

Urban Waters Federal Partnership Delaware River Location Call

October 7, 2020 at 2:00pm

Call Participants: Simeon Hahn, NOAA; Megan Mackey, EPA Region 3; Karen Crumlish, EPA Region3; Elizabeth Brown, Audubon; Frank McLaughlin, NJDEP; Kathy Klein, PDE; Emily Baumbach, PDE

- Emily Baumbach welcomed call participants and thanked everyone for joining another Urban Waters planning call for the Delaware River location and reviewed agenda items:
 1. Simeon to provide an update on the Port of Wilmington expansion as it applies to Urban Waters
 2. Webinar series on connecting youth to urban waterways
 3. 2021 Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit and the potential to cover Urban Waters at this event (talks, panels, etc.)
 4. Discuss creating an Urban Waters location workplan
 5. Partner roundtable discussion

1. Port of Wilmington Expansion Project

- Simeon Hahn: The Port of Wilmington expansion project poses impacts to traffic and environmental justice communities
 - The DuPont Edge Moor plant is where the port expansion is going to occur, and there are containment issues
 - Adjacent to the property is Fox Point State Park, which is the only access point for that community
 - There was a virtual public meeting last week and is now open for public comments with public comment period open until November 1
 - They are working with someone from University of Delaware working with one of the community groups on this
 - The community isn't in objection to the project, but they want to be involved in the development
 - Permitted offsets from a natural resources perspective
 - There are community assistance grants related to port expansion based on the priorities of the community
 - USACE, NOAA, DOI, and EPA are involved in this project, and Riverkeeper is interested in the project as well
 - Lots of issues related infrastructure, access, and transportation
 - Also has potential impacts on sea level rise and climate change
 - Project location is about a mile long and is moving forward pretty quickly
- Kathy Klein: Have other urban waters locations weighed in on these types of projects before?
- S. Hahn: Yes, there was a similar port project in Los Angeles relating to environmental justice and community input with the Urban Waters location there
 - One of the issues is that there's really not any permitting for environmental justice (EJ) right now, and the groups have to evaluate EJ even when it doesn't come under a permit
 - There has been reluctance to get involved with his type of work and not fight with the state or federal government, but we could we get engaged more in community input and addressing some of these concerns
- Megan Mackey: I've listened to a few of the presentations about the LA project, and can reach out to Abu at EPA HQ to see what role other UW locations have played related to port expansion and permitting

- K. Klein: It would be helpful if we had some idea of how we can get more involved, what's allowable, and what the parameters are and how we can add value to this
- M. Mackey: There are resources available that coalesce the projects from different UW locations since each of the locations is unique
- S. Hahn: The Delaware Estuary Benthic Inventory (DEBI) that includes mussel research and restoration work would be something worth reviewing from a technical perspective and other agencies
- K. Klein: So if there's an assessment that says habitat will be damaged, will funds be available?
- S. Hahn: Possibly through mitigation
 - There can be Coastal Zone funding through mitigation (mitigation through regulation with Army Corps of engineers permits for some resources)
 - The coastal zone reauthorization committee discusses how to do offsets
- K. Klein: Maybe there's an opportunity to get some funding for these projects,
- S. Hahn: The group involved in Fox Point is DCBAC
 - The group has had some reorganization and was fighting with the refineries
 - I will share information about an upcoming call
- Elizabeth Brown: If there a decision-making process or strategic planning on this project, and then to extend when funding becomes available to align to impact those particular projects

2. Urban Waters Upcoming Webinar Series

- E. Baumbach: PDE is moving forward with hosting a webinar series on behalf of UW for organizations across the Delaware River location to share their stories on educational programming that connects urban youth to their local waterways
 - Speakers have also been invited to discuss how COVID-19 has impacted programming and the modifications made to continue youth engagement, and share any challenges and best practices
 - This will be a series of three webinars that are scheduled to take place in November
 - Thanks again for everyone that provided us with some great organization contacts for this series
 - The webinar schedule includes:
 - **Monday, November 2nd 12:00 – 1:30pm**
 - John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum - Philadelphia, PA
 - Discovery Center - Philadelphia, PA
 - Brandywine River Shad Project
 - **Tuesday, November 10th 12:00 – 1:00pm**
 - UrbanPromise - Camden, NJ
 - Center for Aquatic Sciences at Adventure Aquarium - Camden, NJ
 - **Tuesday, November 17th 12:00 – 1:00pm**
 - Delaware Museum of Natural History - Wilmington, DE
 - Alliance for Watershed Education of the Delaware River
- Details for this upcoming webinar series will be posted in a short story I drafter in the fall issue of Estuary News
- We have three other PDE staff helping with this webinar series for logistics, IT, and communications
- Details will be posted in the next Urban Waters locations update email that goes out to all the location ambassadors

- I'll also see if I can get the series listed in an upcoming Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed next monthly newsletter update
- PDE's Communications Coordinator is going to make some posts on social media and send out a couple of email blasts for this
- We're also setting up some planning calls with each of the webinar presenters prior to each webinar
- Please get the word out about this webinar to your organizations and other colleagues as well and share the registration link: <http://www.delawareestuary.org/save-the-estuary/urban-waters/>

3. 2021 Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit and possibility for an Urban Waters Session

- E. Baumabch: PDE is having a virtual Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit from March 1st to the 3rd
 - We recently sent out a Save the Date and Call for Abstracts
 - This summit is usually a big in-person event with almost ~350 participants that takes place every two years in January in Cape May, NJ, but will be virtual this year due to COVID-19
 - We'd like to cover the UW Delaware River location in some capacity at this virtual summit, but haven't made any plans as of right now since we still have a team of staff planning the event.
 - We'd like to get some feedback from this workgroup on summit ideas
- K. Klein: We can't have the conversations and networking that normally goes on during the summit, and we usually have three concurrent tracks (education, science and research, and monitoring)
- S. Hahn: I think it's a good idea to include UW in this
 - The CDRW conference went pretty well and their sessions covered, planning, utilities, environmental justice, and urban issues as well
 - There were some specific topics that involved the urban areas at the CDRW conference, like the Wild and Scenic Rivers designation, environmental justice, unifying the areas across the Delaware River, there are a lot of urban projects and abstracts
 - Happy to help out with this at the summit for Urban Waters
- E. Baumbach: We could also call out specific talks and items in the agenda to highlight Urban Waters efforts
- M. Mackey: I know we previously discussed holding a youth summit, and we used to hold annual UW partners meetings in the past
 - There is an opportunity to reengage the partners that this partnership is still going on
 - The annual partner meeting at Villanova a few years ago had presentations on what current agencies were doing and goals of the partnership
 - We could think about if there are specific goals we want to work towards an use the summit to further or gather information on
 - We could provide a high-level outline of the work and use the audience to get input
- K. Klein: Need to this about what role can we play to foster opportunities and mentoring programs for young people to pursue jobs in the environmental field
 - The UW partnership provides the opportunity for us to work together to develop a program collectively and we can go out and get some major funding
- E. Baumbach: There are some great examples of youth mentorship programs that we could look at as examples to hold something for the four cities, like the Delaware Green Jobs Program through the University of Delaware and PowerCorps in Camden and Philadelphia

- M. Mackey: Maryland Coastal Bays program has a youth program that works to promote diversity and the program is nationally known to engage youth through internship opportunities with the Estuary Program
 - Maryland Coastal Bays would be a great speaker on this topic at the Summit
- S. Hahn: If we develop a new workplan with specific projects, then we can know if we are on target
 - Need to work on building more trust with communities in this region
- E. Brown: I like the idea of having a track that highlights UW projects and planting some seeds for what are examples of successful programs to build careers
 - We have a nationwide initiative at Audubon that focuses on elevating careers and looking at conservation from a number of different dimensions
- K. Klein: I was in a meeting with the William Penn Foundation about organizations wanting to do more with environmental justice and DEI, but it's hard to find funding to build these kinds of programs and to train staff
 - Could look for foundations in the country that are funding this type of work
- S. Hahn: I was involved with the Elizabeth River project when they conducted a port expansion and they established the Elizabeth River Trust
 - There's been discussion in the Delaware on establishing a trust for a long time now
 - Millions of dollars have gone to the brownfields program, and there's other lists of potential funding sources like NFWF, etc.
- M. Mackey: Everyone always wants to see more projects take place, but you need the funding behind it to make it happen
 - If we find some concrete examples and the way that funding has worked, we then have a schematic to go to

4. Discuss Urban Waters Workplan for Delaware River Location

- E. Baumbach: This creation of a new workplan for this UW location has come up on a few of our monthly calls.
 - I know that most of the other UW locations have workplans to help guide their work and this seems to be something that we want for this location
 - Don't think we need something too lengthy, but a brief document to help outline some of our goals would be helpful and be able to prioritize for future activities and have a set list to refer to track progress
- S. Hahn: Anacostia is working on updating their workplan
- E. Baumbach: I'll take a look at some of the other locations workplans
 - I'll go through our previous call notes and pull out the topics we've been discussing, as well as the survey feedback we reviewed from the other partners involved in this program to tee up a list of potential ideas teed up for our next monthly call.
- M. Mackey: Some past documents had reference to the communities of practice and how we wanted to be organized
 - There were some topics that bubbled to the top in our content analysis
- E. Brown: I attended the last public meeting for the Lower Darby Creek super fund site and had the chance to connect with Josh Barber who's leading the cleanup effort and works with the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge
 - There's an upcoming aquatic risk assessment and plan to improve signage at the refuge for fishing and swimming advisories

- I'm happy to continue keeping this group updated on this
- There was also an USACE flood feasibility study and they provided an update on where that stands in terms of community and conservation issues and addressing flooding
- S. Hahn: Delaware Sea Grant period is open for economic development for folks in environmental justice areas
 - There's a signage effort that we've been coordinating with Delaware Nature Society on the Brandywine
- M. Mackey: Josh Barber assisted PDE in the development of the revised CCMP through workshops and meetings and has also provided interesting living shoreline approaches in PDE's Summit abstracts
 - There's a great wealth of science and data in the Upper Darby Creek Watershed