

## CSC Project Synopsis — 2014

**Project Title:** Conservation Stewardship Technical Support and Capacity-building for RINHS

### Goals:

1. Research conservation stewardship needs and emerging issues and disseminate information and best practices to RI practitioners
2. Build capacity for biodiversity inventory, monitoring, and information management by assisting RIDEM with heritage data management tasks, pursuing other information management initiatives, training volunteers, and raising awareness among policy makers and the public about biodiversity and its conservation
3. Chair the RI Invasive Species Council (RIISC) to provide communication and coordination among diverse stakeholders in RI on invasive species: emerging trends, inventory and management initiatives, and developments external to RI
4. Participate in other initiatives benefiting conservation stewardship in RI, for instance RIDEM SWG planning, Watershed Counts, RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative (RIEMC), New England Wildflower Society Plant Conservation Volunteers.

**Brief Description:** As it celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2014, RINHS is one of the "go-to" resources for land trusts and other stewardship practitioners needing information on ecological communities, invasive species, habitats, land management best practices, and biodiversity information. RINHS contributes a biotic resource perspective and a community/citizen perspective to a variety of planning and management committees and processes that are otherwise dominated by academics and agency representatives. RINHS organizes public events that encourage community engagement in science-based environmental conservation and management, educate about biodiversity, advocate for the benefits of exposure to nature, and raise the profile of natural resource conservation.

In 2014, RINHS will raise approximately \$49,000 from members and friends in support of these activities, substantially less than will be spent on them in the form of staff time. In order to retain staff and sustain the focus on these activities, which are core to RINHS's mission, RINHS needs to raise additional funds not tied to comparatively less mission-critical fee-for-service grants and contracts, the Survey's other large source of funds. A CSC grant of \$20,000, leveraged with over twice as much in membership and contributions, will help RINHS retain staff whose focus will be stewardship priorities such as those enumerated above. With stable funding, other valuable stewardship projects such as the Watershed Counts, RIEMC, RIISC, RI Land & Water Summit, and the SWG plan will benefit from RINHS's participation, further multiplying the value of a CSC grant.

### Tasks:

1. Two meetings annually of the RIISC plus communication throughout the year, an annual written report on new developments, invasive species impact, and invasive species management capacity, maintain an RIISC webpage
2. Annual Watershed Counts invasive species metric
3. Presentation at Land & Water Summit on an aspect of invasive species management

4. Recommend new resources monthly for the "Resources" page on landandwaterpartnership.org and add resources monthly to rinhs.org/partners-resources
5. Provide staff to assist conservation practitioners including land trusts seeking advice, best practices, or referrals
6. Manage and promote a field equipment loan program
7. Staff participation in RIDEM's SWG invertebrate committee, RI Environmental Monitoring Collaborative, New England Wildflower Society PCV program, RIDEM's Crop Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) advisory committee
8. Continued coordination of regular water chestnut management activities at Belleville and Chapman Ponds
9. For biodiversity outreach, host bioblitz and organize pre-bioblitz training programs for students and the general public

**Timeline and Benchmarks:**

This budget would support the above tasks throughout calendar 2014. Each task has its own timetable and at least one concrete deliverable during the year

**Budget:**

\$20,000 will support salary, fringe, and other costs for the executive director and program administrator. The botanist/invasive species coordinator will also participate in tasks above, but with funding from the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel, provided through CRMC, and other sources.

**Total CSC Request: \$20,000**

Payments will be made to RINHS

The project will be overseen by David Gregg, executive director