

Notes from Partnership Framework Breakout Discussions at Lower Passaic River UWFP Riverwide Meeting 6/22

Partnership Activity 1. Expand opportunities for walkable public access to the Lower Passaic River, including access to and from the water. Support programming that raises awareness of the watershed as a whole, and that integrates river stewardship into holistic, culturally-competent community development efforts.

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning upland projects to include water access • Repeat attendance at boating events – high demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community involvement related to new Essex County boathouse • Bergen county asked for kayaks and caravan in their park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonality on the lower 17- hard to make a living operating a boat house, would need to be a non-profit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could involve schools and foundations, in addition to the non-profit model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of insurance 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal program – BIG – millions of dollars to marinas, but not smaller boats 	

Partnership Activity 2. Facilitate collaboration between park stewards, affordable housing experts, and homelessness service providers in order to ensure access to the benefits of new riverfront parks for old and new residents, and minimize displacement. Connect stewardship and public-access advocates with best practices and local partners for advancing a housing-first approach to ending homelessness.

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population just shifts as the park expands. In Newark, Passaic, Clifton – abandoned factories along route 21, container terminal, makeshift shelters underneath the bridge, tent city in Passaic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passaic and Hudson Counties have coordinated assessment and housing first policies in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essex County/Newark has limited funds to provide services or operate existing shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NJTPA – active in homeless issues in Atlantic City. They have interest in supporting efforts – lots of homeless people are pushed onto trains and transit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach varies agency to agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for collaboration with regular parks stewards

Partnership Activity 3. Identify and implement local opportunities for advancing the Hudson Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan, particularly in the Partnership’s core geographic area and in underserved communities. Support innovative means of restoring habitat despite sediment contamination as a barrier to habitat restoration.

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites in Lyndhurst, downstream of park, are eroding and flooding 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clifton restoration project needs funding, as does streambank stabilization in Passaic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dundee Island Park, Clifton Green Acres site were in USACE HRE Draft Feasibility study, could potentially be advanced under continuing authorities program, but would need local support as they are challenging projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration is costly, need local match for USACE projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NJDEP Green Acres Open Space funding, Blue Acres Discharge – environmental benefits program NRDA – NJDEP grants USACE buyouts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for coordination among upstream municipalities and HEP/USACE Comprehensive Restoration plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passaic River Coalition has potential funding to advance restoration projects, and has worked to include sites for the HEP/USACE Comprehensive restoration Plan

Partnership Activity 4. Improve coordination with existing community outreach infrastructure for federal agencies engaging in the NEPA process. Work with agencies, academics, local business owners, and community-based organizations to identify and promote ongoing means for community members to participate in river-related environmental governance

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need transparency about the process, and how much influence can be exerted, in order to manage expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate the public on the process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple community meetings on overlapping dates/times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Waters Partnership can help publicize meeting dates through bulletin, and assist with scheduling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and state agencies need to work with community partners to do effective outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine meetings with similar project geographies to maximize the public's time • Partnership can offer speaker's bureau to present on a wide range of river topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need public participation around key upcoming issues: PATH Train, airport, housing, jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicize through Partnership bulletin

Partnership Activity 5. Reduce sources of pollution to and within the Passaic River, and other related activities, in order to meet the fishable/swimmable goal of the Clean Water Act

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost prohibitive for NGOs to handle bacteria trackdown and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could expand NJDEP and EPA pathogen trackdown programs to include public engagement • Create more partnerships with local universities and their students • Common issues among midriver and lower river communities • Deeper dive into funding opportunities and eligibility, bring in funders so they can be educated on local work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging mid- lower-river communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could expand municipal action teams to non-CSO communities, address runoff and flooding issues • Bring these groups to also participate in CAG

Partnership Activity 6. Identify the impact of climate change on key public access, water quality, habitat, and equity goals. Implement means of improving social and ecological resilience to climate change.

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable transportation and stormwater management infrastructure 	<p>Passaic River Basin Climate Resilience Plan – NJTPA is developing a climate resilience plan for the New Jersey portion of the Passaic River Basin. The purpose of the plan is to identify adaptation strategies to protect transportation corridors and assets from extreme weather events, including excessive flooding. The study consists of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a vulnerability assessment of the area’s transportation system; Project future climate risks for the Passaic River Basin; Develop adaptation strategies for critical transportation corridors and assets; Develop a Climate Resilience Action Plan. http://www.njtpa.org/planning/regional-studies/studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flooding from storm surges causes flooding in Newark and other low lying areas 	
<p>Passaic Tidal USACE Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs continued support at USACE HQ Does not address some residential areas – e.g. Terrell Homes 	<p>Passaic Tidal Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued community engagement in NE Newark Need continued engagement with Turnpike Authority and NJ Transit and the rail line near southern end of the project Possibility to advance betterments / GI for stormwater management associated with the project at hotspots Identifying common needs between transportation stormwater management and LTCP/MS4 permit requirements could help promote green street projects and lead to leveraging stormwater/DOT capital investments. Priority for Jersey Water Works GI Committee. Potential for co-benefits for water quality, aquatic habitat, and tributary connectivity

