

Urban Waters Delaware River Location Workgroup
February 10, 2021 Call Notes - 1:00 – 2:00pm

Call Participants: Chris Anderson, PWD; Beth Brown, PA Audubon; Sarah Bouboulis, PDE; Kathy Klein, PDE; Emily Baumbach, PDE; Flavia Rutkosky, USFWS; Simeon Hahn, NOAA; Irene Purdy, EPA Region 2

- Beth Brown: After scoping out the work required for the pollinator corridor project and the funding needed, we realized it was too much work for the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program, so we will be looking to apply for some funding in the future under the Delaware River Conservation funding

1. Related PDE & Urban Waters Updates

- E. Baumbach: EPA recently shared their first Urban Waters Program [Progress Report](https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/progress-report-urban-waters-program) - <https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/progress-report-urban-waters-program>
 - This report came up on our call last week with the Urban Waters Learning network, and how they can help to support urban waters locations
 - This report started getting put together back in late 2019 or early 2020, before we started having this monthly calls
 - For our location, the report highlighted work at Phoenix Park and Graffiti Pier
 - In the future for these types of updates, if there's a request like this that comes up, we will add that to a call agenda or circulate it to this group for feedback on project updates so that we are capturing updated information and the best projects to showcase
- E. Baumbach: Something that was also shared on the Urban Waters Basecamp account earlier this week was a letter of support for the various EPA Urban Waters initiatives
 - Some folks have constraints with signing something like this, but they are accepting sign-ons until Tuesday Feb 16th
 - Letter focuses on UW locations as well as the EPA Urban Waters Small Grants and the NFWF Five Star and Urban Waters grants– link to sign on here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeEChX33sO7bXKuYIxrZtyyvXI0qKY96m3oxBdofRsR4U6AJA/viewform?gxids=7628>)
- E. Baumbach gave an overview of the Living Shoreline for Improved Coastal Resilience in the Philadelphia Portion of the Delaware Estuary project (proposed location - 39.964359, -75.182792)
 - Want to get some feedback on this projects from this group for potential contacts and organizations to coordinate with on this effort
 - This is a NFWF Grant that includes creating a living shoreline in Philadelphia just down river from Fairmount Water Works
 - It's phase 1 of a two-part project to design and install an innovative living shoreline approach incorporating freshwater mussels at a high priority area of erosion on the Schuylkill River
 - There's a task specifically about Community Outreach & Engagement that will include some community workshops & meetings, engagement materials, analysis of pre and post engagement, and some freshwater mussel workshops
 - We're interested in getting a better sense of the specific community interests with respect to living shorelines, make some more of those connections and see how their input can be incorporated into living shorelines and other future restoration projects

- We might try to set up some virtual meetings with folks, have some introductory webinars about living shorelines
 - Angela Padeletti at PDE thought it would be a good idea to ask this group for feedback about any possible contacts, community groups or leads for folks living in and around that general area in the Fairmount neighborhood along the Schuylkill, but I think we could get more general input beyond that area as well from residents
- Simeon Hahn: We had lots of outreach at Lardners Point and Riverfront North while developing a general permit for living shorelines
 - Jim Fries Is a good contact on living shorelines
 - Phoenix Park and Harrison Avenue landfill
 - Coastal Resilience Program
- Chris Anderson: The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation is also doing some wetlands work in south Philadelphia along the river waterfront
 - Could reach out to civic associations, but wouldn't recommend this since its very development-oriented and would conflate what's in the water
 - Area for the project site is a bit rough
 - Schuylkill Navy boathouse rowing group
 - With the dredging, might be hit or miss since they are pretty upset about that program right now
 - Schuylkill River Development Corporation and Schuylkill Banks would be good if a partner or amenity could work with them
 - Discovery Center is a good group
 - Schuylkill River Greenways – part of the greenway trail goes through that location
 - Academy of Natural Sciences might want to be involved if they aren't already
 - Philadelphia Parks and Rec
- Beth Brown: Discovery Center is a little further down river, but we are happy to help at help out with Fairmount CDC and from student coalition
 - Fairmount Park Coalition
- Kathy Klein: What about the art museum if it's something that could be something art related?
 - Contact at Philadelphia Museum of Art, Grace Meredith
- Sarah Bouboulis: We are working closely with Victoria at Habitech
 - In plan we suggested to incorporate some cool stormwater art into the project
- May want to focus what we are doing on the trail itself
 - View of living shoreline will be obscured by MLK and overpasses, so should focus primarily on outreach and connection to the trail
- This living shoreline is part of a bigger project we're doing with a floating workshop etc. that will bring people to the water and have ideas for along the trail as well

2. **Review Urban Waters [Draft Workplan Feedback](#)**

Form (<https://forms.gle/tBwUtARBJsouY4uu9>) to be shared during the [Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit](#) (March 1 -3) and will ask the questions:

- *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)?*
- Will take the draft workplan document we've been working on and translating those items into a simple list on a Google Form

3. Brownfields and EJ Communities of Practice Webinar Series

- E. Baumbach: Moving forward with planning the Brownfields and Environmental Justice virtual communities of practice meeting
 - Frank and Simeon have done a great job pulling speakers together very quickly for this
 - Decided we are going to do this meeting as a webinar series like we did for the Connecting Youth to Waterways series since we have so many organizations that are interested in participating and didn't want to limit it to only a few presentations in a half-day session
 - Planning to do 1.5 – 2 hour webinars three weeks in a row at noon on Thursdays on March 25, April 1, and April 8th
 - I'll get out details to this group and the broader UW listserv once we get the remaining confirmations from speakers
 - We will also send out some email blasts to our full PDE listserv
 - We did want to see if EPA had any contacts in mind that would want to provide some EJ remarks or updates at the EPA level
 - We've sent Reggie Harris a couple of emails but haven't heard back so we wanted to see if he's not available, if there might be another contact that would be interested in doing this
- Irene Purdy: At EPA Region 2, the EJ Coordinator is new and the workgroup is pretty new as well
 - Let me think about this more and then get back to you
- Simeon Hahn: We're going to have updates on recent developments in policy and new guidance from agencies on the first day from NJDEP and Senator Coons office and we have a slot for EPA if someone wants to speak
 - Might try to get someone from the Department of Interior to give some high level remarks as well
 - Second week will be brownfields project updates from the Urban Waters cities
 - Third week will be updates on EJ initiatives from several organizations on the Port of Wilmington Expansion, equitability of access for oysters, updates from John Heinz National Wildlife refuge, and environmental justice on the Elizabeth River
 - We want to do another event after this series and have the city of Chester involved
 - Reached out to Jahlil Beatz since he's involved in affordable housing in Chester and want to get some groups in Wilmington involved in this too
- K. Klein: I've had some conversations with environmental consulting companies and brownfields sites through the Water Table project and I think many of them have vested interest for their clients to do things that are more responsible
- S. Hahn: For the Wilmington updates, one of our speakers is Marion Young with Brightfields, Inc. and worked with Northeast Wilmington and brownfields implementation on area wide assessment
 - Point of concern in the past so working towards public private collaboration
- K. Klein: Interviewed Urban Engineers for another project and they said they'd be interested in working with clients to make them aware of opportunities to bring community members into the decision process for community projects
- S. Hahn: We've had Biohabitats consulting come talk about living shoreline projects in Philadelphia at Lardner's Point in Philadelphia
 - Would be a good group to keep engaged
 - There is a brownfield group in Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development
 - I thought there was a group working on brownfields from Schuylkill down to the Navy Yard

- Bartram's Garden area might be interested in that living shoreline as well
- C. Anderson: With the refinery closing, that's probably one of the biggest issues in our region right now
 - Will be lots of EJ-related issues for cleanup and remediation and how this will impact marginalized communities
 - Jasmine Sessoms with Hilco might be a good contact

4. Partner Report Outs

- Beth Brown: We received a new grant to develop a legislative caucus to work at the federal level
- S. Hahn: Saw that the Great Lakes region is involved with legislative caucus that's bringing in lots of money
- B. Brown: It's an effective tool to coalesce legislative champions and want to use the model that's working in other places to help restore federal funding for DRBC and have a comprehensive plate of policies since there are so many programs
 - Want to start having these conversations more regularly in DC
- K. Klein: Will you be engaging other organizations in these discussions? Can you send us some info about that and how it's different than what CDRW is doing?
- B. Brown: Legislative body and providing that connection to the watershed with policy briefings and continuing to support development of the caucus and membership organizations within Congress
 - The funding for this is from the William Penn Foundation