

2023 WORK PLAN

Urban Waters Federal Partnership – Delaware River Location



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Location: Delaware Estuary

Point of Contact: Erica Rossetti, Urban Waters Ambassador, Partnership for the Delaware Estuary

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I. Background

The Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) is an effort seeking to “revitalize urban waters and the communities that surround them, transforming overlooked assets into treasured centerpieces and drivers of urban revival.” The partnership is an environmental justice program based out of the U.S. EPA in agreement with 14 other federal agencies to align federal programs and investments in urban communities, expand partnerships, build local capacity, and improve the environmental and economic potential of safe and clean urban waters.



FIGURE 1: THE DELAWARE ESTUARY

The Delaware River Location includes the four major cities along the main stem of the Delaware River prior to reaching the Delaware Bay. These cities are located in the Delaware Estuary, which is the tidal portion of the Delaware River Basin spanning from Trenton, NJ down through the Delaware Bay. The Delaware River Location also aligns with the National Estuary Program and the Delaware Estuary’s Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan. Both the Delaware National Estuary Program and the Delaware River UWFP Location are led by the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary.

The four cities that comprise the focus area of this location are:

- Camden, New Jersey, population 71,773
- Chester, Pennsylvania, population 32,535
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, population 1.576 million
- Wilmington, Delaware, population 70,750

This work plan has been developed by partners working in tandem for the Delaware River Location as part of the UWFP. It is intended to detail key partners, define goals, summarize priority projects, and specify milestones.

II. Workgroup Partners

Federal Agency Partners

- Department of Agriculture
 - U.S. Forest Service
- Department of Commerce
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Department of Interior
 - Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
 - National Park Service (NPS)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Inter-State Agency Partners

- Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)

State Agency Partners

- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP)
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)

Non-governmental Organizations

- Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed (CDRW)
- Delaware Community Benefits Agreement Coalition (DCBAC)
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE)
- River Network
- The Nature Conservancy

Academia Partners

- Pennsylvania Sea Grant

III. Community Partners

The following list consists of local community organizations that are at the front of leading environmental justice projects in their respective cities. The list is currently comprised of organizations that have received past funding or letters of support as well as organizations that the workgroup hopes to involve as part of a community cohort. This list is subject to fluctuate and may also overlap with the workgroup partners.

Camden, NJ Partners

- Camden Community Partnership
- Center for Aquatic Sciences
- Center for Environmental Transformation
- Delaware Riverkeeper Network

Philadelphia, PA Partners

- Bartram's Gardens
- Nueva Esperanza
- Riverfront North
- Tookany-Tacony Frankford Watershed

Chester, PA Partners

- City of Chester and Shade Tree Commission
- Delaware County Riverfront Alliance
- 9th Street Youth & Community Center
- Making A Change Group

Wilmington, DE Partners

- Brandywine River Restoration Trust
- Collaborate Northeast
- DCBAC
- Delaware Nature Society
- New Castle Prevention Coalition

IV. Overall Goals and Objectives

The Delaware River Location strives to, alongside community members, revitalize and remedy aging infrastructure, redress a history of environmental pollution, and mitigate the brunt of increasing climate change impacts on already-vulnerable communities. Priorities for the Delaware River Location include:

- Stormwater management
- Erosion and flooding control

- Source water protection
- Restoring lost habitat
- Enhancing overall waterway health
- Protecting community investments
- Promoting public access, health, sustainability, and safety
- Pursuing environmental, socioeconomic, and climate justice
- Transforming Brownfields Sites into community assets
- Building local capacity by empowering communities to become leaders of environmental stewardship
- Equipping communities to be resilient and adaptable to climate change impacts

V. Delaware River Location 2023 Initiatives

Initiative 1: Plan and Participate in Local Community Events

Many urban communities have been disconnected from nature both physically and psychologically. By planning and attending events centered around local waterfronts that provide engagement and economic opportunities, we have the opportunity to meaningfully connect communities with the River and foster environmental stewardship.

Activities

1. Plan a River Festival in each of the four cities with local partners
2. Participate in and support events that help connect local community members with urban waters and resources
3. Explore other community events for UWFP to attend and get to know community members

Expected Outcomes

1. Plan at least 3 River Fest events and reach 5,000 people
2. Attend at least 3 other community events and reach 250 people

Initiative 2: Support Restoration and Revitalization projects

There are many local organizations and community leaders throughout the Delaware River Location doing on-the-ground restoration projects. We aim to support these projects both financially and technically, specifically those that restore habitat and quality of life in socioeconomically and climate vulnerable communities.

Activities

1. Continue a mini-grant program to distribute funds to local community groups doing restoration, stewardship, and engagement work.*
2. Write letters of support for projects that support UWFP goals

Expected Outcomes

1. Allocate \$50,000 to support local partner projects
2. Plant 1,000 plants
3. Support 8 local restoration projects across all 4 cities
4. Write at least 2 letters of support
5. Update the Workgroup every month with projects

*Example project ideas include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Pollinator corridors
- Tree plantings
- Urban trails and/or waterfront access
- Stormwater infrastructure
- Living shorelines
- Community gardens
- Sustainable development
- Water quality and access
- Community stipends

Initiative 3: Equity Mapping and Project Prioritization

There are many ways to identify “disadvantaged communities.” If we are to pursue environmental justice equitably, we must carefully consider and prioritize who and where our projects serve, especially considering that working in highly

urbanized, disadvantaged, vulnerable, and/or overlooked communities often yield the most benefits for habitat, health, and safety.

Activities

1. Choose indicators to define “disadvantaged communities” and map priority areas
2. Write an equity plan to ensure that a majority of funds are being allocated to disadvantaged communities
3. Create a list that identifies projects in each of our four cities that we can help prepare for funding and connect to resources from federal partners. (What are the projects in each city that can help revitalize the community?)

Expected Outcomes

1. List of indicators defining “disadvantaged communities” and accompanying maps
2. Equity plan written by June 1, 2023
3. Ongoing priority project list

Initiative 4: Build Relationships

The Urban Waters Federal Partnership at its core is about working collaboratively across federal agencies to achieve environmental justice and clean water. In the Delaware River Location, it is important to maintain and increase partnerships that will ultimately reduce barriers between federal agencies and local communities as well as bridge gaps between local community leaders for a more cohesive urban corridor that works together across city and state boundaries.

Activities

1. Identify and invite federal partners missing from the Location Workgroup
2. Form a cohort of local community leaders and build capacity

Expected Outcomes

1. An increased number of location partners on monthly calls that can collectively solve more problems, complete projects, and offer resources
2. Allocate \$20,000 to pay for registration and travel for urban community leaders to attend the 2023 Science & Environmental Summit together
3. Organize 2 sessions at the 2023 Science & Environmental Summit specific to Urban Waters to connect partners

Initiative 5: Share Stories and Resources

In additional efforts to maintain and build partnerships, the Delaware River Location aims to reach a wide array of stakeholders by sharing public resources, news, and success stories that will help multiply UWFP efforts.

Activities

1. Write newsletters for *Estuary News* or other local news outlets sharing stories, updates, and resources
2. Develop a list-serv of Urban Waters stakeholders to be able to formally share Urban Waters, environmental justice, climate change, and other relevant resources across the Delaware Estuary and beyond
3. Share meeting minutes, meeting dates, and other resources on the Delaware River Location’s public web page <https://delawareestuary.org/save-the-estuary/urban-waters>

Expected Outcomes

1. At least 2 newsletter articles published
2. A list-serv of at least 50 Location stakeholders