

UWFP Delaware River Location Monthly Meeting Notes
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
11:00-12:00 ET

Attendees:

John Harrod (PDE)
Haley Burns (PDE)
Jordana Cutajar (DNREC)
Tomás Deza (NPS)
Nicole Lick (EPA 3)
William Ethridge (FEMA)
Irene Purdy (EPA 2)
Megan Mackey (EPA 3)

I. Welcome & Introductions (11:00-11:10AM)

II. Discussion (11:10 – 11:40AM)

- Collaborative Community Projects
 - i. These projects are moving along and on track to meet the completion deadline which is November 30. A few have already been completed. Eve is working on procuring contractors needed for some of the projects from the first round. Agreements with the second round folks have them procuring on their own if they have the capacity to do so.
 - ii. The last NEPA categorical exclusion request has been submitted, and we are hoping for a quick turnaround. This is for a project at Bartram's Garden that involves growing plants.
- Artist in Residence Program
 - i. Delaware Estuary Program Artist in Residence Bus Tour: September 24th
 - Part of National Estuaries week celebrations.
 - Visiting sites in Camden: CFET garden, Shipping container mural on Cooper River at Cramer Hill Park, JPEG Gallery photo exhibit
 - ii. September 15 is the opening of the photography show at JPEG Gallery. 25+ entries were submitted for the community photo portion. It will also highlight the process of this program in all four cities.
 - iii. There will be smaller events for projects in the three other cities later this fall. PDE will share more information as it is available.
- Lenape Food Forest project in Cheswold, DE: PDE is working with Chief Coker of the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, using IJA funding, to help enhance a food forest in Cheswold. The goal is to enhance the understory but planting shade-tolerant trees and other plants.

III. Partner Updates & Resource Sharing (11:40 – 12:00AM)

- Roundtable: share updates, events, initiatives, and other opportunities
 - i. Irene: Javier Laureano from Region 2 is looking forward to the AiR bus tour.
 - ii. Megan: EPA is working on an updated roles and responsibilities document for UWFP in light of the recent program restructuring. It is currently in draft form and they hope to finalize in at a Steering Committee meeting in October.
 - iii. Tomás: NPA continues to work with Old Pine Farm in Deptford, NJ on the Big Timber Creek Water Tail project that they are leading with multiple local municipalities. A set of recommendations for municipalities to enhance river access was created, and they are now focused on an action plan and looking for funding for implementation.
 - iv. Jordana: Delaware Coastal Programs hired a replacement for Kristen Thornton, who retired. The new staff member is helping with the Resilient Community Partnership and looking for potential projects in DE. These are small scale planning grants and technical assistance for communities looking to do some resilience planning or wetlands restoration. They are hoping to get a project started by the end of year.
 - v. John: An example of the UWFP in action – at a previous meeting, Donald Farrell, a member of the group and local CERT team member, brought up a funding option through the DNREC community environmental project fund. Afterward, Tomás, Gabe and John met with him to have a conversation about options and flesh out some ideas. Donal ultimately decided there was not enough time to get an application together before the deadline, but he's thinking about starting a nonprofit to make it easier to apply for things like this in the future.
 - vi. William: He will be departing FEMA at end of month to become city planner in Lewes, DE. Stacey Blanken will likely attend or have someone else attend these meetings in the future.

IV. Next meeting: October 20, 2026, via Microsoft Teams