

URBANWATERS

FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

Restoring Urban Waters, Revitalizing Communities



**NATIONAL
STRATEGIC
WORKPLAN
2016–2018**

URBANWATERS.GOV

THE URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP



FEMA



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National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Urban Waters Federal Partnership, or Federal Partnership, is an initiative designed to revitalize urban waters and the communities that surround them.



Background

The Federal Partnership formed in April 2010, and was formally launched in June 2011. Currently, the Federal Partnership is comprised of 14 Federal agencies working in 19 locations supported by 28 Non-governmental organizations. The Federal Partnership designated the 19 locations between 2011 and 2014 (henceforth “Partnership Locations”).¹ The Vision, Mission, and Principles for the Federal Partnership, the Federal Partnership’s first national report, as well as key detailed information on the 19 locations, are described at urbanwaters.gov. The Federal Partnership’s Strategy for the Future, an action plan, was adopted in June 2012 and is at Appendix A. The 19 Partnership Locations are learning laboratories of on-the-ground Agency collaboration for real progress toward the environmental, social and economic goals set forth in the Federal Partnership’s Vision, Mission, and Principles. There are many examples of Federal Partnership and Federal Partnership Location accomplishments in the Appendix B.



Urban Waters Partnership Approach

As detailed in the draft Handbook for the Federal Partnership now on urbanwaters.gov, the Federal Partnership works by building and sustaining Urban Waters Partnerships at urban locations. These locations always include urban water, a watershed and communities connected to the urban water, and at least one distressed neighborhood. While locations have diverse needs and priorities, the Federal Partnership has implemented a flexible five-phase process; Partnership Locations have selected and tailored this process to meet their needs. Communities may adopt this process to reflect their unique circumstances.

Phase 1 – Define Vision and Goals – Identify relevant stakeholders, community conditions, and common goals for local urban waters.

Phase 2 – Forge Partnerships – Bring people together and set urban waters partnership objectives and priorities.

Phase 3 – Pursue Projects and Activities of Interest – Support implementation of priority projects and activities, from developing clear work plans and leveraging resources to strengthening community engagement efforts.

Phase 4 – Measure and Communicate Results – Ensure that projects and activities lead to outcomes that better support people, their environment and their communities.

Phase 5 – Sustain Momentum – Guide long-term planning, building on strengthened relationships and

¹ While the Federal Partnership designated 7 locations in June 2011, 11 locations were added in May 2013, and 1 more was added in December 2014. The Urban Waters Partnerships at these locations are intended to be sustainable for the long term, so they are no longer referred to as pilot locations

adequate resources.

Urban Waters Partnership Impacts

The Partnership Locations are already making a difference for urban waters and the communities that surround them by:

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

Encouraging existing and new partnerships, resulting in greater cooperation, communication, and diversity of thought. The Partnership has the special distinction of strengthening partnerships across levels of government and with a wide range of local public and private entities.

BUILDING TRUST

Encouraging transparency and collaboration creates the foundation for trusting relationships among partners in an Urban Waters Partnership. Trusting relationships are at the core of successful projects at a location.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Anticipating and preventing conflicts, and facilitating their resolution when they do arise, are critical functions of Urban Waters Partnerships. Early collaboration with all interested stakeholders ensures that proposed actions are consistent with community values and priorities. Further, gathering partners together can create healthy dialogue, resulting in more creative and durable projects at a location. When challenging situations do arise, having a resilient group of partners to address them increases the likelihood of a swift and amicable resolution.

LEVERAGING FUNDING

Pooling resources through strong relationships between Partners at Urban Waters Partnerships makes the most impact with the fewest dollars. It is essential that those involved in Urban Waters Partnerships are doing valuable work and ensuring investments are spent wisely and efficiently.

INCREASING CAPACITY

Supporting local communities to learn and grow, assisting them in identifying opportunities and challenges, and providing the support necessary to address weaknesses results in increased capacity. Urban Waters Partnerships lead to better results than Partners working alone and thereby lead to more rigorously designed and executed projects and empowered communities.

ADDRESSING DISPLACEMENT/GENTRIFICATION

Urban Waters Partnerships can develop actions that will minimize displacement/gentrification as projects at locations are planned and implemented.

For more detailed information, a draft Handbook on building and sustaining Urban Waters Partnerships, for any location nationwide, has been posted at urbanwaters.gov.

Vision, Mission, and Principles - Signatures 2011 – 2013



OUR VISION

Through our partnership, we will revitalize urban waters and the communities that surround them, transforming overlooked assets into treasured centerpieces and drivers of urban revival.



THE NEED IS CLEAR

Many of our nation's urban rivers, streams, lakes, forests and wetlands are polluted, degraded or inaccessible. The surrounding communities often are not reaping the environmental, economic and social benefits that living near a water body can provide.

Research demonstrates that a clean, safe, accessible, urban environment – including urban forests, gardens, parks, lakes, aquifers, and rivers – is directly linked to improved public health, stronger local economies, and lower crime rates.

We believe a deeper connection to local water bodies can bring a new cycle of community hope and energy that will lead to healthier urban waters, improved public health, strengthened local businesses, and new jobs, as well as expanded educational, recreational, housing, and social opportunities.



OUR MISSION

The “Urban Waters Federal Partnership” will help urban and metropolitan areas, particularly those that are under-served or economically distressed, connect with their waterways and work to improve them. This federal partnership will put communities first. We will work to break down government program silos and to ensure that our collective efforts will reverse past neglect, energize existing programs, and engage new partners. We will listen to, engage and serve the communities where we work, ensuring they are full partners in restoring and protecting the water that surrounds them. We will establish strong partnerships with effective community-based organizations and local government officials to make the most effective use of economic incentives and other beneficial actions. With the right set of federal, state, and local tools and the local commitment of political will, the Federal Partnership will leverage existing neighborhood assets. These actions will be geared to promote early and visible victories to fuel long-term action. Success will advance the missions of our partnership, our agencies, and the federal government as a whole.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To guide our work, we will:

- **Promote clean urban waters.** We must enhance the value and health of urban waters, recognizing their rich history, spiritual value, natural beauty, and economic and recreational potential, as well as their role in basic services, such as water supplies. We know clean water is a foundation for sustainable communities and healthy ecosystems, and that the watershed is the fundamental planning unit for water quality protection. That means the Federal Partnership will work with urban communities to connect them to upstream areas including rural parts of the watersheds, where the large majority of our country's water originates. In addition to addressing the direct challenges presented by physically, chemically and biologically degraded urban waters, we will engage these communities in the broader process of enhancing the value and quality of water resources supplying urban areas using approaches to protect, manage and restore the lands that surround those waters.
- **Reconnect people to their waterways.** Many communities do not have access to their urban waterways. This cuts them off from a valuable community asset. These assets can be used to spur commercial, recreational (such as parks, green spaces and cultural centers) and educational opportunities. Indeed, the reconnection of distressed communities to their waterways can act as a catalyst for greater economic revitalization and growth as well as improvement in resident well-being.
- **Water conservation.** We shall strive to meet urban water needs in a sustainable manner by increasing the efficiency of water use. The Federal Partnership therefore will strive to educate and work with urban communities to conserve this precious resource. We will increase efforts to address infrastructure needs, especially in underserved urban areas where modernization of aging and inefficient infrastructure can lead to significant water savings. We believe conserving water and using it wisely will be fundamental to our success.
- **Use urban water systems as a way to promote economic revitalization and prosperity.** Healthy and accessible urban waters enhance any area's economic competitiveness. In urban communities, water-related environmental improvements will be integrated with other community priorities, such as revitalizing local businesses, creating jobs, and improving access to job training. Community revitalization through the promotion of clean urban waters must minimize displacement of existing residents, expand opportunities for current and new residents, and fully tap into the potential of the local and regional communities. To achieve these objectives when working locally, the Federal Partnership will particularly focus on revitalizing communities that are, or have been, disproportionately impacted by pollution or economic burdens.
- **Encourage community improvements through active partnerships.** Strong multi-agency partnerships at the federal, state, local levels, and with the tribes, will integrate many of the services needed for community revitalization. Aligning federal policies and funding will break down traditional silos, remove barriers to collaboration, and increase the accountability and effectiveness to plan and act for future growth. These goals will also be achieved through innovative regional collaboration and approaches that connect policies and programs at every level of government and across multiple sectors.
- **Be open and honest, and listening to the communities is the best way to engage them.** We will work with urban populations, not act for them. This means, among other things, to recognize their values and seek to understand environmental issues through their eyes. We will work from the bottom up rather than taking a top down, one-size-fits-all approach.
- **Focus on measuring results and evaluation will fuel future success.** We need short-term improvements, but also an analytical view toward sustainable and systemic improvements we can measure using meaningful outcome measures. We will invest and focus our resources on what is working in targeted places and draw on the compounding effect of well-coordinated action. By evaluating conditions to design better solutions and monitoring progress to respond quickly when change is needed, we will learn what works to develop best practices.



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As required by the Antideficiency Act, 31 U.S.C. 1341 and 1342, all commitments made by all agencies party to this Partnership agreement are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and budget priorities. Nothing in this agreement, in and of itself, obligates any agency to expend appropriations or to enter into any contract, assistance agreement, interagency agreement, or incur other financial obligations. Any transaction involving transfers of funds between the agencies will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures under separate written agreements. Furthermore, this agreement does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity, by persons who are not party to this agreement, against any party to this agreement, its officers or employees, or any other person. Finally, this agreement does not impose legally binding requirements on any Federal agency, States or the regulated community, nor does it change or substitute for any existing legally binding requirements.

NEW NATIONAL STRATEGIC WORKPLAN

Now the Federal Partnership is adopting this new National Strategic Workplan. The essential actions to ensure success are to:

I **STRENGTHEN THE NATIONAL CROSS-PROGRAM STRUCTURE.**

Ensure that the 14 Federal agencies, 19 Partnership Locations and supportive Non-Governmental organizations are working in tandem.

II **EXPAND RESOURCES FROM PARTNER AGENCIES.**

Ensure that all Federal Partners of the Federal Partnership strive to contribute to the national resources used for the effort and all resources are used in a most effective way.

III **INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP.**

Ensure the best approaches implemented by the current 19 Partnership Locations are exported to any urban location across the country, optimizing utilization of federal resources.

IV **ENHANCE QUALITY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH.**

Ensure that all work nationally and at the Partnership Locations, and best information from many other sources, are provided to all interested audiences nationwide.

V **MEASURE AND COMMUNICATE RESULTS.**

Ensure the national story of the Federal Partnership is being told using key quantitative and qualitative measures adopted by the Federal Partnership.

VI **LEVERAGE RESEARCH TO ASSIST URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIPS.**

Strengthen the National Cross-Program Structure



A. OPERATE THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The Federal Partnership will maintain the current structure: an Executive Signatories Committee and a National Workgroup.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The Executive Signatories Committee will be composed of the Agency Executives in the positions of those that signed the Vision, Mission, and Principles document. The National Workgroup will continue to be composed of Agency representatives designated by each Agency's Executive Signatories member. National Workgroup meetings and conference calls will be once each month with at least one of the current designated Partnership Locations presenting a status update, accomplishments and challenges.

ASSISTING DESIGNATED LOCATIONS

The National Workgroup will establish an operating structure to maximize the assistance to all Partnership Locations, as well as processes to transfer results from these locations to any other locations nationwide.

EMPOWERING AMBASSADORS AT THE DESIGNATED LOCATIONS AND OTHER LOCATIONS

The National Workgroup will form a group to assist current Partnership Locations with establishing and implementing an Ambassador position. This assistance will include writing a guide so any other location, nationwide, can more fully consider establishing and implementing an Ambassador position as part of an Urban Waters Partnership.



B. CONVENE CROSS-AGENCY WORKING GROUPS

The following Working Groups will either continue or be newly formed:

MEASURES GROUP

The Measures Group will continue to work on all the policy and management issues for the national measures described in Section V.

AMBASSADORS GROUP

The Ambassadors Group will be formed to work on empowering Ambassadors as described in sub-section IA.

RESEARCH GROUP

The Research Group will be led by several partner agencies to produce the "compendium" described in section VI.



C. CONVENE NEW PARTNER AGENCY EXECUTIVE SIGNATORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Executive Signatories Committee meetings (at the level of the Executives that signed the original Vision, Mission and Principles) will be scheduled when key decisions for the overall Partnership are needed.



D. RECRUIT NEW FEDERAL AGENCIES FOR THE FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

The Federal Partnership will continue to work with other Federal agencies to develop close working relationships and encourage them to join the Federal Partnership. When joining the Federal Partnership, new agencies will: (1) adhere to the Federal Partnership's Vision, Mission, and Principles; and (2) be guided by this Strategic Workplan.



E. COLLABORATE WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs)

The Federal Partnership will collaborate with CBOs in order to ensure that its work will evolve in a way that is responsive to their needs and leverages their resources and expertise.



F. COLLABORATE WITH STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The Federal Partnership will collaborate with initiatives at the state and local levels to encourage further adoption of the Federal Partnership's Vision, Mission, and Principles nationwide.



G. IMPLEMENT NATIONAL ACTIONS TO WORK WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs), FOUNDATIONS AND PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT BUSINESSES

The Federal Partnership will invite all of the above noted organizations partnering NGOs and other organizations to its national meetings and conferences, and take actions to achieve results that are responsive to community needs.



H. COLLABORATE WITH OTHER CROSS-AGENCY INITIATIVES

The National Workgroup will cooperate with the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the White House Domestic Policy Council, and the Office of Management and Budget to connect this Partnership to other national conservation and urban initiatives, including:

- Ladders of Opportunity
- Partnership for Sustainable Communities
- Strong Cities, Strong Communities
- Promise Zones and Promise Neighborhoods
- Green Ribbon Schools

Expand Resources from Partner Agencies

Each Department/Agency within the Federal Partnership will make every effort to implement one or more of the following actions during FY 2017:

- Provide funding for an Urban Waters Ambassador position for up to two years in at least one Partnership Location.
- Provide funding for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) "Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program." (<http://www.nfwf.org/fivestar/>)
- Designate a staff liaison or point of contact to work with the 19 Partnership Location leads and Ambassadors (identified on location web pages on urbanwaters.gov). Agencies could designate one liaison for each location.
- Ensure the Agency participates in developing an actionable workplan in at least one Partnership Location.
- Provide funding for one special emphasis project in at least one Partnership Location.
- Direct funding, such as grants, to the 19 Partnership Locations or to any locations implementing the Handbook referred to in Sub-Section III-A.

As required by the Antideficiency Act, 31 U.S.C. 1341 and 1342, all commitments made by all agencies party to this Partnership agreement are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and budget priorities. Nothing in this agreement, in and of itself, obligates any agency to expend appropriations or to enter into any contract, assistance agreement, interagency agreement, or incur other financial obligations. Any transaction involving transfers of funds between the agencies will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures under separate written agreements. Furthermore, this agreement does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity, by persons who are not party to this agreement, against any party to this agreement, its officers or employees, or any other person. Finally, this agreement does not impose legally binding requirements on any Federal agency, States or the regulated community, nor does it change or substitute for any existing legally binding requirements.

Increase Accessibility of the Federal Partnership and its Program Actions to Any Location with Urban Waters, Nationwide



A. PUBLISH A NATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR ANY LOCATION NATIONWIDE TO IMPLEMENT AN URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIP.

The handbook would describe the process and structure for building and sustaining a successful Urban Waters Partnership location. For more detailed information, a draft Handbook for use and comment by any location nationwide has been posted at urbanwaters.gov.



B. ESTABLISH A NATIONAL PROCESS FOR NEW LOCATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO AFFILIATE WITH THE FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP.

Develop and implement a process, beginning with a pilot phase, for state and local governments as well as for private organizations that: (1) maximizes the number of urban locations creating successful Urban Waters Partnerships; (2) provides tangible assistance from Federal agencies to any new Urban Waters Partnership; and (3) assists all entities in a new Urban Waters Partnership to band together, share resources and avoid duplication. This process would maximize use of available federal expenditures.



C. EVALUATE AND LEARN FROM LOCATIONS IMPLEMENTING URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIPS.

Use the Urban Waters Learning Network as an important vehicle to develop an on-going process to analyze, summarize and distribute information to evaluate, local actions taken and capture lessons learned and best practices. In addition, the Network will distribute this information in a way that demonstrates both accomplishments and challenges of Locations with an Urban Waters Partnership.

IV Increase Quality of Communications & Outreach



A. DISSEMINATE PARTNERSHIP LOCATION ACTIVITIES AND LESSONS NATIONWIDE

Ensure that all Partnership Locations have updated and current webpages on “Urbanwaters.gov” that fully explains all the key actions occurring at the locations.



B. COMMUNICATE RESULTS OF THE MEASURES

Publish a report every two years using the national measures that will be developed pursuant to Section V below plus any other relevant information describing to the public the work, actions, accomplishments and challenges of the Federal Partnership, Partnership Locations and supporting organizations.



C. COMMUNICATE SPECIFIC AGENCY ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIPS

Federal Partnership agencies will develop and implement specific approaches to communicate agency-specific initiatives or actions that can assist local Urban Waters Partnerships.



Measure and Communicate Results

The Federal Partnership will adopt national measures of performance and an implementation approach. These measures will permit accountability for our actions, over time, to achieve our Principles. The Measures will include processes and outcomes of our actions and account for:

1. Progress and quality of the Federal Partnership
2. Work, actions, accomplishments and challenges of the Partnership Locations relative to:
 - Restoration of communities and the environment, including climate resiliency
 - Access to urban waters
 - Water quality
 - Engagement of people and organizations
 - Economic impacts

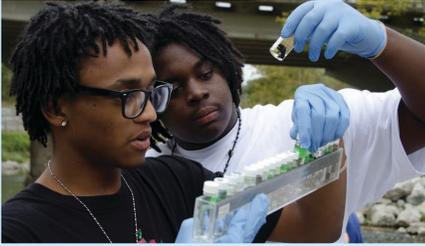
Based on an extensive analysis of other national partnership's measures and data systems, this Partnership will seek to establish an approach for national reporting and accountability by maximizing use of available resources and utilizing current agency established systems. Such an approach will be consistent with the Government and Performance and Results Act and the Paperwork Reduction Act.

We intend for these measures be used for several purposes: (1) assist us in adapting our efforts as needed to achieve the guiding Principles; (2) permit us to demonstrate to the public the nature of the accomplishments and challenges of operating such a Partnership; and (3) assist non-federal organizations in seeking funding for urban waters projects.

Finally, the Federal Partnership will implement a measures approach to publish a national report in 2016 and every two years thereafter. The report would use information from two sources: the measures; and from all 19 Partnership Locations, 14 Federal agencies and supporting organizations. In this way, the Federal Partnership will regularly capture information to explain the results of the Federal Partnership to date.



Leverage Research To Assist Urban Waters Partnerships



A. COMPENDIUM OF FEDERAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIPS

Publish a compendium on current and planned research by Federal Partner Agencies and other key supporting organizations that support Urban Waters Partnerships. Partner agencies will set up a Workgroup to develop this document.

Contact for this National Strategic Workplan: Roy Simon, Staff to the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Office of Water, U.S. EPA Simon.Roy@epa.gov; 202-564-3868

Appendix A: Strategy for the Future - Adopted June 2012

On June 12, 2012, the Executive Partner Departments/agencies (13 at the time) and the White House Council on Environmental Quality and Domestic Policy Council adopted a “Strategy for the Future,” to guide the Federal Partnership’s actions to achieve the Principles. The essential components of that framework are: (1) Creating a National Program; and (2) Aligning Agency efforts.

URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP: STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE



As we continue to advance the Partnership, our thirteen participating agencies are collaborating to revitalize urban waters and the communities that surround them — particularly those areas facing economic, social, and public health challenges. Coordinated with the White House Domestic Policy Council and Council on Environmental Quality, the Partnership will align with America’s Great Outdoors, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, and the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. The Partnership will focus on moving from a pilot-based initiative to a national program while also better aligning the policies, programs and resources of the thirteen agencies.



CREATING A NATIONAL PROGRAM

1. Add new locations to the Partnership beginning summer 2012 using the Partnership’s Workgroup processes and provide assistance from the partner agencies to these new locations.
2. Establish a cross-agency team to develop a comprehensive, sustainable national program that will enable communities to self-nominate and become recognized Partnership locations.
3. Establish a national private-public Partnership to finance a set of projects with the goal of restoring urban waters and the communities that surround them.



ALIGNING AGENCY EFFORTS

1. Align national policies and programs (regulatory and non-regulatory) and leverage resources for urban waters plans and activities to achieve the Partnership’s principles.
2. Provide preference in federal funding efforts for locations and activities prioritized by the Partnership, or top projects advancing the Partnership’s goals, based on the authorities, regulations and policies of each participating agency.
3. Form two cross-agency teams to: (1) oversee implementation of all locations and (2) establish specific measures of success for the national Partnership program and locations.



As required by the Antideficiency Act, 31 U.S.C. 1341 and 1342, all commitments made by all agencies party to this Partnership agreement are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and budget priorities. Nothing in this agreement, in and of itself, obligates any agency to expend appropriations or to enter into any contract, assistance agreement, interagency agreement, or incur other financial obligations. Any transaction involving transfers of funds between the agencies will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures under separate written agreements. Furthermore, this agreement does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity, by persons who are not party to this agreement, against any party to this agreement, its officers or employees, or any other person. Finally, this agreement does not impose legally binding requirements on any Federal agency, states or the regulated community, nor does it change or substitute for any existing legally binding requirements.

Appendix B – Partnership Accomplishments Nationally and at 19 Partnership Locations

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:

- **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP:** The Urban Waters Federal Partnership (urbanwaters.gov) was launched in 2011 with nine federal agencies and seven pilot sites. After five years, we have grown to fourteen (and counting) federal agencies working collectively in nineteen locations across the country.
- **NGOS SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIP:** The CEOs from 28 non-governmental organizations signed on to support the Federal Partnership and are aligning resources and expertise with the Federal family's resources. The Conservation Fund recently brought a \$500K grant to work with Baltimore on creating a network of greenspace throughout the metropolitan region. American Forests is bringing \$300K in corporate dollars to three Partnership Locations to increase greenspace and urban forests.
- **FIVE STAR AND URBAN WATERS GRANTS:** By July 2015, over 3 years, there were 155 grants across the country with total Federal funds of \$2.83 Million and total private and match funds of \$16 Million administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
- **AMBASSADORS:** In 2016, there will be 18 dedicated ambassadors in the 19 locations with funding and support from EPA, USDA, Army Corps, HHS/CDC and DOI/NPS and USGS.
- **NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOPS (2013, 2014, 2016):** There were about 500 total attendees at the Workshops in 2013 and 2014, and likely 500 in 2016. On September 2, 2015, an invite-only successful roundtable was held for Mayoral and local government leadership co-sponsored by EPA and the National League of Cities and International City and County Management Association, with DOI, USDA and HUD participating.
- **NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION EXCHANGE:** To track progress, successes, and challenges, we hold monthly calls for all 19 locations to exchange best practices and lessons learned. In addition, an EPA contractor issues a bi-weekly newsletter to all 19 Partnership Locations.
- **MULTI-LOCATION WORKSHOP:** We held our first regional Urban Waters Partnership Workshop in June 2015 with three Partnership Locations: San Antonio, New Orleans, and Albuquerque to network and share successes, challenges, and solutions.
- **LEARNING NETWORK:** Roughly 300 individuals and partners have joined our Urban Waters National Learning Network, a Network funded by EPA and led by a partnership between River Network and Groundwork USA. The Learning Network is a peer-to-peer network of people and organizations working to restore and revitalize local waterways, many located in communities disproportionately impacted by pollution, economic distress and related challenges. Its purpose is to strengthen the effectiveness of urban waters practitioners across the country by providing them with opportunities to share experiences, exchange technical expertise, and learn about funding and technical resources available to support their work.

- **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE (GI)/LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID) CHARRETTES:** Scheduled to take place at four Urban Waters Federal Partnership Locations: Grand River/Grand Rapids (Michigan), Lake Pontchartrain Area/New Orleans (Louisiana), Los Angeles River Watershed (California), and Middle Rio Grande/Albuquerque (New Mexico).

AT THE URBAN LOCATION LEVEL:

1. MIDDLE RIO GRANDE/ALBUQUERQUE (NEW MEXICO)

- **Stormwater Management Innovation:** In January 2014, the Middle Rio Grande Urban Waters Federal Partnership hosted a water planning workshop at the Bureau of Indian Affairs complex in Albuquerque. The event was attended by approximately 30 representatives from federal, state, tribal, local and non-governmental organizations. The purpose of the workshop was to identify roles and responsibilities for water management in the Middle Rio Grande, to improve communication and facilitate more efficient implementation of government programs. In August 2015, the Partnership collaborated with the municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) permittees to host a Green Infrastructure charrette. The 2-day charrette was attended by over 40 state, local, and NGO practitioners, and resulted in potential development concepts for several flood-prone parcels of land in the Albuquerque area.
- **Coalition Building:** In April and November 2014, HUD and EPA hosted an Urban Waters Federal Partnership meeting at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History. Participants included Congressional representatives, state/tribal/local government officials, NGO staff and community members. Attendees received updates on the status of federally-funded projects, engaged in networking, and provided input for the Middle Rio Grande Urban Waters web site, future Middle Rio Grande Urban Waters events, and workshop topics. On March 4, 2015, the Middle Rio Grande Urban Waters Partnership convened a special meeting of stakeholders in Albuquerque, NM. The meeting was attended by DOI Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennifer Gimbel and management from the National Park Service, EPA, USGS, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and others. The purpose of the meeting was to emphasize the need and value of these partnership efforts and identify opportunities for the various DOI bureaus and services to support partnerships and projects across the country. The discussion addressed funding opportunities as well as community engagement opportunities and challenges.
- **Environmental Education and Employment:** In April 2014, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff initiated a series of meetings focused on coordination and cooperation among groups providing environmental education and employment opportunities. In August 2014, the Sustainability Officer, along with approximately 25 other federal, state, and local partners meet with Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell and the local Congressional delegation to discuss the Middle Rio Grande Conservation Initiative and its relationship to initiatives for employment, education, transportation, development, and health care opportunities. In the year that has followed, the Middle Rio Grande Education Employment & Environment Alliance (MRGE3) has become a formal organizational structure. It receives AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) support from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and USFWS. This group has established a mission and goals, appointed a Steering Committee, and been working to integrate environmental education curriculum into every classroom.

Youth Conservation Corps opportunities have increased tenfold and two Conservation Career Fairs have been conducted on the Valle de Oro National Urban Wildlife Refuge.

- **Climate Change Scenario Planning:** In July 2014, HUD and EPA hosted an Urban Waters Federal Partnership meeting at the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) to view a presentation on the Central New Mexico Climate Change Scenario Planning Project. Participants included Congressional representatives, state/tribal/local government officials, NGO staff, and community members. The Project assessed the costs and benefits of a series of growth scenarios to determine how best to manage congestion, reduce emissions, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The project coincided with the development of the Futures 2040 MTP and utilized transportation and land use scenarios to assess the region's resiliency to the impacts of climate change. The project was a partnership between MRCOG, the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. DOT Volpe Center, and federal land management areas, including the Bureau of Land Management, National Parks Service, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.
- **Valle de Oro National Urban Wildlife Refuge (NWR):** The first urban wildlife refuge in the southwest celebrated its 3rd birthday in September 2015. In the past two and a half years, the refuge has completed the land acquisition process, completed the 30% design phase on refuge development concepts, developed a first-of-its-kind Environmental Justice Plan for the refuge, and received an EPA Environmental Justice grant to implement the Plan. The refuge has supported the activities of four Urban Waters Small Grant recipients, hosted over 1000 school children, held monthly open houses, hosted career fairs, employed dozens of Youth Conservation Corps members, and established itself as an integral part of a community that has long suffered from the impacts of heavy industry and a severe lack of infrastructure. On October 15, 2014, Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx came to the Valle de Oro NWR to announce the award of an \$8 million Federal Lands Access Program grant to Bernalillo County. The County partnered with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain the funding for a multi-modal transportation project that will improve residents' access to this natural asset.
- **Community Outreach and Education:** On November 7 and 8, 2014, the Partnership hosted three public information workshops on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, including the status of projects included in the Urban Waters Federal Partnership project area. Materials were provided in English and Spanish, and a bilingual facilitator and translator service were provided. Participants included Congressional representatives, federal/state/local government officials, NGO staff and community members. In April 2015, the Partnership hosted another workshop specifically geared toward writing comments in response to a Draft Environmental Assessment.
- **South Valley Transportation Improvements:** In February 2014, Bill Honker, EPA Regional Division Director, and Mandy Griego, HUD New Mexico Sustainability Officer and local federal lead for the Partnership, met with several staff from the New Mexico office of the U.S. Federal Highway Administration in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The purpose of the meeting was to promote the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, and improve communication between Federal agencies. There are over 20 separate projects underway in the South Valley at this time. The Partnership is working to support the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) and Bernalillo County with communication and education efforts that inform the public about all of the proposed construction and potential impacts.
- **Bridge Boulevard Redevelopment Plan:** In February 2015, Bernalillo County, through its South Valley Main Street Initiative, began a series of community meetings to examine cultural identity, place making, and public art. The concepts and priorities identified will be incorporated into the implementation of

the Bridge Boulevard Redevelopment Plan. The County is also in the engineering phase of the road redevelopment plans approved through the HUD/DOT funded Community Challenge Planning Grant.

- **Isleta Pueblo Island Removal Project:** Following a request for assistance in sampling the sediment collected from the Isleta Pueblo Island Removal prior to allowing interested community partners access to free sediment, the Federal members of the Urban Waters Partnership team in Albuquerque provided technical support to coordinate in the development of the sampling plan and sample collection. The EPA Houston Laboratory committed to support the sampling exercise with lab space and necessary sampling containers. Other Federal partners include: Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), EPA, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and Isleta Pueblo.

2. GRAND RIVER/GRAND RAPIDS (MICHIGAN)

- **Grand River Restoration:** Restoration of the Grand River and namesake rapids in downtown Grand Rapids will bring social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits. Goals include: expanding public use and access; engaging youth, Native Americans, and underserved or economically distressed neighborhoods; expanding recreational use by anglers, rowers, paddlers and whitewater enthusiasts; restoring spawning grounds for Lake Sturgeon; improving habitat for mussel species; remediating the hydromodification impacts on water quality; and expanding economic opportunities associated with turning the “face” of downtown back toward the River. An economic impact study commissioned by Grand Rapids Whitewater, the nonprofit organization spearheading the restoration of the Grand River, estimates a net new economic impact of \$15.9-\$19.1 million per year considering new and enhanced tourism associated with recreational activity.
- **Grand River Restoration Steering Committee:** The Committee has completed its work assuring coordination of the various planning studies to create a vision for the restored river, downtown, and the river banks. The committee is proud of its accomplishments and looks forward to assisting in the transition from vision to implementation. The Grand River Restoration Steering Committee’s final report summarizes the committee’s charge, accomplishments, and recommended actions.

3. ANACOSTIA WATERSHED (WASHINGTON, DC/MARYLAND)

- **Anacostia Riverwalk Trail:** Secretary Salazar and NPS Director Jarvis wrote support letters for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) application for the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail, referencing USDOT’s role as signatory to UWFP. Project selected from over 400 applications and will receive \$10M from DOT to complete the final portion of the DC trail. NPS played critical role in developing successful proposal.
- **The East Capitol Urban Farm:** FWS, EPA, USDA and other federal agencies from the Anacostia UWFP partnered with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), and the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) to transform an abandoned parcel into the District’s largest-scale urban farm and aquaponics facility – the East Capitol Urban Farm. The farm promotes urban agriculture and improves nutrition through a community-centered farmer’s market and aquaponics facility; offers nutrition education; provides community gardening; creates opportunities for entrepreneurship; incorporates public art and a nature play space for youth, and includes a research and demonstration site for UDC. The opportunity for partners is to develop this farm as a model for temporary use of vacant lots while demonstrating on-site stormwater management and local food production. The Anacostia UWFP convened public and private partners and raised roughly \$1M in funding and technical support from groups as wide-ranging as Walmart, the Metropolitan National Church, American Forests and the DC Building Industry Association.

4. PATAPSCO WATERSHED/BALTIMORE REGION (MARYLAND)

- **Summer Youth Green Jobs Program:** With funding from a number of agencies and sources, the Partnership helped implement a Summer Youth Green Jobs program. Outputs included 60 hours of training above and beyond basic first-aid and CPR certifications; Eighteen 50-gallon trash bags of debris collected; 150 feet of earth trenched; 7,604 square feet of invasive species removed; and much more.
- **Humanim:** Humanim focuses on workforce development and social enterprise. Baltimore has approximately 30,000 vacant and abandoned properties. Historically, vacant row homes were demolished, creating significant waste streams and limiting future redevelopment opportunities on affected sites. With technical assistance from the USDA Forest Service Forest Products Lab, Humanim has learned how to deconstruct homes. Under a deconstruction contract with Baltimore City, members of the community are being trained and employed in deconstruction (<http://www.details.org/>), bringing deconstructed materials to new markets and enhancing Baltimore's sustainability efforts.
- **Green Pattern Book and Registry:** The Green Pattern Book is a toolkit to help agencies, NGOs, community groups, and citizens undertake restoration projects on Baltimore's 30,000 vacant and abandoned lots. The Green Pattern Registry is a mapping tool that displays existing projects and candidate sites for projects to implement the typologies in the Green Pattern Book. In 2014, EPA and Baltimore City provided \$300,000 for a design competition to implement Green Pattern Book projects on vacant lots. Seven concept projects were awarded resources for 100% design and construction.

5. LOS ANGELES RIVER WATERSHED (CALIFORNIA)

- **Juan Bautista de Anza Historic Trail Certification - Los Angeles River Corridor:** The certification of this Trail is a tribute to the role of the Los Angeles River in the City's history, and the complexity of its influence. The Urban Waters Federal Partnership worked with the City of Los Angeles and the National Park Service in the certification - which was marked by a celebration along the River on October 15, 2015 with local officials, including Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. To highlight the connection between the natural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles through the Every Kid in a Park Initiative, over 400 local fourth grade students joined National Director Julie Williams and Mayor Garcetti to receive their free annual family pass to national recreational lands while being sworn in as Junior Rangers. [History: The exploratory expedition led by Spanish Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza and 240 people from Culican, New Spain camped along the Los Angeles River in 1775 on their way to San Francisco. In 1781, a member of the Anza expedition, Jose Vicente Feliz, returned to help establish El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles – now known as the City of Los Angeles.]
- **Los Angeles River and Aliso Creek Confluence Park:** On October 21, 2015, the Trust for Public Land broke ground on its first construction project along the Los Angeles River. The Trust for Public Land has been working in Los Angeles to identify opportunities to bring parks, trails, and green streets to low and moderate income communities locked in the hardscaped, urban core of Los Angeles. The fenced, concrete-lined meeting spot of the Los Angeles River and one of its San Fernando Valley tributaries at Aliso Creek is being transformed into a recreational hub along the River that includes a natural park, outdoor community meeting areas, public art, and 1.5 miles of walking and biking paths. The Urban Waters Federal Partnership has been working with its partners, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which provided Community Development Block Grant funding, to showcase the engagement of federal programs typically less-utilized in environmental projects in multi-benefit neighborhood projects that includes river revitalization, expanded recreation, and storm water management as a driver of community economic development.

- **Green Infrastructure and Climate Change Resilience Charrette:** In support of Urban Waters partners working to increase the number and effectiveness of green infrastructure projects in the Los Angeles area, the EPA and the City of Los Angeles conducted a Green Infrastructure and Climate Change Resilience Charrette on September 24, 2015 that drew over 75 practitioners from a diverse range of stakeholders involved in local infrastructure planning. The event was designed to move stakeholders from discussion about the dire need for water conservation and storm water management to ground-level design and action. Participants focused on three transportation corridors within the Los Angeles River Watershed aligning with an overarching resiliency theme of heat island relief, urban connectivity/revitalization, and local water supply enhancement. Breakout groups came up with plans for using green infrastructure to improve resiliency and made recommendations for better institutionalizing green infrastructure in local planning processes, which were presented to officials present from City, County, and State agencies.
- **Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration - Army Corps of Engineers Feasibility Study:** The focus of the effort is an 11-mile stretch of the Los Angeles River in the Glendale Narrows area north of Downtown called the ARBOR (Area with Restoration Benefits and Opportunities for Revitalization) and central to the expanding momentum to revitalize the Los Angeles River in all reaches. The City of Los Angeles first began a feasibility process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) related to restoring a natural ecosystem within the Los Angeles River nearly 10 years ago, and in July 2015, both long time visionaries and recent advocates shared an emotional moment as the USACE Civil Works Review Board voted to move the Plan forward with the comprehensive restoration scope known as "Alternative-20." This scope was championed by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, officials from neighboring cities, and other local advocates as having the greatest ecosystem outcome for the price, and yet they judiciously worked at every level of approval to defend the anticipated \$1.35 Billion total price and to explain how the cost will be shared by the City of Los Angeles. This advocacy involved a \$1 Million contribution by a private local source in 2012 to help finish the Alternatives Study when the process seemed stalled for lack of funding. The Chief's Report was signed in December 2016 and was transmitted to ASA CW for administration review. \$100,000 was provided in the FY 16 Work Plan for the Corps to initiate Pre-construction Engineering and Design.

6. LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN AREA/NEW ORLEANS (LOUISIANA)

- **Resilient and Sustainable Stormwater Management and Green Infrastructure Planning:** In 2014, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) partnered with EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) on an Urban Soils Assessment across the City of New Orleans as part of ORD's Safe and Sustainable Water Resources Research Program. ORD has developed a methodology to assess how urbanization has impacted on soil development and affected soil hydrologic providing a minimum dataset for planning and implementing green infrastructure. The results from the New Orleans study are supporting the City's on-going efforts in developing sustainable and resilient water management practices in a unique hydrologic setting facing many environmental challenges, including a high rate of coastal land loss, adaptation to climate change and sea-level rise, and an aging grey infrastructure system.
- **Storm Water Management Model Update:** Building on the 2014 soils study, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the UWFP successfully partnered with the City on a proposal for funding in fiscal year 2016 through the Flood Plain Management Services program to update an existing Storm Water Management Model (SWMM) with the ORD soils study data as well as other new information to evaluate scenarios

where green infrastructure could be implemented as a nature-based approach in managing flood risks during extreme weather events. This study will build on the previous ORD soils study supporting broader objectives of the City's Resilience Strategy and is scheduled to kick off in October 2015.

- **New Canal Lighthouse Museum and Education Center:** The New Canal Lighthouse Museum and Education Center was opened to the public in April 2013. The facility now educates over 1,000 visitors monthly, ranging from school age children to adult groups and tourists, teaching them about the environmental challenges, successes, and future of Southeast Louisiana. [History - the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (LPBF) enlisted the assistance of the UWFP and local citizens to rebuild the New Canal Lighthouse into a museum and education center. The 1890's-era lighthouse located on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain in New Orleans was destroyed in Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The LPBF dismantled the lighthouse and used the original materials in the recreation of the lighthouse, financed with over \$1 million of support from the community.]
- **Lafitte Greenway:** The City of New Orleans is constructing the Lafitte Greenway, a 2.6-mile, multi-use trail and linear park that will connect six historic neighborhoods from the French Quarter to Bayou St. John and Mid-City. A broad range of Federal and non-Federal partners have been involved in developing of the Greenway and construction is scheduled to be complete in Fall of 2015. The City requested the UWFP assist in identifying a sustainable management strategy. In 2013, NPS and the UWFP facilitated a series of public meetings with local stakeholder, resulting in a 2015 agreement between the City and the Trust for Public Land to provide further technical fundraising support..
- **Supporting Underserved Communities:** Local Foods Local Places New Orleans (Louisiana) Friends of Lafitte Greenway received technical support from the US Environmental Protection Agency through the Local Foods Local Places Program to develop a community Strategic Action Plan to increase access to healthy local foods in New Orleans' underserved Lafitte Corridor neighborhoods—neighborhoods that suffer from a high prevalence of poor health outcomes and food insecurity. The Growing the Greenway Committee--composed of community members, stakeholders, and City representatives--is presently implementing the Strategic Action Plan by advocating for and creating community gardens along the Lafitte Greenway. This project seeks to improve health outcomes of local residents, strengthen neighborhoods, support environmental stewardship education, and foster economic growth in the Lafitte Greenway area.
- **The Green Team Youth Program:** The US Environmental Protection Agency and the National Park Service are working closely with Groundwork New Orleans to assist their Youth Program, the Green Team, in focusing on environmental education and workforce development. Green Team members are urban high school students who work in underserved neighborhoods throughout the city. One focus area is the Green Slice, based in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans. This project aims to study and protect Bayou Bienvenue, a body of water decimated by pollution and saltwater intrusion, and improving recreational and educational activities in the neighborhood adjacent to the Bayou. Supported by the Urban Waters program, the Green Team has conducted regular water quality monitoring, assisted with neighborhood surveys and workshops, helped to build a new rain garden and green infrastructure demonstration site, and engaged in community mapping activities to identify hazards and pollution sources. By studying the neighborhood as an urban watershed, students learn how human activities directly impact local waterways, and in turn how urban waterways impact human health and quality of life. They also learn and apply the scientific method, integrate techniques from the environmental and social sciences, gain presentation and organization skills, and have the opportunity to participate in local

and national meetings and conferences.

7. GREATER PHILADELPHIA AREA / DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED (PENNSYLVANIA, NEW JERSEY, DELAWARE)

- **Brownfields Revitalization:** The local Partnership has developed a Regional Brownfields Community of Practice (CoP) that meets regularly and focuses on key near-shore urban brownfield sites. With support from this group, the four partnering cities (Philadelphia, Chester PA, Camden NJ, and Wilmington DE) have been awarded over \$6-million in federal brownfield planning, assessment, cleanup, and job training grants since 2013. Federal agencies are also providing in-kind technical resources and additional grant funding to link these efforts with broader UWFP ecosystem service restoration goals related to climate resilience, fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, recreational enhancement, economic revitalization, and environmental justice. Example projects include Phoenix Park and Harrison Ave Landfill in Camden; Schuylkill and Delaware River waterfront projects in Philadelphia; the Chester Waterfront Master Plan; and the South Wilmington wetland design and construction and planning efforts along the lower Brandywine River. By adding and transferring site-specific benefits and successes, the Brownfields CoP addresses regional needs in the most populated and negatively impacted area of the Delaware Bay and Watershed.
- **Engaging Disadvantaged Youth on the River:** The Wilderness Inquiry Canoemobile, a fleet of vans each with six 24-foot Voyageur canoes, delivers place-based education and paddling experiences on urban rivers and waterways nationwide. In 2013, with the help of the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, the Canoemobile visited the Lower Delaware River and its tributaries for the first time, spending one day in each of the four cities. After that highly successful initial outing, the project was awarded an EPA Urban Waters Small Grant in 2014, enabling the local partners to expand their impact with 3-4 days in each city on future visits. In addition to safely navigating their local waterways, participants conquer their fears, work as teams, test water quality, observe wildlife, try out fishing and rowing, study watershed models, and learn about the cultural history of their urban rivers. Now a celebrated annual event, the Delaware River Canoemobile program has engaged several thousand underserved schoolchildren and community members. The program is a catalyst for federal, state, and local governments, school districts, and nonprofit organizations to come together and provide high quality environmental education at scale and where it is least expected – and most needed.
- **Communications and Connections:** One important foundational activity of the Delaware River UWFP is ongoing communication with engaged partners – now including more than 400 individuals in some 140 organizations across all public and private sectors. Making connections through periodic email compilations of assorted useful items – grants, events, webinars, meetings, resources, job postings, etc. – these “Partner Updates” continually attract new partners and have largely sustained themselves, with new material shared routinely from numerous collaborative sources. Another important method of communication and interconnection is the Annual All Partners Meeting, a day-long event offering informative and inspirational presentations and activities with ample opportunities for participation and networking – the basis for another year of active collaboration.

8. NORTHWEST INDIANA AREA (INDIANA)

- **Helping Local Partners Build Capacity and Secure Grants:** Northwest Indiana federal partners help develop projects, strengthen local collaboration across organizations, enhance existing work, and create new opportunities for not-for-profit community groups, local, state, and other federal governmental agencies across the region. As a result of this added capacity, local partners are developing more robust

and thoughtfully-conceived projects. Additionally, the partnership helps develop successful funding proposals for the USEPA Urban Waters Small Grant Program, Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake Michigan Coastal Program, and other sources. In 2015, local partners secured over \$250,000 in grants for waterway-focused projects that support the Urban Waters goals of connecting urban residents to their waterways and improving water quality monitoring.

- **Increasing Waterway Access:** For years, a vibrant network of paddlers has worked to expand non-motorized boating opportunities in northwest Indiana. They identified a need for wheelchair-accessible boat launches and began raising awareness about the issue – and seeking funding to address it. In 2015, Michigan City installed the state’s first accessible launch and other nearby municipalities are raising funds for additional launches. Since 2012, NPS assisted local organizations to bring Wilderness Inquiry’s Canoemobile program to northwest Indiana. Wilderness Inquiry offers safe, no-cost paddling opportunities to students and families from across the region, including the environmental justice communities of Gary & Michigan City. Most participants have never paddled on local waterways before. Local school districts work with non-profit and government partners to provide land-based education stations at the canoe launch points.

9. SAN ANTONIO RIVER (TEXAS)

- **San Antonio Missions Site Approved as World Heritage Site:** In July 2015, San Antonio’s five Spanish Colonial Missions and the Rancho de las Cabras were approved as a World Heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The San Antonio River has a rich connection to the history of the San Antonio Missions, which is the 23rd World Heritage Site in the United States. The site includes five mission complexes found along the San Antonio River basin. The missions – the most famous of which is the Alamo – were built by Franciscan missionaries in the 18th century. The world heritage site list is made up of more than 1,000 properties throughout the world, including Stonehenge and Machu Picchu.
- **Elmendorf Lake Park Improvements Project:** Elmendorf Lake Park on San Antonio’s West Side is being enhanced with people-friendly and environmentally sensitive features. New additions to the Elmendorf Lake will incorporate rain gardens, wetlands, bio-filtration swales, and an aerator to improve water quality. Some successes to date include: 1) installation of three bridges and a fishing pier, 2) the demolition of a vacant building to make way for added green space, 3) improved hiking and biking trails, 4) construction of stormwater best management practices (BMPs), that will treat stormwater prior to it draining into the lake, and 5) removal of invasive plant species along the shore line. Park improvements are estimated to be completed by the summer of 2016.
- **Martinez Creekway Trail Construction:** Trail construction is underway along the Martinez Creek. The project will link the Martinez and Alazan creeks for pedestrians and cyclists, who make their way across the heavily-traveled part of San Antonio’s West Side. Upon completion, the Martinez Creekway Trail will extend approximately half a mile, providing connections to VIA Metropolitan’s Primo bus line serving the Medical Center and Downtown. The trail is expected to be completed by April 2016.
- **Olmos Basin Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project:** The City of San Antonio and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers entered into a Project Participation Agreement (PPA) in August 2015. The \$2.5M project will restore riparian corridor and stream habitat by 1.) establishing native vegetation and removing non-native invasive plant and tree species and 2.) providing a food source and resting area for migrating neo-tropical birds. Initial preliminary engineering design work is underway with 60% of the design anticipated to be available in August 2016.

10. SOUTH PLATTE WATERSHED FROM THE HEADWATERS TO THE DENVER METROPOLITAN AREA (COLORADO)

- **River Vision Implementation Plan:** The Greenway Foundation continues to partner with numerous public, private, philanthropic and political partners to create ongoing recreational and water quality enhancements along the South Platte River and its tributaries. After three years of planning and visioning, followed by three subsequent years of fundraising, over \$30 Million of projects are in planning, design or construction phases along the entire 10 mile area of the South Platte in Denver. Beneficiaries of these projects are diverse, including several underserved neighborhoods along the river corridor. Example projects include: 1) a new park in the Sun Valley neighborhood adjacent to Weir Gulch, along with improvements to the Gulch as it merges with the south Platte River; 2) conversion of a former landfill dump site into an innovative outdoor education and urban camping amenity at Johnson-Habitat Park; 3) reconstruction of Grant-Frontier Park and Pasquinel's Landing Park, creating improved riparian, recreation, and water quality features; 4) design for a new park in the heart of RiNo, adjacent to the River, as well as a signature pedestrian bridge across the South Platte River increasing access to the river corridor from surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Water Quality Assessment Tool:** The development of an online water quality assessment tool using open source software is underway. The tool will present a cross-jurisdictional view of water quality in the Denver metro area, enhance access to water quality data, and increase understanding of existing water quality in the Denver Metropolitan area waterways. Partners engaged in this project include EPA, USGS, ATSDR, USFS, Denver Water, City and County of Denver, Tri-County Health Department, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Metro Wastewater Reclamation District, Littleton/Englewood Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Groundwork Denver.
- **Natural Capital Ecological Infrastructure Study:** The South Platte River Urban Waters Partnership submitted a successful grant application for US Forest Service (USFS) State and Private Forestry funds to craft a green infrastructure assessment for the river corridor and watershed. This work will result in a tool that documents the network of high value natural watershed resources, with ecosystem services values assigned to critical components of the system. This will allow the prioritization of investments in conservation and restoration of high-performing or threatened critical areas. The \$300,000 grant has been awarded to the Colorado State Forest Service as lead agency for implementation.
- **Denver Department of Public Works, Wastewater Management and Earth Force:** The Denver Department of Public Works, Wastewater Management, is continuing to expand the Keep It Clean-Neighborhood Environmental Trios (KIC-NET) outdoor classroom model developed by environmental education nonprofit, Earth Force, in the impaired South Platte River and tributary watersheds. Many of the children reached through this program live in underserved neighborhoods. The program is expected to help meet pollutant source mitigation needs to protect the South Platte River and Cherry Creek watersheds while adding value to communities and schools.
- **Groundwork Denver Bear Creek Community Stewardship Network:** Groundwork Denver is developing a Community Stewardship Network, which is expected to improve the water quality of and accessibility to the area surrounding Bear Creek. A key component of this project is the Master River Steward Job Training program, which will engage youth from Denver and Sheridan. These stewards will participate in water quality sampling and engage the broader community through education, outreach, stewardship activities, and recreation activities in the watershed. Outputs to be tracked include job training hours, water quality samples collected, households and businesses reached, volunteer hours,

and stakeholders joining a Community Stewardship Network.

- **The Water Connection:** The South Platte River Urban Waters Partnership Coordinator has launched the local venture of the Partnership, The Water Connection. This new endeavor is functioning as the water quality arm of The Greenway Foundation in order to give the national Urban Waters Federal Partnership program a rooted local presence in the South Platte River Watershed. The Water Connection brings the stability of The Greenway Foundation to work in tandem with the Partnership as one enterprise, with an emphasis on action.

11. PROCTOR CREEK WATERSHED/ATLANTA (GEORGIA)

- **Chattahoochee Riverkeeper:** The Riverkeeper with West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, a community partner, has expanded a Neighborhood Water Watch Program and helps to identify and resolve major water pollution problems in Proctor Creek. Additional urban waters small grant funding has allowed the grantee to strengthen this program, which analyzes water samples in partnership with community members. Proctor Creek Watershed residents will implement their second Proctor Creek 'River Rendezvous,' a water quality education and community organizing initiative that connects citizens with local streams.
- **Eco-Action, Inc.:** This project includes low income and predominantly African American communities in the low elevation residential neighborhoods of English Avenue, Vine City and Washington Park that lie in the western part of the Proctor Creek/North Avenue watershed. The Eco-Action, Inc. project brings academics together with leaders of underserved communities to better understand the extent and impact of sewage and stormwater flows from the high elevation Atlanta University Center campuses on the downstream residential communities. The project team is working with Atlanta University Center faculty to incorporate green infrastructure principles and practices, and water quality issues specific to Proctor Creek into their engineering curriculum. These efforts are supported by professional hydrologists and land-use-planning personnel.
- **Proctor Creek Community Showcase:** The rain did not dampen the excitement and spirit of the Proctor Creek Community Showcase held at Grove Park at the site of one of the few daylighted areas of the creek. There was great teamwork from stakeholders, community, nonprofits, city leaders, local government, state and federal agencies setting up the showcase booths and displays inside the Grove Park Recreation Center. There were 30+ booths, entertainment, food and activities for everyone attending the event. Laughter filled the air and some say it was the first time such a diverse gathering for public dialogue and displays for urban community has happened in the City. But what really stood out was the teamwork that was contributed -- and enjoyed. The community planning team worked diligently and volunteered for numerous hours. They were committed to making the showcase an informative, fun and educational experience that could be enjoyed by everyone in the 38 neighborhoods in Proctor Creek Watershed. The community is already talking about making this showcase an annual community event and that's what makes it such a success. The goal of the Proctor Creek Community Showcase is to connect the citizens in the communities to the creek where green space/revitalization efforts are already in progress, and to showcase all the partnerships and efforts in the watershed as well as the continued challenges.
- **Supporting Underserved Communities:** Proctor Creek Health Impact Assessment (HIA): The purpose of Proctor Creek HIA is to help inform the City of Atlanta's decision on whether to implement the proposed project as designed and to provide an avenue for stakeholders, including state environmental and public health agencies, city and county departments, advocacy groups, and the community, to be

engaged in the decision-making process. The HIA evaluates the proposed Boone Boulevard Green Street Project for its potential to impact twelve determinants of health identified by stakeholders – water quality; flood management; climate and temperature; air quality; traffic safety; exposure to greenness; urban noise; access to goods, services, greenspace, and healthcare; crime; social capital; household economics, and community economics. The results of the HIA suggest that the proposed green infrastructure project will have a positive impact on health overall and provides recommendations for implementation and expansion of green infrastructure projects throughout the watershed. [History - Proctor Creek is one of the most impaired creeks in metro-Atlanta and has been placed on the impaired waters list because it does not meet state water quality standards for fecal coliform. The topography, prevalence of impervious surfaces in the watershed, and a strained combined sewer system have contributed to pervasive flooding in the Proctor Creek community and created environmental, public health, economic, and redevelopment issues. A green infrastructure project, aimed at supporting water quality and revitalization improvement efforts, has been proposed in a headwater community of Proctor Creek.]

- **USACE Proctor Creek Watershed Study, Atlanta, Georgia:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is conducting a feasibility study of the watershed which consists of a 16 square mile area and approximately 24 miles of urban stream to determine whether there is a Federal interest in implementing a project. The uppermost 9 stream miles of Proctor Creek headwaters are the most severely degraded within the basin. The study is focusing on opportunities to enhance the aquatic and ecological functions of the watershed that have been lost or degraded during the urbanization process in an effort to identify a project to restore and protect valuable habitat for all life stages of native fishes and at least one endemic state threatened fish species, the bluestripe shiner. The study will also look at opportunities to reduce the potential for flood damages along the creek. Possible solutions include stream channel modifications for the purpose of restoring the aquatic habitat and reducing flood damages, development of a greenway, removal of encroachments, debris removal, removal of exotic species, and planning of desirable species to benefit wildlife. The feasibility study was initiated in October 2015 and is scheduled to be completed in 2018.

12. MARTIN PENA CANAL (PUERTO RICO)

- **USACE Caño Martín Peña Ecosystem Restoration Project:** On May 16, 2016, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Jo-Ellen Darcy, signed the Record of Decision and approved the Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement for the Cano Martin Pena Ecosystem Restoration Project in San Juan, Puerto Rico which was prepared by the non-Federal sponsor, Corporacion del Proyecto ENLACE del Cano Martin Pena (ENLACE) and reviewed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Section 5127 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, Public Law 110-114 authorized a project for Cano Martin Pena subject to the Secretary of the Army reviewing the report prepared by the non-Federal interest and determining that the report met the evaluation and design standards of the Corps of Engineers and that the project was feasible. The project described in the recently approved feasibility report will restore tidal connectivity between the San Jose Lagoon and the San Juan Bay by dredging 2.2 miles of the 3.6 mile long Cano Martin Pena tidal canal. Urban development has encroached into the canal and the placement of fill and accumulation of debris prevent water from flowing naturally through the canal. As a result, ecological conditions in the Cano and adjacent estuarine areas have been severely degraded. Further, during heavy rainfall events, untreated sewage entering the canal cannot be flushed out causing this contaminated water to infiltrate adjacent communities, posing serious health threats to residents. Dredging will involve the removal of over 800,000 cubic yards of sediments, debris and trash. Restoration of the Cano Martin Pena will improve dissolved oxygen levels, reduce water residence time

and reduce salinity stratification. Essential fish habitat conditions will be improved along with the mobility of fish throughout the San Juan Bay Estuary. Biodiversity will be increased by restoring fish habitat and benthic conditions, and the functional value of mangrove habitat within the estuary will also be improved. The project will restore over 6,600 acres and improve living conditions for over 25,000 people who live along the obstructed canal.

- **National Estuaries Program Annual meeting:** The Association of National Estuaries Program will hold its annual conference in Puerto Rico from December 2-4, 2015. The conference's main theme "From Citizen Science to Estuarine Hybridity" will showcase the San Juan Bay Estuary and the Caño Martín Peña.
- **Soil Shop Fair:** A Soil Shop Fair was conducted by EPA and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) on October 3, 2015 in the Buena Vista community. The PR Department of Health, the College of Medical Technologists of PR, and the UPR Agricultural Extension Program were also participants of the activity. The purpose of the fair was to disseminate the results of the study on bioavailability of metals (Arsenic and Lead) in Martín Peña urban gardens, conduct Lead (Pb) soil, and blood screenings. Workshops were offered on health and best management practices for urban farming.
- **Economic Benefit Assessment:** A close collaboration between Enlace, the UN Global Cities Compact, and the RMIT University in Australia is enabling the commencement of the Economic Benefit Assessment Study of the dredging and revitalization of the Caño Martín Peña. The purpose of the study is to validate and further define the socio-economic benefits of the Caño Martín Peña dredging, which will improve quality of life conditions for residents and stimulate economic activity and competitiveness of the Metropolitan Area. This initial stage will consist of community surveys, coordinated through Enlace, to compile socio-economic information, which will be analyzed by RMIT University professors.

13. PASSAIC RIVER/NEWARK (NEW JERSEY)

- **Passaic River Education and Outreach Project:** In 2012, the first phase of Newark's Riverfront Park opened giving residents of the Ironbound section of Newark safe access to the river for the first time. The second phase opened in 2013. Ironbound Community Corporation and the City of Newark received an EPA Urban Waters Federal Partnership small grant to connect residents to this new resource in their community and educate them on becoming stewards of the river. This project included: (1) a series of free Boat Tours and Walkshops that introduced Newark adult and student residents and others to the history and ecosystem of the Passaic River; (2) youth educational workshops on river stewardship; (3) seminars on current river issues; (4) River Day celebrations on the river's edge that taught about its condition and ways to act to improve it; and (5) creation of a "Back to the River" brochure and map that depicts the history and current state of the Lower Passaic River and features a map of the Passaic River from north of Newark to Newark Bay, emphasizing Newark's riverfront, river access points, and the riverfronts of neighboring municipalities.
- **Passaic River Cleanup and Restoration:** To date, there have been two significant cleanups of the Passaic River. The first success was the removal of 40,000 cubic yards of the most concentrated inventory of dioxin-contaminated sediment in the riverbed adjacent to the Diamond Alkali facility, a former pesticides manufacturing facility and Superfund Site. The second success was the removal of 16,000 cubic yards of surface sediment (2 feet) over a five-acre area, followed by capping of the riverbed to prevent future exposure to the sediments at River Mile 10.9, adjacent to Riverside Park in Lyndhurst, NJ. EPA also conducted a multi-year study focusing on the cleanup of the sediments of the lower 8 miles of the river. In April 2014, EPA proposed a cleanup plan for the lower 8 miles, which ultimately will lead to a cleanup remedy for the sediments of the lower 8 miles of the Passaic River. A comprehensive study

of the Passaic River up to River Mile 17 is ongoing in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the State of New Jersey. The USACE has also made progress on the restoration planning for the Lower Passaic watershed as part of the Hudson-Raritan Estuary (HRE) ecosystem restoration study. The draft feasibility report and Environmental Assessment for the HRE study will be released for public review in 2016.

- **Passaic River Flood Risk Management:** The USACE and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) partnered to complete the Passaic River Basin Study in the 1980s to determine the best flood risk management alternatives to help communities throughout the Passaic River basin. The recommended plan included approximately 11 miles of levees and floodwalls, and associated closure structures and pump stations to reduce flood risk for the tidally-flood prone areas in Newark, Harrison, and Kearny NJ. As a result of Hurricane Sandy, the USACE NY District initiated a general re-evaluation study of the previously-authorized levee and floodwall plan in Newark, Harrison, and Kearny, NJ. The draft general re-evaluation report and Environmental Assessment for the study will be released for public review in 2016.
- **Passaic River Erosion Control:** The USACE and NJDEP partnered to complete a three-phase erosion control and recreational development plan in 1996 for the Joseph G. Minish Passaic River Waterfront Park, which extends from Bridge Street to Brill Street in Newark, NJ. Minish Park is congruent with the previously-referenced Riverfront Park. The major features of the overall project include stream bank erosion features, including a bulkhead and stream bank stabilization measures (Phase I), and recreation facilities (Phases II and III). Portions of the Phase I features were completed between 1996 and 2016. In 2016, the USACE NY District released a draft Limited Reevaluation Report to support the construction of the remaining Phase I features. Completion of Phase I would reduce the risk of land loss by stabilizing a portion of the stream bank along the Passaic River providing the foundation for the return of public access within the city of Newark, NJ.

14. BRONX AND HARLEM RIVER WATERSHEDS (NEW YORK)

- **USGS Harlem-Bronx River Watershed:** The USGS compiled 100+ years of water-quality data related to the Harlem River from a variety of sources; it will be summarized in a report and evaluated for trends. The USGS is working with the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) to better understand the current quality of the stormwater runoff and how much pollutant loading to Harlem River will be reduced by an innovative pop-up wetland. Since 2011, the USGS has been participating in the annual Harlem River Festival, an event which has grown into a two-week-long, borough-wide outreach effort that brings the local communities together through educational activities. The USGS and BCEQ continue to work with faculty and students from minority serving institutions (such as Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College, Lehman College [CUNY], and Borough of Manhattan Community College) to help collect and interpret water-quality information and sustain green infrastructure projects.
- **\$10 Million in Federal Dot Funding to Complete Final Link along Bronx River Greenway:** The Bronx UWFP helped secure letters of support, incorporate supportive language in the original proposal, and organized de-brief with USDOT after the first proposal was rejected. The \$10M from USDOT will close the Greenway's most critical gap, a three-quarter mile segment in the South Bronx. The federal funding will go towards the construction of two bicycle/pedestrian bridges and approximately 0.75 miles of pathway between Concrete Plant and Starlight Parks. It will open the Greenway to thousands of South

Bronx residents and complete 1.8 miles of contiguous off-street trail, providing easy access to the full Bronx River Greenway system, the vision for which was supported by the NPS early on. This award will be matched by funding from Mayor de Blasio, New York State Department of Transportation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation/Department of the Interior Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant program, and funding allocated by NY State Senator Ruben Diaz, Sr. and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.

- **Approximately \$400,000 U.S. DOI's NFWF Resilience Award:** This project would reduce the vulnerability of Bronx communities from future coastal storms and significantly contribute to the remarkable, continuing ecological restoration of the Bronx River. The project would restore floodplain functions for 1.7 acres of the Bronx River waterfront, by re-naturalizing 740 feet of armored shoreline, re-grading and removing fill from the estuarine floodplain and restoring native salt marsh grasses in 0.55 acres of new wetlands. The project would also apply stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as rain gardens and infiltration basins, along 11 acres of parkland and reduce the risk of human exposure to toxic substances in future flooding events by removing contaminated soils found along the waterfront. Moreover, the project would help to realize a long-sought community vision: a continuous greenway along the Bronx River, designed with ecological principles that would provide access to and along the river to thousands of Bronx residents and visitors.

15. MERAMEC AND BIG RIVER (MISSOURI)

- **Big River/ Meramec River UWFP Ambassador Funding:** The Corps and USEPA signed an interagency agreement (IAs) in September 2014 for the UWFP Ambassador position in FY2015. Subsequent IAs have been executed for FY15 and FY16 for USACE to support the UWFP. Because USACE has an active study in this basin that requires similar coordination, the Ambassador also serves as the Study Manager and has been able to coordinate both efforts to achieve both UWFP objectives as well study objectives. Both the USEPA and USACE have been able to leverage funding because the ambassadorship complements the ecosystem restoration feasibility study, as well as areas beyond the immediate feasibility study area. The
- **Expanding the Conversation Partnership Meeting:** Building on the existing Big Rivers Task Force of State and Federal agencies, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Ambassador and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Our Missouri Waters coordinated presentations and information sharing about existing programs and opportunities for collaboration. Topics included hydraulic modeling, stream restoration and enhancement, applied research, watershed planning, health effects of lead, and available programs from The Nature Conservancy, Saint Louis University, US Forest Service Watershed program, the National Corporation for Community Service program, US Geological Survey Missouri Water Science Center, Natural Resources Conservation Service and East-West Gateway Council of Governments.
- **Lower Meramec Hands-On Stewardship and Watershed Education Project:** This project focused on the Lower Meramec Watershed, which drains nearly 4,000 square miles of central and eastern Missouri, including the southern St. Louis metropolitan area. The three-tiered collaborative project builds on community partnerships to address specific recommendations in the Lower Meramec Watershed plan by engaging in: 1) on-the-ground riparian habitat restoration through the Open Space Council's Operation Clean Stream river stewardship project; 2) a public education exhibit of this watershed by creating and publicizing a public work of art, known as "Watershed Cairns;" 3) an assessment, analysis

and technical interpretation conducted by St. Louis University. At the end, the project leads had a meeting on the riverbanks to discuss potential collaboration projects in the Meramec watershed.

- **US Corps of Engineers Partnering with Missouri DNR on Second Joint Feasibility Study in US History:** The FCSA was executed in August 2015 between USACE and MDNR to conduct an ecosystem restoration feasibility study along the Meramec and Big Rivers. The study is investigating projects to address connectivity, excessive sedimentation, and bank instability. The USEPA is conducting a Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study in the same area, which is a Superfund site, in parallel with USACE's study. While USACE and USEPA are not cost-share partners for the studies, both agencies are collaborating to ensure the studies are consistent, are not redundant, and leverage Federal funding. Because the intent is to identify projects that meet USACE's aquatic ecosystem restoration mission and USEPA's human health and ecological risk reduction mission, the collaborative effort has been referred to as a Joint Feasibility Study.

16. GREEN-DUWAMISH WATERSHED (WASHINGTON)

- **Green-Duwamish Watershed Tour:** On July 14, the annual Green-Duwamish Watershed Tour will showcase the year in restoration with a particular focus on strategic partnerships and projects that yield multiple benefits, such as habitat restoration, social equity, and human health and well-being. Hosted by King County's Salmon Habitat Restoration program and the USFS Urban Waters program (funded by the USFS). Contact Tracy Stanton, Urban Waters Partnership Ambassador at: tstanton@me.com.
- **Salmon:** Across the Green-Duwamish River Watershed in Washington State, maintaining water quality for spawning salmon has long been a focus natural resource agencies across all levels of government. Recently, through a series of meetings with tribal leaders and environmental justice stakeholders, the agencies have expanded their focus, exploring how public health and economic development concerns overlap with natural resource management. These issues are among those that will be factored into an emerging Re-vegetation Strategy being developed for the Green-Duwamish watershed with an expected release in June 2016.

17. MYSTIC RIVER WATERSHED (MASSACHUSETTS)

- **FEMA:** has a long-standing presence in the Mystic River Watershed with regards to water quantity and flooding issues. FEMA was very involved in the Watershed Summit and in early Steering Committee meetings. We contacted FEMA and they have agreed to re-engage with this initiative on water quantity issues as they relate to water quality and overflows. There are many opportunities to engage their expertise in our Water Quality Work Group and SSO work.
- **Canoemobile:** In September 2015, Canoemobile, by Wilderness Inquiry, came to the Mystic River enabling more than 300 students from the City of Somerville to venture on to the Mystic in 24-foot Voyageur canoes. In addition to the on the water activities, partnering agencies such as US Forest Service, the National Park Service and EPA manned land based stations where students learned about water quality, local history and the environment through hands-on activities. This was the pilot year of the Canoemobile program in the Boston area with intention to continue in future years in order to connect urban youth to the natural world through hands-on and outdoor learning.
- **Stream Gauge Installation:** In August 2015, USGS installed three new stream gauges (for a total of six in the watershed) on the Mystic River in August 2015. After the gauges are tested, all the data will be available live online. Data from these gauges will be analyzed by EPA, USGS and the Mystic River

Watershed Association in order to aid in the development of a phosphorous loading study for the watershed. The findings of this study will be used in the development of a TMDL for Phosphorus, which could have significant impacts on water quality in the watershed.

18. WESTERN LAKE ERIE BASIN, NEAR TOLEDO (OHIO)

- **Partnership Meetings:** The Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) Partnership held eight partnership meetings since the first one held in 2013. Meetings have been held in the Toledo OH area, and one was held in an upstream community in conjunction with a River Summit held in Ft. Wayne, IN in April 2015. The most recent partnership meeting was held on October 20, 2015 in Toledo.
- **Community Planning and Outreach:** WLEB organized several community events, including: stream clean-ups and rain barrel construction workshops. As harmful algal blooms (HABs) continue to be a concern for WLEB partners, the Partnership is developing nine-element approved watershed management plans, and a coordinated outreach strategy about Lake Erie waters.

19. MIDDLE BLUE RIVER (MISSOURI)

- **Blue River Flood Inundation Maps:** The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the City of Kansas City, MO and Overland Park, KS, created digital flood-inundation maps for the Blue River and its tributaries Brush Creek, Indian Creek and Tomahawk Creek. The USGS Flood Inundation Mapping Program focuses its efforts at state and local levels to help communities understand flood risks and make cost-effective mitigation decisions. The availability of real-time inundation maps will increase the awareness of flood risks and help protect the lives and property of those who live, work, and play along the Blue River. The flood-inundation maps, accessed through the USGS Flood Inundation Mapping Science Web site at http://water.usgs.gov/osw/flood_inundation/, depict the spatial extent and depth of flooding corresponding to selected water levels at 18 streamgages and associated stream reaches in the Blue River Basin and is one of the largest single USGS flood inundation mapping efforts in the nation. Near-real-time stage data may be obtained from the USGS National Water Information System at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/> or the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service at <http://water.weather.gov/ahps/>.
- **Community Engagement Logic Model:** The National Park Service Rivers Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS RTCA), assisted the partnership in creating a community engagement logic model, through its technical assistance to communities program. This model will inform community engagement across the partnership and is the first step for NPS RTCA provided technical assistance, which will also include the creation of “hands-on” community engagement map tools, and a series of community meetings designed to listen for how river neighbors relate to and engage the river. Overall the matrix guides four goals: Deepening understanding of river history and culture; creating public awareness for river stewardship; restoring riparian habitats; and providing greater access.
- **Forest Restoration Climate Framework:** The US Forest Service (USFS) has assisted the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) in creating a draft forest restoration climate framework (<http://climateframework.org/MiddleBlueRiver>). In their climate change vulnerability assessment, managers from the Middle Blue River relied on regional technical input reports from the National Climate Assessment, tree species habitat suitability modeling results from the Climate Change Tree Atlas, and other relevant primary and secondary literature. Several adaptation approaches were identified across the watershed

that differed by landscape position and land use and a matrix of potential tactics related to these approaches was created. The final framework will be utilized across partnership restoration projects and be promoted to influence projects throughout the watershed.

- **Unified Messaging:** With contract assistance from the EPA Urban Waters Program, the partnership has designed a unified brand for the Blue River: Renew the Blue: partners for a healthy blue river. The brand will be launched inside a strategic unified message campaign that is being developed with multiple partners throughout the watershed.