

UWFP Delaware River Location Monthly Meeting MINUTES

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

11:00-12:00 ET on Zoom

I. Attendees (20)

- Delaware River Basin Commission: Avery Lentini
- EPA Region 2: Irene Purdy
- EPA Region 3: Nicole Lick, Megan Mackey
- Green Building United: Karen Igou
- National Park Service: Tomas Deza, Gabe Levitan, Olivia Wilson
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary: Haley Burns, John Harrod, Kathy Klein, Erica Rossetti erossetti@delawareestuary.org*
- Sea Grant DE: Emily Maung-Douglass
- Sea Grant PA: Zach Nemec
- The Nature Conservancy DE/PA: Kim Hachadoorian
- USDA Farm Service Agency, Philadelphia: Veronica Erenberg, Nina Berryman,
- USDA NRCS: Kefeni Kejeli, Freddie Patino Rodriguez, Leon Tillman leon.tillman@usda.gov*
- *Note: emails shared in the Zoom chat were also shared via the meeting minutes

II. EJ Gathering Updates

1. PDE is planning the Delaware River Environmental Justice Gathering, on **Tuesday March 12, 2024 at the Rutgers Camden Campus Center**. Please save the date!
2. This event is geared toward community leaders to share challenges and successes
3. Discussed topics for the event, which were based on community feedback and also feedback from this group:
 - i. Urban gardening and agriculture
 - ii. Youth/community engagement
 - iii. Tree canopy and restoration
 - iv. Flooding/stormwater
 - v. Pollution (may include water quality and/or litter)
4. Kathy suggested grouping this topics into more general ones to not silo people too much: for example, greening, climate change, water quality, and engagement.
5. Kathy also suggested having some sort of flip chart or bulletin board so that organizations can share resources such as job opportunities, funding, etc. throughout the day.
6. Erica offered groups to have a table at the event to share resources with community members. If your organization is interested please email ERossetti@DelawareEstuary.org
7. Registration will be sent to some community leaders first and then to the Urban Waters partners. All are welcome but please be mindful that there are only 100 spots available.

III. Partner Updates & Resource Sharing (11:20-12:00)

1. Karen is working on flooding issues on the Brandywine River in Wilmington DE. BRRT has determined that a non-functioning dam (**dam 6**) on the Brandywine needs to be removed, as it

- is it is non-functioning and is preventing mussel fish hosts from swimming upstream. There is a resolution with Wilmington City Council for an easement to have the dam removed, and there will be a virtual meeting about it in early February. The community and habitat need support on this, if anyone from this group can call in to the meeting it would go a long way. More information can be found on BRRT's website at <https://brrt.org/social-media/>
2. Tomas shared that NPS **Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance** is having an annual informational webinar for their program on **January 25 from 3-4:30**. Please share this opportunity with community partners.
 - i. Video explaining the program for communities:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItHN_OKhwM8
 - ii. Webinar registration:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=urWTBhhLe02TQfMvQApUIC_vQHOD1SpCjr_z09P7xShUMVBHT0VONk1HQUZJM01HSjVVVINUMVRNOS4u
 - iii. Community Assistance application page: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/apply.htm>
 3. Veronica shared that the Farm Service Agency Philadelphia office is hosting a **Resource Share Potluck** at their office (1415 N. Broad St., Suite 118) on **Wednesday, January 24 from 12:30-2:30pm** alongside PASA. This is for community members to learn about how to apply for resources to support urban farms and gardens.
 4. Kefeni shared that NRCS doing series of webinars on **urban ag and urban soils** for urban farmers that can be shared with the urban ag community. Leon also shared that USDA NRCS and the Farm Service Agency offer technical assistance for private urban agriculture lands if anyone works with such partners
 5. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/other-topics/urban-agriculture>
 6. Kathy provided update on PDE's mini-grant program. Because of the burdensome federal compliance requirements, PDE will not be simply sub-awarding money but will be working with the 8 selected projects to do all of the purchasing. Fish and Wildlife will be funding additional 10 projects next year and also capacity for PDE. Erica noted that perhaps other agencies that are part of the Urban Waters group will be able to fund some of these projects with their resources, and will send out the list of proposals again.
 7. Zach shared that PA Sea Grant is offering an all-day **native plant workshop March 7th at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge** and continuing education credits can be provided. Intended for public works and landscaping audiences. Registration:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc5B-f5mBI4jkl0Iud_teaLF1ONDeqtdfIYkba-0W6UGFRgVw/viewform
 8. Kathy shared that PDE is talking with EPA about hosting a **pilot artist in residence program** that would be tied into Urban Waters. PDE would host an artist for 18 months that could carry out a project that PDE/Urban Waters would identify. PDE has not heard of a final decision yet but will notify the group at next month's meeting what the EPA's decision is. In the meantime, ideas of art projects (both physical and performance art) that focus on climate change in the Delaware Estuary will be most welcome.
 9. Erica shared that the 2024 work plan will be posted on the web page at www.DelawareEstuary.org/save-the-estuary/urban-waters/. She also noted that she will share relevant resources from today's meeting with the list of mini-grant program applicants.

IV. Adjourned at 11:51am. Next meeting: February 20, 2024 from 11-12 ET on Zoom.