



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.

2027 Registration Guidance

Registration deadline: December 4, 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 have not led or held a significant role in a collaborative science project.
- 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. Additional reserve staff that are interested in participating may join the waitlist for the 2027 cohort.
- Participants must choose a [management or 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 or your addition to the waitlist.
- By December 4, 2026, complete your [online registration](#) or join the [waitlist](#). Both require a completed Reserve Manager Confirmation Form.
- [Please hold dates for required activities.](#)

Overview

Designed to mirror the key elements of collaborative science, “Getting Started” is grounded in applied learning with an emphasis on peer interaction. Participants are encouraged to integrate their learning with their reserve role by focusing on a real management or knowledge exchange need from their reserve and participating in self-guided activities at their reserve. A small amount of funding is available to each participant to support engagement with potential partners and self-guided activities that participants can bring to their reserves.

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 or knowledge exchange need](#) specific to their reserve to guide learning on the following topics:

- Collaborative science objectives, mindset and principles;
- Relationship building; and
- Building blocks of a collaborative process.

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 in-person workshop; and
- Up to \$1,500 to reimburse costs of applied learning activities (e.g. travel to meet with a partner; invite a partner to lunch to learn more about their needs; provide honoraria or travel support to bring a group of partners together and advance understanding of shared needs).

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. 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.



Key Dates / Schedule of Required Activities

Date	Activity
December 4, 2026	Registrations due; last day to join the waitlist
December 16, 2026	Participants confirmed
February 3, 2027,	Virtual cohort welcome and introduction (3-4:30 pm ET)
April 13-14, 2027	In-person gathering in Ann Arbor, Michigan (travel support will be provided)
June 9, 2027	Virtual learning session (3-5pm ET)
October 6, 2027	Virtual learning session (3-5pm ET)

Registration Process

If a staff member from your reserve did not participate in 2026, you can secure your reserve's spot by registering by December 4, 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 December 4, 2026 at the following link: <https://graham.umich.edu/application-request/33671>

Before starting your registration

This opportunity is open to one staff person per reserve. Additional reserve staff that are interested in participating may join the waitlist for the 2027 cohort. 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 2027 professional development opportunity will run from February - October 2027 ([dates to hold](#)). Cohort participants commit to:
 - Attending a virtual intro to the cohort (90 min)
 - Attending an in-person cohort gathering in Ann Arbor, Michigan (1.5 days)



- Participating in 2 virtual learning sessions (120 min each)
- Meeting with a Science Collaborative facilitator (1 hour, additional time as needed)
- Completing independent learning activities at reserve (~5 - 10 hours per month)
- **The management or 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. You will also need to submit this form if you are joining the 2027 cohort waitlist.

Registration Review

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”;
- and
- You have selected a reserve management or knowledge exchange need relevant to your reserve.

Joining the Cohort Waitlist

Depending on interest in this year’s opportunity, we may have capacity to offer additional spots. If you are interested in joining the 2027 cohort but do not have a guaranteed spot, you may join the [2027 cohort waitlist](#). The waitlist is open to staff at all reserves and closes December 4, 2026.

Please note that you will need to have your manager fill out the Reserve Manager Confirmation Form to join the waitlist.

If you are invited to participate, we will ask you to complete the full registration form.

Supporting Documents

All supporting documents and access to the online registration form can be found at: <https://nerrsciencecollaborative.org/getting-started-collaborative-science>



Questions Regarding this Opportunity?

Email: Written questions regarding this funding opportunity should be submitted to nerrs-info@umich.edu

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



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 role did you play? (e.g., project lead, collaborative lead, science lead, technical lead, intended user, participant, other, N/A)
- Please explain why you are interested in participating in this cohort. What do you hope to gain or learn by participating? Include details about your current work and how collaborative science supports / might support your work. (Approximately 1-2 paragraphs)
- In 2-3 sentences, please briefly describe the management or knowledge exchange need you will focus on.
- Please explain why you have chosen this management or knowledge exchange need to focus on for this learning opportunity and how it relates to your responsibilities at your reserve.
- 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 during the cohort? Learning themes:



collaborative science objectives, mindset and principles; relationship-building; essential elements of a collaborative process.

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

