

**NEW ENGLAND TRANSPORTATION CONSORTIUM
QUARTERLY PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT**

- A. PROJECT NUMBER AND TITLE:** NETC 21-3: Seed Production for NE Roadsides
- B. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S) & UNIVERSITY(S):** J. Kuzovkina, University of Connecticut
- C. WEB SITE ADDRESS (If one exists):** NA
- D. START DATE (Per NETC Agreement):** May 18, 2022
- E. END DATE (Per NETC Agreement):** June 30, 2024

F. ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE: June 30, 2024

*If different from the END DATE in paragraph E., the reason must be given. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to insure that the project, including review of the draft report by the Project Technical Committee and the printing of the Final Report, is completed prior to the Agreement End Date. Costs incurred after the Agreement End Date cannot be reimbursed. **Requests for extensions of the Agreement End Date must contain the reasons for the request and be submitted so as to arrive in the Coordinator's office at least 90 days prior to the Agreement End Date.***

G. PROJECT OBJECTIVES: The objective of this project is to increase native plantings and pollinator habitats with seed from local ecotypes along roadsides throughout New England. The proposed work is designed: 1) to promote ecotypic seed production for effective establishment of native plants on roadsides in New England and 2) to expand management practices that result in the proliferation of existing native plant communities along the roadsides in New England.

H. REPORT PERIOD: July 1, 2023- September 30, 2023

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS PERIOD:

Task 1: Current knowledge and practices (seed zones, seed mixes, BMP etc.)

- Prepared a revised version of the report for Task 1 Subtasks 5 and submitted it to the TC on July 17.
- Conducted additional vegetation inventories at 4 sites.
- The intern Laura Urban has collected and reviewed all state DOTs references (from 50 states) regarding the reduced mowing practices.
Continued data collection for the trials to determine optimal dates and heights for mowing milkweed to extend their production of fresh foliage for Monarch butterfly oviposition (egg laying).

Task 2: Investigate local seed production opportunities

Started the report for Task 2.

Participated in the event related to the Northeast Seed Network:

October 5: Northeast Seed Network Steering Committee meeting

Discussed next steps for the network

Task 3: Establish and monitor roadside demonstration plots for training and research purposes.

CT: Southbound Exit 38

Site inspection July 19, August 9; mowed annuals on August 11; inspected CT site August 25.
Planting of forbs is scheduled for October 16, 2023.

MA: applied for another MA permit for the site located in Holyoke. Sent letters to the Mayor of Holyoke and to the MA Environmental Committee. Submitted all documents through the on-line portal. Filed a new application in the DOT district, while waiting for a Limited Application Waiver from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. Visited Holyoke site on July 24 with the Director of Conservation Committee to stake the herbicide application area; prepared the map of this area; attended the Conservation Committee hearing to discuss our project on July 27; next day received an approval. Visited site with Garrett Postema from MASS DOT to discuss the staging area adjacent to our proposed site. Inspected the floristic composition of the site. Corresponded with Clayton Edwards, ROW Coordinator regarding type of herbicide on August 8. A virtual meeting with Brian Colleran from Ecological Landscaping to discuss the details of herbicide application on August 14. Sept 1 - submitted an ad to *The Republican*. Sept 8 mowed the site. Sept 13 sent certified letters. Sept 15 herbicide application by Lewis Tree Co. Sept 20-29 discussion on the composition of nurse crops with Ernst Conservation and ordering seeds for CT and MA sites.

The Republican (MA newspaper) article about seeding project (published: Sep. 16, 2023)

<https://www.masslive.com/news/2023/09/project-aims-to-seed-wildflowers-at-spot-along-i-91-in-holyoke.html>

VT: UConn analyzed soil from the adjacent area; VT DOT sent the result of the generated material; discussed concerns with high pH with experts; corresponded with VT DOT to discuss how to proceed with the project; agreed to seed the site w/o soil amendments. Ordered the straw erosion mats and seed from Ernst and shipped it to VT (delivered on August 11); Vermont DOT planted the site Aug. 22.

Discussed and confirmed the plans with TC during a meeting on September 12, 2023.

J. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED (If any):

K. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACTIVITIES: *List any reports, papers, presentations published/presented during the report period or anticipated for the next quarter.* NA

L. STATUS BY TASK: *Show Work Task Number, description and % complete for each task including those completed, those underway, and those not started.*

Task1: Current knowledge and practices 80% complete

Task 2: Investigate local seed production opportunities 70% complete

Task 3: Establish and monitor roadside demonstration plots for training and research purposes 70% complete

Task 4: Draft Final Report and Technology Transfer Strategy and Toolbox 50% complete

Task 5: Deliverables: Final Report 0% complete

M. PERCENT COMPLETION OF TOTAL PROJECT: _____ **65** _____ %

N. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT QUARTER:

- Complete the establishment of the demonstration sites in NE:
 - Plantings of forbs at CT site
 - Plantings of grasses and forbs at MA site
 - Conduct site inspection
- Preparation of Subtask 3 of the Final report.

O. FINANCIAL STATUS:

As of: July 1, 2023

Total Project Budget: \$ 200,000

Total Expenditures: \$ 120,000

Note: This report should not require more than 2-3 pages & should be e-mailed to the NETC Coordinator so as to arrive no later than ten (10) working days after the end of each calendar quarter.