

URBANWATERS

FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

Restoring Urban Waters, Revitalizing Communities

Delaware River Watershed (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Camden, New Jersey; Chester, Pennsylvania; and Wilmington, Delaware)



Ambassador

Krista Heinlen (The Davey Institute/USDA Forest Service)

(215) 988-1635

Krista.Heinlen@davey.com

Co-Leads

Sarah Low (USDA Forest Service)

sclow@fs.fed.us

Simeon Hahn, (NOAA)

Simeon.Hahn@noaa.gov

Overall Assessment of the Partnership Since the Beginning

The Delaware River Watershed joined the Urban Waters Partnership as a designated location in 2012, with the goal of fostering the guiding principles of this collaborative effort in the urban communities of Camden, New Jersey, Philadelphia and Chester, Pennsylvania, and Wilmington, Delaware. This has provided a thriving and informed network of stakeholders and residents across the region who are invested in the watershed both upstream and down, and has highlighted efforts both large and small for their impact on water quality and community resilience.

Members of the Partnership

The Delaware River Watershed Partnership includes more than 400 federal, state, and municipal agencies, community organizations, non-profits, regional academic institutions, environmental education centers, and private and business entities. Each member brings a diverse set of perspectives, interest areas, needs, and resources to the network. The commitment of all partner organizations and individuals is voluntary, with involvement structured to be flexible based on various geographies, concentrations, priorities, and time frame.

List of Partners

Federal Government

- U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Park Service
- U.S Army Corps of Engineers
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Emergency Management Administration
- U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Department of the Interior
- Department of Justice
- National Archives and Records Administration
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Small Business Administration
- U.S Coast Guard
- U.S. Commercial Service (Department of Commerce)
- U.S Geological Survey
- Strong Cities, Strong Communities

- Federal Interagency Executive Board

State Government

- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- Delaware Department of Transportation

Local Government

Pennsylvania

- City of Philadelphia
- Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp.
- Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Department
- Philadelphia Water Department
- Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- Philadelphia Mayor's Office of

Sustainability

- Philadelphia Center City District
- City of Chester
- Chester Planning Department
- Chester Parks & Recreation Department
- Chester Economic Development Authority
- Chester Shade Tree Commission
- Chester Strong Cities, Strong Communities
- Bucks County Conservation District
- Bucks County Planning Commission
- Delaware County Planning Commission
- Delaware County Conservation District
- Montgomery County Conservation District
- Montgomery County Planning Commission

New Jersey

- City of Camden
- Camden County
- Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority
- Gloucester County Planning Division
- Gloucester County Public Works

Delaware

- City of Wilmington
- Wilmington Department of Public Works
- Wilmington Department of Parks & Recreation
- Wilmington Tree Commission
- WILMAPCO

Multi-State / Regional

- Delaware River Basin Commission
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Business

- AKRF Inc.
- Asadi Enterprises, Inc.
- Azavea Inc.
- Biohabitats, Inc.
- E4 Planning and Engineering
- Greening Lea / West Philly Coalition for Neighborhood Schools
- Masley Enterprises Inc. / Military Gloves
- MRN Environmental
- Venable LLP

University

Pennsylvania

- Academy of Natural Sciences
- Drexel University
- Franklin Institute - Climate & Urban Systems Partnership
- Penn State University
- Philadelphia University
- Temple University
- University of Pennsylvania
- Villanova University
- Widener University

New Jersey

- New Jersey Institute of Technology – Technical Assistance to Brownfields
- Rutgers University (Camden)

Delaware

- Delaware State University
- University of Delaware
- Wilmington University

Nongovernmental Organizations

- American Rivers
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Audubon
- Beaver Valley Conservancy
- Brandywine Conservancy
- Center for Environmental Transformation
- Center in the Park
- Chester Environmental Partnership
- City Parks Association of Philadelphia
- Clean Air Council
- Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed
- Cooper's Ferry Partnership
- Delaware Center for Horticulture
- Delaware Greenways
- Delaware Nature Society
- Delaware River City Corporation
- Delaware River Waterfront Corporation
- Delaware Riverkeeper Network
- DE Sea Grant
- East Coast Greenway
- Eastern Delco Stormwater Collaborative
- Fairmount Park Conservancy
- Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center
- Friends of Chester Arthur Elementary School
- Friends of Heinz Refuge
- GreenTreks
- Independence Seaport Museum
- Kalmar Nyckel Foundation
- Let's Go Outdoors
- Lower Merion Conservancy
- Manayunk Development Corporation (Destination Schuylkill)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Parks Conservation Association
- National Wildlife Federation
- Natural Lands Trust
- New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences
- New Jersey Conservation Foundation
- New Jersey Future
- New Jersey Tree Foundation
- Old Brandywine Village
- Open Space Institute
- Outward Bound, Philadelphia Center
- Parkside Business and Community in Partnership (Camden)
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary
- PA Sea Grant
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council
- Penn Future
- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
- Pennsylvania Humanities Council
- Pennsylvania Resources Council
- Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education
- Schuylkill River Development Corporation (SRDC)
- Schuylkill River Heritage Area
- Sustainable Business Network (SBN)
- Stroud Water Research Center
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Trust for Public Land
- Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Partnership
- Urban Blazers
- Urban Promise-Urban Trekkers
- Urban Waters Learning Network

- William Penn Foundation
- Wilmington Rowing Center
- Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association
- YMCA of Burlington and Camden Counties
- 10,000 Friends

Nature of the Partnership

The Delaware River Watershed Partnership was established in a region filled with organizations involved in the regional management, oversight, ecological health, and care of one of the largest working rivers along the Eastern Seaboard. These stakeholders include multiple federal, state, and municipal agency regulators charged with administering the substantial benefits derived from drinking water, agricultural, ecological, and industrial use. They also include numerous local environmental stewardship, advocacy, and research institutions, all of which play a vital role in keeping portions of the watershed healthy and productive for people, plants, marine life, and wildlife.

With these dynamics in mind, the partnership set out to connect with as many stakeholders as possible through a series of listening sessions in each of the four focus communities to establish the most pressing issues and overarching themes within the watershed. The following focus areas were identified from these meetings: Water Quality and Quantity, River Protection and Restoration, Climate Resilience, Brownfields Revitalization, and Trails, Parks, and Open Spaces.



Within this framework, Communities of Practice (CoP) were developed around each focus area, allowing partner members to collaborate effectively around common areas of work, concern, and impact. Commonly-recognized themes that also emerged across all areas included: Education and Outreach, Community and Economic Development, Environmental Justice, and Youth Engagement. Ideas and projects focused on these themes continue to be the strength and

foundation of the partnership. Approximately twice a month, newsletter emails are distributed partnership-wide from the Ambassador to announce opportunities, highlight work throughout each community, and keep partners up-to-date on developments concerning the watershed. The goal of this approach is to foster an organically-connected network, where the ebb and flow of questions, projects, people, and resources can inform and assist development, allow for the sharing of best practices, and provide a sustainable cohesion that allows the partners to continue doing what they do best with support from the broader partnership.

Organizations for Planning and Action

Monthly Federal Team Meetings The Ambassador, federal co-leads, and agency liaisons meet monthly to touch base, report on new and ongoing activities, and advise on resource availability. These meetings have greatly enhanced the level of understanding and camaraderie among these interworking agencies in the region.

Annual All-Partners Meeting With the support of local partners (offering space/sponsoring supplies and refreshments), the partnership has come together during each of the last three years for an annual meeting. Drawing attendees from all four focus communities and across the spectrum of organizations involved, the annual meeting offers the chance for the partners to network while hearing from other stakeholders (symposium-style) about current initiatives, challenges, and conditions of the Delaware River region wide. This allows the partnership to reinforce its collaborative capacities while acknowledging (and addressing) the fluid nature of partner interests and priorities. It also provides an opportunity for partner organizations to hear from community members and individuals impacted by activities in the watershed.

Communities of Practice These groups continue to form a basis for partnership structure, and have adjusted their level of engagement and participation based on the evolving needs and resources of those involved. Essentially self-propelled, they remain flexible in their ability to provide a forum for the themes and organizations active within them. In some cases, shaping the CoP around existing efforts has benefited the partnership. For example, the Climate Resilience Team has essentially been adopted by the pre-existing Climate Roundtable (held bi-annually with the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary), making more efficient use of a structure already in place rather than paralleling this effort.

Major Actions Since the Beginning of the Partnership

Canoemobile:

- Years active: 4
- Cities involved: 4
- School-age children engaged: 5,000+
- Horizons expanded: Countless

Phoenix Park:

- Brownfield acres reformed: 5.3
- Cubic yards of contaminated concrete removed: 500+
- Trees planted: 68 (and counting!)
- Restored riverfront access: Priceless

All-Partners Meeting:

- Years convened: 3
- Cities involved: 4
- Partners engaged: 300+
- Opportunities recognized: Limitless

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grants

- NEST (Neighborhood Environmental Stewardship) (PA)
- National Audubon Society, Inc., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, Student Conservation Association, Outward Bound Philadelphia, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department
- Greenway Construction Along the Schuylkill River (PA)- Schuylkill River Development Corporation
- Tree Philly (PA)- Fairmount Park Conservancy
- Saddler's Woods Riparian Habitat Restoration (NJ)- Saddlers Woods Conservation Association

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Urban Waters Small Grants

- Villanova University Roof Shelter/Stormwater Management Project (PA)
- Temple University Center for Sustainable Communities GSI Plan (PA)
- Schuylkill River Development Corporation "Greenway Systems" Project (PA)
- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Chester Green Space Training Sessions (PA)
- Clean Air Council/Southbridge Community GI Plan (DE)

- Wilderness Inquiry, Inc./Canoemobile (PA/NJ/DE)

Additional Partner Projects Ongoing and Underway

- Mantua Greenway (HUD Choice Neighborhood green space initiative)
- South Wilmington Wetlands Project
- U.S. Geological Survey Watershed Ecosystem Services Study
- Watershed Education and Outreach in Partnership with CUSP (Climate & Urban Systems Partnership)
- 2015 video highlighting the partnership: [The Power Of Partnership: Urban Waters and the Delaware River](#)

Major Actions Planned for the Future

- Source Water Protection Plans: Collaboration with EPA and William Penn Foundation
- Self-Generated Canoemobile: Efforts to use local vessels and train local youth through local boat-building and safety programs
- Urban and Community Gardens: Strengthening local coalitions between neighborhoods and the City of Philadelphia
- Philadelphia Zoo Community Corridors: Expanding the reach of the zoo's ecological and educational programming to the neighborhoods between their space and the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge

Impacts and Challenges

The partnership is an important vehicle for increasing awareness of efforts, resources, and investments in the watershed region wide. It also facilitates efforts to better understand the roles and capacities of partner organizations, and to better appreciate and respect the institutional knowledge contained within communities, their residents, and watershed stakeholders. Bringing the various partners and stakeholders together to share knowledge and identify needs has allowed the partnership to foster trust, address gaps within planning processes, and more effectively leverage resources. It has also provided opportunities for people to reconnect to and appreciate this waterway with a greater sense of stewardship that will act as an important tool for the future as both the urban and climate landscapes continue to change. The partnership will continue to strive for these outcomes while navigating the diversity of agency participation, capacity, and expectations.