



**Water Table Branding Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday, September 12, 2023**

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Introductions, and Icebreaker

After the first Branding Subcommittee meeting, it was clear that everyone involved wants there to be some branding for the Delaware River and Bay, and while passionate, we are not experts in this field. Kathy Klein reached out to a marketing consultant that the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE) has worked with in the past to get her thoughts on this effort. She referred Kathy to Maskar Design, a firm that has worked with other organizations in the watershed. They will provide a proposal for consulting support options, but have already helped identify some questions that may help us refine our needs and goals.

To kick off this in-person meeting, attendees were asked to introduce themselves and answer the icebreaker question “What/where is your favorite place in the watershed and why?”

Discussion

While describing their favorite place in the watershed, a number of subcommittee members identified their chosen locations as a hidden gem or an escape. Because of this, conversation started around what makes the Delaware River Watershed unique, which included examples such as the number of invested stakeholders, its mixed use and the compatibility of those uses, and the river’s history, as well as its place in American history. The majority of the meeting was devoted to discussion around the three guiding questions that were sent out with the agenda. Some highlights are mentioned below, but the full list can be viewed in the attached Flip Chart Notes document.

1. What impacts/outcomes do we want to realize through a Delaware River and Bay Branding campaign?

- Creating an identity for the River and Bay
- Building pride in, and ownership of, the River and Bay among its populace
- Building support for legislation to secure additional funding
- Raising resident’s awareness of where they live in the watershed and how they are connected to and can help protect the health of the region’s waterways
- Increasing connection and participation, particularly in urban areas

2. Who is our desired audience?

- Everyone who lives, works, and plays here
- Existing organizations
- Press/media
- Water-dependent businesses
- Tourists/visitors

3. What tools/mechanisms do we want to put in place in order to realize the desired impacts/outcomes?

- Clearinghouse for all kinds of water-related information in the region
- Listing of grant opportunities for NGOs
- Targeted messaging for different regions
- Story Maps
- Advertising/videos/commercials
- Experiential learning/field trips

Presentation: Our Shared Waters

Beth Brown, Director of External Affairs and Communications for the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), presented on Our Shared Waters, a DRBC-managed public outreach effort founded on partnership with diverse groups from all Basin states.

An original goal of this program was to educate the public as well as decision makers about the state of the Basin and about opportunities to support its sustainability and protect its waters. Educating the public as a whole ended up being broader than was feasible for DRBC, particularly since their strengths are typically more technical and not always easy to translate to the general population. However, this effort could still be used as a resource to partners who have their own audiences whom they know how to speak to, a way to train the trainer.

A primary method of communication is through the [Facebook](#) page, which has about four thousand followers. Here they highlight news and events from member organizations. There is also a blog on the [Our Shared Waters website](#) (housed separately from DRBC's website), which focuses on personal stories of connection with the River. As part of the Our Shared Waters program, DRBC has hosted events like speaking engagements and webinars, and tabled at partner events, even outside of the environmental space.

While Our Shared Water has a different focus than the Water Table, there is some overlap with what the Branding subcommittee has discussed so far. This existing initiative may be something that we can build off of or connect with in the future.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

There was agreement that 2026 is going to be a big year for our region with the World Cup coming to the area and the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the US and that we should work to roll out branding activities to coincide with these big happenings.

Notes taken on the flip chart can be found on the following page.

We will look into additional options for outside design/marketing assistance.

The planning team will meet prior to the third round of subcommittee meetings to debrief and identify additional next steps.



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[Flip Chart Notes](#)

What (big) Impacts do we want to realize through a Delaware River and Bay branding campaign?

- River and Bay has an identity
- Populace has pride in and ownership of River and Bay
- Action taken for the watershed
- Make appealing for legislation/funding
- More money for the watershed
- Help organizations achieve their missions

What Outcomes need to be in place for the Impact to be realized?

- Awareness - Residents to know where they live in the watershed
- Connection to river and increased participation, particularly in urban areas
- People have water quality knowledge including how they affect the watershed and actions they can take to affect change
- Experience the different wonders of the watershed
- Residents understand connection/impact on waterways

Who is our desired audience?

- Existing organizations
- Schools, Depts of Ed.
- Funders
- Chambers of commerce
- Everyone who lives, works, and plays here
- Include people on the “edges”/ in outlying towns
- Merchants/Navy Yard -> water-dependent business
- Press/media
- Energy/utilities
- Underserved communities
- Tourists/visitors, especially for the 250th Anniversary Celebration (2026)

What is unique about the Delaware River Watershed?

- The number of invested stakeholders
- River is a place of unity

- Mixed use with a variety of demands - recreational amongst commercial/industrial
- Philly = history, but we don't talk about the history of water; water was the foundation of building America
- Where we have been vs. where we are
- Both a working river and a natural resource (compatibility of these)
- Many stories
- Longest undammed river east of the Mississippi
- Natural Resource Treasure

What tools/mechanisms do we need to put in place in order to realize the desired impact/outcome?

- Clearinghouse for grant opportunities (in multiple languages)
- Modules on website with different resources
- Messaging: "It's your River to live, work and play. Enjoy it, Protect it."
- Messaging: Different angles/stories for different regions
- Parent-level campaign, association
- Something like a "know your watershed address" campaign
- Show how far we have come
- Experiential learning/field trips
- Story map
- Video/commercial
- Website/hub/one-stop shop
- Editorial in Inquirer - outside voices
- Buy-in from stakeholders
- Billboards with chosen messaging
- CDRW communications - participation in future forum
- Incorporate the arts/theater
- Involve celebrities