

Southeast New England Coastal Watershed Restoration Grant Program



Grant Donor: EPA – Southeast New England Coastal Watershed Restoration Grant Program

Grantee: Aquidneck Island Planning Commission

Year: 2016-2019

Grant Value: \$996,820 in federal funding and \$167,800 municipal/private match

Grant Partners: Municipalities of Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth as well as nonprofit's Clean Ocean Access and Aquidneck Land Trust

Grant Overview:

Aquidneck Island in the state of Rhode Island consists of three separate municipalities with one hydrologically interconnected and vulnerable system of water resources consisting of water reservoirs, surface streams, aquifers, and coastal waters. Unfortunately, this network is affected by nutrient or bacterial pollution from stormwater and agricultural runoff. This has led to periodic beach closures causing economic harm to tourism dependent communities and has resulted in impaired reservoirs for drinking supply for the Island's 66,000 residents. Island Waters: The Aquidneck Island Water Quality Initiative is a program with the purpose of developing a sustainable approach to improving water quality within Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth on Aquidneck Island. The intentions of this program are to create a model that can be transferable to other communities that have multiple political jurisdictions sharing responsibility of managing shared water resources.

Expected Impact:

The non-profit and inter-municipal group will work together to reduce nutrient pollution from storm water and agricultural runoff; restore coastal, surface, ground and drinking water quality; restore habitat and ecosystem functions; and enhance economic opportunity and jobs related to clean water. This will be done by constructing stormwater control measures and educating homeowners to better control runoff from their yards and rooftops. The role that Clean Ocean Access plays in this project is providing large scale public outreach and public engagement through its nationally recognized volunteer-based citizen science programs, including its water quality monitoring program that educates volunteers about actions to improve water quality. Clean Ocean Access will host at least 20 coastal cleanups and perform frequent water quality sampling. Clean Ocean Access has historically removed over 115,216 pounds of debris at over 636 coastal cleanups and has collected over 7,773 water quality samples at 41 locations on Aquidneck Island.