



watertable

**Phase 2
Funding Subcommittee
July 13, 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

Nonprofits

Impressions

Champions

Many highly qualified staffs

Good at partnering

Compete for limited resources

Some say NO vs find common solutions

Less connected to economic realities

Want Others to Know

Have expertise and capacity to help

Desire balance between clean, healthy environment and thriving economy

Are collaborative and desire even larger constituencies

Misconceptions

Their funding challenges are not due to lack of financial responsibility

They are more than a bunch of volunteers - they are sophisticated

Their activities cost money and require planning - they cannot drop everything and do pro bono work

Government

Impressions

Local caring, knowledgeable staff are there

Low capacity

Under-funded

Do not prioritize water issues

More focused on liability and checking a box

Want Others to Know

Have passionate people wanting to share expertise, beyond compliance

Are constrained by funding and beholden to regs on what can and cannot do

Striving for equitable outcomes and raising previously unheard voices

Misconceptions

Federal Gov't has bags of money to give out

When say can't be done, its based on real constraints of authority, expertise and jurisdiction

County gov't has no agenda other than conservation, protection, and wise use of resources

Water Users

Impressions

Do great job
supplying clean water

Show great
knowledge and
concern

Purely profit driven
Greenwash
Stuck in mindsets
Not innovative
Uncollaborative
Suspicious

Want Others to Know

Desire to bring their
passion and
expertise to the table

Can bring outside
expertise from
across the country

May be able to offer
in-kind support for
projects

Misconceptions

They are not purely
profit driven - they
want to invest to
make the community
better

They are not
mysterious entities
with lots of \$ - how
they spend it PUC
regulated

They do want to
partner and create
better projects

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 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.

Water Table Phase II

- Maintain Core Team of PDE, DVRPC, PWD and WRA, now led by PDE
- Widen Steering Committee
- 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 to spend it

Discussion Board

- Technical Assistance Providers
- Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Water Infrastructure
- New Funding Sources, or strategic ways of applying funding to projects?
- Other?

Guiding Questions

- What geography would we like to focus on?
- Are there existing examples or cases studies we should consider?
- Are there initiatives that your organization is involved with that could be helpful to other organizations?
- What would you like to learn throughout this process?
- What would be the desired outcome?

Next Meeting Dates, by Zoom?

- September 13, 10:00 - 11:30
- December 13, 10:00 - 11:30

Set up schedule for 2024, quarterly?



watertable

thank you
for attending