



National Estuarine  
Research Reserve System  
Science Collaborative

# Getting Started in Collaborative Science:

*A professional learning opportunity for NERRS staff who are new to collaborative science.*

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## 2026 Registration Guidance

**Registration deadline: February 20, 2026**

### Important notes about this opportunity:

- This opportunity is designed for reserve staff members who are new to the practice of collaborative science, especially staff members who are new to their position and/or the NERRS.
- Every reserve is guaranteed one spot for a staff person's participation in either the 2026 or 2027 cohort. It is up to each reserve to identify the individual who will participate and which cohort they will participate in.
- Participants must choose a [management / knowledge exchange need](#) specific to their reserve to guide their learning.
- Before registering for this opportunity, please discuss it with your reserve manager. Your reserve manager should be prepared to complete the [Reserve Manager Confirmation Form](#) and provide their signature to confirm your participation.
- By February 20, 2026, submit your registration form and upload a completed Reserve Manager Confirmation Form. [Complete your online registration here.](#)
- [Please hold dates for required activities.](#)

## Overview

The NERRS Science Collaborative is offering a professional learning opportunity to bring together NERRS staff from across the System who are new to collaborative science. The opportunity will be cohort-based and grounded in applied learning with an emphasis on peer interaction as well as individual activities at participants' respective reserves. Participants will integrate their learning with their role at their reserve by using their current reserve work as the foundation for their skills-building.

This opportunity is meant for those who want to strengthen their skills to engage in the earliest stages of collaborative science project development. Participants will choose a [management / knowledge exchange need](#) specific to their reserve to guide learning on the following topics:

- Collaborative science objectives, mindset and principles.
- Relationship building
- Collaborative process design

## Support for Participants

Cohort participants will have access to:

- Peer-to-peer learning workshops with fellow cohort participants
- Tailored support from Science Collaborative facilitators
- Travel support to attend the May in-person workshop
- Up to \$1,500 to reimburse costs of independent learning activities and / or to support participant time

## Eligibility

Every reserve is guaranteed one spot for a staff person's participation in either the 2026 or 2027 cohort. It is up to each reserve to identify the individual who will participate and in which cohort they will participate. To register for this opportunity, your participation must be confirmed by your reserve manager.

This opportunity is designed for reserve staff members who are new to the practice of collaborative science, especially staff members who are new to their position and/or the NERRS. Staff members who have not led or held a significant role in a collaborative science project are a strong fit for this opportunity.



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## Registration Review Process

Registrations will be reviewed to confirm the following:

- Only one staff person per reserve has registered to participate
- Your registration includes a completed “Reserve Manager Confirmation Form”
- You have selected a reserve management and knowledge exchange need relevant to your reserve.

## Key Dates / Schedule of Required Activities

Date	Activity
<b>February 20, 2026</b>	Registrations due
<b>Week of March 2, 2026</b>	Participants confirmed
<b>March 12, 2026</b>	Virtual cohort welcome and introduction (3-4:30 pm EDT)
<b>May 13-14, 2026</b>	In-person gathering in Ann Arbor, Michigan (travel support will be provided)
<b>June 25, 2026</b>	Workshop on designing a collaborative process (3-4:30 pm EDT)
<b>October/November, date TBD, 2026</b>	Workshop on navigating challenges + cohort wrap-up (3-4:30 pm EDT)

## Supporting Documents

All supporting documents and access to the online registration form can be found at: <https://nerrsciencecollaborative.org/node/1313>

## Questions Regarding this Opportunity?

**Email:** Written questions regarding this funding opportunity should be submitted to [nerrs-info@umich.edu](mailto:nerrs-info@umich.edu)

**Phone:** You may also direct questions to Arianna Stokes (734-763-0056).



## Before starting your registration

This opportunity is open to one staff person per reserve. Before starting your registration, please discuss the opportunity with your reserve manager. It will be helpful to discuss the following:

- **Your fit for the opportunity.** The cohort is designed for reserve staff who are new to the practice of collaborative science. If you have not led or held a significant role in a collaborative science project, you are a strong fit for this opportunity.
- **Your manager's support of your commitment of time to participate.** The 2026 professional development opportunity will run from March to December 2026 ([dates to hold](#)). Cohort participants commit to:
  - Attending a 1 hour virtual intro to the cohort
  - Attending an in-person cohort gathering in Ann Arbor, Michigan (1.5 days)
  - Participating in 2 virtual workshops (90 min each)
  - Meeting with a Science Collaborative facilitator (1 hour, additional time as needed)
  - Completing independent learning activities at reserve (~5 hours per month)
- **The management / knowledge exchange need you are interested in exploring.** The need you select will be the basis of your applied learning. Check out the list of reserve management / knowledge exchange needs [here](#). If you are interested in focusing on a need that is not yet represented on this list, discuss this with your reserve manager so they are ready to confirm its importance when completing the manager form.
- **The “Reserve Manager Confirmation Form.”** Your reserve manager should be aware of and prepared to complete [this form](#) after your conversation. You will submit it as part of your registration.

## Registration Process

Secure your reserve's spot by registering by February 20, 2026. The registration form is a chance to share more about your interests and learning goals. Your answers will help the Science Collaborative better tailor learning activities. A preview of application questions is available below. Be sure to also upload a completed copy of the “Reserve Manager Confirmation Form” when submitting your registration.

**Registrations must be submitted by 11:59pm ET on February 20, 2026 at the following link:** <https://graham.umich.edu/application-request/31987>



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## Preview of Registration Questions

For reference only, you will be answering these questions in the online form; submit your registration [here](#).

- Reserve:
- Sector:
- Position title:
- Email address:
- Can we share your contact information, including name, position title, and email address with other participants?
  - yes
  - no
- How long have you worked in your current position?
- How long have you worked within the reserve system?
- Have you previously participated in a collaborative science project? (yes/no). If so, what project and what role did you play?
- **Please explain why you are interested in participating in this professional learning opportunity.** What do you hope to gain or learn by participating? Include details about your current work and the ways that you imagine collaborative science will enrich your work. (approximately 1-2 paragraphs)
- **Please briefly describe the management / knowledge exchange need you will focus on and explain how the need relates to your responsibilities at the reserve.** (approximately 1-2 paragraphs)
- **Cohort activities will be tailored to meet the specific interests of participants. Within the following learning themes are there specific skills, questions, or challenges that you would like to explore?**



- **Do you anticipate using the \$1,500 funding award and if so, how?** Please check all boxes that apply:

- I anticipate using these funds to reimburse costs of applied learning activities
- I anticipate using these funds to support my time as a cohort participant
- I am unsure if I will use these funds
- I do not anticipate using these funds

Comments to explain your answer (optional)

- **Please upload a signed copy of the [Reserve Manager Confirmation Form](#)**

