



## LRWP Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2017

- I. Attendees: Bill Schultz, Raritan Riverkeeper; Denise Nickel, Middlesex County Economic Development; Meredith Comi, NY/NJ Baykeeper; Tom Boccino, Somerset County Open Space Program; Scott Yaede, New Brunswick; Jamie Bruno, NEA Artist; David Tulloch, RU Landscape Architecture; Donna Wilson, Laurence Harbor + Raritan Bay Slag; Mike McMann, civic science water monitoring volunteer & SLAG-CAG participant; Nick Tufaro, Middlesex County; Karen Elenjickal, Middlesex County College; Alex Zakrewksy, Middlesex County; Dan Swern, coLAB arts; Tobiah Horton, RU Landscape Architecture; Heather Fenyk, LRWP
- II. LRWP Updates, Heather Fenyk
  - a. Storymaps: As part of the 2017 Project WADES residency in the Greater Brunswick Charter School, students used the Esri StoryMap technology to produce “A Tale of Two River Artifacts”: <http://lowerraritanwatershed.org/storymaps/>
  - b. “Community Resources for Water Quality” archive tool: It is now live! This tool lists and describes publications and other types of materials available through the Rutgers-New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) that discuss topics connected to protecting watersheds. Also included is information about water quality and maintaining or improving water conditions. These publications and resources are intended to assist Environmental Commissions, Green Teams and/or other interested residents to improve, preserve and restore stream areas and watersheds in their communities. This tool was developed by the LRWP and Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County (part of Rutgers NJAES) to improve the accessibility of information about preserving water quality. <http://lowerraritanwatershed.org/water-quality-tools/>
    - i. Comments: Possibly link the LRWP tool to the Sustainability Hub as well as to Jersey Water Works. Plays into JWW idea into a local activities toolkit.
  - c. State of the Lower Raritan Watershed Report: We have made great progress, with 33 maps under development. We are still working on data analysis of historic nutrient and pollutant data.
  - d. November 17, Resiliency Workshop with NOAA: Please register!  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/workshop-green-infrastructure-for-coastal-resilience-with-noaa-registration-38405611217>
- III. Special Presentations

- a. Meredith Comi, Restoration Program Director NY/NJ Baykeeper: “Citizen Science Monitoring for Pathogen Indicators Along the Raritan Bayshore”

Summer 2016 pathogens monitoring was supported through the small grants program of the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary through EPA. Monitoring was a partnership w/ LRWP, Riverkeeper and Bayshore Regional Council. Monitoring focus was on sites not monitored by Monmouth or Middlesex County Departments of Health or NJDEP. Although not designated as bathing beaches, sites are used for recreation, fishing, and swimming. Data can inform the public, elected officials, agencies and residents about their local water quality. Project engaged over 25 regular volunteers.

Conclusions & recommendations: higher levels of Enterococcus were found near CSOs, especially after a rain event. It takes about 72 hours for the Raritan Bay to “flush” therefore citizens should avoid the water for 72 hours after a rainfall event. Usage at these non-bathing beaches is high, especially in PA. Fishing and swimming observed near CSO pipes.

Outcomes: DEP has now been prompted to conduct somewhat regular monitoring. Specific concern w/ 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Maybe this is an area to start w/ as a pilot for CSOs.

Obvious next step is to get grant \$ for currents and flows. A public notification system implemented at these locations would be an important part of a wq monitoring program. Residents can decrease the amount of raw sewage and bacteria entering waterways by installing a rain barrel, conserving water, rain gardens, etc. MUCH MORE needs to be done in terms of public notification, connect w/ people using the waters.

Discussion: Town/county health department could communicate warnings. ?Nixle alerts for the River (Everbridge runs Nixle). “wait 72” should be included as part of signage/communication.

- b. Tobiah Horton, RU Cooperative Extension Water Resources: “Lyle Brook Habitat Connectivity Plan”

Professor Horton shared a powerpoint demonstrating a concept plan to use Green Infrastructure to bring the Raritan River up to New Brunswick neighborhoods. This work is driven by reflections on forgotten/buried streams. How do we make people aware of what used to be here, and how do we make people understand how water flows through the City? The proposal goes through and links open space/public space.

The visuals are keyed as follows: Blue parts are potential sources of stormwater for GI projects (impervious rooftops, parking lots, etc.), and orange is how can we do streetscape improvements to bring awareness to this being a major flow of water down to the river.

At 33 Livingston Avenue (New Street side of the Bloustein School) the idea is to show flow of water/ represent flow of water on the building itself. Project historic water flows map on the side of the building. An additional component would be to open up the EJB park and make it a “headwaters” park – mark the way the stream would have flowed.

An on-going LRWP project at this area is intersection modification (traffic calming), and the idea would be to combine both.

Also talking w/ NB Parking authority: how to make art in garages and manage stormwater?

The idea is to incorporate a living wall in the parking garage: root structures, branching structures. Would need solar for sustainable lighting. How to improve experience of garage using sustainable greenery? Make simple boxes as community engagement project. Could do moss directly on the concrete. Images of precedents of working with plant life underground. The "low line" NYC's disused sub-way system. Create as a vegetated underground park. The goal is to highlight where the recreated Lyle Brook would come from.

Interesting thing about the corridor concept – each part of the corridor could be related to GI for that part. Cemetery, Guest house, community garden, community housing. Can be seen and used as a corridor, can also be a very localized amenity for whatever is going on next to it. Become a parklet for whatever is adjacent to it.

Discussion: Wall idea at EJB is interesting. Vegetation in the parking deck is probably do-able.

Use some sort of animation (pinwheels) that the water can power. Blue neon?

Could be a precursor for actual daylighting.

Develop a concept sustainability plan – create a few catalytic rain gardens for the whole idea. Some strategizing for how to initiate w/ existing funding.

#### IV. Partner Updates and Community Discussion

- a. Denise Nickel: EPA announcement for Brownfield Assessment and Cleanups. Overview meeting is October 18, in Edison. Late November deadline.
- b. Tom Boccino: main thing the county is doing is updating farmland and open space and historic preservation plans. Combining three programs into one plan. Same consultant doing three separate plans with a single summary plan. Still doing preservation work, working on greenways, lot of small projects. Bikeway along greenway along Raritan River. Connecting / creating pedestrian access into Duke Farms. Contracting w/ design consultant. Walk into Raritan from Nevius Street Bridge. Residents gate/north gate. Coordinating w/ Duke Farms.
- c. Raritan Riverkeeper: working on oyster project w/ Baykeeper. Folks in PA are harvesting oysters (sampling site at Route 35 Bridge). Great that there are naturally occurring oysters.
- d. Clean-ups in Piscataway are having an impact: clean-ups went from multiple storage compartments filled to now significantly less trash being picked up. ?How to make artwork out of the cars. Cost is prohibitive to dispose of.
- e. Scott Yaede: real need for water based clean-ups, Lawrence Brook issues. 10 foot high plastics pile.

