

Delaware River Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) Call Notes

Thursday, July 23rd at 10:30 – 11:30a.m.

Participants: Emily Baumbach, PDE; Kathy Klein, PDE; Simeon Hahn, NOAA; Flavia Rutkosky, USFWS

Overview of Urban Bird Treaty Program

- Emily Baumbach welcomed call participants and thanked everyone for joining another Urban Waters call.
 - Krista Heinlen may join the call later since she is on a deadline and Megan Mackey might be on vacation.
- E. Baumbach: We're happy to have Flavia Rutkosky joining the call today.
- E. Baumbach: Before we get into the call agenda, Kathy gave me a brief overview of the Urban Bird Treaty Program and Flavia's interest in doing some work in Wilmington, DE on this.
 - Flavia shared the Urban Bird Treaty Guidebook and we can add the guidebook to the call resources on the Urban Waters page on the PDE website.
- Flavia Rutkosky: There is an Urban Bird Treaty Program in Philadelphia that started back in the 1990s.
 - I've been thinking about trying to create a coalition to see if there is interest in this program in Wilmington, DE since it's located down the river from Philadelphia.
 - It would be great to have some migratory bird stopover areas in Wilmington and find a way to get the community involved.
 - The current fish and wildlife director has taken urban resource conservation as a signature program to reflect current leadership priorities.
 - Keith Russell is the Program Manager for Urban Conservation with Audubon Pennsylvania at the Discovery Center in Philadelphia and was instrumental in the development the Urban Bird Treaty Program in Philadelphia.
 - Another good contact is Jim White with Delaware Nature Society with a background in ornithology and herpetology, is part of the Delaware Native Plant Commission, and brings lots of expertise and contacts with him.
- Simeon Hahn: There are some good opportunities tied to birding and bird habitat in Wilmington through the DuPont Environmental Education Center (DEEC), Brandywine Park, Delaware State Parks, Brandywine Zoo
 - There might also be some opportunities associated with the Brandywine shad restoration project.
 - Fox Point Park also has lots of opportunities for events and outreach as well.
- K. Klein: The Department of Public Works in Wilmington has a staff arborist.
- F. Rutkosky: There are some important bird areas for Audubon for federal recognition in the area.
- S. Hahn: I know that somewhere in Wilmington there used to be a peregrine falcon camera.
- F. Rutkosky: One of the programs we tried to roll into the Urban Bird Treaty Program work is the Wilmington Lights Out program (program to raise awareness of the problems that lights pose for birds in an urban center through Delmarva Ornithological Society in Wilmington).
 - I will look into this more to see if it is still active and who the contacts are.
 - I had previously printed out a list of the buildings that were part of the program.

- F. Rutkosky: The Delaware Center for Horticulture is another organization that we want to get more involved with as well.
- F. Rutkosky: I can reach out to these contacts and then it would be nice if the Urban Waters Program could help to convene a conversation about the Urban Bird Treaty Program in Wilmington, DE.
- K. Klein: If we're looking at this as being a project for the Urban Waters Partnership, we want to check in with Megan and Krista too.
- S. Hahn: We used to have a natural resources and restoration community of practice that never really took off covering brownfields, natural resources materials, and monitoring and education with the public.
 - We haven't been doing too much on this and this program would fit in well.
 - We used to develop work plans for this program as well in the past.
 - We could try to get a group of partners together that the feds will try to support.
 - This all falls under the Urban Waters umbrella well with outreach, education and habitat restoration for the Urban Bird Treaty Program.
- F. Rutkosky: It illustrates collaboration between the federal agencies and brings experts together to the partnership as well as the opportunity to work with the community.
- S. Hahn: It would be great to have a presentation from Philadelphia on the current program there.
- F. Rutkosky: Maybe we could get Keith to give a presentation on his work.
- E. Baumbach: We could even have someone give a presentation on an upcoming PDE webinar series and give an overview of Urban Waters and how we want to look to expand the Urban Bird Treaty program to Wilmington, DE.
- S. Hahn: Could also find a way to link this work back to the Delaware River and the importance of Red Knots and other shorebirds.
- S. Hahn: Could also tie into work at Phoenix Park and Harrison Landfill with some of their planning issues related to bald eagles and restoration efforts.
 - Frank might be able to talk about some of this information, including eagles nests in Camden, landfill at the mouth of the Cooper River, and Kroc Center programming and other community programming.

Review Urban Waters Page on PDE website, ask for feedback on additional contents/resources to have on webpage

- E. Baumbach: The Urban Waters webpage on PDE website is now live with some background information, contacts, and meeting resources.
 - There will also be some brief information about Urban Waters with a link to the webpage in the next issue of Estuary News coming out in the next few weeks.
 - There will be an opportunity in the future to write some stories related to Urban Waters in upcoming issues as well.
 - We could reach out to some federal partners for them to report out on work that they're currently doing – perhaps for the fall newsletter
 - You can access the website here: www.delawareestuary.org/save-the-estuary/urban-waters/
 - This is just a starting point for the website, and we'd like to see this turn into more of a hub for the work going on at this location with links and resources.

- If anyone on the call has information and resources they want to see on this PDE webpage, we can add that information to this page (e.g., brownfields resources, information about the Urban Bird Treaty program).
- S. Hahn: Krista used to put out emails periodically with information about the Urban Waters location and grant information.
 - Marine Debris grants for NOAA are open right now.
 - Some projects are oriented towards fishing gear and hardened concrete in Camden for living shoreline projects.
 - Grant opportunities could be posted on the Urban Waters webpage as well.
- K. Klein: The Harlem River Watershed works with youth and collects trash that kids in the community can then analyze the types of trash that are being collected and help to identify potential sources of trash from upstream.
 - They found that the largest volume of trash was actually Styrofoam when they thought it would most likely be water bottles.
 - This type of program would be cool for us to do.
- S. Hahn: They are conducting similar source tracking programs along the Anacostia River to research impacts of marine debris on habitat.
 - Looking at how tires affect wetland plants, the effects of aluminum cans and plastic bags on the bottoms of streams, and effects of marine debris on birds and turtles.
- S. Hahn: There are some reoccurring grants with NOAA and NFWF and the EPA Brownfields grants.
 - It would be interesting to see how many grants we've actually received since the UWFP formed and highlight some successful applicants of projects.
- F. Rutkosky: The Urban Bird Treaty program has information about funding opportunities as well.

Review updated contact list for October webinar on urban youth and connecting to nature/waterways (see attachment 'Contacts for Urban Youth & Waterways Webinar July2020')

- E. Baumbach: We wanted to give everyone a final review of this list of contacts for the upcoming webinar we are planning for the fall.
 - Again, our plan is to poll some key partners in this region to gauge interest in participating in a virtual meeting that focuses on youth and their connection to urban waterways.
 - We will most likely work on the agenda and more specific webinar topics based on what organizations are interested in presenting and see if some themes become apparent.
 - We're thinking this will most likely take place sometime in October of this year.
- K. Klein: It would be great if we could create an event at some point where there's some synergy so it gets attention to build new programs.
 - We could have activities taking place across the different cities at this location and have a kids outdoors day or exchange day where kids from one city get to go visit another city to experience a different part of the watershed.
 - We could find funding to facilitate an exchange program for kids to go to Camden from Philadelphia, etc.
 - We could work on developing these kinds of connections.
- S. Hahn: I've been pretty involved with youth basketball engagement in a few cities, and we want to bring in some other types of programming in the future.

Identify Action Team workgroup invitees and determine date for initial meeting

- E. Baumbach: As discussed on the last two calls, we think it would be helpful to have some sort of Steering Group with federal representatives and some city contacts moving forward with this Urban Waters location.
 - This group could help oversee projects and provide feedback in addition to the federal leads.
 - On the last two calls we have had as well as the call today, we discussed some really great future project ideas, and I've been capturing all of that information in the meeting minutes.
 - As we get others more involved in the Urban Waters location again, we can revisit these project ideas and have some more discussions.
- Additional contacts call participants recommended for a future Urban Waters Steering Group:
 - Debra Martin – Preservation Planner for the city of Wilmington and has been involved in Urban Bird Treaty program workbook development (Flavia can ask who else she recommends)
 - Riverfront North
 - Chris Anderson - PWD
 - City of Wilmington – Alison Quimby
 - Philly Parks and Recs – Jason Mifflin – Deputy Stewardship Directory,
 - City contacts from all cities - Wilmington, Philadelphia, Chester, Camden
- K. Klein: The functions that we can play are tech transfer and work on getting funding for projects with the help of partners to identify some initiatives.
- F. Rutkosky: What type of specific expertise or interest are you looking for to invite contacts for the team?
- E. Baumbach: We haven't picked specific topical areas of expertise yet since this group has only had a few calls and we are still brainstorming ideas.
 - We will most likely invite people to this broader team for increased involvement once we have a few different projects mapped out and we can then invite folks based on their interest and background to provide their expertise and input on specific projects and programs.
 - We just wanted to start getting a list of some contacts as a starting point to keep on file as we move forward.
- S. Hahn: In the past, the ambassador provided potential projects where we need some federal assistance and see what resources are available for them to point them in the right direction.
 - This is one of the functions of the ambassador, and this group is a good start.
- S. Hahn: One of the projects we are already kicking off with the youth webinar already has a lot of overlap with outreach and sharing project information already.

Discuss sending survey out to Delaware River Urban Waters listserv to seek input on how the Urban Waters Partnership can add value to this location

- E. Baumbach: We wanted to discuss sending a survey out to the Delaware River Urban Waters listserv to seek input on how the Urban Waters Partnership can add value to this location.
 - This can help us to evaluate how we can support and fill some gaps for partners in this region.
 - We will distribute a brief survey via Google Form and provide a brief overview of Urban Waters in the email with the survey link.

- Kathy and I talked about this idea of sending out a brief survey out to contacts a few weeks ago.
- Krista sent out emails back when she was serving as the ambassador to location contacts.
 - We can we could use that list as a starting point and utilize some of our other lists at PDE (Comprehensive Conservation & Management Plan (CCMP) tracking database and Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed contact database).
- We will work on distributing this survey and have some results to review for the next Urban Waters call.
- S. Hahn: We appreciate what PDE is doing for the Urban Waters location here.
- K. Klein: We are happy to have this opportunity since it complements so much of what PDE is already doing so well.