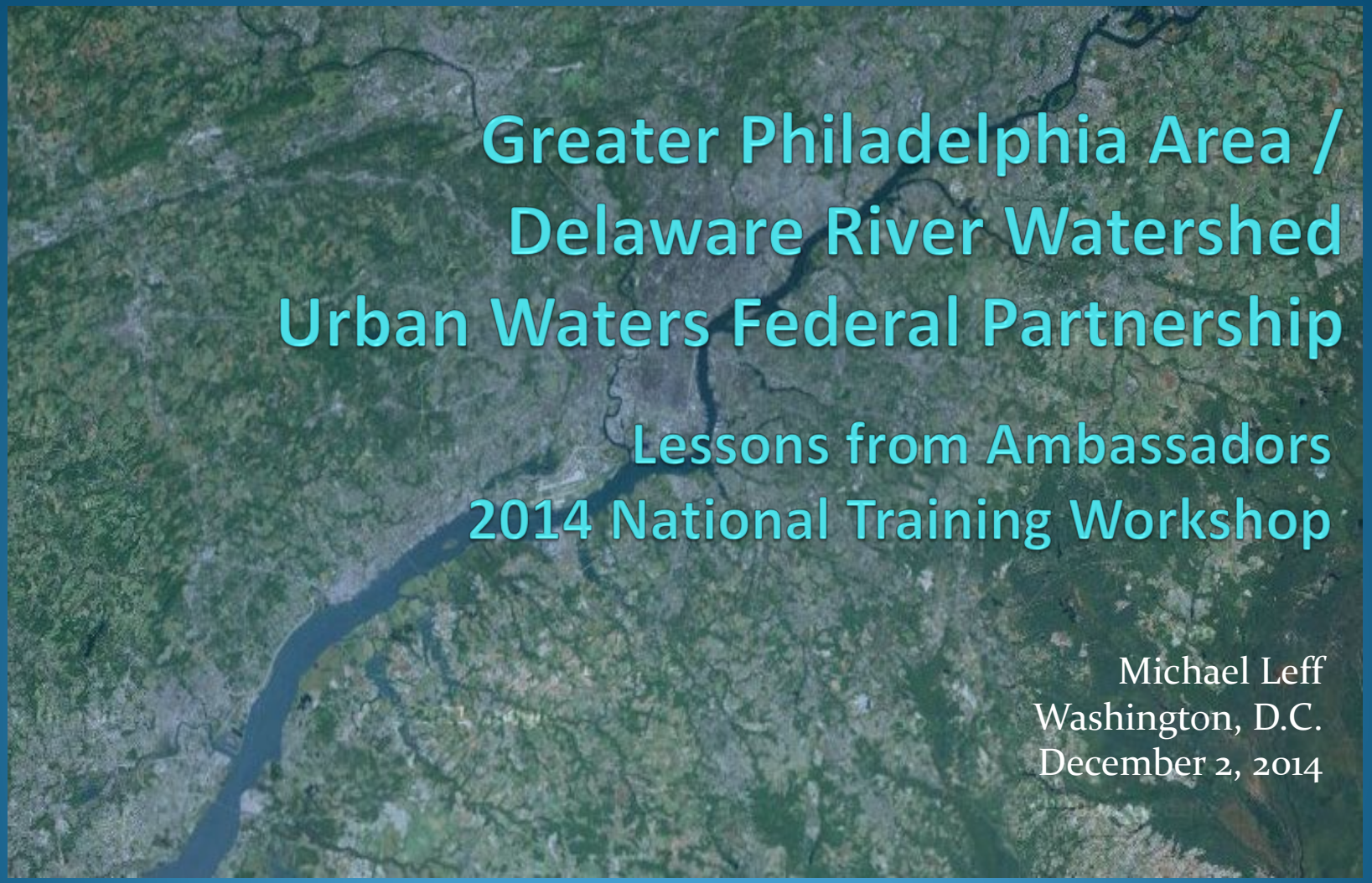
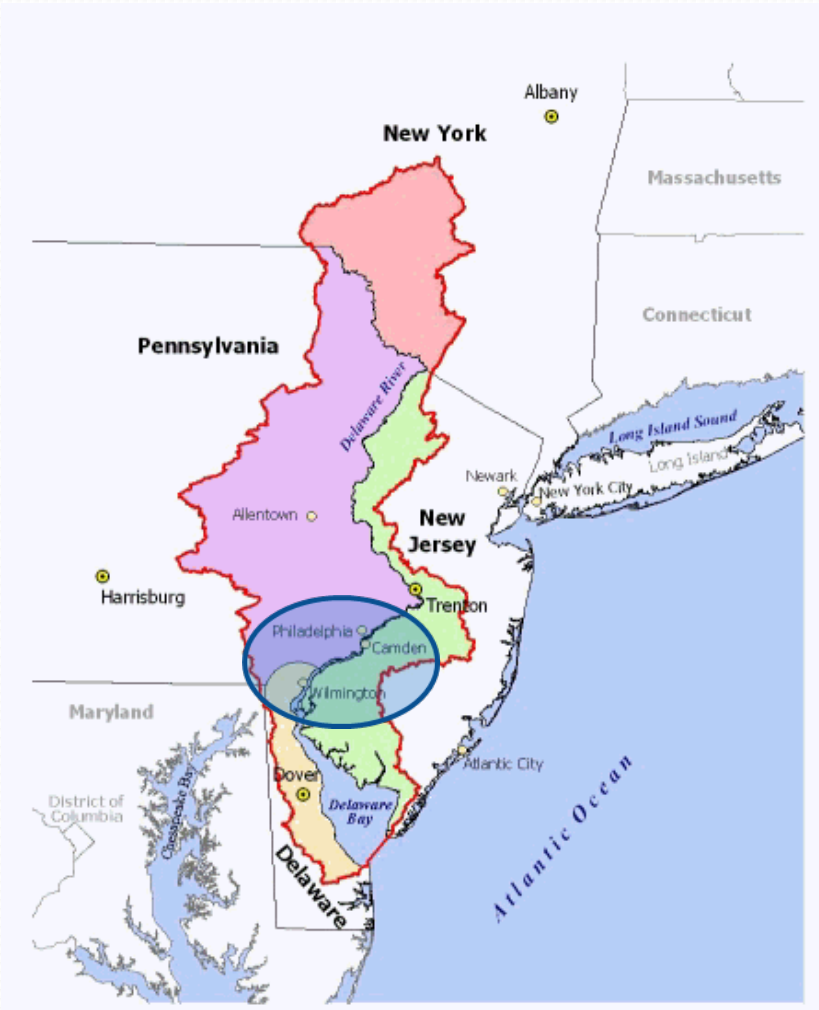

Greater Philadelphia Area /
Delaware River Watershed
Urban Waters Federal Partnership
Lessons from Ambassadors
2014 National Training Workshop
Michael Leff
Washington, D.C.
December 2, 2014

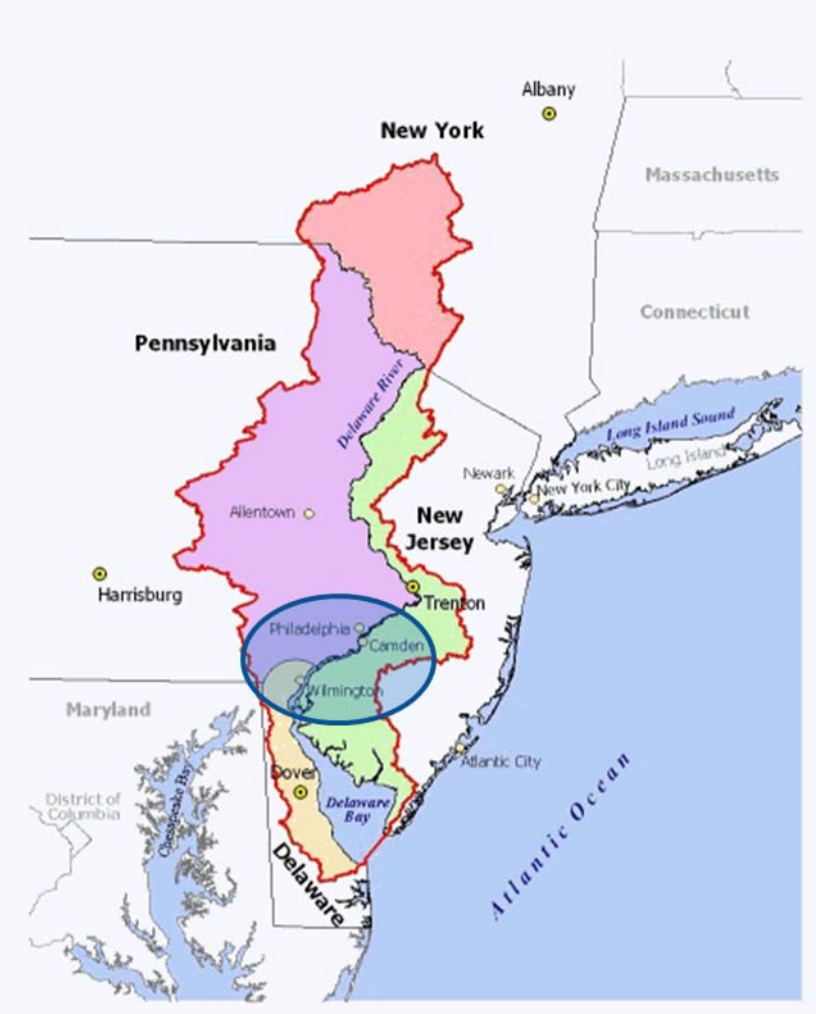
Delaware River Watershed

- Longest un-dammed river east of Mississippi
- 330 miles from New York State to Delaware Bay
- Drinking water for >15 million people
- Plus agricultural, recreational, commercial, and industrial use



Greater Philadelphia Area site footprint

- 4 cities in 3 states:
  - Philadelphia PA
  - Camden NJ
  - Chester PA
  - Wilmington DE



The Greater Philadelphia Area Story

1. Coalesce Federal partners
2. Begin to build full cross-sector partnership
3. Form core planning team
4. Conduct “Listening Sessions” in all 4 cities
5. Sift through input (content analysis), while continuing to build partnership

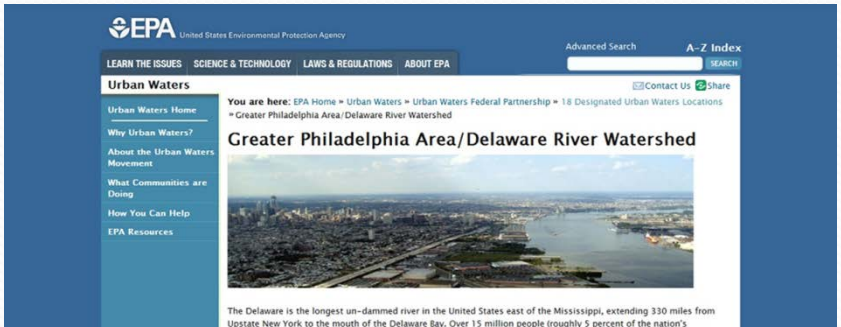
Interlude: Crowd-pleasing paddlers

- 1st Annual Wilderness Inquiry paddling event
  - 24-foot Voyageur canoes
  - All four cities
  - 440 students
  - 60 school staff & chaperones

The Greater Philadelphia Area Story (continued)

6. Identify five main areas of interest from Listening Sessions:
   - Brownfields Revitalization
   - Water Quality & Quantity
   - Climate Resilience
   - Trails, Parks & Open Space
   - River Protection & Restoration

7. Develop concept of “Communities of Practice”
8. Convene “All Partners Meeting” (April 2014)
9. Launch Communities of Practice
10. Build website and share resources



Planned activity

- Second Annual All Partners Meeting
- Third Annual Canoemobile visit
- Strengthen CoPs, identify research and resource needs
- Enhance all sectors, activate Feds, build political and business connections
- Develop more outreach materials

Challenges aplenty

- Sheer size of sprawling site
- Vast array of active partners, countless projects
- Keep CoPs vibrant and evolving, with self-guided facilitators and engaged participants
- Raise and maintain interest and involvement – without dedicated funding

Lessons learned

- Keep core team small but engaged, infused with fun and camaraderie
- Keep listening to partners, be flexible and responsive, make connections, watch for opportunities
- Don't stretch too thin
- Empower individuals and organizations to provide leadership and guidance

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