

**Urban Waters New Orleans/Lake Pontchartrain
Local/State/Federal Partners Discussion
July 7, 2015 - 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.**

Attendees

26 attendees, including meeting coordinators, US FWS, USGS, USACE, EPA Region 6, seven members of the SWB, and representatives from the City of New Orleans, New Orleans Port Authority, and numerous NGOs. (Sign-in sheet will be sent separately.)

Discussion and Consensus of UWFP Themes

Interconnectivity – One Big System (consensus was that this is the overriding theme.)
Regionalism was discussed as well.

Environmental Education a sub-theme. UWFP “connectivity” include:

- Community and people
- Shared water
- Shared expertise
- Shared resources
- Shared commitment (a number of organizations are focused on interconnectivity issues involving water)
- Recognition that somethings can be done even better (need for multi-organization buy-in and support)
- Collective impact of the groups involved
- More connected than not (how are the issues, etc., *not* connected?)
- Regional impact and approach
- Health considerations
- Theme messaging along the lines “my backyard to the ocean”

Discussion of Ways to Incorporate EJ into Themes

- Job creation is critical in each UWFP project (all agreed).
- Need to create a training pipeline (discussion of various existing environmental job training programs).
- Water safety and access. (Many in EJ community are afraid to get into the water.)
- Need multilingual signage.
- Incorporate shade/cool green elements into projects (concrete, blighted areas are more prevalent in EJ communities).
- Diversity in UWFP leadership (people won’t engage if they are not involved).
- Need to be mindful of soil contamination related to UWFP sites in EJ communities.
- Need more riverfront access in EJ communities (Discussion of reopening Crescent Park).
- Health component is critical – recreation, access to green markets, etc.

Other Critical UWFP Players

- New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA)

- NO school systems
- Mayor's Office
- NO Parks and Parkways
- Regional Planning Commission
- Land Trust
- Health Department
- LSU/Tulane schools of public health
- Others in the public health community

NOLA UWFP Partners Assets/Resources Available

- Federal Partner environmental education resources, including training programs, staff, sites, connections to schools, etc.
- Federal participation regarding the regulatory framework.
- Federal Partner high-level expertise and knowledge of project funding systems.
- Asset mapping capability (NOLA Vibe).
- Ability to tap grants funding.
- Collaborative orientation.
- Water networking.

Corporate/Governmental/Nonprofit Environmental Education Tie-ins

- New Orleans Environmental Education Collaborative (publishes guide to environmental education instructors).
- US FWS environmental education programs.
- Port of New Orleans environmental education programs and tours. (Contacts: Emily Federer and Paul Matthews.)
- Meraux Foundation (focus on teacher education).
- Girls Collaborative.
- Sewerage & Water Board (SWB) green funding and water education and training, including green education for professionals.
- Friends of Lafitte Corridor (FOLC) educational walks, stormwater pilot programs and education.
- Greater New Orleans Water Collaborative's numerous educational outreach programs and projects.
- Green Project.
- Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (LPBF) environmental education programs. LPBF wants to develop an educational facility

What is the NOLA UWFP?

(Added to the agenda and information handed out)

- Goal is to reconnect urban communities to their waterways.
- Strong emphasis on projects in EJ communities.
- Restoring the health of urban waterways.
- Connecting people with water.

Assets Needed for Local Organizations to Become NOLA UWFP Lead or Co-Lead

(Added to the agenda)

- Funding (1-2 year grants available, possibly other funding).
- Help finding funding.
- Dedicated staff member.
- Dedicated location in which to meet.
- Buy-in that all stand to benefit from keeping the UW programs going.
- Having goals of UWFP as part of the organization's own mission.

NOLA UW Local Lead Qualifications

(Added to the agenda)

- Passion (how badly do they want to be the UW local lead?).
- Credibility.
- Accountability ("skin in the game").
- Ability to provide qualitative and quantitative measurable results.
- Influence – the ability to get things done.

Potential NOLA UW Local Co-Leads

- Consensus that a co-lead it could be advantageous to be a government agency with the authority to get things done.
- Regional Planning Commission (not in attendance but mentioned as good candidate)
- City of NO Resilience Office (when fully established)
- SWB
- NORA
- Port of NO (note Emily Federer needed to check with management)
- LPBF
- CSED

Other Local Leadership Discussions

- Create a theme-based UW collaborative, rather than an UW entity, one that would meet to execute a specific project each year. (Question arose as to who would convene the collaborative and make sure that it continued to function.)
- Create an Urban Waters Board to oversee projects. (Group agreed that the challenge would be the legal structure and the fact that other organizations have water-related boards.)

Next Steps

- Representatives of organizations present indicated they would discuss UW leadership role with their upper management.
- Outreach to organizations not present at the meeting will continue.

- Given the 10th Anniversary of Katrina, the group agreed that October would be a better month for the third and final UWFP Local/State/Federal Transition Planning Meeting. Danny Wiegand will send out a “save the date” email once an October date is identified.