

Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) Greater Philadelphia Area/ Delaware River Watershed Planning Call

Wednesday May 6, 2020, 11:00AM

Call Participants: Emily Baumbach, PDE; Simeon Hahn, NOAA; Krista Heinlen, Davey Institute; Kathy Klein, PDE; Megan Mackey, EPAR3; Samantha Rachko, EPAR3; Kaitlin Tucker, PDE

1. Welcome & Introductions

- Kathy Klein: The Urban Waters Federal Partnership Ambassador role is a great opportunity for PDE and ties into many Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) priorities.
 - Grant awarding effective on October 1, 2019
 - PDE doesn't use the National Estuary Program (NEP) grant until January
 - The funding wasn't enough to hire a fulltime staff member, so PDE wanted to choose someone internally to fill the Ambassador role
 - Emily Baumbach at PDE has experience with facilitating and coordinating the CCMP revision and has been involved in environmental justice (EJ) and diversity and inclusion efforts at PDE and will serve as the Ambassador
 - Kathy and Emily attended an Urban Waters meeting at EPA Region 2 in NYC in February 2019 and Emily has been participating on the national Urban Waters calls
 - PDE will be funded for the next fiscal year for the Ambassador as well

2. Reflect on Previous Accomplishments

- Krista Heinlen provided information on the **Wilderness Inquiry Canoemobile project**:
 - Project took place for four seasons with the last season abbreviated since we lost a chunk of funding
 - The partner network was still interested and Wilderness Inquiry helped out to make the last season happen
 - This was a successful educational outreach program and folks with the National Park Service who put it together were the strongest partner for this project
 - Activated networks with the schools (safety boats, permission slips, coordinating with teachers, etc.)
 - Project got a lot of urban youth on the water for the first time and also provided some land-based activities at the same time
 - Project needed to be more self-sufficient and working more with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and Wilmington Parks and Recreation
 - Need to learn how local boat programs are able to facilitate at a smaller scale and put guides in the boat that have similar past experiences that the participants have

- Great way to engage children in ecological programs or boat building and a good outlet for educational outreach and connecting to nonprofits as well as the Urban Waters Federal Partnership agencies
- Simeon Hahn provided updates on the **Regional Brownfields Community of Practice:**
 - In the early stages, NOAA was interested on focusing on specific projects in specific cities versus a more regional approach
 - The group later reached consensus to focus efforts on the four cities in the Urban Waters Federal Partnership
 - The workgroup has been successful and used to meet quarterly and rotate around the cities
 - Last meeting was about a year ago and was very well attended
 - Group received awards from EPA for brownfields and funding to support projects through grants
 - The group has always focused on triple bottom line (incorporating environmental justice, economic and social aspects, value on habitat and restoration, and human value in terms of recreation)
 - Also serves on the national committee and works on some other urban waters locations (Baltimore, Anacostia Watershed)
 - There are some connections right now to Chester, but more work is getting done at the Camden and Philadelphia locations
 - There are also some project locations in Claymont, DE
 - Strong partner co-lead is Frank McLaughlin from NJDEP
 - The workgroup receives lots of nonprofit input and PDE restoration staff have been involved (mussel restoration efforts)
- K. Heinlen: The workgroup and the work of Simeon and Frank have helped brownfields projects to be a unique aspect at this Urban Waters location
 - It's also one of the only locations that has NOAA as such an active federal partner
- S. Hahn: One thing the Partnership could help with is to capture the accomplishments through outreach and education of brownfields work
- M. Mackey: The workgroup serves a great purpose in the location and folks continued to participate and wanted to increase the frequency of meetings again
 - The partnership could pull more meeting together and help to facilitate that
- M. Mackey provided updates on the **Annual All Partners Meeting:**
 - There were two all partner meetings that were both very well attended
 - Meetings took place at Drexel Academy of Natural Sciences and Villanova University
 - There was no meeting last year since it's a huge undertaking and requires lots of planning
 - The group focused on smaller topical meetings after the two large annual partner meetings
 - The in-person meetings were valuable, so it might be helpful to revisit the idea of holding these again in the future
- K. Heinlen: There was another partner meeting at the Independence Seaport Museum

- Interest in engagement was rising at that time and we were able to bring some really good regional representation with great stories and project examples to the meeting
- Kaitlin Tucker provided information on the **Climate Outreach Roundtable**:
 - Started back in 2010 or 2011 for PDE as a roundtable group to focus on climate outreach and bring together folks across the Delaware Estuary Region to discuss climate change and future impacts
 - Group was initially convened to get a sense of where the gaps were that could be filled
 - Another Climate Outreach Roundtable event was for Urban Waters, with Sari Rothrock of PDE and Sarah Low of the Forest Service leading the effort
 - Kaitlin started at PDE in 2016 planning the Climate Outreach Roundtable with Krista and had meetings annually (was previously twice a year)
 - Meetings were relatively well attended with 15 people on average
 - One meeting was combined with (CUSP?) and had about 40 attendees
 - It was challenging each year since we rotated meeting locations across the three states and there's difficulty for some partners to travel across state lines and long distances
 - We tried to have a virtual option with GoToMeeting and had high attendance, but it was hard to encourage networking on a virtual platform
 - Meeting format included one or two presentations at the beginning followed by a roundtable style report out section with questions for attendees
 - The last roundtable took place in May 2019
- K. Heinlen: The Climate Outreach Roundtable was one of the communities of practice with great engagement, but lots of the same people were returning to the meetings

3. Urban Waters Action Team

11:25 – 11:40

- S. Hahn: We could look into expanding the group to other federal leads, including the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Interior, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and folks involved with transportation and port services
 - Mike Slattery with US Fish and Wildlife Service and involved with the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act funding would be a good contact too
 - Flavia Rutkosky also with US Fish and Wildlife Service has been very involved with the Brownfields Community of Practice for a long time
- M. Mackey: We've lost a bit of National Park Service Engagement over the years
- S. Hahn: Other partners that could be more involved are the Delaware River City Corporation, Riverfront North, groups in Camden, City of Wilmington, and some other NGOs in Wilmington
- S. Hahn: The purpose of the Partnership is to help the federal agencies coordinate with the states and community groups, but maybe it should be focused on doing better federal coordination and expand our federal team

- There was a team of people at one time from the National Park Service, US Forest Service, NOAA, and EPA that tried to do some coordination and organize different events like the annual meeting and be responsive to requests and reporting
- M. Mackey: We used to have monthly calls among the co-leads to talk about Urban Waters futures
 - We could put out a request to all the federal partners in the location to see who would be interested in participating and this might turn into an action team
- K. Tucker: If you are going to be running programs across the watershed, you might want to have workgroup leads for different projects and cities on the action team in addition to federal partners
- S. Hahn: Lots of work is led by partner agencies already since they are the ones conducting the on the ground projects and engaging with the public while the federal agencies help them to navigate
 - We've always let the partner organizations and community groups set the priorities and then help them reach their goals
- K. Klein: Through this effort, we can help facilitate the sharing of information across different areas
 - Groups in Philadelphia and Camden are working together on different projects, but they are probably not working with Wilmington and Chester as much, so there is a tech transfer opportunity here

4. Review Potential Future Project Ideas

11:40 – 11:55

- S. Hahn: There are some great ideas on this list, and PDE is a lead on activities like citizen science and engagement
 - Urban Waters could benefit from some more outreach and tech transfer across the different cities
 - Like the idea of helping to coordinate among the watershed groups and highlight the work being done, particularly related to youth engagement
- K. Klein: We could facilitate the sharing of stories on successes and challenges of working with youth across the location
 - There might be some opportunities to fund some of these ideas, so we can start identifying what we would need funding for
- E. Baumbach: We could provide examples of how each of the cities are engaging with their youth
 - We are working with Bartram's Garden right now in Philadelphia already
- M. Mackey: I really like the idea of bringing folks together on how they work with youth (e.g., Wilderness Inquiry)
 - We always talk about the Canoemobile project and how it was a great idea, but organizations across other cities also have boat building activities and ways to get youth out on the water

- With the boat house at Bartram's Garden already, once the hatchery project picks up, there will be even more opportunities to engage with youth at that location
- K. Klein: The William Penn Foundation might be interested in funding something like this as well
- S. Hahn: One idea is having a youth summit with presenters and attendees from the four cities
 - I do some basketball coaching and youth engagement, and had an idea for a while now to make connections with different urban areas and also cover some of the social issues groups face
 - In Camden, the Kroc Center is a good location for events
- S. Hahn: Like the idea of reconnecting youth to nature and to Urban Waters, and could include boating, fishing, kayaking, etc.
- M. Mackey: Need to keep in mind the environmental justice piece for appropriate communication and making sure we are reaching out to people effectively and what they're availability looks like
- M. Mackey: One of the biggest accomplishments and takeaways from this location is the ability to get kids in Camden out on the water
 - For 22 years, there was a moratorium on Camden schools since there was an incident a long time ago
- S. Hahn: If we move forward on this, we will want to engage the people that are the community leaders and have a bottom-up approach
 - Did a project with Frank on brownfield resiliency that covered how local citizens can be paid to help organize this type of work
 - Would be great if we have a way to reimburse people for their time
- K. Heinlen: Youth engagement is going to look different in the foreseeable future with COVID, so we will need to look at ways that we can tap into other means of engagement
 - Seasonal work is being cut back and cleanups and other events are being cancelled
 - These are things our location has never had to worry about before
- M. Mackey: There will be energy behind folks now more than ever wanting to safely get kids outside to still be able to engage in outdoor activities since there most likely won't be any summer camps or pools open
- K. Klein: If we want to start engaging other federal partners that were involved in the past, we could hold some calls or zoom meetings with organizations in the cities that lead youth on the water efforts
- M. Mackey: The Delaware River Basin federal interagency team meets monthly to talk about the docket, so I can bring this up during the next meeting to see what federal agencies want to get involved
- Call participants agreed to convene for another call in June
- Emily Baumbach will send out a Doodle and follow up items