

Partnerships Program Webinar Transcript

December 11, 2025

1

00:00:00.000 --> 00:00:01.010

Robert Kearns: Record.

2

00:00:02.460 --> 00:00:20.059

Robert Kearns: So, welcome everybody again, and to those who are watching the recording, welcome to our Lunch and Learn webinar today on the Regional Restoration Partnerships Program here at the Division of Ecological Restoration at the Department of Fish and Game here at the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We're really excited here today to

3

00:00:20.250 --> 00:00:29.580

Robert Kearns: Talk to you about this really exciting partnership, program and future potential opportunities, for new partnerships.

4

00:00:30.480 --> 00:00:33.589

Robert Kearns: I just wanted to give everybody

5

00:00:33.810 --> 00:00:39.370

Robert Kearns: a little orientation on how to use a Zoom webinar, if you are not familiar with Zoom.

6

00:00:39.490 --> 00:00:56.399

Robert Kearns: webinar, it's a little bit different than a traditional Zoom meeting. We will be exclusively using the Q&A function at the bottom of your screen for answering questions as well as doing introductions. If there's anybody here today on the telephone dialing in,

7

00:00:56.780 --> 00:01:01.000

Robert Kearns: At the end of the presentation, we'll have time for questions and answers for folks

8

00:01:01.470 --> 00:01:12.750

Robert Kearns: on the computer, and also people who dial in. If you dialed in to raise your hand if you're having trouble, or to ask a question, dial star 9 to raise your hand.

9

00:01:13.580 --> 00:01:28.510

Robert Kearns: And just to stop, we wanted to do some introductions of the team here, from DER, as well as give you all an opportunity to introduce yourself in the Q&A function, and to test out how to do a Q&A.

10

00:01:29.120 --> 00:01:39.680

Robert Kearns: So, to first introduce ourselves, my name is Robert Thomas Kearns. I am the DER's Restoration Partnerships Program Coordinator.

11

00:01:39.900 --> 00:01:44.810

Robert Kearns: Alongside my colleague, Allison, I don't know if you want to introduce yourself?

12

00:01:47.090 --> 00:01:54.319

Allison Perlman | DER: Sure. Hi, everyone. I'm Allison Perlman. I'm the Partnerships Program Manager for the Division of Ecological Restoration.

13

00:01:56.040 --> 00:01:59.260

Robert Kearns: And also, we're joined by Callie. I don't know if you want to introduce yourself?

14

00:02:00.080 --> 00:02:09.359

Calli Willette DER: Hi everyone, I'm Callie Willette, I'm in Operations at DER, and I'm here in the background just as some tech support for Robert and Allison.

15

00:02:09.509 --> 00:02:10.759

Calli Willette DER: Welcome, everybody.

16

00:02:11.200 --> 00:02:11.940

Robert Kearns: Welcome.

17

00:02:12.140 --> 00:02:15.810

Robert Kearns: We see people are starting to introduce themselves in the Q&A.

18

00:02:16.270 --> 00:02:17.360

Robert Kearns: Awesome.

19

00:02:18.810 --> 00:02:28.629

Robert Kearns: Welcome, welcome. And also, we're going to do a quick poll for folks to sort of get a sense of who's here in the room in an aggregate, so...

20

00:02:29.380 --> 00:02:31.220

Robert Kearns: Callie, whenever you're ready.

21

00:02:38.190 --> 00:02:42.980

Robert Kearns: So the poll questions are, number one, what organization or affiliation are you representing in this webinar?

22

00:02:43.300 --> 00:02:49.259

Robert Kearns: And then... Number two is where you're joining us, from today.

23

00:02:49.560 --> 00:02:52.119

Robert Kearns: Just to get a sense of where folks are.

24

00:02:53.170 --> 00:02:54.240

Robert Kearns: Coming from.

25

00:02:55.920 --> 00:02:58.639

Robert Kearns: Let's give folks a couple minutes to fill that out.

26

00:03:12.810 --> 00:03:14.010

Robert Kearns: Welcome.

27

00:03:33.850 --> 00:03:38.339

Robert Kearns: Right? I think that's... Good, how we doing on the pole, Callie?

28

00:03:40.910 --> 00:03:42.060

Robert Kearns: Great.

29

00:03:42.340 --> 00:03:43.490

Robert Kearns: Looks like...

30

00:03:44.830 --> 00:03:53.559

Robert Kearns: Majority of people are from a watershed nonprofit. We have a... the second is statewide nonprofit, and then local nonprofit.

31

00:03:53.770 --> 00:03:57.749

Robert Kearns: We also have folks from municipal government, regional planning associations.

32

00:03:57.860 --> 00:04:03.979

Robert Kearns: community members, and consultants. Everybody can see that on the screen, and we also have other

33

00:04:04.270 --> 00:04:11.389

Robert Kearns: So definitely, if you're in the other category, feel free to juice yourself in the Q&A as other people have been doing. Additionally.

34

00:04:11.700 --> 00:04:17.390

Robert Kearns: seeing where folks are joining us today. Looks like the majority of folks are coming from the greater Boston area.

35

00:04:17.490 --> 00:04:33.949

Robert Kearns: Got, second choice Northeastern Massachusetts in the Berkshires and Hill Towns are tied. Got Cape Cod, the Islands, Central Mass, Southeastern Mass, and some folks from, outside of Commonwealth of Massachusetts and other states. Welcome, I'm glad you're excited to join.

36

00:04:34.200 --> 00:04:35.969

Robert Kearns: And learn about our program.

37

00:04:37.160 --> 00:04:38.220

Robert Kearns: Great.

38

00:04:38.860 --> 00:04:44.929

Robert Kearns: Go to the next slide... Pass it off to my colleague, Allison.

39

00:04:46.900 --> 00:04:48.550

Allison Perlman | DER: Great, thanks, Robert.

40

00:04:48.890 --> 00:04:56.600

Allison Perlman | DER: And hello, everyone. We are very excited to be here today to talk about the DER Partnerships Program and current partnership outcomes.

41

00:04:57.020 --> 00:05:09.599

Allison Perlman | DER: We're hoping to kind of lay a foundation for a better understanding for the unique aspects of our program, and how the partnership's funding has been used to advance regional coalition building and restoration work in Massachusetts.

42

00:05:09.950 --> 00:05:16.390

Allison Perlman | DER: We will touch briefly on our next request for responses and wrap up with any questions you may have for us.

43

00:05:16.580 --> 00:05:17.780

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide.

44

00:05:25.350 --> 00:05:39.649

Allison Perlman | DER: Yeah, great, thanks. So, as the impacts of climate change intensify in Massachusetts, we've heard an urgent call on demand for restoration, which is growing within our communities and our ecosystems.

45

00:05:40.410 --> 00:05:58.909

Allison Perlman | DER: I'm sure you've all have seen a lot of these stats, but I want to reiterate how important they are. We have 3,000 aging dams, 90% no longer serve an active public purpose, such as flood control, hydropower, or drinking water storage. We have 25,000 culverts, with the majority failing or undersized.

46

00:05:59.170 --> 00:06:03.899

Allison Perlman | DER: We see sea level rising along the coast and increasing storms inland.

47

00:06:04.440 --> 00:06:08.570

Allison Perlman | DER: We're seeing increased municipal requests for assistance,

48

00:06:09.390 --> 00:06:23.469

Allison Perlman | DER: Especially, we've seen this for the state grant programs over the last few years with extreme weather events. As evidence of this, the DER's Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Program received over \$10 million in requests last funding round.

49

00:06:24.020 --> 00:06:31.969

Allison Perlman | DER: There's also over 100 dam owners pursuing removal across the state, and dozens more that have requested assistance.

50

00:06:32.490 --> 00:06:44.069

Allison Perlman | DER: Additionally, the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Program's plans have identified aging dams, undersized culverts, and a need for freshwater and coastal wetland restoration and floodplain protection.

51

00:06:44.700 --> 00:06:52.940

Allison Perlman | DER: DR's mission is to restore and protect rivers and wetlands and watersheds in Massachusetts for the benefit of all people and the environment.

52

00:06:52.970 --> 00:07:06.319

Allison Perlman | DER: Our team has an incredible set of experts moving projects forward to meet our mission, but we recognize we cannot do this work alone. We simply cannot hire enough project managers to do all the work that needs to be done.

53

00:07:07.320 --> 00:07:21.270

Allison Perlman | DER: Based on our work over the last 15 years and countless conversations with restoration-focused organizations such as yourselves and public entities, there are gaps in restoration that need to be filled in order to meet the identified needs.

54

00:07:21.680 --> 00:07:37.770

Allison Perlman | DER: These gaps to progress include municipalities wanting to support these projects. They see that critical link between restoration and resiliency, public health, and safety, but they often lack capacity and technical expertise to advance projects.

55

00:07:38.320 --> 00:07:43.759

Allison Perlman | DER: Grant funding is also focused on project implementation, and less funding on how to get there.

56

00:07:44.370 --> 00:07:52.269

Allison Perlman | DER: Projects are often locally focused, and lack a more comprehensive watershed-scale approach to provide greater restoration impacts.

57

00:07:52.660 --> 00:07:58.410

Allison Perlman | DER: And finally, regional collaboration can be hard, and relationship building takes time.

58

00:07:58.860 --> 00:08:00.169

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide.

59

00:08:04.730 --> 00:08:08.799

Allison Perlman | DER: So how do we fill these gaps? How do we move the needle forward?

60

00:08:09.360 --> 00:08:19.860

Allison Perlman | DER: We think that regional organizations are really well positioned to fill these gaps. They are eager to advance the work, and they can amplify restoration work throughout Massachusetts, but

61

00:08:20.000 --> 00:08:22.990

Allison Perlman | DER: will require additional things.

62

00:08:23.660 --> 00:08:39.630

Allison Perlman | DER: One, they need additional staff time. We have heard time and again how frustrated organizations are to see potential grant opportunities pass them by, but just don't have the

staff to get projects grant-ready, or once they do get grant funding, they don't have staff to advance the projects.

63

00:08:40.049 --> 00:08:43.189

Allison Perlman | DER: Additionally, building restoration knowledge is critical.

64

00:08:43.320 --> 00:08:54.860

Allison Perlman | DER: Restoration is an ever-evolving practice, and it will be essential to building up organizations' knowledge to help them advance successful restoration projects that can adapt to the changing climate we see.

65

00:08:56.340 --> 00:09:01.919

Allison Perlman | DER: Regional coordination action will be critical to advance restoration at scale and increase the pace.

66

00:09:02.270 --> 00:09:13.579

Allison Perlman | DER: It is imperative we support building this framework for Massachusetts to bring folks together, to build relationships, discuss their unique community needs, and identify a path forward together.

67

00:09:14.500 --> 00:09:31.800

Allison Perlman | DER: This will also require kickstart project funding. It takes substantial work to move a project from idea to grant ready. This early project initiation phase is critical to develop the needed information to advance a project to the feasibility and design phase, yet it's not funded in typical grant programs.

68

00:09:32.230 --> 00:09:37.910

Allison Perlman | DER: And finally, we all know it takes more than one grant to advance a project to construction.

69

00:09:38.310 --> 00:09:43.070

Allison Perlman | DER: It will require gap funding to ensure the project is not delayed between grants.

70

00:09:44.180 --> 00:09:45.370

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide.

71

00:09:52.300 --> 00:10:07.749

Allison Perlman | DER: The DER's Partnership Program begins to fill this gap. The partnership program is created to meet the needs identified through our work and our partners, and is also based on the understanding that restoration needs to be locally and regionally driven, with state resources to support the work.

72

00:10:08.220 --> 00:10:18.670

Allison Perlman | DER: The program provides support funding to enhance capacity to bring together regional partners, identify regional restoration needs, and develop a strategic plan.

73

00:10:19.140 --> 00:10:28.390

Allison Perlman | DER: It also includes seed and gap funding. Seed funding to advance the earliest stages of the project, such as researching ownership and building project support.

74

00:10:29.070 --> 00:10:34.170

Allison Perlman | DER: While also providing gap funding to advance projects between funding cycles.

75

00:10:34.530 --> 00:10:42.819

Allison Perlman | DER: Partnerships funding isn't intended to fund the entirety of a project, but to catalyze high-value projects and to keep them moving forward to construction.

76

00:10:43.780 --> 00:10:48.380

Allison Perlman | DER: Additionally, our program provides facilitation for peer-to-peer learning.

77

00:10:48.480 --> 00:10:52.819

Allison Perlman | DER: Where partners share knowledge, learn from others, and establish relationships.

78

00:10:53.020 --> 00:10:59.140

Allison Perlman | DER: All of which are critical to increasing the pace and effectiveness of watershed-scale restoration efforts.

79

00:11:00.130 --> 00:11:18.150

Allison Perlman | DER: The program also provides technical assistance. DR has that incredible depth of knowledge, as I mentioned. The partnership program connects partnerships to this knowledge through sharing of best practices, restoration resources, trainings, and advisory input on a variety of technical restoration topics.

80

00:11:18.870 --> 00:11:25.830

Allison Perlman | DER: And finally, building a foundation for partnerships takes time, and sustained investment for long-term success.

81

00:11:26.220 --> 00:11:37.399

Allison Perlman | DER: The partnerships program has a multi-year support model which provides consistent investment to advance longer-term regional planning, coordination, and projects which span beyond one year.

82

00:11:39.140 --> 00:11:40.210

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide.

83

00:11:44.720 --> 00:11:49.519

Allison Perlman | DER: We are... provide support through three key stages of the partnership.

84

00:11:49.630 --> 00:11:52.940

Allison Perlman | DER: Catalyst, Capacity in Action, and Leadership.

85

00:11:53.350 --> 00:12:00.150

Allison Perlman | DER: This staged approach allows DR to meet partners where they are, and deliver the level of support they need to progress to the next stage.

86

00:12:00.410 --> 00:12:08.250

Allison Perlman | DER: Over time, it fosters growth and independence, with funding typically building in the early years and then tapers as partnerships mature.

87

00:12:08.800 --> 00:12:17.479

Allison Perlman | DER: So that first stage is catalyst stage, which is typically year one in the program, focused on setting the partnership foundation through planning and relationship building.

88

00:12:17.900 --> 00:12:28.059

Allison Perlman | DER: The second stage is capacity and action, which is typically years 2 through 6, where partnerships turn planning into action and initiate restoration project advancement.

89

00:12:28.680 --> 00:12:36.939

Allison Perlman | DER: The final stage is leadership stage, typically years 7 plus, where partnerships build on a strong foundation, and years of successful projects

90

00:12:37.250 --> 00:12:39.709

Allison Perlman | DER: Can I just take on a more leadership role?

91

00:12:39.820 --> 00:12:42.499

Allison Perlman | DER: In a re... in a regional restoration.

92

00:12:43.640 --> 00:12:56.830

Allison Perlman | DER: I want to caveat that each stage has associated program years and funding levels, as I just mentioned, but this reflects a typical scenario, and it may vary based on funding availability and the pace of partnership development.

93

00:12:57.310 --> 00:13:05.870

Allison Perlman | DER: I also want to note that, DR determines stage placement based on annual application materials and organizational capacity and readiness.

94

00:13:06.980 --> 00:13:08.119

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide.

95

00:13:11.930 --> 00:13:23.080

Allison Perlman | DER: So, the partnerships program funding supports three key tasks. Watershed planning and project identification, which is focused on development or update of our watershed restoration plan.

96

00:13:23.220 --> 00:13:29.639

Allison Perlman | DER: Identifying and prioritizing projects, and building relationships to advance community-driven projects.

97

00:13:30.420 --> 00:13:45.619

Allison Perlman | DER: The restoration and project coordination and project management task, which is really focused on typical coordination and project management tasks to advance projects from early phase work and research through construction. And then the third task is restoration technical assistance.

98

00:13:46.000 --> 00:13:54.839

Allison Perlman | DER: And this is really focused on providing support to municipalities or other NGOs, who are carrying out restoration work in the region.

99

00:13:54.990 --> 00:14:01.600

Allison Perlman | DER: This may take the form of one-on-one assistance or developing tools and trainings in public education.

100

00:14:03.670 --> 00:14:06.300

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide. I'll turn it over to you, Robert.

101

00:14:06.580 --> 00:14:16.910

Robert Kearns: Thank you, Allison. So now I'm going to transition to talking a little bit about the current partnerships here in Massachusetts, and what activities they are doing with their communities.

102

00:14:18.490 --> 00:14:21.840

Robert Kearns: Currently, we have 3 watershed nonprofits.

103

00:14:21.880 --> 00:14:40.050

Robert Kearns: community-based organizations, and our restoration partnerships include the Berkshire Clean Cold Connected Collaborative, which is out in Berkshire County in the western part of the state. We have the Merrimack Restoration Partnership, which is up in the Merrimack River Valley in the northeastern part of

104

00:14:40.210 --> 00:14:47.980

Robert Kearns: the state, as well as the Buzzards Bay, Watershed Restoration Partnership.

105

00:14:48.280 --> 00:15:04.119

Robert Kearns: Led by the Buzzards Bay Coalition in Southeastern Massachusetts on the South Coast. And all of these organizations are led by the restoration coordinators who help coordinate the work in the different watersheds, and their pictures here are displayed on the screen. We have

106

00:15:04.390 --> 00:15:06.739

Robert Kearns: Leah, Matthew, and Evelyn.

107

00:15:10.490 --> 00:15:14.060

Robert Kearns: And you may be wondering, how are these partnerships set up?

108

00:15:14.260 --> 00:15:24.120

Robert Kearns: There are different models that our program uses to help facilitate regional restoration in the different watershed areas, and each partnership

109

00:15:24.630 --> 00:15:31.099

Robert Kearns: set up their partnership in a way that works for them. So it was self,

110

00:15:31.430 --> 00:15:39.619

Robert Kearns: Organized as part of previous, RFRs to the Commonwealth, and...

111

00:15:40.160 --> 00:15:48.720

Robert Kearns: Each of them are defined by models on the early catalyst stage based on what would work for their areas of the Commonwealth.

112

00:15:49.090 --> 00:16:03.560

Robert Kearns: On the left-hand side of the screen, we have the Buzzards Bay Watershed Restoration Partnership. They're the most simplified restoration partnership, where the lead organization, Buzzard Bay Coalition, at the top, half of that,

113

00:16:04.080 --> 00:16:23.469

Robert Kearns: picture is organizing with the partners that they work with to get input on restoration projects, including municipalities, land trusts, landowners, other NGOs, and just other community members. And it's, you know, one single partnership and led, like I said, by Buzzards Bay Coalition.

114

00:16:23.570 --> 00:16:32.480

Robert Kearns: As the lead sponsor. On the right-hand side, we have the two, what we would call, umbrella partnerships. The umbrella was kind of...

115

00:16:32.870 --> 00:16:35.990

Robert Kearns: This picture makes a little more sense.

116

00:16:36.300 --> 00:16:46.919

Robert Kearns: But, essentially, they have the lead organization, number one, is the Merrimack, Valley, the Merrimack River Watershed Council.

117

00:16:47.070 --> 00:17:02.319

Robert Kearns: They are in the center of the circle there, and they work with their lead organ... or their lead org... the lead organization works with the core partners around the ring of the, flower, and the different petals of the flower, and

118

00:17:02.620 --> 00:17:04.109

Robert Kearns: Through that partnership.

119

00:17:04.359 --> 00:17:16.560

Robert Kearns: the lead organization will give grant funding out to those organizations to lead restoration work in their region of the greater watershed. So it's a little bit more complicated partnership.

120

00:17:16.730 --> 00:17:25.569

Robert Kearns: Structure, and the coordinator helps coordinate all the work between all the organizations, but The exciting thing about

121

00:17:25.880 --> 00:17:29.150

Robert Kearns: Both these programs, the partnerships, is this bottom-up.

122

00:17:29.270 --> 00:17:35.530

Robert Kearns: level of... Project prioritization in partnership building, which is kind of unique.

123

00:17:35.890 --> 00:17:37.089

Robert Kearns: with the Commonwealth.

124

00:17:38.840 --> 00:17:40.120

Robert Kearns: Next slide...

125

00:17:40.900 --> 00:17:47.290

Robert Kearns: And you may be wondering, within the first 4 years, the partnerships have been working across over 100

126

00:17:47.410 --> 00:17:51.279

Robert Kearns: municipalities, cities, and towns here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

127

00:17:51.400 --> 00:17:56.889

Robert Kearns: There's over 26 regional organizations involved, and 150

128

00:17:57.040 --> 00:18:08.449

Robert Kearns: high-value restoration projects across the states, so all the blue dots on the pictures. Additionally, the areas that they've self-selected for their watersheds are...

129

00:18:08.570 --> 00:18:12.620

Robert Kearns: In the darker line around, the different regions.

130

00:18:12.880 --> 00:18:24.630

Robert Kearns: Additionally, they're... they've completed over 350 culvert assessments, and they're advancing 56, restoration projects through feasibility studies and designs.

131

00:18:25.240 --> 00:18:32.230

Robert Kearns: And you can see all the different pictures on the bottom of the different types of projects, including the salt marshes, the culverts.

132

00:18:32.350 --> 00:18:37.679

Robert Kearns: And the cranberry bog restoration and the dam removals. I'm gonna pass it off to my colleague, Allison.

133

00:18:40.590 --> 00:18:42.329

Allison Perlman | DER: Great. Thanks, Robert.

134

00:18:42.970 --> 00:18:44.490

Allison Perlman | DER: So,

135

00:18:44.520 --> 00:19:04.010

Allison Perlman | DER: Those metrics are great. It's, you know, it's basically based on 4 years of work so far, but we all know they didn't get there overnight. There was a lot of work that happened prior to, that... what... the last slide that was just shown. And there's really four key elements from early work that helped pave the way.

136

00:19:04.010 --> 00:19:06.050

Allison Perlman | DER: There's regional coalition building.

137

00:19:06.120 --> 00:19:13.320

Allison Perlman | DER: Goal setting and partnership planning, project identification and prioritization leading to a pipeline of high-benefit projects.

138

00:19:13.480 --> 00:19:22.630

Allison Perlman | DER: and partnerships' ability to leverage external funding. And Robert and I really wanted to dive into these a bit more and give you an example of each.

139

00:19:23.570 --> 00:19:24.800

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide.

140

00:19:38.990 --> 00:19:39.690

Allison Perlman | DER: Alright.

141

00:19:40.230 --> 00:19:47.579

Allison Perlman | DER: So, regional coalition building, it's clear that regional restoration and climate resiliency is hard work.

142

00:19:47.660 --> 00:19:52.870

Allison Perlman | DER: But we found that working in partnership is inspiring and solution-driven.

143

00:19:52.880 --> 00:20:05.319

Allison Perlman | DER: The partnerships program has allowed for the creation of a forum which brings lower watershed and upper watershed communities to the table, with different perspectives and values and interests.

144

00:20:05.320 --> 00:20:14.930

Allison Perlman | DER: It's here where they learn and share from each other, coordinate efforts at that broader scale, and support each other and the communities they work within to find solutions together.

145

00:20:15.430 --> 00:20:16.870

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide, please.

146

00:20:22.750 --> 00:20:23.970

Robert Kearns: Sorry.

147

00:20:25.250 --> 00:20:41.390

Allison Perlman | DER: So what does it look like? And as an example, I wanted to talk about the partnership's culvert work. So, municipalities are facing increased culvert failures and often lack that clear starting point for addressing them, leading to growing interest in culvert replacement support.

148

00:20:41.730 --> 00:20:50.519

Allison Perlman | DER: In response, the partnerships have developed coordinated strategies to build local capacity and guide municipalities through this process.

149

00:20:51.300 --> 00:21:04.450

Allison Perlman | DER: Their efforts, centered on culvert assessment, training, and completion of standardized assessments, have strengthened relationships with the towns, helping identify local priorities while aligning them with broader watershed and ecological needs.

150

00:21:05.150 --> 00:21:14.429

Allison Perlman | DER: These partnership forums enable communities to work collaboratively together rather than in isolation, revealing opportunities that benefit multiple jurisdictions.

151

00:21:14.700 --> 00:21:28.940

Allison Perlman | DER: The partnerships also regularly share with each other lessons learned, projects, project prioritization approaches, and effective strategies for engaging municipalities, further strengthening regional capacity and consistency.

152

00:21:29.570 --> 00:21:30.990

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide, please.

153

00:21:33.430 --> 00:21:37.909

Allison Perlman | DER: The second pathway that I wanted to highlight is goal setting and partnership planning.

154

00:21:38.240 --> 00:21:53.790

Allison Perlman | DER: Partnerships identified restoration opportunities within their regions, utilizing existing plans, regional data, and local knowledge to collaboratively work with their partners to identify existing stresses in our streams, rivers, wetlands, and watersheds.

155

00:21:53.830 --> 00:22:03.749

Allison Perlman | DER: Said the best way to address these impacts with consideration for wildlife and people, and outline restoration priorities for their regions, which considered all communities.

156

00:22:04.250 --> 00:22:18.850

Allison Perlman | DER: For many, this was really kind of a shift from taking action in an ad hoc manner, generally guided by project funding opportunities, of course, to a more deliberate watershed-scale planning process for the region, which considered many different habitat and community needs.

157

00:22:19.680 --> 00:22:21.000

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide, please.

158

00:22:23.040 --> 00:22:27.039

Allison Perlman | DER: A good example of this is the Merrimack Restoration Partnership, or MRP.

159

00:22:27.280 --> 00:22:42.199

Allison Perlman | DER: The partnership region covers 1,200 square miles, which spans from headwaters to the ocean. It's a big region. The partnership thrives by bringing all voices to the restoration planning and implementation process, including often underrepresented voices.

160

00:22:42.510 --> 00:23:00.709

Allison Perlman | DER: MRP includes watershed organizations, such as the Nashua River Watershed Association and ORS, and also includes more local organizations, such as Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust and Groundwork Lawrence, who are focused on urban river restoration and increasing access and representation in the urban watershed.

161

00:23:01.060 --> 00:23:12.949

Allison Perlman | DER: Through the work of these local organizations, many urban dwellers of all ages are able to learn about their natural areas, how to access them, and participate in their restoration and stewardship.

162

00:23:13.430 --> 00:23:18.470

Allison Perlman | DER: To date, they have engaged over 2,000 community members in the Merrimack watershed.

163

00:23:19.070 --> 00:23:30.909

Allison Perlman | DER: Working at a watershed scale allows for both the urban and watershed-focused organizations to share their unique perspectives and develop partnership visions which allow all communities to mutually flourish.

164

00:23:31.860 --> 00:23:34.029

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide. Over to you.

165

00:23:34.850 --> 00:23:39.930

Robert Kearns: Thank you, Allison. Another partnership pathway to success is

166

00:23:40.040 --> 00:23:55.480

Robert Kearns: the expanded table of prioritization for community benefits. You know, these partnerships have really identified high-value, pipeline of projects, for restoration in their regions.

167

00:23:55.690 --> 00:24:02.349

Robert Kearns: And restoration projects can take many years to advance, as we all know, and people really see.

168

00:24:02.440 --> 00:24:13.660

Robert Kearns: from the concept all the way to shovels in the ground. It's important that we create this pipeline of projects at various stages to advance our critical needs.

169

00:24:13.660 --> 00:24:27.959

Robert Kearns: You know, we see these culverts and dams failing and other impacts to our fish and wildlife and biodiversity, and the partnerships are really a great example and a way to get these projects up and coming in off

170

00:24:27.980 --> 00:24:29.330

Robert Kearns: on the races.

171

00:24:29.970 --> 00:24:34.820

Robert Kearns: And additionally, the partnership has worked, including,

172

00:24:35.160 --> 00:24:42.540

Robert Kearns: identify specific restoration projects to advance throughout their regions, like I said, including dam removals, culvert replacements.

173

00:24:42.910 --> 00:24:56.450

Robert Kearns: Assessments of the impacts of culverts, as well as cranberry bog restoration, salt marsh restoration, and migration, as well as urban river revitalization and floodplain restoration.

174

00:24:56.490 --> 00:25:13.720

Robert Kearns: as well as increasing access to open space and our rivers and natural areas, which are all supporting our, Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the Governor's Executive Order on Biodiversity. And these projects were...

175

00:25:13.800 --> 00:25:15.060

Robert Kearns: prioritized

176

00:25:15.190 --> 00:25:25.750

Robert Kearns: Identifying, you know, restoration priorities, the ecology, the critters in the rivers, but also, because they were bottom-up projects, they were really

177

00:25:25.850 --> 00:25:34.239

Robert Kearns: Brought together by the restoration need and community need, and municipality needs from the cities and towns.

178

00:25:34.240 --> 00:25:46.529

Robert Kearns: Just to, not only connect people to nature, improve quality of life, but also reduce maintenance issues and build better connections to our natural areas. And,

179

00:25:47.140 --> 00:25:49.939

Robert Kearns: They really have been amazing.

180

00:25:50.090 --> 00:26:03.610

Robert Kearns: They address multiple issues to our environment in our communities to help improve everyday people's lives. So, I just find them really inspiring to see the work that they're doing every day. And, additionally, the partnerships

181

00:26:03.790 --> 00:26:11.500

Robert Kearns: are, advancing projects like I said, with local input and expertise, bottom-up.

182

00:26:11.690 --> 00:26:21.009

Robert Kearns: the landowner cooperation and willingness and other activities that I think is really a unique part of this, project and this program.

183

00:26:21.830 --> 00:26:22.570

Robert Kearns: Right.

184

00:26:22.990 --> 00:26:26.449

Robert Kearns: And one example of this is a regional project.

185

00:26:26.590 --> 00:26:39.730

Robert Kearns: that, is happening in Lowell, as well as communities upstream, in the tributary to the Concord River and the Merrimack River called River Meadow Brook. And this is a great example how the partnership and the different partners have

186

00:26:39.890 --> 00:26:57.750

Robert Kearns: broader regional approach, to climate resilience, biodiversity, and restoration projects in a project pipeline. So they examine both the lower and upper watershed sections. This river flows from the bottom of the screen up to the top.

187

00:26:57.880 --> 00:27:02.789

Robert Kearns: Which is kind of confusing, but... And they,

188

00:27:02.980 --> 00:27:09.569

Robert Kearns: you know, found, a clearer picture of barriers along the river. They've identified

189

00:27:09.670 --> 00:27:24.030

Robert Kearns: all the different dams that are passage... that are passage impacts to our natural migratory fish, like river herring, and looked at the greatest need for restoration in this river system.

190

00:27:24.510 --> 00:27:40.469

Robert Kearns: Which is really exciting. You can see all the different red dots of the dams, like I said, on the map. Additionally, the partners also were advancing the culvert assessments to find other different barriers to fish and wildlife passage, as well as flooding impacts in this area here, downtown.

191

00:27:40.470 --> 00:27:53.829

Robert Kearns: a lull downstream of the first dam on the river, and they're looking to do more of this work, looking at other barriers upstream of this area. And one of the main barriers for fish passage and

192

00:27:53.830 --> 00:28:11.619

Robert Kearns: for, flooding. And climate resilience is the... and biodiversity is the, Congress Street Dam, which is right here in the Gateway City Environmental Justice Communities of Lowell, and the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust has done a great job at engaging the community, getting the history of

193

00:28:11.620 --> 00:28:16.049

Robert Kearns: the sam, and looking at not only, you know.

194

00:28:16.360 --> 00:28:36.279

Robert Kearns: this one dam project in the stream crossings, but looking at connecting the fish and the communities upstream to the natural and open spaces upstream in the upstream community. So it's just a really great, comprehensive regional restoration project that we're really excited about that the partners identified.

195

00:28:37.020 --> 00:28:51.210

Robert Kearns: And the fourth pathway, or maybe I'll say river course, I want to share with the partnership is leverage funding. And, you know, the first investment that the Commonwealth, through the partnership program, has

196

00:28:51.430 --> 00:28:56.980

Robert Kearns: invested through DER to the partnerships has really catalyzed

197

00:28:57.110 --> 00:29:04.350

Robert Kearns: The ability of them to advance further funding from, you know, different,

198

00:29:04.630 --> 00:29:18.470

Robert Kearns: agencies, different levels of government, including the federal government, and the private sector, and individual donors, and supporters, and foundations. And for every dollar that DER, the Commonwealth, has invested in the partnerships program.

199

00:29:18.740 --> 00:29:33.210

Robert Kearns: we have got \$6 back in catalyst funding, and so it's just, it's a really great return on investment for DER and the Commonwealth. We're really excited about the great work that the partners are doing.

200

00:29:33.340 --> 00:29:41.879

Robert Kearns: not only prioritizing their work, but also getting the work done, and getting different funding sources to get these projects, like I said, from start to finish.

201

00:29:42.040 --> 00:29:45.260

Robert Kearns: and connect people to nature. So,

202

00:29:46.110 --> 00:30:03.939

Robert Kearns: Additionally, they're develop, like I said, developing this project pipeline from early feasibility studies, and really getting a community focus and an adaptive, approach to grant applications, and really able to access larger funding pots

203

00:30:04.200 --> 00:30:21.070

Robert Kearns: because of this initial investment by DER. So it's really, exciting for areas that may not be more competitive for some other grants that are, you know, maybe just diadromous fish, or the sea... excuse me, the sea-run fish, or other,

204

00:30:21.090 --> 00:30:30.129

Robert Kearns: places that aren't supported by some of those larger grants. So, just a very exciting, process there. One example of that is the,

205

00:30:30.560 --> 00:30:38.899

Robert Kearns: out in North Adams, which is an environmental justice community, another gateway city here in the Commonwealth, out in,

206

00:30:39.550 --> 00:30:53.509

Robert Kearns: far out west, northwestern corner of Massachusetts. It's one of the most flood-prone areas in Berkshire County for flooding. About a quarter of the city of North Adams is in a FEMA 100-year floodplain. We've got the Hoosic

207

00:30:53.630 --> 00:31:07.449

Robert Kearns: River flowing right through, downtown, and the partnerships have identified, the Berkshire Clean Cold Connected, a, efforts to bundle multiple projects for grant applications, including this

208

00:31:07.630 --> 00:31:18.829

Robert Kearns: crazy dam here on the right-hand side called the Beaver Mill Dam, which is failing, and is a flood risk for the city of North Adams. So we're really excited to see

209

00:31:19.010 --> 00:31:32.829

Robert Kearns: That the partnerships were able to identify this and leverage over \$3.6 million of federal funding to do this, Hoosic River, or North Hoosic River restoration projects, which included both

210

00:31:33.080 --> 00:31:37.170

Robert Kearns: Funding from the state and the federal government, so it's just a really exciting project.

211

00:31:37.300 --> 00:31:39.169

Robert Kearns: To see how...

212

00:31:39.460 --> 00:31:45.319

Robert Kearns: they've leveraged this funding here in, Western Massachusetts. So, I'll hand it back off to Allison.

213

00:31:47.310 --> 00:31:48.879

Allison Perlman | DER: Great. Thanks, Robert.

214

00:31:48.990 --> 00:31:50.510

Allison Perlman | DER: So...

215

00:31:51.420 --> 00:32:00.380

Allison Perlman | DER: You know, the partnership's work highlights how critical the capacity-building funding and technical assistance is to creating these enormous potential for advancing

216

00:32:00.440 --> 00:32:15.419

Allison Perlman | DER: ecological restoration throughout Massachusetts. We are seeing, increased cross-boundary coordination, increased knowledge building, and locally-led projects, that are leading to larger regional system-wide impacts.

217

00:32:15.420 --> 00:32:24.980

Allison Perlman | DER: We're seeing increased municipal assistance, and landowner assistance, and we're seeing increased leverage funding to support ecological restoration projects.

218

00:32:25.350 --> 00:32:33.629

Allison Perlman | DER: This state investment and restoration support has catalyzed watershed scale restoration and resiliency to meet the critical needs of our communities.

219

00:32:34.510 --> 00:32:35.680

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide.

220

00:32:40.570 --> 00:32:41.400

Allison Perlman | DER: Robert.

221

00:32:41.880 --> 00:32:43.340

Allison Perlman | DER: You want to take this poll?

222

00:32:45.740 --> 00:32:53.760

Robert Kearns: Yes, it's downtime for polls. Callie's gonna put it up Here in just a minute.

223

00:32:54.570 --> 00:32:56.730

Robert Kearns: Let me know, Callie, if it's... when it's up.

224

00:32:57.040 --> 00:33:03.349

Robert Kearns: We wanted to see what is your interest in potentially joining the Restoration Partnerships program?

225

00:33:04.890 --> 00:33:08.059

Robert Kearns: I can't see the poll, so Callie, feel free to jump in.

226

00:33:08.340 --> 00:33:11.859

Robert Kearns: Whenever it's going... oh, here we go, now it's up to my other screen.

227

00:33:15.480 --> 00:33:21.719

Robert Kearns: This is, you know, optional. Are you interested? Are you not? Maybe, you know, this is something of interest.

228

00:33:26.830 --> 00:33:28.829

Robert Kearns: We have a couple more minutes. Oop.

229

00:33:32.270 --> 00:33:33.740

Robert Kearns: We get the results.

230

00:33:35.250 --> 00:33:36.710

Robert Kearns: Okay, great.

231

00:33:37.080 --> 00:33:39.079

Robert Kearns: Wow, this is good. So we got...

232

00:33:39.480 --> 00:33:51.910

Robert Kearns: as you can see here, and the folks on... if anybody's on the telephone, big majority, 72% of people are interested in joining the pilot ships program. We have, 26% of people are

233

00:33:52.070 --> 00:34:01.900

Robert Kearns: On the fence, maybe they want to learn more, and also there's a couple people, or one person who is interested, is not really interested, but just here for the information, so we're really excited for you all to be here.

234

00:34:04.970 --> 00:34:05.840

Robert Kearns: All right.

235

00:34:07.120 --> 00:34:12.130

Robert Kearns: Get the next slide... Send it back to Allison.

236

00:34:12.139 --> 00:34:23.089

Allison Perlman | DER: Great, so it's... it's nice to see all the interest. Barbara and I are also excited about this program, the... and the partnership's early results, and we really want to build on this momentum.

237

00:34:23.119 --> 00:34:35.409

Allison Perlman | DER: we see the potential to increase scale and pace of restoration throughout Massachusetts, and kind of building this network of restoration hubs, which provide technical assistance, expertise, and leadership

238

00:34:35.609 --> 00:34:54.529

Allison Perlman | DER: Right now, we have 3 partnerships, but we hope to expand to cover the state eventually. Looking at this map to the right on this slide, these are the pipeline of high-benefit projects identified by 3 partnerships. Imagine if we expanded the partnerships, how many more projects we could catalyze across the state.

239

00:34:54.529 --> 00:35:03.999

Allison Perlman | DER: Imagine that no matter what town you're in, there is a partnership there to help advance community-based restoration and free-flowing rivers available to all.

240

00:35:04.299 --> 00:35:22.189

Allison Perlman | DER: So we have clearly, set our goals very high, but as smaller next steps, we look to, we anticipate to release the request for responses in early 2026, with awards anticipated for summer of 2026.

241

00:35:22.669 --> 00:35:23.789

Allison Perlman | DER: Next slide.

242

00:35:29.089 --> 00:35:33.039

Allison Perlman | DER: So the eligible applicants for the, next RFR

243

00:35:34.159 --> 00:35:49.019

Allison Perlman | DER: Our lead partnership sponsors, as we mentioned, those are kind of the leaders and the applicants of the partnerships, our 501c3 organizations in Massachusetts regional government and planning agencies, and then the core partners are those,

244

00:35:49.019 --> 00:35:54.309

Allison Perlman | DER: stakeholders that are sub-awarded funding from the LEAD partnership sponsor organizations.

245

00:35:54.309 --> 00:36:03.059

Allison Perlman | DER: Those... that eligibility is 501c3 organizations, regional government and planning agencies, travel governments, or municipalities.

246

00:36:03.639 --> 00:36:24.919

Allison Perlman | DER: I do want to caveat that the RFR is in its, kind of, final stages of development and review, so, any interested applicant should really review that final RFR, because there's always kind of shifts and changes that happen, so make sure that... that all the information I'm saying today in terms of eligibility is also in the RFR.

247

00:36:24.919 --> 00:36:28.189

Allison Perlman | DER: But that's, typically the way that we're advancing.

248

00:36:29.009 --> 00:36:41.489

Allison Perlman | DER: We also encourage, any interested parties to reach out. We're going to have a Expression of interest period, and it's anticipated for January. This... this period, or this...

249

00:36:41.579 --> 00:36:53.749

Allison Perlman | DER: Basically, it comes as Expression of interest form. This form is totally optional. It's definitely not required, but it is kind of an opportunity, for you to share your partnership ideas with us.

250

00:36:55.389 --> 00:37:01.459

Allison Perlman | DER: I think that wraps up what we wanted to share with you today, and I'll turn it over to Robert so we can hear from you.

251

00:37:02.950 --> 00:37:07.330

Robert Kearns: Awesome. Thanks, Allison. I think I had... it was a little trigger-happy there.

252

00:37:07.540 --> 00:37:13.969

Robert Kearns: A little fast, sorry. But yeah, we'd like to open it up to... questions and answer period.

253

00:37:14.230 --> 00:37:21.000

Robert Kearns: We have some questions already here in the Q&A, and folks may be already,

254

00:37:21.380 --> 00:37:30.820

Robert Kearns: should already be... know how to use Q&A, because we did the whole test with, having folks put their name and information, but, looks like we have some questions. I'll be up here coming in.

255

00:37:31.050 --> 00:37:34.309

Robert Kearns: Alright, so now we have one question from Kevin.

256

00:37:34.520 --> 00:37:39.340

Robert Kearns: For coalitions that provide grants to other organizations.

257

00:37:39.450 --> 00:37:51.890

Robert Kearns: Do those grants need to stay within the state boundaries? For watersheds that cross state borders, would funding to organizations doing work on the river but in another state be allowed? Very good question.

258

00:37:52.030 --> 00:37:54.900

Robert Kearns: There's two questions within that. Allison, do you want to take those?

259

00:37:54.900 --> 00:38:03.710

Allison Perlman | DER: Yeah, no problem. Yeah, so, shockingly, the river doesn't stop at the Massachusetts boundary, I get that. We have...

260

00:38:03.860 --> 00:38:22.530

Allison Perlman | DER: several organizations, two of our partnerships work in several states, and so they're kind of struggling with that same question. The funding, that we provide from the state has to stay within the state, so the way that the partnerships have... have dealt with that, as an example, that,

261

00:38:23.420 --> 00:38:39.729

Allison Perlman | DER: that leveraged funding slide that Robert had showed of Beaver Mill Dams, that was a comprehensive project, for North Hoosick River, and what they did is they, they applied, they applied the partnership funding for the Beaver Mill Dam, which was in Massachusetts, and then

262

00:38:39.830 --> 00:38:45.830

Allison Perlman | DER: Upstream of that, is another dam in Vermont, and so they applied for separate funding through...

263

00:38:46.080 --> 00:38:55.700

Allison Perlman | DER: I think it was probably federal funding for that... for that piece of... of the project, and so we do require that all of the partnership funding from DER stay within the state.

264

00:38:56.380 --> 00:39:03.030

Allison Perlman | DER: But that doesn't say that the partnership can't be working on projects that are out of state. We just won't fund that work.

265

00:39:04.820 --> 00:39:11.700

Robert Kearns: Great. I think we answered all that. Okay, great.

266

00:39:12.150 --> 00:39:21.380

Robert Kearns: other thing I want to note, because people can't see this, we... we had 72 people here. We still got a lot, over 60 people. Can...

267

00:39:21.750 --> 00:39:27.610

Robert Kearns: for-profit consultants join and ask this question. Do you want to take that, Allison, or I can take it?

268

00:39:28.320 --> 00:39:30.459

Allison Perlman | DER: I can, yeah, I can take it.

269

00:39:30.830 --> 00:39:41.160

Allison Perlman | DER: So... for-profit consultants cannot be, a core partner, which is a... or a lead partnership sponsor.

270

00:39:41.380 --> 00:39:54.740

Allison Perlman | DER: so they cannot be... they cannot receive the funding directly, and they cannot be sub-awarded the funding directly. But the for-profit consultants can definitely be part of the stakeholders group. We have...

271

00:39:54.740 --> 00:40:04.689

Allison Perlman | DER: some partnerships, like, as you saw, Buzzards Bay, where they, they don't have core partners, they have the stakeholders, and so for-profit consultants can definitely be part of that group.

272

00:40:04.780 --> 00:40:20.980

Allison Perlman | DER: The other partnerships, they have core partners, and not all of them receive funding. Some of them provide just technical expertise, and so they can be part of that partnership, but for-profit consultants cannot receive funding.

273

00:40:21.060 --> 00:40:29.590

Allison Perlman | DER: They can... let me just caveat that by, the partnership projects that they advance, they do hire consultants,

274

00:40:30.210 --> 00:40:35.079

Allison Perlman | DER: To advance that work, so they are part of the partnership in some way in that aspect, too.

275

00:40:35.900 --> 00:40:40.670

Robert Kearns: Yeah, so the consultants could be sub-awarded by the partnership.

276

00:40:41.660 --> 00:40:44.859

Allison Perlman | DER: Right, but they just... For specific purposes. We're hired.

277

00:40:44.860 --> 00:40:46.300

Robert Kearns: We're hired for the projects.

278

00:40:46.300 --> 00:40:46.830

Allison Perlman | DER: Yeah.

279

00:40:46.830 --> 00:40:49.390

Robert Kearns: Thank you. I'm not gonna put my... yup.

280

00:40:49.720 --> 00:40:53.039

Robert Kearns: Alright, Lisa has a question.

281

00:40:53.650 --> 00:40:59.669

Robert Kearns: Do you have a sense of how many partnerships and how much total funding you're hoping to award this round?

282

00:41:00.690 --> 00:41:04.590

Allison Perlman | DER: Lisa, that's a really good question. Let me get out the crystal ball.

283

00:41:05.280 --> 00:41:15.260

Allison Perlman | DER: So we don't really... you know, we have kind of an idea of what the funding will look like, but we won't really know, until a little later in... or...

284

00:41:15.920 --> 00:41:27.149

Allison Perlman | DER: later in the fiscal year. You know, so we have... right now, we're currently working with 3 partnerships. We'd love to increase the total number of partnerships to, you know.

285

00:41:27.580 --> 00:41:37.320

Allison Perlman | DER: 4 to 6, but we'll kind of just see what the funding landscape looks like, and the applications, and who kind of applies and make a decision then.

286

00:41:37.630 --> 00:41:39.219

Allison Perlman | DER: We would like to expand, though.

287

00:41:40.330 --> 00:41:42.670

Robert Kearns: Yeah, and the budget process should be ongoing.

288

00:41:42.670 --> 00:41:43.959

Allison Perlman | DER: With the Commonwealth.

289

00:41:45.100 --> 00:41:48.679

Robert Kearns: So... Stay tuned.

290

00:41:48.920 --> 00:41:58.040

Robert Kearns: April asks, do all partnerships start at the catalyst stage, or might some more advanced start at a later stage of planning or implementation? Great question.

291

00:41:59.090 --> 00:42:07.580

Allison Perlman | DER: Yeah, that's a really good question. I guess it depends. What is really key about the catalyst stage is that,

292

00:42:07.880 --> 00:42:10.970

Allison Perlman | DER: The partnerships develop or,

293

00:42:11.140 --> 00:42:24.030

Allison Perlman | DER: you know, revise a strategic plan, that's approved by DER, so it needs to... it needs to be highlighting, kind of, all the key pieces of... of restoration, kind of, the identified ecological stressors.

294

00:42:24.070 --> 00:42:37.340

Allison Perlman | DER: and the restoration activities that they want to advance. And so, at submission, the partnership or the applicant would submit their strategic plan, and if it seemed like,

295

00:42:37.340 --> 00:42:46.260

Allison Perlman | DER: it was adequate, then the partnership may move on to the next phase, which is Catalyst in action. We haven't had that happen yet,

296

00:42:46.560 --> 00:42:58.800

Allison Perlman | DER: Typically, we want the new partnerships to come on, kind of review their strategic plan, make sure that it's good to go, kind of start to build those relationships, and then step into the catalyst and action phase.

297

00:42:58.960 --> 00:43:04.019

Allison Perlman | DER: So we kind of have to make that call during the application process.

298

00:43:07.690 --> 00:43:16.230

Robert Kearns: Alright, Shayna asks... Has there been any progress developing a partnership for the Connecticut River Valley?

299

00:43:18.530 --> 00:43:21.580

Robert Kearns: That's a good question, I wouldn't--.

300

00:43:23.780 --> 00:43:35.390

Allison Perlman | DER: I... I don't know. We don't work in the Connecticut River Raleigh. We work in the three areas that we showed right now, and we would love to work in the Connecticut... we'd love to work all over the state, to be honest with you.

301

00:43:35.550 --> 00:43:40.690

Allison Perlman | DER: But it seems like there's a lot of work going on over there, especially with,

302

00:43:41.000 --> 00:43:52.309

Allison Perlman | DER: the Connecticut River Conservancy. We'd love to see more restoration out there, so I... I don't know, but we would love to, see more work happening, or more partnerships out there.

303

00:43:52.980 --> 00:43:55.830

Robert Kearns: I'd love, like you said, Allison, I hope to see the whole Commonwealth.

304

00:43:56.280 --> 00:43:57.719

Robert Kearns: pasted with partnerships.

305

00:43:58.350 --> 00:44:07.530

Robert Kearns: April asks, what DER technical assistance is provided through the partnership program, and how does this differ from complement...

306

00:44:07.920 --> 00:44:11.099

Robert Kearns: technical assistance on DER priority projects.

307

00:44:11.470 --> 00:44:16.259

Allison Perlman | DER: Okay, this is a great, great question. So...

308

00:44:16.470 --> 00:44:31.369

Allison Perlman | DER: The DER Priority Projects is, like, the Cadillac version of DER, in that once you move a project into priority projects, DER helps kind of advance that project all the way through construction.

309

00:44:31.990 --> 00:44:46.380

Allison Perlman | DER: And there's a lot of technical assistance involved in that from DER, because they're essentially the, you know, kind of the project manager as well for the project. So that's kind of like the Cadillac. The partnership program, because...

310

00:44:47.100 --> 00:45:06.719

Allison Perlman | DER: we are working with partnerships that are advancing over 50 projects. We cannot possibly provide that level of technical assistance for each project. What we do is we... a lot of the technical assistance requests that come in are, can you review the scope of work and make sure it kind of covers what we need?

311

00:45:06.720 --> 00:45:14.119

Allison Perlman | DER: Or can you review this H&H analysis and provide input? Those... and that's kind of a one-off,

312

00:45:14.270 --> 00:45:27.749

Allison Perlman | DER: assistance that we provide, and over time, we're hoping to build the technical skills of the partnerships so that they don't need that... they don't rely on that assistance, and they can ask for different technical assistance, over time.

313

00:45:27.880 --> 00:45:43.279

Allison Perlman | DER: So, it is a little bit different in that it's not high-level technical assistance for every project, but it is kind of technical assistance to build the restoration skill sets. In addition, we really encourage the different partnerships to use each other as support.

314

00:45:43.280 --> 00:45:58.159

Allison Perlman | DER: So, now that they've been in for 4 years, they all kind of have a grasp of what each other is advancing, and they have so... it's like a wealth of knowledge, and a lot of them are working on the exact same thing, so we really encourage them to go to the other partnerships first.

315

00:45:58.210 --> 00:46:05.230

Allison Perlman | DER: see if they can answer the questions, and if not, then we try to grab people from different DER teams to kind of help assist.

316

00:46:06.780 --> 00:46:23.379

Robert Kearns: And I can add a little bit on that, too. We also have a peer-to-peer learning, which is helpful, and send out a bunch of information on other learning opportunities, and people can always contact me, too. I like to answer people's questions, if I can answer them. Anonymous says.

317

00:46:23.520 --> 00:46:27.939

Robert Kearns: How many lead... how many lead partnership sponsored grants

318

00:46:28.210 --> 00:46:32.099

Robert Kearns: Do you anticipate to be awarded in 2026

319

00:46:32.320 --> 00:46:37.500

Robert Kearns: And how do you, plan to address quote, competing.

320

00:46:37.820 --> 00:46:42.239

Robert Kearns: Applications from the same regions, priority criteria.

321

00:46:45.440 --> 00:46:54.860

Allison Perlman | DER: So the... in terms of anticipate how many awards, I kind of already answered that, in that we don't really know. We're hoping to grow the partnerships.

322

00:46:55.610 --> 00:47:07.579

Allison Perlman | DER: in terms of plan to address competing applications, I really encourage, folks to connect with people in their regions and see, kind of, what partnerships make sense,

323

00:47:07.720 --> 00:47:11.549

Allison Perlman | DER: We're, you know, in terms of evaluation.

324

00:47:11.790 --> 00:47:20.729

Allison Perlman | DER: whoever kind of sets forward the... we're not going to choose two partnerships that are in the same region or that have overlapping regions.

325

00:47:20.730 --> 00:47:40.450

Allison Perlman | DER: But I would just encourage the, you know, the applicant to put their best foot forward, and I would read back through, kind of, some of our website materials, and once the RFR is released, we're really clear on the evaluation criteria, so I would try to make sure that you cover each one of those criteria, areas.

326

00:47:41.710 --> 00:47:47.100

Robert Kearns: And I'll just add, on that, definitely fill out an EOI.

327

00:47:47.520 --> 00:47:54.939

Robert Kearns: You know, if they've got questions. That process is outlined. And also, all the current partnerships

328

00:47:55.140 --> 00:47:57.640

Robert Kearns: Are over 75 square miles.

329

00:47:59.490 --> 00:48:03.839

Robert Kearns: In acreage, or area, land area, so...

330

00:48:03.980 --> 00:48:23.310

Robert Kearns: And I guess water area, too. Okay, Angela asks, is there a recommendation, watershed size for pot... oh, wow, I just... that's funny. Yeah. Is there a recommendation water size for partnerships, or have you seen any differences in the type of projects come out large versus small partnership areas? So, like I said.

331

00:48:23.720 --> 00:48:27.800

Robert Kearns: The current partnerships are at least 75 square miles.

332

00:48:27.990 --> 00:48:30.039

Robert Kearns: I don't know off the top of my head

333

00:48:30.750 --> 00:48:35.270

Robert Kearns: what the size of Merrimack is, but I believe that's the biggest one.

334

00:48:35.370 --> 00:48:36.429

Allison Perlman | DER: It's 1200.

335

00:48:36.670 --> 00:48:39.080

Robert Kearns: Wow. See, Allison's coming out.

336

00:48:39.220 --> 00:48:42.330

Robert Kearns: And do you know the Berkshires and the other two?

337

00:48:42.580 --> 00:48:53.970

Allison Perlman | DER: I don't know, but the... so the two, partnerships we have that are the largest are Berkshires and Merrimack. They're pretty similar in size. In terms of the differences in the types of projects.

338

00:48:55.220 --> 00:48:56.290

Allison Perlman | DER: the...

339

00:48:57.570 --> 00:49:15.660

Allison Perlman | DER: It depends on the region, so our southeast region, they're clearly focused more on salt marsh and tidal restriction restoration-type projects and bogs. The other two are really focused on culvert work and dam removal, and maybe that's because they're larger regions and think that they, you know, that they can kind of hit a larger scale with that.

340

00:49:15.690 --> 00:49:38.220

Allison Perlman | DER: I would say that the biggest consideration for size of your region is really, like, what are you hoping to accomplish, and what's the best way to do that? And so in Merrimack region, it kind of makes sense, the size of their region, because there's... there's just so many different types of projects that they wanted to advance, and they needed a lot of different, core partners to come in and do that work.

341

00:49:38.220 --> 00:49:51.140

Allison Perlman | DER: Versus Buzzards Bay is really hyper-focused on advancing their projects, and so they're kind of, like, moving through projects much quicker, because they're not as complex, in terms of stakeholders.

342

00:49:52.100 --> 00:50:04.630

Robert Kearns: One other thing I'd like to note, the... from a... if people don't know the geography and the hydrology, the Merrimack, all of the different sub-watersheds with some of the core partners are from, like OARS and the...

343

00:50:04.940 --> 00:50:16.309

Robert Kearns: Concord, Assabet, Sudbury, they all flow in the Merrimack River, and that's the whole partnership. But Berkshire's is interesting, because it's the County, and there are multiple watersheds, but they don't all flow the same way.

344

00:50:16.460 --> 00:50:20.420

Robert Kearns: So, just something to keep in mind for organizing

345

00:50:20.570 --> 00:50:24.810

Robert Kearns: how the partnerships are organized, it just depends on how you structure your region.

346

00:50:24.940 --> 00:50:27.409

Robert Kearns: So, just interesting to note that the...

347

00:50:28.060 --> 00:50:34.040

Robert Kearns: And they work together in the whole region. The Berkshires, they get along very well, which is cool. Okay, Anthony asks, are there...

348

00:50:34.620 --> 00:50:39.169

Robert Kearns: Given examples of core partners that... examples...

349

00:50:40.210 --> 00:50:44.790

Robert Kearns: Hold on. Okay, are the given examples of core partners just that

350

00:50:44.960 --> 00:50:55.169

Robert Kearns: Examples, or are there requirements around the types of partners that must be included in the partnership? For example, can a partnership comply solely of a 501c3 organization?

351

00:50:57.750 --> 00:50:59.190

Robert Kearns: Thank you.

352

00:50:59.570 --> 00:51:08.369

Allison Perlman | DER: Yeah, they could. Again, it's... what we want to see in the application is understanding what... who are you propo...

353

00:51:08.620 --> 00:51:16.989

Allison Perlman | DER: what type of partnership are you proposing? What are the key things that you're trying to address? And then we'll look at, okay, so the core partners

354

00:51:17.080 --> 00:51:30.130

Allison Perlman | DER: do... does that make sense? Do the core partners make sense to help address what they want to move forward? And so, I don't think necessarily that we would say, oh, the so-and-so partnership

355

00:51:30.130 --> 00:51:42.090

Allison Perlman | DER: shouldn't advance because they're all 501c3s. However, I think it's important to kind of make sure you're balancing the needs of the region and make sure that you have all the players at the table.

356

00:51:44.980 --> 00:51:53.850

Robert Kearns: Okay, Cheryl asks... In this ecoregion, I believe, in reference to... the Pine Barrens Southeast.

357

00:51:54.050 --> 00:52:12.290

Robert Kearns: In this ecoregion, Pine Barrens, ponds play a major role in the health and biodiversity of the ecoregion. Their restoration or the maintenance of their water quality and biodiversity is key to the overall health of the natural system. Is that worked in a possible, quote, restoration project?

358

00:52:19.650 --> 00:52:27.809

Allison Perlman | DER: I think I'd have to understand a little bit more about the ponds, if they're natural systems versus man-made ponds.

359

00:52:30.890 --> 00:52:43.619

Allison Perlman | DER: I think that in our RFR, it's pretty explicit about what is eligible and what is not eligible. We're really focused on rivers, streams, wetlands, salt marsh, so...

360

00:52:44.390 --> 00:53:02.700

Allison Perlman | DER: and advancing, kind of, the restoration and process-based restoration of those. So, we don't do a ton of work in ponds, necessarily, especially if they're man-made, but if it's a natural pond with adjacent wetlands, then we could, you know, we'd just have to take a look at the specific project.

361

00:53:03.370 --> 00:53:04.120

Robert Kearns: Yeah.

362

00:53:04.350 --> 00:53:06.689

Robert Kearns: No, that area does have natural ponds.

363

00:53:07.570 --> 00:53:12.579

Robert Kearns: So, okay, we got a lot of questions, so let's try to... we'll try to go quick.

364

00:53:13.740 --> 00:53:18.549

Robert Kearns: And I'm okay staying a little longer. I don't know. Al, Lisa asks.

365

00:53:18.690 --> 00:53:22.509

Robert Kearns: Are there specific budget requirements for the anticipated funding?

366

00:53:22.760 --> 00:53:27.480

Robert Kearns: Example, last round of the funding went directly to one partnership coordinator.

367

00:53:29.440 --> 00:53:35.890

Allison Perlman | DER: Oh, interesting, yeah, so... No.

368

00:53:36.220 --> 00:53:39.160

Allison Perlman | DER: There's... there's some, like,

369

00:53:39.520 --> 00:53:53.370

Allison Perlman | DER: There's some restrictions on, like, you know, I talked about the three different tasks, so there's some restrictions on how much can go towards a specific task. That's all outlined... that'll be outlined in the RFR, I take a look at that.

370

00:53:53.370 --> 00:54:09.690

Allison Perlman | DER: The model's very different than maybe the last, the last designation RFR, in that we, what we're asking is for the partnership to propose specific tasks, and then you tell us how you're going to accomplish those with, with, you know, different

371

00:54:09.780 --> 00:54:22.889

Allison Perlman | DER: staff. So whether that's a restoration coordinator or whatever it may be. But we do rely on... we do want to make sure that each partnership has some kind of restoration coordinator that's coordinating all the different stakeholders and partners.

372

00:54:25.740 --> 00:54:32.329

Robert Kearns: Next one, I can answer this. Is the standard post-implementation monitoring requirements for partnership projects? No.

373

00:54:32.470 --> 00:54:47.070

Robert Kearns: It's all specific, mainly depending on what you all want to do from a community engagement perspective, or mainly from a perspective of the permitting process and the regulations. So, answer is no.

374

00:54:47.410 --> 00:54:53.780

Robert Kearns: Karen asked, how have you prioritized any region of the state for New Partnerships?

375

00:54:53.940 --> 00:55:00.900

Robert Kearns: And I would say, can I answer that? No. And it's open to all in the Commonwealth, and...

376

00:55:01.220 --> 00:55:02.710

Robert Kearns: like I said, like we said.

377

00:55:02.870 --> 00:55:09.220

Robert Kearns: Encourage EOIs, and working collaboratively. Anything to add there, Allison?

378

00:55:10.230 --> 00:55:27.730

Allison Perlman | DER: No, I mean, I think our goal is to, you know, spread the love across the state, so we do, you know, we do want to see, kind of, partnerships starting to spread across the state and not completely adjacent to each other. But that said, it just really is about the application and,

379

00:55:27.730 --> 00:55:33.449

Allison Perlman | DER: You know, so I would encourage everyone to submit, and we do not have any kind of prioritized areas.

380

00:55:36.260 --> 00:55:43.050

Robert Kearns: Great. Sean asks, some of our most promising Restoration opportunities involve

381

00:55:43.650 --> 00:55:55.709

Robert Kearns: discussion collaboration with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Would proposed partnership that involves liaisoning on these projects face issues due to cross-department Division concerns?

382

00:55:56.950 --> 00:55:58.480

Robert Kearns: You want me to answer this?

383

00:55:59.240 --> 00:56:00.029

Robert Kearns: What do you want to answer?

384

00:56:00.460 --> 00:56:02.129

Allison Perlman | DER: I don't know what your answer's gonna be.

385

00:56:02.800 --> 00:56:04.169

Robert Kearns: You know what mine is?

386

00:56:04.170 --> 00:56:05.030

Allison Perlman | DER: No, go ahead.

387

00:56:05.030 --> 00:56:09.730

Robert Kearns: Okay, I was gonna say, I know... Some of our...

388

00:56:09.870 --> 00:56:12.530

Robert Kearns: current projects, including the one in Lowell.

389

00:56:13.040 --> 00:56:21.050

Robert Kearns: involve other state agencies, so the River Meadowbrook Congress Street Dam is owned by MassDOT.

390

00:56:21.370 --> 00:56:27.389

Robert Kearns: And the partnership has contacted them via me and other people, so...

391

00:56:27.520 --> 00:56:31.720

Robert Kearns: I don't think it would preclude that.

392

00:56:32.250 --> 00:56:35.360

Robert Kearns: I don't know if you... if that's accurate. Allison, you're...

393

00:56:35.670 --> 00:56:49.279

Allison Perlman | DER: No, I mean, we'd have... it's, like, case-by-case basis, we'd have to take a look at it, but overall, we encourage, you all to kind of collaborate with other state agencies, especially since these are more kind of regional, comprehensive projects.

394

00:56:50.390 --> 00:56:51.010

Robert Kearns: Great.

395

00:56:51.220 --> 00:56:53.199

Robert Kearns: Kristen asks, is it...

396

00:56:53.850 --> 00:56:59.529

Robert Kearns: Possible to join an existing partnership of our organization that's in the region? That's a really good question.

397

00:56:59.910 --> 00:57:12.470

Allison Perlman | DER: Yeah, I... so, right now, this RFR that would be coming out is the RFR designation grant, so, if there is an existing partnership and there's interest in, another

398

00:57:12.940 --> 00:57:21.279

Allison Perlman | DER: Like, core partner coming on to that, then now is the time to be adding, additional organizations to those existing partnerships.

399

00:57:22.230 --> 00:57:22.770

Robert Kearns: Right.

400

00:57:23.310 --> 00:57:29.940

Robert Kearns: Okay, Matthew asked, is the process going to be transparent so that different organizations might be able to spot

401

00:57:30.180 --> 00:57:34.060

Robert Kearns: Potential overlaps with

402

00:57:34.690 --> 00:57:42.390

Robert Kearns: Other organization... interested organizations, or whether a smaller organization might be able to support an application for their area.

403

00:57:44.450 --> 00:57:56.880

Allison Perlman | DER: It's... if people, you know, the more expressions of interest that we get, the more we can kind of identify those overlaps. I don't... the process in and of itself is hard to make it transparent,

404

00:57:57.820 --> 00:58:13.889

Allison Perlman | DER: in that way, we don't have, like, a public-facing website where we can kind of show this. But those expression of interest conversations, we will have the opportunity to kind of see who's interested, and if there's kind of multiple people in a region talking, we'll make sure that, you know, you guys connect with each other.

405

00:58:14.550 --> 00:58:15.480

Robert Kearns: And this, this...

406

00:58:15.830 --> 00:58:22.010

Robert Kearns: Man, people are thinking together. Angela asked, will DER help connect partners in the same region if an expression of interest is submitted?

407

00:58:22.150 --> 00:58:25.649

Robert Kearns: of overlapping regions? I believe the answer is yes, from what you're.

408

00:58:25.650 --> 00:58:26.280

Allison Perlman | DER: Yes.

409

00:58:26.600 --> 00:58:33.880

Robert Kearns: Okay, Warren asks... I had assumed that Trout Unlimited was based on our past priority project, working with DER,

410

00:58:34.140 --> 00:58:42.029

Robert Kearns: seeing a partner, seemed to be a formalizing of the process. How does this change for the process DER will use when considering

411

00:58:42.370 --> 00:58:44.800

Robert Kearns: What will be adopted as a priority project?

412

00:58:51.680 --> 00:58:56.429

Robert Kearns: Warren, I'm not totally unsure about your question. I think from...

413

00:58:57.030 --> 00:59:01.010

Robert Kearns: It may be... you may be asking if there's a current priority project.

414

00:59:01.370 --> 00:59:04.700

Robert Kearns: How is this different? I don't... maybe? I don't know.

415

00:59:05.180 --> 00:59:20.749

Allison Perlman | DER: Yeah, I, so the priority projects are really different than the partnerships program, and when, a priority project... I guess it's the same in that a priority project is accepted through a designation process as well, and so if...

416

00:59:21.750 --> 00:59:30.239

Allison Perlman | DER: you know, I think TU gen... TU is oftentimes a partner on projects, but I think

417

00:59:30.350 --> 00:59:34.160

Allison Perlman | DER: you would have to discuss it with the Priority Projects team on that.

418

00:59:35.630 --> 00:59:37.029

Robert Kearns: Yeah, okay.

419

00:59:37.890 --> 00:59:39.199

Robert Kearns: Definitely reach out.

420

00:59:39.650 --> 00:59:42.360

Robert Kearns: Aaron asks.

421

00:59:42.770 --> 00:59:50.579

Robert Kearns: We already answered this, about new... no prioritized regions. Okay, anonymous asks, is there preference for applicant

422

00:59:50.760 --> 00:59:54.040

Robert Kearns: Is more of a coalition-based application.

423

00:59:54.240 --> 00:59:57.070

Robert Kearns: Well, of organization looking to be

424

00:59:57.220 --> 00:59:59.529

Robert Kearns: The lead and have subawards and such.

425

01:00:00.650 --> 01:00:08.409

Allison Perlman | DER: Just before I answer that, I want to recognize that, we're over time now, so we'll stay on and answer these questions, but we will also,

426

01:00:08.750 --> 01:00:16.150

Allison Perlman | DER: Post all these questions and answers on our website, so if you have to go, don't worry, you'll still get all the same information.

427

01:00:16.600 --> 01:00:20.360

Robert Kearns: And we are still recording, and that recording will be posted.

428

01:00:20.360 --> 01:00:20.920

Allison Perlman | DER: True.

429

01:00:21.270 --> 01:00:22.730

Allison Perlman | DER: So...

430

01:00:23.340 --> 01:00:31.540

Allison Perlman | DER: There... no, there's not a preference. Again, it's really based on your partnership and your region and your priorities and what makes sense for you all.

431

01:00:33.310 --> 01:00:42.360

Robert Kearns: Thank you, Cheryl, about talking about the natural ponds. Danielle... okay, thank you.

432

01:00:43.010 --> 01:00:47.709

Robert Kearns: Dan asks, okay, what have you done with cranberry bogs?

433

01:00:47.720 --> 01:01:03.320

Robert Kearns: to open up water flow for migratory fish. We have a cranberry bog that is no longer operating, but dams are still in place using boards to regulate water levels to keep ponds in place. Are dams adjusted enough to enable waterfall

434

01:01:03.400 --> 01:01:05.420

Robert Kearns: In spring, during the migration.

435

01:01:06.590 --> 01:01:08.179

Robert Kearns: I can answer this, so...

436

01:01:08.180 --> 01:01:08.720

Allison Perlman | DER: Okay.

437

01:01:09.800 --> 01:01:23.570

Robert Kearns: I don't know your specific example, but our program does support, doing cranberry bog restorations to open up water flow for migratory fish and create habitat, flood.

438

01:01:23.750 --> 01:01:30.110

Robert Kearns: Storage and, also to create habitats, and

439

01:01:30.290 --> 01:01:36.330

Robert Kearns: We, you know, bring back the wetlands, and the fisheries, and the streams. So yes, we definitely work on that.

440

01:01:37.100 --> 01:01:44.959

Robert Kearns: Anonymous asks, does the lead partnership sponsor need to be based within an EJ community? Are there explicit or

441

01:01:45.100 --> 01:01:53.389

Robert Kearns: implicit... Are there implicit or explicit deal breakers that would reduce the competitiveness of an application

442

01:01:54.510 --> 01:01:57.060

Robert Kearns: This is the opposite of eligibility.

443

01:01:59.270 --> 01:02:01.180

Robert Kearns: That seems... okay.

444

01:02:01.180 --> 01:02:14.769

Allison Perlman | DER: I can answer it. Yeah, so the evaluation... there is evaluation criteria that considers environmental justice. It's important to the state of Massachusetts. There's... there's also kind of a whole,

445

01:02:14.770 --> 01:02:30.340

Allison Perlman | DER: suite of things that kind of contribute into that evaluation, which include disadvantaged communities. We're, really clear in the RFR about that evaluation criteria, so take a look at it, and you can kind of see how many points that is in the overall evaluation.

446

01:02:31.320 --> 01:02:32.000

Robert Kearns: Great.

447

01:02:45.310 --> 01:02:47.230

Robert Kearns: Warren,

448

01:02:48.440 --> 01:02:55.070

Robert Kearns: Yeah. If you have questions about different projects, feel free to reach out to me, I think I sent you my email.

449

01:02:57.800 --> 01:03:03.069

Robert Kearns: Thanks for coming. Okay, Lisa asked, would one organization statewide be able to be a part

450

01:03:03.550 --> 01:03:06.290

Robert Kearns: Of different partnerships regionally.

451

01:03:10.620 --> 01:03:11.490

Allison Perlman | DER: Alright.

452

01:03:12.320 --> 01:03:12.890

Robert Kearns: Huh?

453

01:03:17.110 --> 01:03:18.070

Robert Kearns: I don't know.

454

01:03:18.870 --> 01:03:23.399

Allison Perlman | DER: So, yeah, like, TU, because they have their, like, separate regional

455

01:03:25.360 --> 01:03:41.380

Allison Perlman | DER: In general, I would say that, we don't want, like, let's say a watershed organization applying for two... in two different partnership applications. That becomes really complicated and can lead to issues.

456

01:03:41.560 --> 01:04:01.559

Allison Perlman | DER: during selection, but I think that there are entities that are completely distinct from each other, where they have, like, their regional focus areas that are, you know, that are statewide organizations, but they have their regional, focus areas, like, TU and the Berkshires. I can't remember their specific

457

01:04:01.750 --> 01:04:06.200

Allison Perlman | DER: Names, so those are separate entities, so we would consider those.

458

01:04:11.610 --> 01:04:20.059

Robert Kearns: Anonymous, the last question we have here is, what if our partnership is advanced, but...

459

01:04:20.230 --> 01:04:25.559

Robert Kearns: The project we're proposing Regional culvert analysis is new.

460

01:04:26.240 --> 01:04:28.410

Robert Kearns: Are we early or mid-stage?

461

01:04:28.640 --> 01:04:30.910

Robert Kearns: maybe, I would say fill out an EOI.

462

01:04:31.600 --> 01:04:32.540

Robert Kearns: Mabye?

463

01:04:33.440 --> 01:04:41.549

Allison Perlman | DER: Yeah, fill out an EOI, and also, you know, based on your application, partnerships will determine what kind of stage that you would be in.

464

01:04:44.540 --> 01:04:46.580

Allison Perlman | DER: Great, I think we got through them all.

465

01:04:46.580 --> 01:04:47.210

Robert Kearns: Great, Yep.

466

01:04:48.520 --> 01:05:01.500

Allison Perlman | DER: So, I just want to say thank you all so much for coming. Some of you stay on late, we really appreciate it. There's a lot to cover. We're really excited about the partnerships program, and we're excited to see so many people interested in that.

467

01:05:01.500 --> 01:05:15.410

Allison Perlman | DER: So, as we said, the Expression of interest period will be opening up pretty soon. Stay tuned. We have your email addresses so we can share out any updates on the RFR and the Expression of interest.

468

01:05:15.410 --> 01:05:20.009

Allison Perlman | DER: In terms of when those are released, and everything should be on our website. So thank you, everyone.

469

01:05:21.300 --> 01:05:22.160

Robert Kearns: Thank you.