

Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2019 – 10:00 AM-NOON

I. Welcome / Introductions

In Attendance: Mariann Bischoff (Rutgers School of Social Work), Christine Morales (Rutgers School of Social Work), Nicole Wines (Raices Cultural Center), Nicholas Tufaro (Middlesex County), Bill Schultz (Raritan Riverkeeper), Maya Robles (Rutgers), Alex Zakrewsky (Middlesex County), Heather Fenyk (LRWP)

II. Presentation: Raíces Cultural Center co-founder Nicole Wines on “EcoCulture as Innovation”

Raíces works to preserve cultural heritage. The non-profit started by focusing on connections with musical traditions and nature/ecology/environment. Raíces means roots - they have spread from original mission to now include eco culture. They work in both the US and Puerto Rico. They believe that cultural preservation work requires environmental preservation work.

Raíces work highlights:

Seed saving. In Puerto Rico they partner with an agronomist concerned with destruction of the land through industrial agriculture. They are working to create a strong bio diverse seed stock adapted to the climate and soil conditions.

Earthship Puerto Rico: education center, community school of ecology. 50% recycled material, 50% concrete. Buildings meant to be self-sustaining. For example, showers collected rain water.

Focus on adaptation. Raíces microfarm and gardens; Sustainability workshops: intro to solar energy, rain barrel build, seed saving, apiary, herbal healing (United National of herbs!); Build bee boxes - apiculture initiative. Pollinator support. Encourage people to plant a lot of flowers. Native bees!!

EcoCulture: putting the environment and ecology first in our minds and decision-making about how we want to form our society

III. Presentation: Maya Robles on “Citizen Science and Diversity: The Case of Water Quality Monitoring in New Jersey”

Maya presented on findings of her Rutgers undergraduate thesis in which she surveyed 17 environmental organizations in NJ that conduct WQ monitoring to see to what extent they include diversity. She did not find clear statement of intent to work with diverse communities on websites, nor was there indication of work in this regard on evidence in the course of the interviews.

IV. Partner Updates / Announcements

a. Middlesex County: Middlesex County Master Plan Update & outreach activities

At our June 21 General Meeting the LRWP will host Middlesex County for a “Set the Table” Master Plan Outreach conversation. The session will run from 10-12:30PM. Lunch will be provided.

- V. LRWP Projects Discussion & Planning
 - a. June 8 BioBlitz
 - b. Water Quality Monitoring / Trash Reduction / Pollution Control
 - i. Monitoring (June 1 VHA training, planning for bacteria monitoring with NEIWPC and Rutgers Cooperative Extension)
 - ii. Outreach / Action / Stewardship
 - c. Resilience / #lookfortheriver
 - i. Coastal Resilience (NJDEP grant)
 - ii. Green Infrastructure resilience workshop Part II w/ NOAA
 - iii. #lookfortheriver: frames (Middlesex County Arts grant)
 - iv. EPA Environmental Justice Grant - #lookfortheriver: frames
- VI. July 15 “Detention Basin Tour” with Middlesex County Extension
- VII. Adjourn



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