}, Kenneth B. Raposa³

¹Rhode Island Natural History Survey, Kingston, RI

²Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, Wakefield, RI

³Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Prudence Island, RI

*Corresponding author cchaffee@crmc.ri.gov

March 2018

REQUIRES dedicated Program with FTEs to make it work efficiently

Formalizing into Program

Protecting Rhode Island's Salt Marshes

Salt Marsh RAMP brings agencies and organizations together to preserve Rhode Island's salt marshes for future generations.

Our Mission

Multiple agencies and organizations with differing missions and mandates work efficiently and collaboratively towards the goal of preserving coastal wetlands throughout Rhode Island.

- Amplifies partner organization's unique work
- Operationalizes statewide (and regionwide) strategic planning and methods development
- Implements prioritization systems
- Supports funding seekers to meet identified needs



- Led by [Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve](#)
- Administered by [Narragansett Bay Estuary Program](#)

Partners



Federal to local

Academic to nonprofit to advocates

Bridge scientists and managers



And Growing!

See a Need...

- Systematic (top-down) restoration coordination
- Monitoring and assessment capacity
- Equipment inventory
- Project management capacity
- Centralized data management
- Outreach capacity



Fill a Need...

- Developing efficiencies and collaborations
- Coordinating across agencies
- Being flexible to changing needs and funding regimes

How does this work?

Projects Hub

.. **Restoration** .. **Monitoring & Assessment** .. **Land Acquisition** .. **Outreach & Tech Transfer** ..

Featured case studies and best practices resulting from recent partner-led efforts.

RAMP Clearinghouse

Find salt marsh restoration research, restoration methods, monitoring protocols, and assessment information. View tracking and reporting for ongoing restoration and interventior projects in the state of Rhode Island.



Salt Marsh Working Group - Meeting #5

Jan 12, 2022



Salt Marsh Working Group - Meeting #4

May 20, 2021



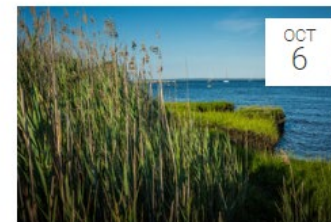
Salt Marsh Working Group - Meeting #3

Jan 14, 2021



Salt Marsh Working Group - Meeting #2

Nov 18, 2020

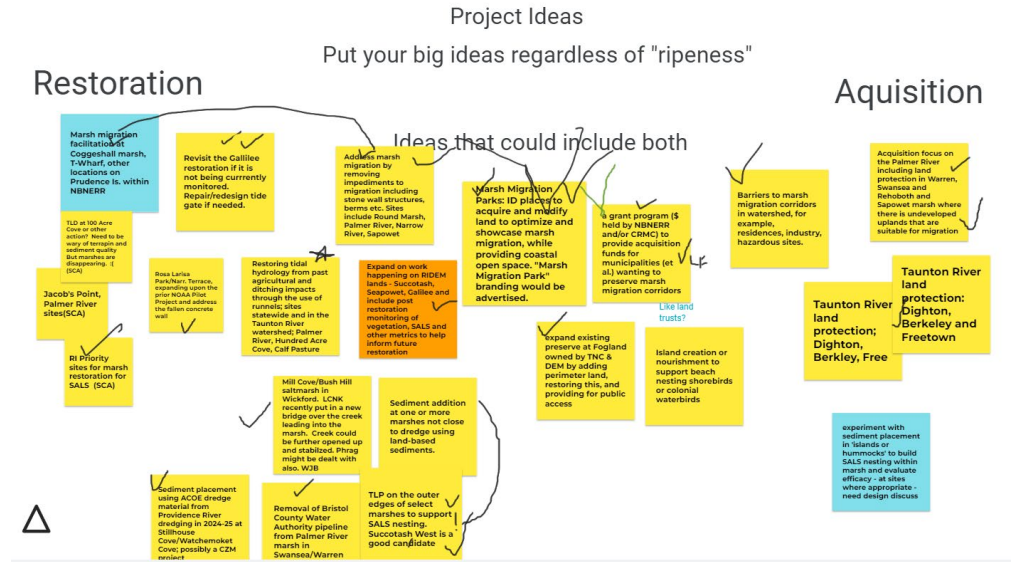


Salt Marsh Working Group - Meeting #1

Oct 6, 2020

An Effective Program

- Need to commit FTEs
- Need Facilitation
 - NBEP sets the table
 - Transparency
 - Consensus-built
 - Link to regional efforts across state lines
 - Effective meetings and debriefs (also calls for help)
 - Allows the on-the-ground groups to be on the ground

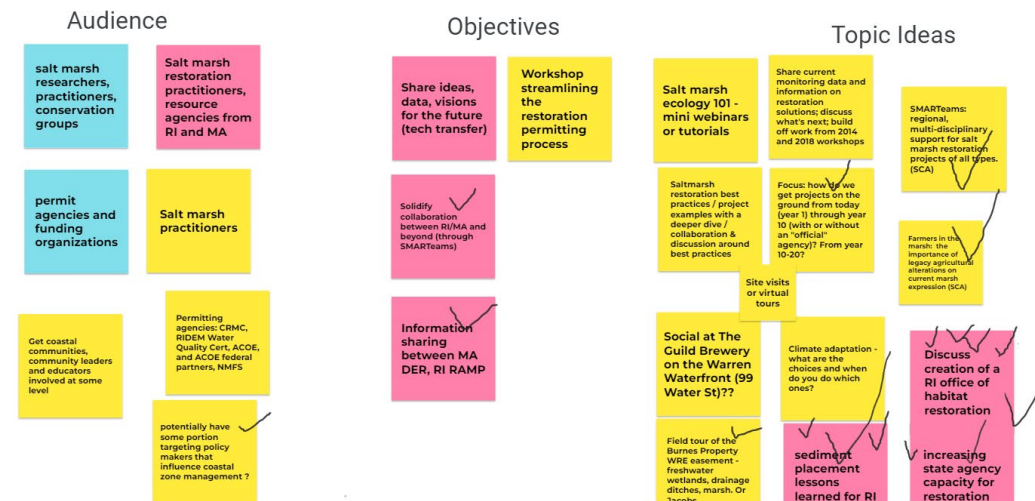


What's Next...

- Continue restoration, assessments, monitoring
 - Understand new and emerging priorities
 - Continue partnership development for funding
-
- Finalize framework with specific requests for people's job descriptions
 - Continue strategizing projects for new funding
 - NBEP facilitating to be ready with science-based plans and strategic project planning



Salt Marsh Workshop Ideas



Linking these efforts to communities

- New focus on environmental justice
 - Federal funding
 - Local initiatives
- NBEP [provides space and tools](#) to balance priority wetland restoration activities with community resilience
- NBEP is not the authority on these issues, but is [partnering with other organizations to create more space and tools](#) to understand EJ

NARRAGANSETT BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM

ABOUT US ACT

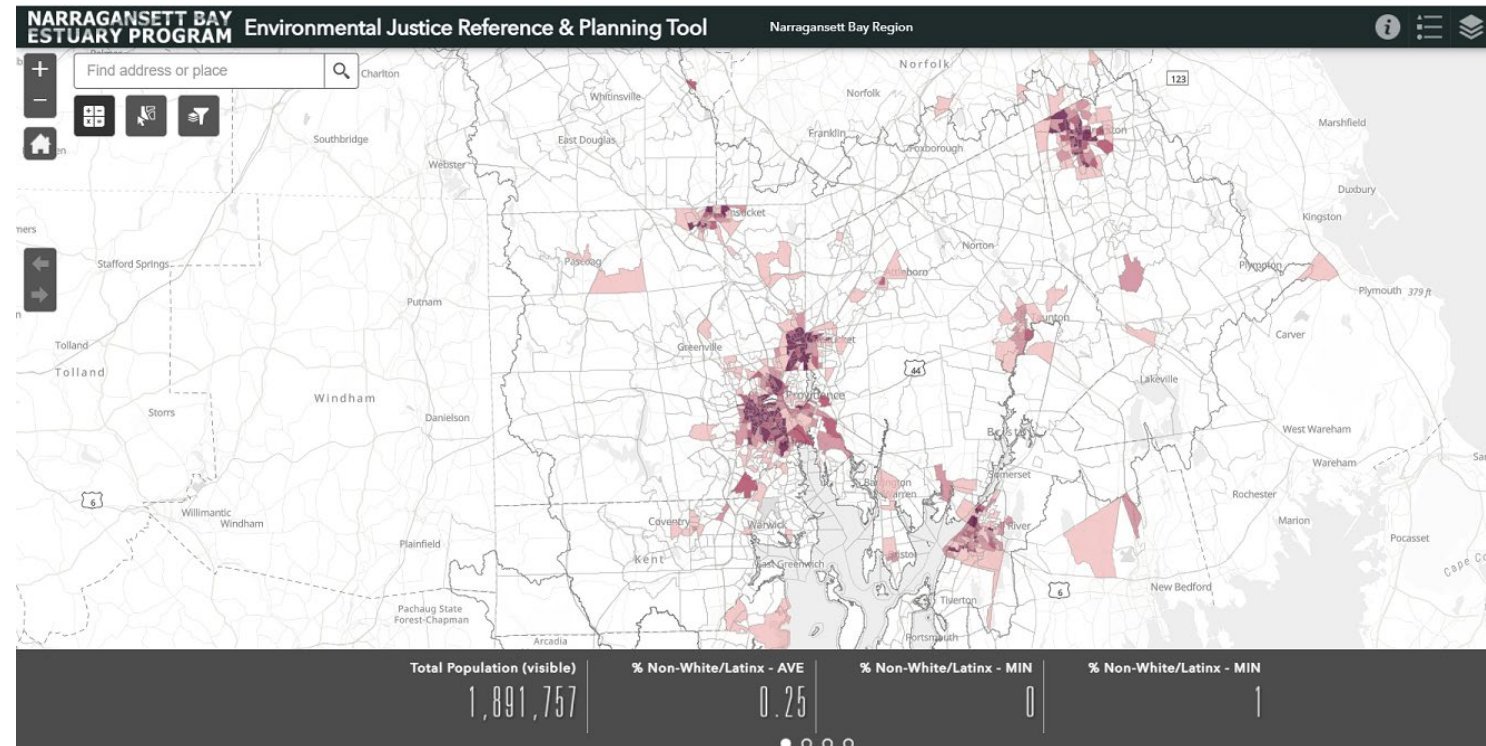


Action Planning Resources

Let's move the needle of change! The Estuary Program is developing and piloting a set of working resources and planning tools to look systematically at our own work through the lenses of racial equity, sustainability, and climate resilience. We hope other organizations and regions may find them useful.

Linking these efforts to communities

- Simple **tool** used to characterize demographics of proposed project area
- Helps **locate, portray, and prioritize communities** where the impact of environmental hazards could be intensified



Tool and user guide here:

<https://www.nbep.org/planning-for-equity>

The Ideal...



GET ORGANIZED FIRST!



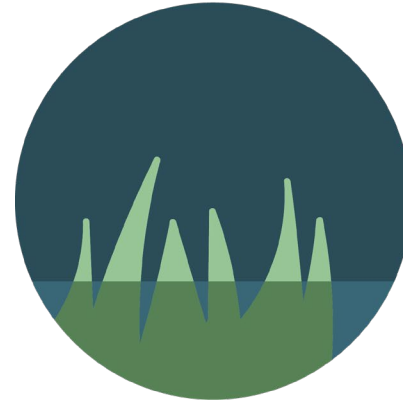
WRITE PLANS (INCLUDING
MONITORING AND
ASSESSMENT)



GET TO WORK AND
EXPANDED PARTNERSHIP
AS NECESSARY



Conclusion



SALT MARSH RAMP RESTORATION, ASSESSMENT & MONITORING PROGRAM

- Standing on the shoulders of giants
- Here now because of how much work has been done in the past

RAMP

- **Unites** organizations who restore, assess, and monitor salt marshes in RI and MA
- **Identifies** key priorities and standardizes methodologies
- **Creates and invigorates** collaboration through shared practices, successes, and failures
- **Integrates** into regional partnerships (MassECAN and SMARTeams)
- **Energizes** partners with opportunities for incoming funds through the BIL and other “once in a generation” opportunities