

**UWFP Delaware River Location Monthly Call MINUTES**

**Tuesday, May 16th, 2023**

**11am-12pm ET**

**Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83425487982> Meeting ID: 834 2548 7982**

**1. Introductions (11-11:10am)**

- **PDE:** Erica Rossetti, Kathy Klein, Haley Burns, Sarah Bouboulis, John Harrod
- **DRBC:** Beth Brown
- **NPS:** Julie Bell, Olivia Wilson
- **EPA:** Megan Mackey (Region 3), Irene Purdy (Region 2)
- **FWS:** Flavia Rutkosky
- **PA Sea Grant:** Zach Nemec
- **DE Sea Grant:** Emily Maung-Douglass
- **HUD:** Roberto Frugone
- **DCBAC:** Jeffrey Richardson, Simeon Hahn

**2. Partner Updates (11:10-11:20)**

- **NPS:** Just went through project selection. One new project will be with the USFS on their Prescribe Outside program (like Nature Rx) including partners such as Awbury Arboretum and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. NPS will be evaluating the impacts of the program and expanding it to underserved communities. PDE offered assistance. Good opportunity to re-establish relationship with USFS.
- **FWS:** Flavia added that the Urban and Community Forestry Program got 1.5 billion dollars so we should consider reaching out to them to get funding as they have so much.
- **NJDEP:** Frank shared his article published in this month's NJ League of Municipalities magazine about brownfield redevelopment in NJ, including its benefits to stormwater management, land preservation, revitalization of cities, park creation, climate/resiliency, etc. <https://www.njit.edu/njbrownfields/sites/njit.edu/njbrownfields/files/NJLOM%20Article%20on%20Bring%20back%20blighted%20sights%205-23.pdf>
- **PDE:** Got some BIL money to start a "Homegrown Habitats" program focusing on pollinator gardens and native plants in backyards, alongside partnership with local Habitat for Humanity in Wilmington DE. Hope to expand it in the future. There is interest from Delaware County PA residents as well.
- **Delaware Community Benefits Agreement Coalition:** The port expansion project is currently in a state of flux but if it goes through it will be very detrimental to

water quality (e.g. PCBs and other pollutants from dredging). DCBAC is working with Supreme Court of Delaware to challenge permits. There was a report on ABC related to 10,000 tons of tires dumped at the site as well, which gained coverage for the area. <https://www.delawarepublic.org/politics-government/2023-05-03/port-of-wilmington-scrap-tire-yard-uncleared-nearly-a-year-after-dnrec-order>

- DRBC: Having a second quarter business meeting live in Camden NJ on June 7<sup>th</sup>. There will be guest speakers.  
<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/public/outreach/camden.html>

**3. Show & Tell: Chester River Festival (11:20-11:30)**

- Erica shared album of photos and videos from the event:  
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/TinP3s9FJJvtvyJB7>

**4. Delaware River Festival Interest & Ideas (11:30-11:35)**

- The Delaware River Fest in Philadelphia and Camden will take place on September 9<sup>th</sup> this year. More information to come.

**5. Federal Partner Connections (11:35-11:45)**

- Need to get federal agencies to get involved and share resources about environmental justice work. It's difficult for community members to engage with federal agencies.
- Current federal agencies actively at the table: EPA, DOI, HUD, NOAA
- Federal agencies currently missing at this location: CDC, CDFI, Corporation for National and Community Service, Dept of Education, Dept of Commerce, Dept of Energy, FEMA, NIEHS, USACE, DOT
- Agencies we'd like to involve in the short term: if you have any contacts please share with Erica
  - i. **USFS** – Michael Rains
  - ii. **NRCS** – good contact to have for urban areas and support for pollinator and habitat projects in terms of investigating soils, cultural resources, etc.
  - iii. **FEMA** -
  - iv. **ACE** –
  - v. **AmeriCorps** –
  - vi. **DOT** -
- EPA shared that the next Urban Waters steering committee meeting will take place in September and they are beginning planning for that meeting. Will bring up the conjuncture of BIL, Urban Waters, communication, engagement, and environmental justice and the need for federal agencies to get involved.
- Could we have some sort of forum or roundtable or lunch with all of the federal agencies to hear about what we are all doing? Even if they don't end up getting involved. Thumbs up from the group. Could coincide with the annual meeting.

**6. Urban Waters / EJ Annual Meeting (11:45-11:55)**

- Context: there are a lot of EJ efforts happening in the Delaware Estuary and a lot of new money sources and initiatives. Therefore there is a need to connect for this work to be more cohesive. As almost all of these efforts are occurring in disadvantaged communities under the Urban Waters mission's umbrella, is there any interest in this group planning a regional event and facilitating these discussions? Thumbs up from the group, interested in further developing the idea
- Are there any programs your agency has that are coming to mind that you'd like to showcase?
- Any interest in being on a planning sub-committee? Flavia, Simeon, John/Erica
- Simeon noted there used to be quarterly meetings that would rotate within the four cities and would specifically invite the other locations. There was also an annual meeting that took place at places like Villanova, the Seaport Museum, etc. Format should be that community groups are invited and have the opportunity to ask questions, not just federal agencies presenting on their resources.
- Using the PDE Science & Environmental Summit was also a great model.
- Want to focus on urban initiatives and environmental justice initiatives.
- All of the federal agencies do have funding for environmental justice, so that should be the flag we fly when we invite them and learn more about it.
- PDE will plan for an in person conference like meeting around February of 2024 and include federal agencies AND community partners

**7. Resource Sharing / Other**

- Urban Waters Blog post: <https://www.oursharedwaters.org/post/connecting-our-shared-waters-through-community-engagement>
- May 20<sup>th</sup> Brandywine ShadFest
- Water Table project meshes well with Urban Waters. They are creating 4 different subcommittees: branding, funding, climate change, workforce development. Kathy will send out an email to everyone inviting them to the meetings. Website: <https://www.dvrpc.org/waterquality/watertable/>