



Aneca Atkinson

Assistant Secretary of Environmental Justice, Office of the Secretary

AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL FOCUS

- Environmental Justice
 - Community Engagement
 - Stakeholder Collaboration
 - Grant Management
 - Policy Development
 - Data Analysis
-

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Aneca is an experienced environmental leader and accomplished Water Resource and Environmental Engineer, and has led operations, projects, and staff in public and non-profit sectors. Aneca has a proven record of guiding large cross-functional teams to complete projects in challenging environments that meet organizational goals. Aneca's ability to develop meaningful relationships with strategic partners, build consensus, and integrate environmental justice principles into organizational policies, programs, and projects will be instrumental to MDE's success in addressing environmental disparities in underserved communities.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE 18

SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE

Assistant Secretary, Environmental Justice | Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), Baltimore, MD
January 2024 - Present

- Serves as the lead implementer of MDE's Environmental Justice (EJ) Priorities by supporting efforts to increase investments and reduce pollution in overburdened communities for positive health outcomes.
- Build relationships and support communities' needs for permitting and other areas of authority.
- Institutionalize EJ practices into operations for program planning, development and implementation.
- Lead the development of essential information to the agency and communities on EJ-relevant matters.
- Ensure meaningful involvement of diverse communities with respect to the development, adoption, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- Work across state agencies to promote just policies and prevent disparate outcomes in communities.
- Lead the improvement and use of MDE's EJ screening tool, and develop performance metrics.
- Advise legislative priorities, budgets and grants to strengthen partnerships with advocates, local communities organizations, underserved communities and other stakeholders.

Director, Delaware River Watershed Program | National Audubon Society Mid-Atlantic, Audubon, PA | 2022 - 2024

- Led Audubon's work across the watershed and advanced a strategy for the basin that incorporates science-driven policy, advocacy, conservation, and public engagement work.
- Increased and supported funding efforts within the Delaware River Watershed.
- Intentionally made space for communities historically excluded from environmental conversations.
- Designed and implemented on-the-ground conservation in systematically excluded communities throughout Philadelphia, PA and Wilmington, DE, that typically range from 80-99% minority populations and 30-50% below the poverty line and are most often farthest from public greenspaces.
- Helped build state-based policy to conserve and protect the Watershed and increase equitable access.
- Expanded partnerships with diverse NGOs and priority communities on conservation goals.
- Served as spokesperson on Watershed issues to implement communication plans with EJ focus.
- Facilitated learning opportunities amongst staff about equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Deputy Secretary, Office of Water Programs | PA Dept of Environmental Protection, Harrisburg, PA | 2018 - 2022

- Managed activities of five offices related to water resource and infrastructure management.
- Worked with the Secretary to develop and implement Diversity Equity Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ).
- Developed and expanded systems and technologies to improve organizational effectiveness.
- Implemented outcome-based grant-making process including DEIJ initiatives.
- Managed multiple earmarked funds associated with conservation, restoration, and preservation.

- Coordinated interagency and inter-departmental meetings on topics relating to cross functional ideals, efficiencies and productivity to include federal delegations and strategies to promote environmentally just outcomes in communities across the state.
- Managed PA's water quality and watershed initiatives, as commissioner, through interstate and international commissions including the Delaware, Ohio, and Susquehanna Rivers and Great Lakes with fellow commissioners from the states of MD, NY, DE, DC, NJ, WV, VA, and other jurisdictions.
- Facilitated learning opportunities amongst staff, creating and sharing tools and resources for DEIJ.
- Designed and implemented agency wide initiative to help institutionalize principles of DEIJ.
- Served at regional and national Environmental Justice leadership opportunities like EPA.

Director, Office of Program Integration | 2018 - 2022

- Evaluated statewide program implementation for consistency, effectiveness and efficiency.
- Oversaw the agency's Emergency Response Team.
- Established and oversaw Regional Permit Coordination Office to drive environmental regulations.
- Developed and deployed a new Business Intelligence tool that resulted in reports and dashboards that managers can use to determine workload and make strategic changes to meet goals.
- Effectively managed all legislative inquiries of agency-wide significance.
- Led post authorization monitoring of large complex multi-regional/county projects.
- Developed and implemented disaster preparedness and response plans.
- Led the improvement and use of PADEP's Environmental Justice screening tool.
- Participated on the hiring panel for the Director of Office of Environmental Justice.

Environmental Group Manager, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction | 2016 - 2017

- Managed the erosion and sedimentation control and stormwater management program related to Water Quality Standards, Pennsylvania's Clean Streams Law and the federal Clean Water Act.
- Oversaw and wrote technical guidance, policy, SOPs and other regulatory implementation tools.
- Coordinated program activities and provided technical assistance and training to 66 conservation districts and various programs, including oil and gas, mining, waste and land recycling.
- Provided training and technical assistance to the regulated community.
- Developed and implemented e-reporting strategy for construction stormwater in response to the federal mandate which resulted in Pennsylvania complying with the appropriate portions of the rule.
- Expanded the use of online training software for new hires and timely refreshers and updates for veteran staff, which resulted in cost-savings and year-round staff training.
- Developed the scope of work and implemented the contract for revisions to the Pennsylvania Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual, a key component in PA's water resource management
- Served as technical liaison for regulated communities, governments, federal agencies, elected officials
- Prepared analysis on bills proposed by the PA House and Senate and federal government for impacts.

EDUCATION **M.S. Water Resources & Environmental Engineering**, Villanova University, Villanova, PA, 2012
B.S. Engineering, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 2006

AFFILIATIONS AND ADDITIONAL ROLES

Delaware River Basin Commission's Advisory Committee on Climate Change; Partnership of the Delaware River Estuary's Water Table Climate Change Subcommittee; Partnership of the Delaware River Estuary's Water Table Funding Subcommittee; Coalition of Delaware River Watershed Diversity Equity Inclusion & Justice Workgroup

SELECTED PROJECTS

Philadelphia Pollinator Network | 2022-2024 The project created a framework for a community-led pollinator habitat network, deepened community engagement, created employment opportunities for local youth, and improved access to and condition of open spaces for underserved Philadelphia neighborhoods.

Whitby Meadow | 2021-2024 This project restored two meadows in Philadelphia's Cobbs Creek Park, an underserved neighborhood, by adding native plants for erosion control, birds, pollinators, and other wildlife.

Perkiomen Riparian Buffer Restoration | 2023-2024 This project repaired and enhanced tree canopy and native vegetation damaged after Hurricane Ida, uplifting wildlife habitat and protecting drinking water quality.