

Urban Waters Delaware River Location Workgroup  
January 13, 2021 Call Notes - 2:00 – 3:00pm

**Call Participants:** Emily Baumbach, PDE; Kathy Klein, PDE; Irene Purdy, EPAR2; Chris Anderson, Philadelphia Water Department; Kathleen Martin, Audubon; Catherine Magliochetti, EPAR3; Frank McLaughlin, NJDEP; Megan Mackey, EPAR3; Krista Heinlen, USDA Forest Service/Davey Institute; Simeon Hahn, NOAA; Flavia Rutkosky, USFWS

**PDE & Urban Waters Updates**

Chester Shade Tree Commission

- Emily Baumbach: As we've discussed on several of our previous calls now and also heard in the survey we sent out over the summer to the full list of UW Delaware River partners, we want to prioritize building some more relationships with the City of Chester
  - PDE has had a few calls with Ann Faulds and Lisa Gaffney (Chester Economic Development Authority) who are both involved with Shade Tree Commission
  - Introductory calls getting up to speed on community priorities in Chester
    - Community interested in getting more people to experience the waterfront, getting youth involved, youth and community stewardship programs, Chester young professionals work day
    - Group is interested in seeking funding to hold something similar to the annual Delaware River Festival (in Philadelphia and Camden) and hold something similar on the Chester waterfront
      - We will be looking for funding opportunities this
      - Maybe it could even be an extension of Delaware River Fest with activities set up in Chester at some point in the future
    - I'll be participating in the Shade Tree Commission meetings moving forward and will keep this group in the loop on any updates
- Chris Anderson: Make sure we are soliciting the partner base
  - Takes lots of partner planning to put on a large event like this
  - PDE folks, Sarah Morales and Angela Padeletti, already planning for the event this year
- Kathy Klein: I might mention something to PA Coastal Zone Management (PACZM) that we are looking for some funding since they might be interested in funding something like this
  - I'll talk to Angela at PDE more about this idea
- K. Klein: We've been wanting to establish a better relationship with Chester for a while
  - We thought about going after some funding through the NFWF Five Star grant, but after having a few conversations, we decided that we just aren't at the place we need to be with Chester yet
    - It takes time to lay the groundwork and develop partnerships which is very important for this work
- Simeon Hahn: Both Lisa and Ann have participated in previous Brownfields Community of Practice meetings before
  - We've had some activities in Chester in the past like the Canoemobile project

USGS pre-proposal for Urban Waters Directed Cooperative Matching Funds (DCMF) project

- E. Baumbach: PDE received a message from Heather Heckathorn with USGS a few weeks ago informing us that USGS and DRBC submitted a pre-proposal for a DCMF opportunity as part of the UWFP funding opportunity
  - The main concept of the proposal is to conduct microbiological monitoring, coupling innovative technology with standard analysis methods, in the Lower Delaware River and Estuary
  - Since the UW location is listed in this proposal, they want this group to assist in some coordination capacity
    - I'm not sure what specifically this is yet
    - Still waiting to hear back from Heather, but will keep this group informed
- Krista Heinlen: I think we've gone through this with UGSG before, so they're already connected
  - Did some work with Darby Creek and the John Heinz Refuge

#### Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative

- E. Baumbach: Since EJ has been a focus of conversation with this group, wanted to make folks aware that a few staff at PDE are going to be involved in the Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative
  - Group focuses on racial equity and social justice work throughout the state of Delaware and have different topical and geographic workgroups
  - I'll be getting involved in the New Castle County workgroup to learn about Wilmington initiatives
  - First meeting on 2021 is in the next few weeks, so I will keep folks updated on relevant topics that come out of that collaborative

#### Corridor Pollinator Project

- E. Baumbach: Kathy and had a call with Beth and Kathleen last week about some of Audubon's work with John Heinz Refuge and Fish & Wildlife on community-based work that's turned into a pollinator corridor project
  - Kathy had a few conversations with Beth about this and looking at how the Urban Waters location can possibly get involved in this effort
  - What came out of our conversation last week is maybe looking at taking this project and expanding it to have a project at each of the four Urban Waters cities, or at least expanding it to one of the cities that doesn't have a pollinator corridor project yet
- Kathleen Martin: It's a great project that could be expanded to other areas and other green spaces
  - Project takes existing green spaces and engages community members on projects
  - Give community members the opportunity to provide project feedback
  - Uses existing spaces to make them more ecologically beneficial to the areas
  - It will be interesting to see how the project progresses in Philadelphia
- K. Klein: We also talked about the idea of continuing the conversation about this project with this group and maybe submitting a proposal for the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF)
  - a. Match is always a big hurdle with those grants
  - b. We'd like to continue the dialogue and think of ways to approach this type of project
  - c. Proposals for DWCF will be due in March or early April
- Kathleen: Will share one of the pollinator corridor project reports with Emily

#### **Increasing Community Outreach and Engagement in Urban Waters**

- E. Baumbach: community engagement and participation has been a common theme on a few of our last calls

- It was great to have Reggie Harris from EPA join our last call and provide some insights on this topic
- We thought a good way for us to learn more about specific examples of community-based projects across the Urban Waters cities is for PDE to conduct some interviews with organizations working in urban centers
- PDE will conduct interviews with organizations to learn about organizational history, building relationships with local communities, and successful programs for engagement
- In addition to holding these one on one interviews, we'd like to see if we can invite some of the organizations to participate on a webinar or webinar series to share their community-based project stories
- We had set aside some funding in our NEP workplan for 2021 to hire another environmental justice (EJ) consultant to help PDE continue our diversity, equity, and inclusion work with additional trainings, but we're thinking of using some of that to give to the organizations that we want to engage in this interview process for their time
  - This could be especially helpful for engaging some community-based organizations in Chester that we haven't historically worked with
- K. Klein: We're trying to think about how we can be better at working with communities
  - We have only \$2,500 set aside in our Estuary Program budget right now for something like this
  - It isn't really enough money to hire a consultant, but we could use this money to get information from organizations and start building some partnerships and support
  - As a result of all the William Penn Foundation work going on, I'm really sensitized to what's going on in the watershed and funding being provided to people to serve on workgroups and committees to cover their time, need to talk to the EIC to see how they feel about this idea
- C. Anderson: One group that might be good to reach out to with this is Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Environmental Education Center Network, a city parks program
  - a. Pennypack, Wissahickson, and Cobbs Creek might fit into this environmental just model best
  - b. We turn to this group for this type of work, so I would offer them up as possible interview candidate
- K. Heinlen: Yes, they would be a great candidate, and Philly Parks and Rec after school programs have done some similar efforts

### **Feedback on draft Urban Waters Workplan Items during Science & Environmental Summit**

- E. Baumbach: This group previously talked about collecting input on the workplan from other partners involved in this partnership as well as a broader group of stakeholders
  - Our ideas list of draft workpan items right now is pretty good, even though it's not a formalized workplan yet
  - I think we could easily just keep adding new items to this list of activities we want to do, so I think it's time for some prioritization
  - On the draft workpan document now, we have 9 items we've already confirmed that we want to start working on this year and we also have almost 20 other potential project ideas to take on in the future
  - We're thinking of taking this list and turning it into a simple Google Form where folks at the Summit can provide us with some of their input on future projects to prioritize
  - Questions for the survey could include:

- *What top 3-5 initiatives would you like to see this Urban Waters location take on over the next 1-2 years?*
  - *What are 3-5 additional initiatives you would like to see this Urban Waters location prioritize beyond 2021 (next 3+ years)?*
- We can create a simple form where respondents just click boxes to make their selections
- In addition to having Summit participants weigh in on this survey, I can also circulate the form to the full Urban Waters Delaware River location contact database for additional feedback
- M. Mackey (via Zoom chat): I love the idea of folks weighing in on top 5!

### **Environmental Justice & Brownfields Community of Practice updates**

- E. Baumbach: We had a good planning call last week with Simeon and Krista for the upcoming Community of Practice meeting
  - a. The plan is to have an EJ-themed Communities of Practice meeting covering brownfields revitalization projects as well as some other EJ-focused initiatives and updated
  - b. Some talks already lined up include updates on South Wilmington Wetlands Park, EJ and equitability of access for oysters, NJDEP updates on NJ's EJ law as well as some Camden updates
  - c. Looking to block off one day sometime during the last two weeks of march and have sessions throughout the day with some breaks
  - d. Since using a virtual platform, we're looking to extend invitations to folks in our watershed, but also sending some invitations to the other UW locations to see if they want to participate or if any other locations want to present on brownfields or EJ work at their location
- S. Hahn: We have some speakers already interested
  - a. We'll need to reconvene and talk about updates and specifics
  - b. Had talked about 20 minutes for presentations,
- F. McLaughlin: The EJ theme is very timely, and we are open to additional ideas on how to bring speakers around that theme
  - a. With the new EJ law in NJ, we hope it will be a model to help serve communities better
- K. Heinlen: Will need to keep an eye on whether or not input will be from for all four locations and if that is feasible
  - a. Offering 20 minutes to give an update on EJ on their location, if that's what we want to do, might need to take a look at who we are confirming and how long the meeting will be before we have someone commit to a full day
  - b. Meeting might be a 9:00am to 1:00pm event
- S. Hahn: The group has often met almost a full day with presentations in morning and then a lunch break followed by a field trip
  - a. There's lots of material and lots of interest, so we could schedule a couple sessions throughout the whole day
- M. Mackey (via Zoom chat): I was just going to say that while most meetings I have participated in on Zoom have topped out at 3 hours, I think the break out format and transitioning between speakers and breakouts is something that helps keep people engaged vs. just talks
- E. Baumbach: Our internal Community of Practice group will decide on format (either half day or full day with talks)

### **Urban Waters Partner Updates**

- I. Purdy: Passaic River Urban Waters location has an information session on Friday on landowners on the Passaic River to provide updates on the status of a cleanup where they will be dredging sediments there and how landowners and piers could be impacted
  - The Urban Waters program is working with Superfund to reach out to give additional information
- S. Hahn: There's the national update call this Thursday on the future of the Urban Waters
  - It will be interesting hear what the future may be in terms of recent events, but it sounds positive

*\*Urban Waters Workgroup decided on call to shift monthly call times up one hour (start time pushed to 1:00-2:00pm instead of 2:00-3:00pm)*