

2012 Urban Waters National Training Workshop
Washington, DC
October 24-25, 2012

Thursday, October 25, 2012

8:30- 9:00am - Welcoming Remarks:

Lisa Garcia, Associate Assistant Administrator for Environmental Justice, EPA, praised everyone coming together to improve communities through environmental justice and introduced Nancy Sutley, White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Nancy Sutley, White House Council for Environmental Quality

Stated that a sustainable economy starts at the local level and that places getting this right are setting up for success. She then outlined how the Obama administration is supporting communities in this regard, including the creation of the *Partnership for Sustainable Communities* and giving unprecedented focus to natural resources and ecosystems, creating “place-based tailored solutions”. She emphasized that, to achieve environmental goals, the federal government must work collaboratively at the state, local and agency level. Ingenuity from other organizations (such as those in attendance) is also crucial.

9:00 – 10:00am – Plenary Panel: Building Partnerships for Clean Water & Strong Communities:

Tommy Wells, DC City Council

Spoke about how he was able to build partnerships to pass the Anacostia River Clean Up and Protection Act that placed a five cent charge on all plastic bags. He shared that the success of the initiative was due to a careful strategic approach that included: (1) meeting with likely opponents, and (2) targeted outreach. He addressed opposition by including measures to mitigate business costs (such as allowing one cent to be taken by the business) and including a range of businesses so that supermarkets were not “demonized”. The result was a 65% reduction in trash and \$2 million raised that will be invested in cleaning the river.

James Rasmussen, Duwamish River Clean-Up Coalition

Praised the impact of relationship-building in supporting environmental justice. He emphasized the crucial contribution he believes grassroots representatives can offer when involved.

Tammy Leigh DeMent, PA Horticultural Society

Spoke about how the *Roots to Re-entry Job Training and Placement* scheme has engaged young people and supported the environment. The initiative is in partnership with Philadelphia prison system to give entry-level training of local food production and landscape management to inmates. Employer partnerships have maximized the opportunity for employment and partnerships with federal agencies, including the EPA, have enabled the training to extend to stormwater management.

Derek Evans, Turkey Creek Community Initiatives

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Described how innovative partnerships have helped environmental justice and how the expertise and influence of other organizations can be utilized. He shared the example of gaining the support of the National Audubon Society by sharing some knowledge of birds' migratory patterns and, in return, they lobbied on behalf of his organization.

10:15-11:15am – Morning Breakout Sessions:

Session B: Effectively Communicating Water Quality Science and Data

Session Attendees (10 Federal, 2 State government, and 22 nonprofit, community, private sector attendees)

Name	Organization
Deidre Sunderland	EPA
Colin Belby	University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse
Elizabeth Wiles	Friends of Deckers Creek
Rae DeCoitu	Malama Maunalua
Michael Byrd	Prescott Creeks Preservation Association
Jason Ulseth	Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
Franklin Baker	EPA
Diane Burgis	Friends of Marsh Creek
Rose Kwok	EPA
John Kemmere	EPA-Region 9
Scott McWilliams	Upper Colorado River Authority
Scott Lehman	EPA NPS Program
Amelia Rose	Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island
Meg Kerr	Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
Chris Faulkner	EPA
Sandra Albro	Cleveland Botanical Garden
Chris Acree	Revive the San Joaquin
Susan Ford	US Forest Service
Scott McKim	Anchorage School District
Kim Balassiano	EPA
Tony Thomas	Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum
Donna Murphy	Forest Service, NA S&PF
Peg Donnelly	EPA Region 5
Maggie Curme	SRA (EPA Support)
Barb Goode	Kansas State Pollution Prevention Institute
Jean Walat	Port Townsend Marine Science Center WA
Shelley Alingas	Potomac Riverkeeper
Brad Buschur	Groundwork Lawrence
Dawn Henning	Rocking the Boat
Kelly Sparks	Lower Rogue Watershed Council
Tammy Crone	Gallatin Water Quality District
Charlene Bohanon	Galveston Bay Foundation

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Steven Cadenhead
John Lopez

Oklahoma Water Resources Board
Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation

Bob Zimmerman, Charles River Watershed Association

Zimmerman emphasized the importance of attitude in accomplishing your goals. He explained that it's important to sit at the front table because that's where the decision-makers and power-hitters sit. He also noted that you shouldn't be a Just-Say-No (JSN) Organization because it's not effective. Instead, know your options and focus on the science and the evidence. Work with your press office to create effective, well-rounded messages. Zimmerman recommended that your organization should become a source of scientific truth so that the public will come to rely on your organization, but that it's also ok to not know the answer.

Jared Criscuolo, Below the Surface

Below the Surface is a California nonprofit organization focused on promoting water conservation and improving water quality in rivers and oceans. Its mission statement reads, "We believe access to clean water is a fundamental right of all living beings and seek to significantly reduce wasteful use of water and water pollution, and the health, economic and environmental hazards it poses by working to elevate and sustain the topic of water pollution in the national dialogue." Its vision is to define the characteristics of water stewardship and leadership by personal example and to empower all people to be the Solution to water pollution. It doesn't do science, but focuses on communicating messages to average people.

7 Approaches to Achieving the Mission:

- Lead expeditions throughout both critically impaired and vibrant, healthy watersheds;
- Relate our observations through film;
- Generate interactive online narratives of our observations;
- Connect and collaborate with individuals, organizations and entities interested in and working to improve water quality;
- Develop and install First-Alert water monitoring equipment;
- Offer interactive educational materials and action items to engage people in their watersheds; and
- Foster an intimate relationship with rivers and bodies of water through water recreation.

Tools

- Google Streetview for mapping rivers, etc.
- Mobile applications for taking pictures and leaving comments about urban water experiences
- Social Media: Important mechanism of communication. Producing viral videos. Grants from EPA to develop social media tools.
- Strategy: Mobilizing support through experiences shared via the Internet
- Important to understand your audience (community) when developing applications and social media tools

Recommendations

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- Reach out to other organizations to learn from each other and further your causes
- Develop a relationship with the media: Find out what kinds of stories they are looking for

Dotti Yunger, Chesapeake Convent Community

The Chesapeake Convent Community has a number of objectives, such as increasing the capacity of residents and stakeholders to improve, care for, and promote their local environment; reclaiming vacant and derelict lands for conservation, recreation, and economic development; reconnecting residents to their neighborhood's environmental assets; and effectively translating science for the masses. To help achieve those objectives, they have activities where kayaking or rowing on the Anacostia River is accompanied by a discussion of the history of the river. They also track the water quality through a report card system that also rates political initiatives and entities with a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" based on their support of a cleaner Anacostia.

Re-Framing Questions

- Don't settle for either/or positions
- Tell a story that reframes the question
- Change people's behaviors by changing their hearts. Scientific data alone doesn't lead to long-lasting change.
- *Water is a moral issue, not a political issue*
 - Utilize faith-based leaders to reach members
 - Reach out to leaders and ask, "what does your belief system say about this issue?"
 - Members will behave differently if their religious leader has invited them to participate in an event

Shared Panel Discussion

Engaging Communities through Community-Based Participatory Research

- Research heavily involving the community. Direct by community priorities.
- Start with a common goal, and achieve community buy-in.
- It does take longer, and can be messy.
- Get people to the table, and produce community ownership.

Galveston Bay, MA

- 1990s: clean-up activities
- Created water quality monitor model
- Boston Globe: able to get water quality flags in newspaper (partnered with EPA and NGOs to monitor)
- Information went straight to the people

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Questions and comments

- Applications and Useless Photos Overload?
 - Currently, we don't have a filtering mechanism; we just monitor numbers of postings.
- Transparency of Data: afraid it might scare people away from using water sources?
 - We provide the information.
 - People want to swim, but they can't which produces a demand that some economists have successfully placed a price tag on via Willingness to Pay surveys.

Session C: Green Infrastructure and Community Revitalization

Metropolitan Green Alliance

The Alliance is based out of the Chicago and Milwaukee areas and they primarily deal with CSOs and green infrastructure such as rain gardens and rain barrels. The Alliance has worked in Portland to reduce pollution loads and improve the quality of life through green infrastructure. In San Francisco, the Alliance worked to install green roofs, and they worked in Los Angeles County to change land issues from the 1930 Homestead Act.

Bioswales were installed in the Los Angeles area throughout parks and blighted communities. The bioswales became art and took on a local cultural aspect; this was a community dealing with public health concerns. The Alliance partnered with a local school to fix storm drains and installed natural bioswales, and now the students have a place to convene. Long-term maintenance of the projects is a concern.

Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, Northeast Ohio Sewer District

The District's goal is to integrate green infrastructure back into the built community; there are 61 communities in the District. Project Clean Lake is a project to reduce CSOs, and it has created new pervious pavements and storm tanks at universities. There are many environmental justice issues in the District and housing values have dropped. An EPA program provided loans for restoration of the flood plain, and \$31 million has been spent on the project. Since 2005, 2,500 acres of land have been preserved.

Sanitary sewer fees are used for green infrastructure; the District also implemented an impervious surface fee. There are seven watershed groups supported by the District projects. Dreyfuss-Wells emphasized that stormwater solutions should be used for stormwater problems. MS4 permits and zoning codes can be solutions for stormwaters.

Larry Coffman, Stormwater Services

In Montgomery County, MD, there have been hundreds of millions of dollars used for retrofitting of uncontrollable impervious services using decentralized approaches. There are many innovative methods to be learned from industry for community retrofits, including new designs that need to be

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created for the future. Market incentives should be created to increase efficiency of retrofit projects, and to assist states with meeting water quality standards.

Some of the benefits to retrofitting urban spaces include:

- Reduced maintenance costs
- Asset management
- Leveraging from the private sector
- Additional cost-effective urban retrofit solutions

Gary Belan, American Rivers

The organization works in the Toledo, OH, community implementing and maintaining rain gardens and then educating the homeowners and local government on how to maintain the gardens. American Rivers is a trusted local nonprofit, which has allowed them to partner with constituents and entities such as churches. American Rivers changed local policy and ordinances to allow the installation of green roofs. They attended public meetings and were a community educator.

As a result of American Rivers work, Toledo, OH, has changed the design of its street curbs and developed a rain barrel program and a green infrastructure best management practice. They are recognized in the community and now residents are requesting green infrastructure for their homes. It is important to identify a community's need and its challenges; challenges and needs differ among all communities.

Iris Benson, City of Oregon

Near Oregon State University, there are areas with high acres of park land; educated residents in the communities engage in green practices and preserve the outdoors. Rain gardens were installed in many of the residents' yards, and the City conducted a post-construction questionnaire. After many requests from the public, the City performed training on rain garden installation. A green street initiative is in the works with DOT, along with safe bicycling and urban streams and forestry projects. One challenge is that many of the projects are held up in the engineering stage of implementation. By doing public surveys, the City was able to get place-based ideas for projects.

Questions and comments

- The private sector has many of the same goals of the community, and they should be approached.
- Universities can assist with post-construction monitoring. Consent decrees can also require post-construction monitoring, and project partners can have grants for post-construction monitoring and maintenance.
- To quantify green infrastructure benefits, there is emerging science on the issue. Triple bottom-line assessment can be used, and the Center for Neighborhood Technology is a good source. Measuring benefits varies and is dependent upon specific local benefits.
- Most green infrastructure is applicable for new development, not for adapting to current infrastructure. This is a market need.

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Session D: Youth Engagement and Workforce Development

Carrie Samis, EECapacity

Described the work of her organization; EECapacity is funded by the EPA and working across eight states, it provides environmental education through research in partnership with Cornell University. She listed the organization's specific goals: action on climate change, cleaning up communities, protecting waters, and environmental justice.

Sandra Dungee Glenn, American Cities Foundation

Explained how Project NEAT has fostered a concern for environmental issues within young people by working with communities on education and opportunities for activism. For example, it has successfully advocated for the inclusion of education about stormwater in local school curricula. By partnering with other youth-based programs, it has been able to reach out specifically to people facing barriers to employment and delivered new skills to them.

Kelly Bollinder, Earth Conservation Corps

The Earth Conservation Corps has been able to support conservation of the Anacostia River and empower local youth, giving them ownership of their area and emotional investment in it. The young people assist in three ways: direct service (e.g., trash collecting), community outreach, and production of relevant media such as short videos. They benefit by earning a recommendation at the end of the program, during which time they also receive life skills mentoring from EPA employees.

Panel Discussion

- The need to increase engagement of young women in matters of environmental justice rather than traditional science.
- The likely impact on employability of experience in environmental programs such as those described during the session.
- How to attract people to less populated areas with environmental jobs (such as New Mexico compared with the East Coast)

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12:45- 2:00pm - Closing Plenary – Manahatta 2409:

Dr. Eric Sanderson, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Environmental Concerns in the US

Our country is young. We are slowly becoming concerned with trans-generational environmental concerns.

Historical New York City Landscape

NYC once had 66 miles of streams and 573 hills. It was built near a natural water source, but over time the city built over the water source and now has to import its water.

New York City Water Use Trends

NY Residents consume 74% less water, and consume less energy than people in any other state.

Bronx River Restoration

The river has been vitally changed by human activities—from waste dumping to damming for local industries. It is our task to return it as best as possible to its natural state. For restoration efforts to be truly successful, it requires the investment of the communities that live along the river's banks. The goal is to rehabilitate the river as a vital recreational and educational resource for the Bronx.

Manahatta 2409

This Online Tool will offer a forum to enable the public to develop and share climate-resilient designs for Manhattan based on realistic model assessments of carbon, water, biodiversity, and population. It is a map-based web application meant to inspire, inform, and generate new ideas about sustainable urban forms from the many diverse people who love New York City, Manhattan in particular. It includes food production models and impacts of decisions on electricity production. The tool is geared toward urban planners, architects, developers, school teachers, students, public servants and sustainability advocates.

Questions and comments

- Organizing people can produce more significant change than individuals alone
- Density vs. Greening: constant battle
- Emotional attachments – Emotional ecology
 - Attachments to a place
 - Can connect to any place
 - Reflections of the self – taking care of the environment, taking care of the self