

**Urban Waters New Orleans/Lake Pontchartrain
Local/State/Federal Partners Discussion
May 12, 2015 - 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.**

Attendees:

24 attendees, including meeting coordinators, several federal agencies, a City of New Orleans representative, local municipal agencies and NGOs. (Sign-in sheet will be available.)

NOLA UWFP Project Progress and Challenges

UNO/CERF

Progress

- Phase I Video is completed
- Phase II plantings are underway
- Phase II Visioning Plan is underway – NPS is lead
- Connections with other agencies/local groups underway
- NPS/NOAA Marine Debris plan opportunity, also NFWS – “Pack it In, Pack it Out” signage?)
- Good community connections

Challenges

- Staffing resources (UNO factor)
- Accessibility of site to NO general population and tourists
- Lack of awareness about the site (Visioning Plan to address)
- Need for additional grants

East End/Bayou Sauvage Pier and Area

Progress

- MOU created

Challenges

- Access to leadership decision makers
- Funding could be at risk (MOU ends and needs to be renewed by Summer 2016)

Ponchartrain Beach and Pier

Progress

- Close to opening beach (Levee Board sign-off in May)

Challenges – Ponchartrain Beach

- Who is going to run the beach?
- Possible liability issues – who is liable

Other Considerations

- Does beach need lifeguards?
- Restrooms?

Ponchartrain Beach

Progress

- Partnership between Levee District and LPBF
- Restoration is about ½ done

Challenges – Ponchartrain Beach

- Who is going to run the beach?
- Possible liability issues – who is liable

New Canal Lighthouse & West End Pier

Progress

- Lighthouse restoration is completed.
- More than 1,000 tours a month
- Additional educational features added.
- Linkages to environmental education

Challenges

- Deck area needed
- Nearby old dock needs to come down

Lafitte Corridor

Progress

- Going well – 92% completed, will open this summer. Tree plantings nearly done and 2.6 miles of trail completed.
- Addressing drainage problems
- Public is excited and engaged
- Bikeway signage underway
- Recycling bins will be added

Challenges

- Need long-term management plan
- Funding for additional capital improvement projects

Overall Challenges/Needs for UWFP

- New Orleans is not there regarding the UW objectives. Stakeholders are still afraid of public access to water.
- Dearth of leadership. Difficult to access management and get them to step up. No bold, assertive leadership for the initiative.
- Some stakeholders are territorial and guard their power
- Communications issues – leadership needs to communicate with each other
- Need more community outreach
- Need asset mapping - looking at strength and weaknesses, needs resources
- Need to leverage connections
- Need simple, cohesive messages
- Need integrated systems

Themes Linkages: Where do we go from here?

- Connectivity of recreational spaces, e.g. Mississippi River to LP
- Integrated Greenway/Historical Areas/District
- Water Quality
- Accessibility
- One Big System
- Economic aspects both social and resource development – sustainability/tourism
- Community Outreach
- Broaden the industrial outreach – Economic and Community outreach – Private Public Partnership and possible linkages
- Grassroots initiatives
- Need understanding the system, ownership of water and how it integrates in daily lives
- Coastal issues – understanding what is inside and outside –crossing the boundaries
- Environmental Education

Urban Waters Partnership Benefits

- Natural, social, economic capital – all flow into this
- Resiliency – New Orleans leads the way internally and nationally in water issues and management. (Discussion of the larger \$15 billion water infrastructure in play in N.O. – inside/outside the levee ring connection)
- Education about water and all its usages
- Knowledge of living water systems
- Partnership will help create common language/messages
- Can help determine what works for New Orleans (not generic)
- Lends legitimacy to water projects/efforts
- Mechanism to vet ideas, projects, concepts
- Opportunity for even more sharing among stakeholders
- Authority – brings this into play across all projects/initiatives

- Opportunity to collaborate. (Power of convening in real time with other stakeholders)
- Transfer of information
- Demystifies the whole federal/local process
- Opportunity for more public/private partnerships
- Structure to planning process
- Strength in numbers – unity. More staff capacity when shared over multiple stakeholder entity

Importance/role of Federal Partners

- Assist in transferring information among stakeholders (e.g. Living learning labs)
- Promotes collaboration that doesn't always happen
- Source of information
- Funding support
- Sets a good example for state/local governments

Other factors moving forward

- Untapped Partners
 - SBA
 - Federal Reserve
 - Federal Partner agency programs
 - Commercial partners
 - Trade organizations
 - State CPRA

Who on the local level is going to keep Urban Waters going?

Discussion of conflict of interest, best suited NGO, current agency priorities, and how to maximize relations to form state/federal connections.

Consensus of meeting was to consider this question and reconvene to resolve.

