

Urban Water Partnership Meeting

Caño Martín Peña, San Juan, PR

April 7, 2016

Meeting Notes

I. Participants

Refer to Attachment 1 for list of participants.

II. Welcoming remarks

Ingrid Vila, Urban Water Ambassador (UWA) and Judith Enck, Region 2 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator offered welcoming remarks to meeting participants.

III. Urban Water Progress

a. Enlace

- i. Lyvia Rodríguez, Executive Director for Proyecto Enlace (Enlace), presented on the progress of issues being addressed in the Caño Martín Peña. She started by highlighting progress on the Feasibility Study being developed with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and that will allow dredging related planning and design work to continue. Great progress has been made regarding this study which should be made final and approved by the USACE in the upcoming months.

She also informed on efforts to prevent Zika virus propagation in the communities. Community participants and Enlace, with support from Health Pro-Med, a 330 Health Center, are offering orientation programs to residents and will be distributing materials and a magnet with reminders on how to avoid mosquito breeding areas and how to protect from mosquito bites.

Lyvia Rodríguez also highlighted the UN Habitat Award was recently conferred to the Caño Martín Peña Public Land Trust. The award will be given in Ecuador in October 2016. The community will also be awarded a National Public Health Award on work related to health awareness.

Enlace has also continued the Environmental Awareness Program which includes initiatives such as urban farming in school premises, young scientists initiative, community theater productions, developing a community newspaper and coloring book, anti-bullying/anti-violence programs, among others.

She also informed on progress on the Rexach Siphon project in terms of having identified funding through the Municipality of San Juan, to secure housing relocations needed (\$1 million).

- ii. Carlos Muñiz, from Enlace, provided an update on the Urban Water Grant for the Buena Vista Santurce, Storm Sewer Planning Project (EPA Urban Waters Small Grant No. 96283801)

Scope of work: Enlace is proposing the design of a conceptual plan for a new storm water drainage system with the active participation and involvement of the community that includes recommendations and cost estimates, and that incorporates results from several environmental analysis. The community is part of the “Caño Martín Peña” Special Planning District. Project development requires performing the following tasks: (1) Development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), (2) Development of a sub-soil exploration program for geotechnical recommendations, (3) Preparation of a citizen participation program, (4) Analysis of “green” storm water management alternatives, (5) Soil sampling and testing program for pollutants, (6) Water quality sampling program, (7) Analysis and evaluation of existing storm sewer system conditions, (8) Analysis of three storm system alternatives including the preparation of cost estimates, (9) Preparation of final report and conceptual design for recommended storm sewer system alternative.

Status: The QAPP has been completed and they are now moving to soil and geotechnical studies.

- iii. María Rodríguez from Enlace presented on the progress and results on various funding opportunities. Among these she informed that Puerto Rico unfortunately was not selected as a recipient of the National Disaster Resiliency competition held by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Nonetheless, a proposal was presented to HUD with the Municipality of San Juan for a Promise Zone Designation. Enlace will also be working on developing a Tiger Grant application for 2017.

b. **San Juan Bay Estuary Program**

Javier Laureano presented various initiatives being developed by the San Juan Bay Estuary Program for the benefit of the Caño Martín Peña communities. Among these: interactive music concerts in schools, launching of the San Juan Bay Estuary Program visitor’s center with an exhibition of the Caño Martín Peña, and the Caño Martín Peña oral history project.

Javier Laureano also presented future projects and plans which include an inventory for climate change adaptation, and green infrastructure. The presentation is included as Attachment 2.

c. **Office of Research and Development.**

Evelyn Huertas along with researchers from the Office of Research and Development (ORD) presented results on an isotope analysis study conducted in the Caño Martín Peña. ORD collected samples from various points in the Caño Martín Peña, San José Lagoon and tested for Nitrogen-15. High Nitrogen-15 levels are observed where you have sewage contamination. They expected to find high Nitrogen-15 levels in both locations, yet samples from the Caño Martín Peña and San José Lagoon, yet Nitrogen-15 was found at low levels in the Caño Martín Peña. Further studies are being conducted to better assess what is occurring.

Evelyn Huertas also reported on the RARE project which will consist of constructing a rain bioswale at a cost of \$68,500.

IV. Environmental Justice Group

Evelyn Huertas presented the Environmental Justice Group which is also an EPA-led effort working on initiatives in the Caño Martín Peña. Since both the Environmental Justice Group and the Urban Water Partnership engage federal agencies, she recommends combining both efforts in order to avoid duplicity and be more effective. The Urban Water Partnership welcomed the Environmental Justice Group and suggested that the Environmental Justice Group present their objectives and aims at the next partnership meeting to delineate a path forward of mutual collaboration.

V. 2016 Discussion

a. **Caño Martín Peña Ecosystem Restoration**

Ingrid Vila proceeded to facilitate a discussion on various initiatives and next steps in the Caño Martín Peña Work Plan. Specifically discussion centered on the Ecosystem Restoration Project. There is a pending Federal Aviation Administration approval for USACE, but this is not regarded as a big hurdle. Some of the pending challenges are securing the needed funding (both federal and local) for the Planning, Engineering and Design (PED) phase and for housing relocation of needed infrastructure projects.

Millan Mora of the USACE, informed that USACE has secured \$625,000 for the current fiscal year and are proposing \$750,000 for Fiscal Year 2017 for the PED phase. The USACE work plan for FY 2017 presented to Congress includes allocation of \$2.6 million federal funding to be matched by Enlace's cost share. Construction funds can be appropriated by Congress at any time, yet Millan Mora recommends the request be made for Fiscal Year 2018-19 when the PED is expected to be completed.

Lyvia Rodríguez indicated they are working with the Governor and local legislature to secure the local match funding.

b. Resiliency

Ingrid Vila informed of initiatives towards integrating green infrastructure to Caño Martín Peña projects being developed by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority, the Municipality of San Juan and Enlace. A Green Infrastructure Subcommittee was created to look into incorporating permeable pavement, water harvesting, efficient/LED lighting, etc. The biggest issue is identifying financing for these modifications to projects.

Prof. Efrain O'Neill from the University of Puerto Rico then proceeded to give a brief update on the energy initiative being considered for the Caño Martín Peña. He informed that a community meeting was held to discuss with community leaders their concerns and perspectives regarding electricity service in the community. A brief presentation was offered on the potential benefits of efficiency, conservation and renewable energy. Various community sites were visited to collect information on potential renewable (solar) energy projects, particularly on community centers. This project is in an initial phase and will continue to develop in the next years.

c. Small Business Administration

The discussion regarding the agreement to be signed between the Small Business Administration (SBA) and Enlace was left for the next meeting, as the SBA representative was unable to join the meeting.

Attachment 1 – Sign-in sheet

URBAN WATER PARTNERSHIP MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET			
UW Location: Caño Martín Peña, San Juan, PR		Meeting Date: April 7, 2016	
Meeting time: 8:30am - 10:00am		Place/Room: Rainforest Room, EPA Offices, Guaynabo, PR	

Name	Entity/Agency	Phone	E-Mail
Noel Acosta Méndez	AS Army Corps	787-729-6577	noel.acosta@army.mil
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Clariza Molave	HERZA	(por teléfono)	
Sony Beauchant	FEMA	(por teléfono)	
Augusto Trizarriz	Universidad PR Mayagüez	(")	
Desire Eustaquí	Oficina Estatal de Política Energética	(")	
Hillan Mora	Colegio de Ingenieros de San Juan	(")	
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Name	Entity/Agency	Phone	E-Mail
Kaeze Altador	HHS	(por el teléfono)	
Carson Matla	EPA (Resion 2)	(por el teléfono)	
Bismie Ash	EPA (Resion 2)	(por el teléfono)	
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**Attachment 2 – Presentations
(Included separately)**