

**Future of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership**  
*Call with Local Government Officials and Organizations*

**Meeting Summary**  
**Wednesday, May 25, 2016**  
**2:00 PM-4:00 PM EDT**

## Conference Call Participants

### Speakers:

- Carolyn Berndt, National League of Cities (NLC), Principal Associate for Infrastructure and Sustainability
- Stephanie Mash, African American Mayors Association (AAMA), Executive Director
- Andrea Fox, International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Sustainability Director
- Ken Brown, National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals (NALGEP), Executive Director
- Judy Sheahan, US Conference of Mayors (USCM), Assistant Executive Director
- Sandi Fowler, City of Cedar Rapids, IA, Assistant City Manager
- Lorrie Louder, St. Paul, MN Port Authority, Senior Vice President for Business and Intergovernmental Affairs
- Chris Bird, Alachua County, FL Environmental Protection Department, Director
- Mayor Jacqueline Goodall, Forest Heights, MD
- Jane Bacchieri, Portland, OR, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Dr. Hector Gonzalez, Laredo, TX
- Quentin Savvoir, Mayor's Office, Kansas City, MO
- Ed Johnson, City of Tampa, FL
- Michelle Van Loan, City of Tampa, FL
- Mayor Elizabeth Kautz, Burnsville, MN
- David Henry, Tallahassee, FL
- Tim Fields, MDB, Inc. (Facilitator)

### Listeners:

- Mike Shapiro, EPA Office of Water, Deputy Assistant Administrator
- Arnita Hannon, EPA Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations
- Roy Simon, EPA Office of Water
- Emily Simonson, EPA Office of Water
- Abu Moulta Ali, EPA Office of Water
- Steve Jones, EPA
- Andrea Grossman, White House Office of Management and Budget, Environment Branch
- Charles Kovatch, White House Council on Environmental Quality
- Michael Freedberg, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- David Ives, Economic Development Administration
- Sharunda Buchanan, CDC/ATSDR
- Julian Gonzales, Association of Clean Water Administrators
- Sarah Low, Forest Service

- Katherine Antos, Anacostia River Urban Waters Ambassador
- Jennifer Ousley, EPA Region 7
- Adele Cardenas, EPA Region 6
- Lynne Westphal, Forest Service
- Alice Ewen, Forest Service
- April Bennett, National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences
- Susan Wells, Fish and Wildlife Service
- Rosa Moreno, Corporation for National and Community Service
- Ryan Campbell, MDB, Inc.

### ***Agenda and Program Overview***

**Tim Fields, MDB, Inc.:** Thank you to Roy Simon and Arnita Hannon of EPA for organizing this conference call with local government officials and organizations. Mr. Fields mentioned that the purpose of the call was to discuss the future of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP). This is being done at the request of several cities and metropolitan areas who expressed interest in joining the Partnership beyond the original 19 communities Mr. Fields provided an overview of the agenda highlighting three discussion questions along with an open dialogue at the end of the call. Speakers on the call were five local government organizations along with their invited local governmental officials. This conference call built upon the Local Government Roundtable at the 2015 National Brownfields Conference (9/2/15). Additional future discussions on the Future of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) will be held at the 2016 Urban Waters National Training Workshop on July 26-28. Mr. Fields provided context for this discussion noting that the same process for selecting the 19 UWFP locations will not be used in the future. Therefore, the goal of this discussion is to explore how new cities and communities can form urban waters partnerships and have access to the UWFP in a new way. He then laid out the ground rules for the discussion of the three questions provided to the participants in the discussion guide.

### ***Discussion Question 1: Why might a community/metropolitan area choose to “self-affiliate” with the Partnership? What are the benefits of being an affiliate of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership?***

**Ken Brown, NALGEP:** Financial support for new cities and communities is always a top interest. Informing new cities that they will be joining a network is beneficial, so that new cities can learn from the 19 UWFP locations. Communicate to new affiliates that the 14 Federal agency and State partners can bring multiple benefits. Offering technical assistance to new affiliates could entice them to join. With a new Administration coming into office in 2017, new resources could be available, especially with the attention on the needs in Flint, MI; those resources should be leveraged.

**Stephanie Mash, AAMA:** Having a streamlined place for access to opportunities and resources for communities would be useful, so that they can quickly and efficiently be directed to resources without being additionally overburdened. It would also be useful to know of resources that are forthcoming and open to communities.

**Judy Sheahan, USCM:** If federal resources cannot be directed to new affiliates, sharing lessons learned from existing urban waters locations would be best. Lessons learned can include what has worked for the locations, how they accessed resources, and how they formed public-private partnerships, so that those best practices can be replicated. Cities and counties have limited staff hours, so if stories can be made accessible to others, cities and counties will help distribute those stories.

**Andrea Fox, ICMA:** ICMA is happy to help spread the word about the good work of the UWFP. Sharing success stories builds cross-jurisdictional relationships, allows leaders to be recognized, and builds stronger teams to identify and go after resources. Managers could team together for funding opportunities also.

**Carolyn Berndt, NLC:** If an affiliate can have a direct connection to a Federal agency contact that would be helpful. Small and medium sized cities need additional attention because they typically do not have the budgets of larger cities. They are also not eligible for HUD community block development grants. There are many initiatives, such as the Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC), where new affiliates could work with PSC locations and work in a coordinated manner. Having urban waters technical leads/program experts at the 14 federal agency partners would be helpful for affiliates to get acquainted with the UWFP.

**Elizabeth Kautz, Burnsville, MN:** Medium sized cities have capacity constraints compared to larger cities. Facilitating grant procedures and technical assistance for grant writing would be helpful. A guide on resources available for urban waters affiliates and locations would also be made available through GIS mapping.

**Mayor Goodall, Forest Heights, MD:** Small and medium sized cities often do not know how to access federal resources. Small cities can partner with large cities successfully. Compiling resources and technical assistance in one easily-accessible place will allow small and medium cities to be aware of and address urban waters issues. It is important to get the word out to these locations.

**Jane Bacchieri, Portland, OR:** Affiliates would want to know if they have access to the same resources as the 19 UWFP locations. Would cities have access to those resources if they decided to not be an affiliate of the UWFP? Knowing the added value of being an affiliate and where the initiative is going is important. In Portland, equity and development are key issues, and there are many local needs. Providing access to federal resources and technical assistance would be helpful. Portland does not apply for grants under \$50,000 due to limited staff to respond to such opportunities.

**Lorrie Louder, St. Paul, MN:** St. Paul is interested in becoming an affiliate of the UWFP. St. Paul depends on a variety of resources including loans and grants. She mentioned partnering with research entities to solve issues in innovative ways. Their key focus areas are waterfront development and stormwater management. St. Paul uses the Department of Treasury's new market tax credit program and is also funded by the Department of Energy. The city seeks to create a local job base through brownfields redevelopment.

**Discussion Question 2: What could be the expected commitments of new “self-affiliated locations?”**

**Andrea Fox, ICMA:** Commitments could require that affiliates share their messages in peer to peer exchanges and connect with a specific number of communities and/or stakeholders. Criteria should not be burdensome to new affiliates.

**Ken Brown, NALGEP:** Designating a point person, or lead coordinator, for an affiliate should be a commitment. Fostering change within communities and seeing the benefits is critical. There are criteria for cities to compete for the EPA Smart Growth technical assistance program. The UWFP should review them. Often States set criteria too high for communities. Tim Fields mentioned needing support from the State programs.

**Carolyn Berndt, NLC:** We should keep the commitments at a high level and tied to the Urban Waters Vision, Mission and Principles. Documenting milestones could get burdensome. There could be different levels of affiliation based on the size of a city. There are models that could be applied to this process, including the Let’s Move Campaign, and the End Veteran Homelessness Campaign. A workplan and a full partner list for an affiliate would be beneficial. Affiliates could have different levels of activity.

**Judy Shehanan, USCM:** The commitments should not be exhaustive, since the benefits are still to be determined. Cities have limited staff and funding resources. A point of contact is a good idea. Some cities could have partnership fatigue, as there have been many new initiatives under the Obama Administration. This effort should be carefully crafted given resource constraints.

**Ed Johnson, Tampa, FL:** The benefits of being an urban waters affiliate should be clearly stated for local communities and metropolitan areas. Some cities do not have the capacity to join an additional partnership. Will affiliates have early access to grant announcements? Will they have a “leg up” on funding opportunities?

**Tim Fields, MDB, Inc.:** Affiliates and partners will work to coordinate and identify resources. There are cities interested in becoming urban waters affiliates. There is an overlap of cities working on brownfields redevelopment and urban waters revitalization.

**Mayor Goodall, Forest Heights, MD:** There are some small and medium cities that are in need of Clean Water Act and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) compliance. The 19 UWFP locations should collaborate with new small cities.

**David Henry, Tallahassee, FL:** The city of Tallahassee, FL spent resources on capturing lessons learned and success stories to inform communities and found it to be valuable.

**Discussion Question 3: How could new communities/metropolitan areas “self-affiliate” with the Urban Waters Federal Partnership?**

**Carolyn Berndt, NLC:** Signing up versus applying has both benefits and cons. By having a sign up process, it could result in a greater number of communities. With an application process, it could require a set of

criteria be established and then reviewers would be required to approve applications. Timing is essential. New communities should know that this is not another temporary Administration initiative.

**Ken Brown, NALGEP:** With an application process, it can be more exclusive with serious commitments, though it could deter communities. Given limited resources, we want more communities involved. More communities involved can build a larger network. A hybrid approach could allow communities to sign up and have access to the UWFP, participate in events, and learn best practices. We should create the process so that more communities are enticed to join.

**Andrea Fox, ICMA:** We should work to find a balance between having the process being meaningful versus burdensome. There could be two levels of affiliates. The DOE Solsmart program is model that could be applicable for this process. There is an easy form to sign up for Solsmart through a separate website, along with a small set of criteria. There are application reviewers for the Solsmart program; therefore, some staff resources are needed.

**Mayor Goodall, Forest Heights, MD:** A hybrid approach sounds best. For example, the My Brother's Keeper program has a large number of applicants with a small set of criteria. We do have to make this valuable to encourage new cities to sign up.

**Tim Fields, MDB, Inc.:** Tim thanked all the call attendees for their meaningful participation and input for this process. Tim mentioned that two additional calls will take place with State government organizations, and non-government/community-based organizations in the month of June 2016. Tim encouraged all attendees to register for the National Training Workshop where this discussion will continue. He also stated that a summary from the call would be made available to all participants.