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NOTES FOR US EPA URBAN WATER FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP MEETING – 10/18

HOW TO GROW AND SUSTAIN THE MOVEMENT FOR URBAN WATERS AND FOSTER SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Thank you for the opportunity to be here
- Acknowledge my ancestors and the land we occupy, that was once occupied by the Piscataway and other Native Peoples
- Appreciate the invitation to be on this panel and the work of the partnership to provide integrated support to communities as they transform their local waters – we need more of that.
- Treat Water as a ‘relative’ and not a ‘resource’. Prayers to those who continue to live with water, but also to those whose lives are being changed dramatically by water.
- My personal connection to water: Belle Isle, Rouge River
- Overall mission is to ‘re-connect people to water’
- My vision is around ‘re-connecting’ people to water. I know I’ve taken for granted our water ways, and access, affordability for most of my life. But now is the time to change that.
- We don’t have time not to: whether it’s the recent report from the UNFCCC, whether it’s the climate driven flooding, hurricanes, etc. we cannot afford to wait anylonger. No more excuses.
- Before I begin with my vision, I have to say, the agenda you all have put together is packed with visionaries, true water movers and shakers – Andy Kricun from Camden, Mike Seattle, Darryl from WAWA, Eric from Quantified Ventures, Adam Ortiz from Prince Georges county...just to name a few, and many folks from the federal agencies to acknowledge as well.

I’d like to share some thoughts on a couple of items:

A) The vision I have for our Water work at Kresge

B) Some highlights from a recent assessment we conducted of our water work

C) What it will take to achieve our visions:

- Advancing racial equity, and address institutional and structure racism
 - Recognize the connection to history
 - Ask the hard questions
- My fight is your fight
- Water as a relative
- New partners
- Education/voting
- Youth
- Wholistic view of the work – and our connections

The vision I have for our Water work at Kresge

- The Kresge Foundation: The Kresge Foundation was founded in 1924 to promote human progress. Today, Kresge fulfills that mission by building and strengthening pathways to opportunity for low-income people in America's cities, seeking to dismantle structural and systemic barriers to equality and justice.
- Mission of Environment Program: build our resilience to climate change – to do that, we have to address urban flooding
- CREWS: Transform urban storm water and waste water systems so they provide reliable, equitable, and innovative services to communities despite the uncertainties introduced by climate change.
- We made an intentional decision to focus on urban flooding because that is where we saw LIC/COC suffering the most, offering the most opportunity
- To me in order to transform urban water systems we will have to:

New strategy on water – vision – 7 elements to that vision

- Integrated, nimble and responsive to climate change
- Manages storm water and wastewater in an equitable way so everyone benefits
- Engages low-income and other marginalized communities in storm water and waste water planning
- Provides multiple benefits to water users - economic, social, and health-related
- Processes storm water and waste water in an energy-efficient manner
- Embeds climate change considerations into the capital planning processes for storm water and waste water
- Encourage practices that get people thinking across the silos

And we have grantees working on each of those elements.

Don't have time to talk about each and every one – and I'll Diana speak to River Network's work, but I will highlight a couple of streams of work:

Provide an example from the 3 groups we support:

- Utility sector
- Municipal leaders
- Community based organizations
- Impact Investing

US Water Alliance – water equity roadmap; water equity tables

- Connections between water, equity, and climate are not well understood. Many utilities are engaged on climate resilience planning but lack a nuanced sense of the challenges facing vulnerable communities. On the other side of the coin, community advocates calling for equity and climate justice would benefit from a deeper understanding of water systems and the best levers for advancing opportunity for low-income people and communities of color.

- o Six-City Water Equity Taskforce. A cross-sector, multi-city platform to support collaboration, capacity building, and knowledge exchange on water equity in Atlanta, Buffalo, Camden, Cleveland, Louisville, and Milwaukee.
- o Ten-City Equitable Climate Resilience Bootcamp. We will develop an invitation-only strategic workshop for 10 cities to help them move on the path to equitable climate resilience.

Southeast Sustainability Directors Network, partnership with The Kendeda Fund

The Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund is a partnership between the Southeast Sustainability Directors Network, The Kendeda Fund and The Kresge Foundation. Starting in 2017, the SSCF has invested in six communities throughout the South who are leading the way in sustainability and resilience efforts. Led by local governments, projects are focused on equitable solutions to local climate change challenges. Specifically, projects are focused on energy and water outcomes, and seek to set up a new local partnerships and new paths toward inclusive community engagement.

Water-focused projects include those happening in Duck Hill, Mississippi and Savannah, Georgia.

Current grantees are finishing their first year of project work. Takeaways and stories from the first year of project work include:

- A new approach to equitable community engagement – Buncombe County has been working with an equity expert and the City of Asheville’s Equity Manager to implement new community engagement strategies focused on building community trust, listening and development of new infrastructure to reach community members
- Development of new partnerships – The City of Savannah has developed a new partnership with the University of Georgia’s Urban Agriculture program to provide trainees access to an online training program that will assist trainees in working toward a Georgia Certified Landscape Professional License.
- Exploration of policy – The City of Chattanooga has established a policy advisory committee with new partners to explore policy opportunities for continuing energy efficiency work.
- Adaptation and mitigation results – The Town of Duck Hill saw heavy rain storms bring 7” of rain in one hour, but report improved mitigation of flooding due to the installed green infrastructure measures

Project summaries and activities for water-related projects include:

The Town of Duck Hill seeks to improve its mitigate heavy flooding, particularly in the town’s only community gathering place, it’s local recreation center. Project partners are installing green infrastructure measures through a skill-building program for local high school students. Project partners are also conducting the first climate vulnerability assessment and community-led planning process in the town’s history. The desired outcome is a local community that is more aware of and equipped to deal with climate change challenges and establishment of the town’s first green infrastructure measures.

Duck Hill project partners: Action Communications and Education Reform; Eco Adapt; Sustainability Works; Mississippi State School of Architecture, Art and Design

In Savannah, project partners are improving the community's resilience to the effects of major storm events and heavy rains by using flood-prone FEMA lots in Savannah's neighborhood's with low income for urban tree nurseries and green infrastructure pilot projects. The project is being implemented through community engagement efforts in two neighborhoods in Savannah, and includes a green-job training and job placement program. So far, the City has been able to develop new community partnerships to prepare for tree planting in the fall of 2018. A curriculum and cohort of local neighbors has been assembled for the job training piece of the project, which also kicks off this fall. The desired outcome is to build wealth among the communities, and also support climate resilience through green infrastructure.

Savannah project partners: Savannah Tree Foundation, Savannah Impact Program, Victory Gardens, UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant

Green Infrastructure Exchange:

- The City of New Haven emphasizes partnerships with nonprofits to leverage opportunities for community engagement and stewardship. For example, most of their bioswales came from their partnership with a nonprofit through which they were able to employ ex-offenders via the organization Emerge. They designed their bioswales with this labor force in mind, using hand digging, eliminating heavy machinery, etc.
- This year, noting the inclusivity of its approach, New Haven's Green Infrastructure program won the Harvard's School of Government 2018 Roy Family Award for Environmental Partnership. This award is presented every two years to celebrate an outstanding public-private partnership project that enhances environmental quality through novel and creative approaches.

In Atlanta, GA:

- I'm going to focus on urban-flooding. The city developed a Strategic Action Plan has been developed by the GI Task Force to serve as a comprehensive action plan for City-wide GI implementation: addressing institutional and funding barriers, increasing effectiveness, and engaging multiple city departments, citizens, the development community, and environmental groups in working towards GI implementation.
- ECO-Action has led an effort with the Coalition for Community Benefits to develop equity-focused project evaluation criteria for Department of Watershed Management's stormwater management projects that are being incorporated into their revised model for project prioritization
- In addition, both ECO-Action and American Rivers have been serving on the core team of the Atlanta Water Equity Task Force convened by the Department of Watershed and the US Water Alliance with the purpose of advancing equitable development in Atlanta's watersheds. Our next step is finalizing a Water Equity Roadmap to guide our collective work.
- I want to highlight the work of two groups in Atlanta – Eco Action, a community based, people of color led org. that started working on environment health and expanded to address urban flooding in several LIC neighborhoods in Atlanta. They have created an education platform for community members so they understand and advocate on their own behalf for better water management.

- Eco Action along with partner American Rivers are a part of a larger task force to work on comprehensive SW mgt. around Georgia Tech. The Intrenchment Custer Task One Water Management Task Force is off to a running start with seventeen partner organizations including local resident leaders and graduates of the Atlanta Watershed Learning Network program, state and city government, a private developer, Georgia State University, and local non-profit advocacy groups.

Earth Economics

- Since 1998, Earth Economics has been helping quantify the benefits of ecosystem services and take nature into account in policy making and project development. They are a nonpartisan economic research and policy organization working throughout the United States and internationally to provide science-based, ecologically sound economic analysis. This project will seek to embed the key tenets of green infrastructure planning and ecosystem services into the DNA of federal agencies, local governments, and the public at large. Currently, the majority of planners, council members, program managers and residents responsible for project design and implementation do not have the vocabulary and examples to understand and convey the importance of green infrastructure. Meanwhile, community leaders and city staff lack access to appropriate case studies and expert support to design and implement their projects. Earth Economics has collaborated with Kresge grantees in the past and will expand such engagement under this grant, providing both group trainings and one-on-one consultation on specific local projects.
- Thanks again for speaking with me and Matt last week. Attached is the high-level concept document that starts to lay out some ways in which the philanthropic community can strategically engage in the process of bringing municipal adoption of GI to scale. The ultimate goal is to issue guidance in the final report that is intertwined with the 5 focus areas for municipalities as they shift from pitching individual projects to mainstreaming the development of integrated infrastructure programs, both as a means of attracting largescale investment and also in order to systematize the inclusion of green assets in capital planning, rather than leave it to the role of an individual advocate or champion to scrap together opportunities.

Deep South Center for EJ:

Milwaukee Water commons:

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is working to introduce municipalities across the Chesapeake Bay watershed to a new financing model. This model, called the Environmental Impact Bond (EIB), can be used to help pay for green infrastructure projects to manage stormwater. The EIB engages new sources of capital from private impact investors and allows municipalities to share the risk for new, unproven, or under-resourced projects, protecting public budgets. In 2018, Baltimore, Maryland, signed on as CBF's first municipal partner, with plans to issue a \$6.2 million EIB to finance 90 green infrastructure projects across the city.

National Climate Water Equity Caucus - PolicyLink

CREWS Assessment:

Earlier last year, we commissioned a report through Meridian Institute and American Rivers

I wanted to understand – after 10 years of grantmaking in the water space, but also with almost 2 years of grantmaking focused deeply on equity, an analysis. This report describes the challenges, needs and opportunities facing leaders working at the intersection of water, climate and equity; assesses how Kresge's CREWS grantees are addressing equity issues; outlines practical next steps for a developing community of practice and is a repository of knowledge generated to date from Kresge water grantees.

This was the first report to look at work explicitly at the intersection of climate change, water and equity

We wanted to also use this opportunity to analyze Kresge grant making and also the diversity of our grantee partners:

- Analyzed staff, board diversity: and all were still majority white, below 40% in staff and board. We can only work at changing this by knowing where we stand
- majority of projects incorporated both equity and climate resilience as main foci. In 71% of projects where equity was a main project focus, climate resilience was also a main focus. However, when climate resilience was a main project focus, equity was also a main focus only 53% of the time.
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This report was informed by

- analysis of written grant materials (e.g., grant proposals, program officer grant summaries, and grant reports)
- perspectives shared by Kresge Foundation grantees through phone interviews.
- phone interviews conducted with external (i.e., non-grantee) experts working in the fields of water, climate change, and/or equity.

Some key findings that I think very much should inform the vision we have for urban waters and transforming our water systems...

Connecting People at All Scales to the Issues

- Link relevant data and information about impacts and potential solutions to immediate, everyday concerns such as employment, public safety, children’s health, and quality of life.
- Use the power of storytelling to humanize the issues and convey the real toll urban flooding can have on the lives of ordinary people.
- Connect local water and flooding problems with core civil rights issues or high-profile news stories such as the Flint drinking-water crisis or the Standing Rock pipeline protests to help people understand the link to equity.
- Engage prominent cultural figures at local scales (e.g., clergy, barbers, hair stylists) and national scales (e.g., entertainers, athletes) as messengers, and leverage their influence to catalyze dialogue and engagement among local and national political leaders and decision makers. For example, Hip Hop Caucus works

Raising Awareness of and Gaining Buy-In to Solutions

- Clear articulation of co-benefits is crucial to gaining buy-in from diverse parties on proposed solutions.
- Municipalities do not typically prioritize the potential climate resilience or social benefits of GSI, instead primarily focusing on meeting stormwater management regulations and the potential for increased property value (and corresponding tax revenue).
- Social-cohesion benefits of GSI result from public participation mechanisms such as
- design charrettes, as well as the creation of
- new community spaces for people to gather and recreate.

Building Trust and Forging Strong Alliances with Affected Communities

Educational materials and practical toolkits should be designed in user-friendly formats and written in plain, understandable language.

n Since structural racism and inequity tend to be taken-for-granted in communities of color, training local leaders in DEI concepts and building their understanding of power dynamics can be enlightening and empowering.

Increase the emphasis on climate resilience

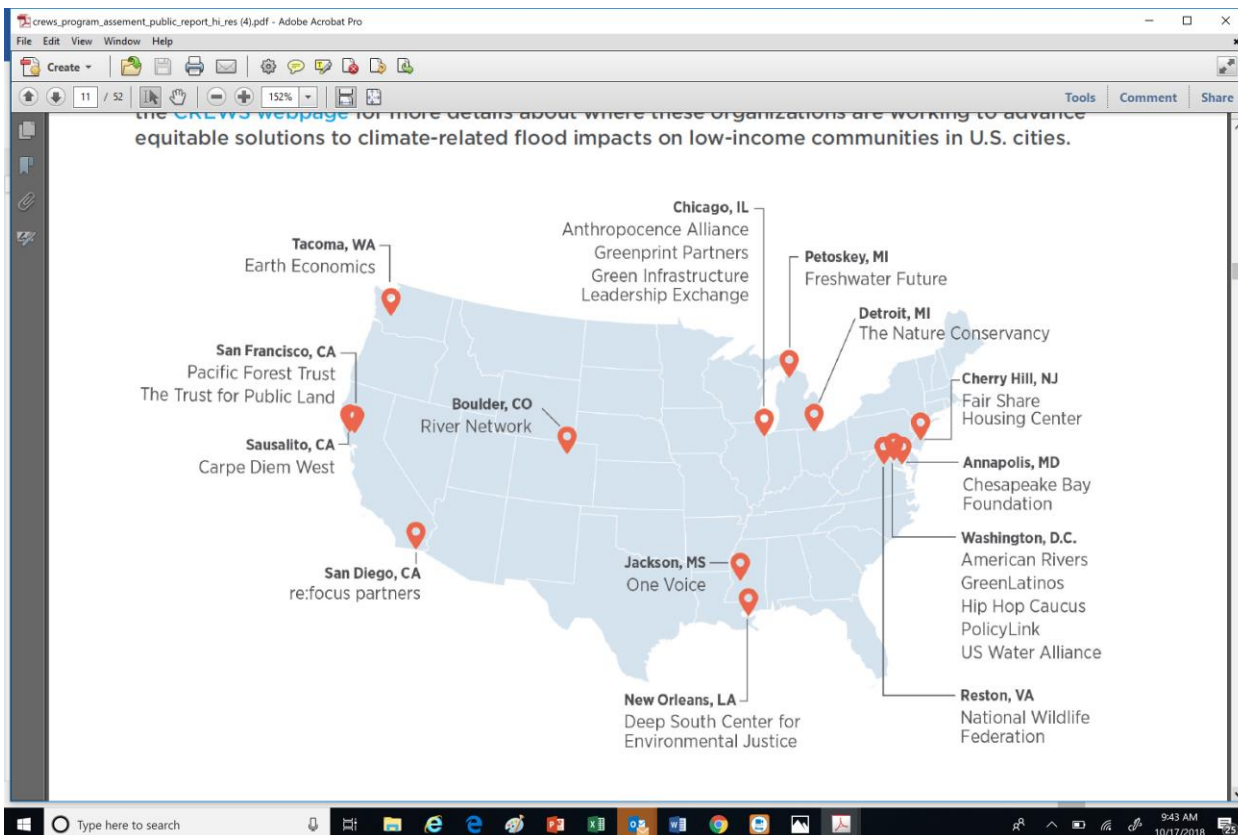
Summary of Key Practitioner Needs

n Greater awareness of the importance of functional stormwater and wastewater infrastructure among residents in low-income communities and communities

of color.

- Greater awareness among decision makers at the local, state, and federal level of the disparities associated with urban flooding, and the related environmental, social, and economic impacts in low-income communities and communities of color.
- Evaluation and demonstration of the full spectrum of GSI benefits in more compelling, evidence-driven ways.
- Access to experts in comparing the triple-bottom-line benefits of GSI versus grey stormwater infrastructure, or training on decision support tools that can run holistic cost-benefit analyses.

- Better and more-actionable information to gain buy-in for GSI projects from affected residents and decision makers.
- Innovative financing strategies to fund the implementation of GSI projects in low-income communities.
- Training for national organizations, utility managers, and municipal staff on DEI and culturally sensitive civic engagement strategies.
- Education for local organizations on the water cycle, integrated water management, how water systems and utilities operate, the drivers and impacts of climate change, and local planning and decision-making processes.
- Skills training for local organizations in civic engagement, advocacy, communications, use of decision support tools, and DEI.
- Funding that allows local leaders and community-based organizations to build and sustain institutional capacity over time.
- Deeper education on climate science and training in using it to inform project planning and decision making.



- Milwaukee Water commons
- Eco Action
- Southeast Sustainable Directors Network

D) What it will take to achieve our visions:

I'm optimistic

- Advancing racial equity, and address institutional and structure racism
 - Recognize the connection to history
 - Ask the hard questions
- My fight is your fight
- Water as a relative
- New partners
- Education/voting
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- Wholistic view of the work – and our connections