

Minutes

Meeting Attendees: Haley Burns (PDE), Karen Forst (PDE), Kathy Klein (PDE), Megan Mackey (EPA3), Cathy Magliocchetti (EPA3), Martha Maxwell-Doyle (PDE), Jason Minnich (PA DEP), Chad Pindar (DRBC), Irene Purdy (EPA2), Meghan Rogalus (PA DEP), Bob Schuster (NJ DEP), Will Whalon (PWD)

Funding

- Both the IJA Year 5 Assistance Agreement and DELEP FY27 work plan Assistance Agreement were approved. Some IJA funding will be used over the next several months, but most of the spending will start in January. DELEP base funding is budgeted on the calendar year and will be used starting in January as well.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is providing support for both the 2027 and 2029 Summits. They are also passing funds through PDE to support Friends of the Upper Delaware River's annual rendezvous over the next 4 years.
- PDE is still waiting on \$500k in congressionally designated spending for assorted efforts in DE. According to USFWS, it is with the highest levels of the Dept. of Interior but is awaiting signature and release. Kathy has been in touch with Senator Coons' office to see if they can assist. Delaware Watershed Conservation Funding (DWCF) is held up too, so it is not just us.
- PDE submitted information in March to get this year's negotiated indirect rate. PDE was just offered a rate of 40.69% (it is currently at 36.58%), and decided to accept this rather than try to negotiate more.

Hatchery Update

- PDE is waiting for PWD's upper management meeting to hopefully bless them making the commitment to provide funding to operate the hatchery for 25+ years. So far everyone seems to be on board.
- We are looking to have this commitment in place before PDE goes back to Pennvest with an updated ROI. The plan is to move forward with or without Pennvest.
- There is some breathing room for hatchery plans since work can't really start on the site until 2029.
- PDE has been in touch with PA Fish & Boat Commission about propagating mussels for the Susquehanna River in the Delaware River Watershed (part of the initial plan). Fish & Boat is creating their own hatchery, and they wrote a letter saying that they would prefer PDE not propagate mussels for the Susquehanna. Only growing for our own watershed would eliminate some complexity related to genetics and grow out.

Events:

Delaware River Festival – September 26

- PA CZM has supported this event from the beginning, and they will be joining at an exhibit booth this year.
- Exhibitor spots are full.
- PDE will have a presence on the Camden side this year in addition to the Philly site.

CDRW Forum – September 29-30

- PDE is using NFWF funding to provide scholarships to folks from community organizations.
- Kathy, John, and Eurhi will be presenting on the Artist in Residence (AiR) project on Day 2.

Experience the Estuary Celebration – October 8

- Sponsorship is at the highest it has been, currently about \$107k.

- PDE is expecting somewhere between 225-300 people.
- [Ticket sales](#) end soon.

NEP Meeting – October 20-22

- Kathy, Martha, and Leah Morgan are attending the meeting in Corpus Christi.
- Leah will be presenting.

Summit – February 23-24

- PDE has some NEP base funding and money from USFWS to put toward contracting, along with IJIA funds for other Summit support.
- [Sponsorship opportunities](#) and abstract submission have opened up. The deadline to [submit abstracts](#) is October 30.
- The STAC Summit Subcommittee is working on programming. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Rebecca Klaper, new dean of the University of Delaware's College of Earth, Ocean and Environment.
- We are keeping registration rates the same as the past few years.
- PDE has NFWF funding to spend down by providing scholarships for 20 community members to attend.

Artist in Residence (AiR) Program

- Today is the last day to register for the bus tour taking place in Camden on the 24th.
 - American Watering is providing meeting space and parking. PDE is paying for lunch through their caterers.
 - Elected officials and media outlets have been invited to attend.
- In addition to the project sites that are part of the tour in Camden, there are 2 project sites in Philly, 1 in Chester, and 1 in Wilmington. There will be some kind of celebration in each of these other cities later in the fall.
- All the projects will live on, as the work will provide a tool for ongoing education around water/environment/native plants etc.
- PDE is actively trying to raise money to continue similar work. Hopefully the events celebrating these projects will get folks interested.
- The photo show that Eurhi organized as part of this program is opening next Tuesday night – 27 entries were submitted from the public, plus there will be documentation of the project as a whole.
- PDE created giveaway materials (tote bags, notecard sets, and sticker sheets) to help promote the program and to share with the community organizations that have been involved.

Collaborative Community Projects

- 17 projects across the four Urban Waters cities were funded by a combination of NFWF and IJIA funding. It started out as a pilot, but because there was so much interest, NFWF increased the funding amount.
- Once it was discovered that PDE couldn't give the money right to the organizations because they couldn't satisfy federal funding requirements, PDE ended up doing procurement for many.
- This funding ends in February, and PDE is trying to get things wrapped up by the end of this year.
- One project from each city has been selected as the site for some kind of ribbon cutting event. We will share more when dates and other details are nailed down.

PDE Science Updates

- Each summer, climate and weather conditions become more challenging, urban work even more so because of CSOs.
- PDE has added air quality considerations to safety plans, in addition to existing heat thresholds.
- This is the last year of the DEEDs project with the University of Delaware.

- The NJ DEP permit has been received to do RGGI work at Matt's Landing and we are still waiting on Corps. permit. The work may start in November - if not, then in March.
- A TREB subcommittee of the STAC has been established, will start contracting soon.

DELEP Steering Committee (SC)

- There won't be a meeting at the upcoming AiR event given attendance and available time. Kathy asked for EIC input into whether it is necessary to try to get the SC together at some point later in the fall.
- There was consensus that, without a specific ask or decision to be made, a meeting is not necessary, but that a detailed summary that looks both back and ahead would be helpful. We will need more input from the SC next year with the start of CCMP revision planning, TREB, etc., and these needs/expectations should be included. This writeup will be shared with the EIC before it is sent to the SC.
- In terms of the CCMP revision, it should be looking ahead at the next 10 years, so not everything necessarily needs to be included. EPA can look at examples from other programs across the table, to see how others have handled new CCMPs or subplans – this could be a good topic for the March NEP meeting.

Partner Updates

- **NJ DEP:** The new Commissioner was officially confirmed this week.
- **DRBC:**
 - The American Water Resources Association (AWRA) [conference](#) is in Philadelphia in November, and a large contingent from DRBC will be presenting on water quality and water quantity.
 - DRBC held their quarterly business meeting last week and has a busy season of [advisory meetings coming up](#).
 - Pam Bush, Assistant General Counsel, announced her retirement, and some legal staff has transitioned.

Action Items:

- PDE will keep the EIC updated about the small events that will be planned to highlight AiR project installations and Collaborative Community projects.
- PDE staff will begin to work on a summary document to share with the Steering Committee later this fall.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- Next EIC meeting: Thursday, October 1, 10am-12pm, virtual
- AiR Bus Tour: Thursday, September 24, 11:30am-3:3pm, Camden, NJ
- [Delaware River Festival](#): Saturday, September 26, 10am-4pm, Penn's Landing in Philadelphia, and Wiggin's Park in Camden
- PDE's [Experience the Estuary Celebration](#): Thursday, October 8, 5-8:30pm, Philadelphia, PA
- Joint EIC/STAC Meeting: Thursday, October 29, 10am-12:30pm, hybrid – PDE office and virtual
- Save the Date! [Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit](#): February 23-24, Clayton Conference Center, Newark, DE