

White Paper

## New England Water Foundation

### **Basis:**

This white paper details a proposal to create a financially independent foundation for drinking water issues and provide public education and educational resources to enhance public awareness and workforce development for water-based issues in New England.

### **Background and Vision:**

The New England region has a number of professional water organizations dedicated to furthering the professional development of their members, as well as the science and technology associated with municipal water; wastewater and storm water management; treatment, collection, and distribution. These associations are member driven and dedicated primarily to member's needs to meet the science, technology, and education requirements of municipal water professionals. Today, as a result of population growth, aging systems, and limited resources, it is clear that the broader context to help the public understand these issues must include developing the leaders for the next decade to assure our children's access to clean water and a protected resource well into the future.

This is a difficult task as generally these issues are easily overlooked in the broader context of municipal and societal needs. This white paper outlines a proposal to create a foundation whose mission will be to support education on all levels to improve both outreach and understanding. The New England Water Foundation (NEWF) would provide a means to integrate and consolidate water sector professionals with NGOs, educational professionals, individuals and citizen groups to further these efforts.

The major challenge behind such an idea will be to build an endowment that can be used to fund projects across New England. It is envisioned that the NEWF would solicit voluntary contributions from utilities, manufacturers, and consultants working in this field as well as to apply for grants and financial support from governmental and philanthropic resources dedicated to furthering these goals. The NEWF will directly impact efforts to build workforce and public awareness of issues related to the water sector. Applications from organizations with the stated goal of supporting environmental and workforce development are directly aligned with this organization's mission. An initial goal would be to raise \$100,000 annually with no more than 50 percent expended. Longer-term goals would be to establish an endowment able to support students and water-related programs from between \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 annually.

In summary, this white paper proposes a new organization with an independent board and funding mechanism. Its name would be the New England Water Foundation (NEWF) and as such it would represent a broad array of water interests encompassing the scope of water resource concerns, water and waste water utilities, storm water management, recycled water, educational institutions, natural science, and environmental interests as well as an important voice from the general community at large.

**Draft Mission Statement:**

***The New England Water Foundation's mission is to provide resources to support educational programs and broaden the understanding and knowledge of water-related issues in New England.***

**Structure and organization:**

The NEWF would be formed as an independent 501c3 nonprofit supported by voluntary assessments and donations from organizations and individuals concerned with water issues. The governing structure would be comprised primarily of representative members the New England community of water professionals with additional seats dedicated to an environmental NGO, a director representing the community of those served by New England water supplies, and an additional director reflecting the interests of our colleges and universities invested in the instruction of water-related science and engineering. This would comprise a board of 5 to 7 individuals with members nominated by the NEWWA Board of Directors, the NEWEA Board of Directors, APWA, a member representing the New England community of environmental NGOs, a director from the New England business community, and an additional member nominated to represent secondary educators in New England that focus on a water-based curricula.

The NEWF Board of Directors would be the organization's only members.

To provide initial organization and development NEWWA is volunteering to contribute in-kind support to help develop the idea, formulate a charter, and develop an initial board. NEWWA will also help with initial fundraising support through its committee structure, as well as accounting, organization, and management services as a non-cash contribution to the NEWF until it reaches the \$100,000 contribution level. At that time NEWWA's in-kind efforts and contributions shall be eligible for reimbursement on a negotiated basis. The NEWWA executive director will directly provide managerial and board support.

The board's primary function would be to raise money, establish endowment goals, and create project funding goals to provide support for current and future efforts consistent with the draft Mission Statement above. While the board may author and implement such activities on its own, it will also function to *solicit and prioritize funding for projects* as received with solicited input from NEWWA, NEWEA, APWA, NGOs and others, including educational institutions.

Examples of these initiatives would include support to students and educational institutions and collaboration with established programs as appropriate. Raising visibility of and support for programs that improve the public's understanding of water resources, tap water supply, distribution, resource planning, collection, and protection are some of the project goals that NEWF might consider. The NEW Foundation will not be chartered to engage in setting policies, lobbying, or engaging in activities that are intended to provide legislative or regulatory outcomes.

**Implementation Process:**

NEWWA will draft, vet, and modify this white paper as appropriate from among the concerned interests identified above. Based on the support and agreement of the integrated water interests, an initial NEWF Board of Directors will be tasked to draft and ratify an initial set of bylaws and begin the process of fundraising.

## Schedule:

Forming this organization would result from discussions with and approval of the primary professional organizations identified. These steps could conceivably take place during 2011 resulting in a first NEWF Board of Director's meeting late in the year to draft bylaws and begin the process of fundraising and soliciting initial projects and outreach ideas.

## Proposed Schedule for New England Water Foundation startup:

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| December 2011     | - | Develop white paper  |
| January 2011      | - | Vet white paper to NEWWA Executive Committee   |
| February 2011     | - | Bring before NEWWA board for comment   |
| April 2011        | - | Place proposal before NEWEA and APWA at Worcester – Business, NGO, and educational community polled for interest   |
| June 2011         | - | Take final concept to legal for an opinion on 501c3 status   |
| Summer 2011       | - | Form 501c3; form initial board – create bylaws   |
| September 2011    | - | Hold first <i>NEWFound</i> Board meeting in Newport, RI  |
| Fall 2011         | - | Begin fundraising – NEWWA Fundraising Committee to assist  |
| Spring 2012       | - | Solicit proposals  |
| Summer- Fall 2012 |   | First award for projects at say 50 percent of funds raised with 50 percent of all funds raised to remain invested in foundation endowment as one way to build a war chest – NEWWA Investment Committee to assist |