

Grant Awarded To Pocasset Water Quality Coalition For Rain Gardens

- By CALLI REMILLARD



The Pocasset Water Quality Coalition (PWQC) was one of the groups honored on Wednesday's ceremony in New Bedford for having been awarded grant funding through the EPA's Southeast New England Program. From left: Sophia Moerman, volunteer; Timothy Lydon, Town of Bourne engineer; Ken Pearson, volunteer; Robert Dwyer, PWQC vice president; Keith Barber, PWQC president; Congressman Bill Keating; and David Cash, New England Regional EPA administrator.

POCASSET WATER QUALITY COALITION

The Pocasset Water Quality Coalition has been awarded a \$37,655 grant through a program under the US Environmental Protection Agency's Southeast New England Program (SNEP).

The money was appropriated through the SNEP program's Watershed Implementation Grant Project program and will fund the coalition's green infrastructure rain garden project. The rain garden is part of the coalition's ongoing efforts to clean up Bourne's waterways.

The announcement was made at a ceremony in New Bedford on Wednesday, November 1. Members of the coalition, including president Keith Barber and vice president Robert Dwyer, attended the ceremony along with US Representative William R. Keating (D-Bourne), EPA Regional Administrator David W. Cash, and a number of local officials and partners.

"The project is to manage contaminated stormwater runoff from the dense residential areas around Hen Cove in Pocasset," the coalition's president and vice president said in a joint statement to the Enterprise following the announcement.

The coalition, they said, will use volunteer labor and donated materials in conjunction with the awarded grant money to construct three rain gardens around the edge of Hen Cove. The Bourne Select Board gave authorization in June for the rain gardens to be built on town-owned property along Circuit Avenue. The gardens will capture and treat local stormwater runoff before it enters Hen Cove.

The inner waters of the cove have been closed to shellfishing for decades because of chronic storm water contamination and poor flushing, the coalition said. In addition to the construction of the rain gardens, the project will also educate local property owners about the causes and effects of stormwater runoff.

"Through community volunteer events and interactive workshops, this project shifts the work of PWQC from policy into infrastructure and permanent, sustainable action," the coalition said.

This week's announcement from the EPA said the SNEP Watershed Implementation Grant program, or SWIG, awarded a total of \$1,494,685 in grant funding. The coalition

was awarded one of the six SWIG allocations. The other SWIG grantees are the City of West Bridgewater, Mass Audubon, Buzzards Bay Coalition, Nantucket Conservation Foundation and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

“Massachusetts’ senior elected officials continue to do a fantastic job crafting great solutions for the challenges facing our coastal waters—and this funding is a result of their hard work and creativity,” EPA New England Regional Administrator David W. Cash said in a statement. “These projects announced today will advance EPA’s and the Commonwealth’s commitment to investing in underserved communities.”

The Southeast New England program was created by the EPA after Congress charged the agency with conserving and restoring the coastal environments of southeast New England in 2012.

“The Southeast New England Program continues to provide vital and targeted funding to dozens of water quality improvement projects in our region,” Rep. Keating said in a statement. “I’m proud of the work that SNEP has accomplished since Senator Jack Reed and I worked together to start the program a decade ago.”

More information regarding SNEP and its Watershed Implementation Grant program can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/snep> or www.snepgrants.org.