



**water**table

**Phase 2**  
**Branding Subcommittee**  
**July 11, 2023**

# Setting the (Water) Table - the Goal

Bring 3 sectors together (**nonprofit conservation organizations, the water-user community, and governments**) to build relationships and identify collaborative initiatives to better align efforts, new projects, and possibly new/sustainable sources of funding.

**Open Doors**

**Get to Know More Water  
Colleagues**

**Move the Needle on Improving  
Water Quality**

# What would happen if we brought more people to the Table?

- Wanted to explore and ground truth sectors' perceptions of each other through in-depth interviews with over 50 organizations.
- The interviews revealed both misconceptions and desires for stronger cross-sector relationships.
- Participants saw deep benefits to a more diverse, resourceful and impactful coalition.
- Facilitated two multi-stakeholder conversations.
- Identified shared priorities and a desire for continuing a multi-stakeholder collaborative initiative.

# Biggest Hurdles Toward Improving Water Quality

- Appreciation** Lack of engagement, sense of urgency, representation, understanding the value
- Funding** Aging infrastructure, stormwater management, CSOs
- Collaboration** Polarization, silos, lack of cross-sector relationships
- Knowledge** Climate change, emerging contaminants, staff turnover and retirements
- DEIJ** Equitable access to the river, EJ, inclusive career opportunities, lack of compassion
- Regulations** Ineffective, enforcement, fractured
- Miscellaneous** Fracking, brownfields, plastics and trash, salt use for de-icing, drought, detachment to river due to perception of its pollution

# Across the Board Impressions

- Everyone has an interest in clean water
- No sector is a monolith, there is much variation within
- One interaction does not mean the same for all future interactions

# Why are cross-sectoral partnerships not more common?

## Time

- Emphasis on efficiency leads to not wanting to develop partnerships
- Everyone not on same page and can be too time-consuming to sort out

## Funding

- No one wants to pay for collaboration, only for projects, and when it is funded, long-term formalized funding for formalized collaboration is needed - a beast

## Relationships

- Easier to stick to relationships one has than build new
- Learned biases, fear of getting burned, don't know who is doing what and what can bring to table, and tendency to stick to own circles due to mistrust

## Leadership

- Need champions to corral and convene people
- Can require identifying feasible projects to attract others

# Water Table Phase II

- Maintain Core Team of PDE, DVRPC, PWD and WRA, now led by PDE
- Broaden Steering Committee Composition
- Affirm Top Four Priorities: Branding, Climate Change, Workforce Development, and Funding
- Create Subcommittees to leverage multi-sectoral approach and create work plans
- Desired Outcome: Improve water quality by bringing more funding, and perhaps a more strategic way of leveraging and spending dollars.

## **Water Table Stakeholders' Shared Priorities for which the Multi-stakeholder Group should take a Leading and Coordinating role:**

- 1. Coordinating existing and/or new sources of funding to increase impact on water quality**, such as from the Infrastructure Bill, a regional CIP for water infrastructure, new mechanisms like a trading market, and/or a circuit rider who improves access to funding.
- 2. Designing a shared regional identity/story** around the Delaware Watershed and unifying our messaging for bigger impact.
- 3. Adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change**, including sea level rise, flooding, drought, extreme heat, and encroaching saltline.
- 4. Supporting workforce development for the next generation of water professionals from diverse backgrounds**, for example, by training and employing the underemployed through a Civilian Climate Corp.



Break for Introduction to Estuary Program

# Branding

## Guiding Thoughts

- To design a shared vision of the watershed you have to take into consideration its rich history.
- People interact with the watershed in very different ways.
- The DRB doesn't have a "brand" like the Chesapeake has.
- There needs to be a bigger platform to bring people into the fold.
- The urban stretch lacks geographical context to the rest of the river.
- A unifying message would be helpful for fundraising purposes and to build a larger constituency to support more money coming into the Basin.

# Branding

## What is the desired outcome?

- We want people to have a vested interest in the watershed, to understand how their daily decisions and actions impact water quality.
- Build peoples' connection to the River.
- Engage more people, recruit more advocates, help people develop a mental picture of the watershed where they live, work, and play.
- Create more opportunities for connectivity and access.

# Branding

Why is the Water Table cross-sector collaboration needed to advance this?

- No one entity can do this alone.
- There are many active players in the watershed who need to be engaged, which will require cross-sector coordination and shared ownership. A non-coordinated effort will fail or leave out important perspectives.
- Avoid competition for limited funds.



**water**table

**thank you**  
for attending