

## Capacity Building Pilots: Outcomes and Draft Recommendations

### ***Pilot Project Successes***

Technical assistance provided through the pilot projects allowed the watershed organizations to build capacity to engage underserved communities. Pilot project successes include:

- *West Virginia Rivers Coalition*: Engaged key community leaders in planning for and designing public forums to involve the broader community in water source protection planning. Learned how to engage decision-makers in the public forum process appropriately and designed culturally appropriate outreach materials to advertise the meetings.
- *Blue Water Baltimore*: Staff participated in a Building Cultural Competence training to build staff knowledge and skills around cultural competence and immediately applied the learnings to build deeper relationships with community leaders involved in the Deep Blue project.
- *South River Federation*: Designed a community meeting in partnership with local community leadership and identified community needs (e.g., open space access and jobs) that the South River Federation can seek to address through their creek restoration project.



*Bywater Mutual Homes community members and South River Federation staff discuss opportunities to watershed restoration efforts and enhance community quality of life.*

Technical assistance is expected to wrap up by June 2016.

### ***Capacity Building Needs to Better Engage Underserved Communities***

Building trust and meaningful partnerships with underserved communities requires the ability to achieve near-term “wins” and complete visible projects quickly and effectively while meeting community needs. Skeo has identified the following capacity building needs that are common across the pilot projects:

- Self-assessments to establish the organization’s baseline capacity to engage underserved communities, identify capacity building needs, and track over the long-term using commonly established metrics.
- Greater cultural competence.
- Collaborative problem-solving skills.
- Tools for working in underserved communities where community leaders may be experiencing tensions with each other, with neighboring communities or with the leadership of potential resource partners.
- Skills to develop build a cross-sector network of resource partners to address watershed restoration and community quality of life needs in underserved communities.
- Funding, technical assistance and other incentives to engage underserved communities and complete implementation projects.

## ***Draft Recommendations***

*Consider the following opportunities to encourage watershed organizations to engage and benefit underserved communities through their watershed restoration and stewardship efforts. The following draft recommendations are based on work to date under the Capacity Building Pilots supported by the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN). The pilots are ongoing and recommendations may continue to evolve over the next several months.*

### ***1. Build the internal capacity of CBFN and watershed organizations to work effectively with underserved communities.***

- a. Conduct a Building Cultural Competence training for CBFN members to build capacity within CBFN to continue to drive this conversation and build diversity within the Chesapeake Bay watershed movement.
- b. Offer regional Building Cultural Competence trainings to watershed organizations to increase the skills and abilities of staff to engage effectively with underserved communities.
- c. Develop a set of metrics and a self-assessment tool to help watershed organizations identify areas of strength and potential growth needs for working more effectively with underserved communities. These metrics could be used to assess current needs, track progress over time and gauge readiness for various grant opportunities.

### ***2. Build the capacity of watershed organizations to build mutual relationships with underserved communities and develop and facilitate productive cross-sector networks aimed at benefiting underserved communities.***

- a. Offer training and/or guidance for watershed organizations on how to build an effective cross-sector network to support planning and implementation of goals and projects that benefit both underserved communities and watershed health.
- b. Offer trainings and/or guidance on Collaborative Problem-Solving and building consensus to help watershed organizations better understand, assess and navigate complex dynamics between underserved communities and related stakeholders (e.g., local government, adjacent communities).
- c. Provide funding or technical assistance to a pilot community to apply the cross-sector network and collaborative problem-solving tools and then summarize these tools in a case study for broader dissemination.

### ***3. Offer funding, technical assistance and other incentives to meaningfully engage underserved communities and complete projects valued by the community.***

- a. Offer grants and technical assistance for projects that specifically focus on engaging underserved communities to increase both community quality of life for underserved communities and watershed health.
- b. Seek partnerships with non-watershed funders focused on enhancing quality of life (e.g., open space, trails, urban agriculture, health infrastructure) to provide collaborative funding matches for projects that engage and benefit underserved communities.