

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Environmental Justice in Watershed Restoration

October 10 and 17, 2019

DEI Assessment: Highlights from the DEI Survey Results

- Survey results show that 88-97% of survey respondents from across the organization believe that DEI practices will benefit CBP on the following measures:
 - Ability to better serve the public,
 - Broaden our partnerships,
 - Advance our mission,
 - Encourage diversity, equity and inclusion in decision-making,
 - Expand our supporters, and
 - Improve hiring and retention of diverse staff.
- Survey results also show that respondents are not yet convinced that CBP is actively demonstrating a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Only 25-35% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that CBP actively demonstrates a commitment to each one of these three factors.

DEI Assessment: Highlight from the Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Increasing DEI in operations and decision-making will require capacity building within CBP:

- DEI is an important issue that currently comes up in meetings topically. Participants are interested in seeing DEI embedded into CBP's operations throughout, but to make this happen, it will take consistent champions in leadership at the top levels of the organization.
- There are different levels of understanding and interest in DEI topics across the Chesapeake Bay Program; sometimes, the resistance to ideas or proposals related to DEI can be palpable within the room.
- Resources and tools are needed to create a common understanding of DEI, especially resources that can help bring along members of CBP who may not understand why DEI issues are important to achieving the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.
- There is concern that DEI does not currently factor into many decision-making processes at CBP.

Training Goals

1. Understand the context for DEI and EJ in environmental work and watershed restoration.
2. Build a shared language for concepts of DEI and EJ.
3. Build a shared understanding of the relevance of DEI strategies to improving water quality in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
4. Identify opportunities and constraints for diversity, equity and inclusion and environmental justice within CBP's mission-related work.



Where does the larger Environmental Field stand relative to DEI and EJ today?

Module 1

Green 2.0 Findings

1. The Green Ceiling

Despite increasing racial diversity in the United States, the racial composition in environmental organizations and agencies has not broken the 12% to 16% “green ceiling” that has been in place for decades.

2. Unconscious Bias, Discrimination, and Insular Recruiting

Confidential interviews with environmental professionals and survey data highlight alienation and “unconscious bias” as factors hampering recruitment and retention of talented people of color.

3. Lackluster Effort and Disinterest in Addressing Diversity

Efforts to attract and retain talented people of color have been lackluster across the environmental movement.

The Result: An overwhelmingly white “Green Insiders’ Club.”



Green 2.0 Recommendations

Tracking and Transparency

- Diversity statements without a plan and rigorous data collection are just words on paper. Organizations and associations should institute annual diversity and inclusion assessments.
- Disclosure should facilitate sharing of strategies for addressing unconscious bias and overhauling recruiting beyond the green insiders' club.

Accountability

- Foundations, NGOs, and government agencies should integrate diversity goals into performance evaluations and grant making criteria.
- The environmental field's associations should use their convening role to showcase leaders and laggards on increased diversity.

Resources

- Increased resources must be allocated for diversity initiatives to work.
- Provide sustainable funding for networking to reduce isolation and support existing leaders of color.



Why do disparities exist in communities today?


Present day disparities and inequities are the result of public policy decisions.

Public policies can include:

- Neutral or benignly intentioned initiatives that positively impact some communities and negatively impact others.
- Intentionally discriminatory initiatives that target low income communities, people of color, tribal and immigrant communities.



Relationship between Watershed Restoration and DEI and EJ

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- Environmental work and watershed restoration have the power to create social change.
 - Historically, environmentalism and environmental justice have changed the way that people think and act and work together – though the two fields have not always aligned.
 - In a challenging moment like this, there's an essential role for watershed and environmental groups to play. But first, you must do some serious introspection – and determine how you want to contribute to this conversation?
 - Each organization takes on as big a role as feasible based on their own capacity.

Developing a Shared Language for DEI and EJ

Module 2



Developing a shared language for DEI

- ***Diverse/Diversity*** – The demographic mix of a specific collection of people, taking into account elements of human difference.
For example: racial and ethnic groups, income, spectrum of built environment settings (rural to urban), faith communities, LGBTQ+ populations, people with disabilities, gender, relationship to the natural environment
- ***Inclusion*** – Refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group. While a truly “inclusive” group is necessarily diverse, a “diverse” group may or may not be “inclusive.”
- ***Equity*** – Improving equity is to promote justice, impartiality and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of disparities within our society.

Developing a shared language for EJ

- **Justice** – the quality of being just, impartial, or fair.¹
- **Equity** – equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. This may mean addressing the present-day impacts of past inequities in order to achieve equity going forward.²
- **Environmental Justice** – the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies³, and refers to “decisions [that] support sustainable communities where people can interact with confidence that their environment is safe, nurturing, and productive...”⁴

¹ Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/justice>

² Pachamama Alliance: <https://www.pachamama.org/social-justice/what-is-social-justice>

³ U.S. EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice>.

⁴ Bunyan Bryant, PhD., Professor Emeritus, former Director of the Environmental Advocacy Program at University of Michigan School for Environment & Sustainability.



DEI and EJ Transformations in Watershed Work

Module 3

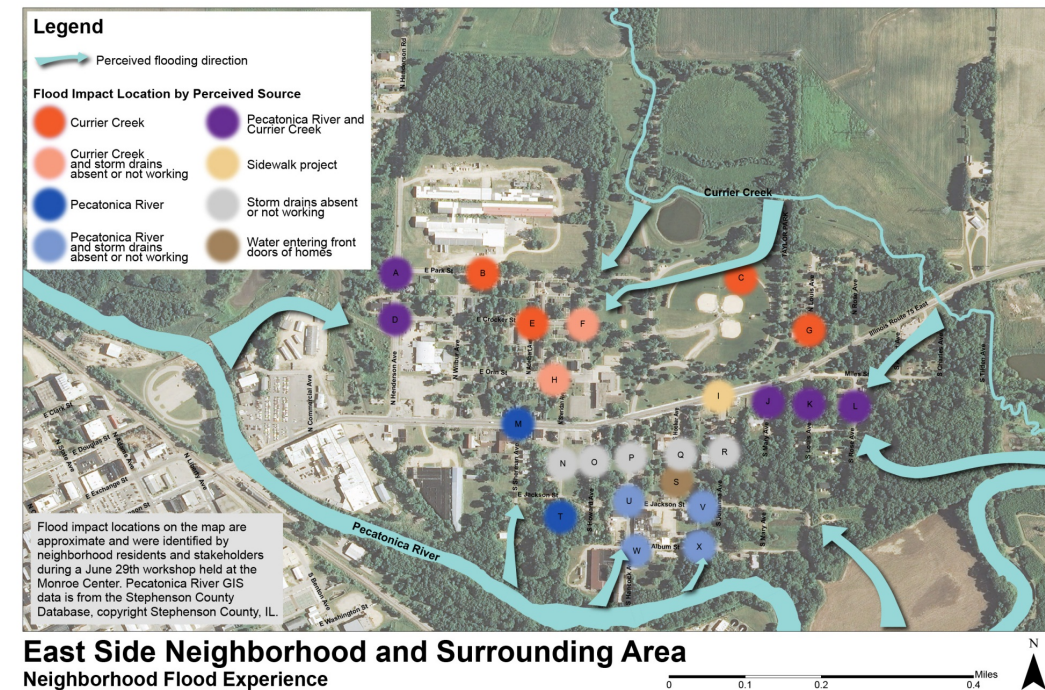
Freeport, Illinois: TMDLs and Regulatory Compliance

- African American neighborhood sited in floodplain faces catastrophic flooding:
 - Flooding and floodway regulations
 - Dilapidated housing
 - Limited neighborhood-oriented amenities
- City threatened by financial penalties for TMDL failures
- Strained relationships limit progress



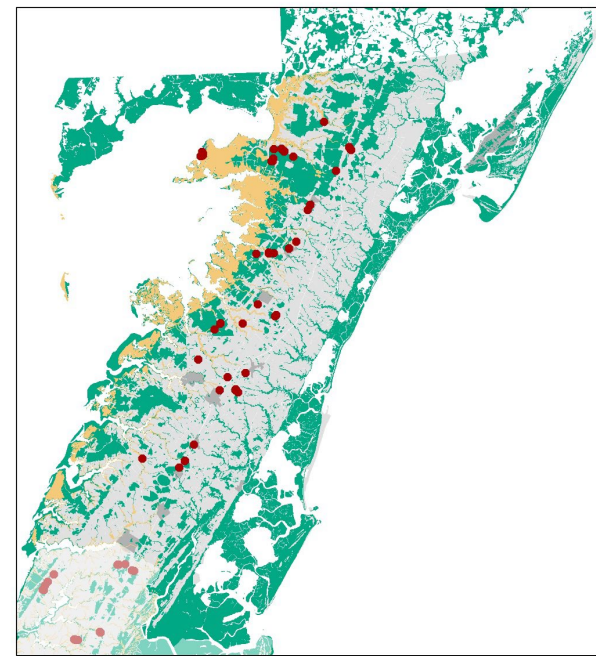
Freeport, Illinois: TMDLs and Regulatory Compliance

- Asked about community needs and priorities
- Shared agreement that addressing flood impacts could set the stage for neighborhood revitalization
- Cultural competence workshop helped rebuild trust
- Community flood mapping exercise
- Flood management strategy (now adopted by the City) includes both gray and green infrastructure investments that will improve TMDLs

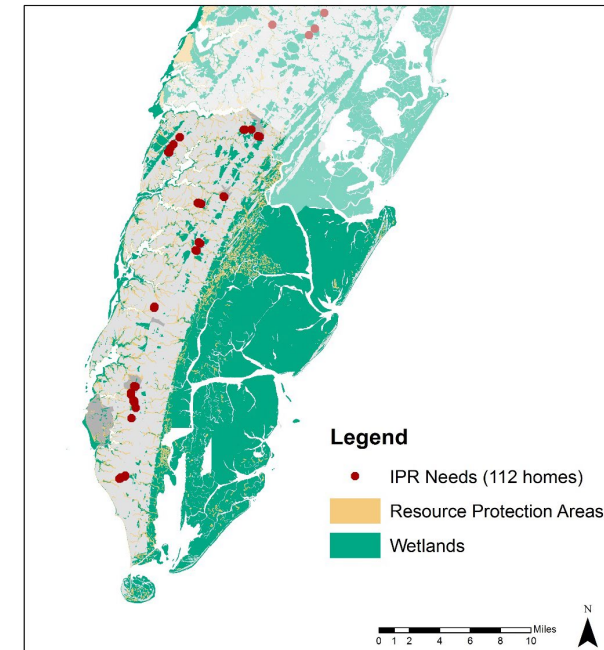


Virginia's Eastern Shore: Indoor Plumbing and Sanitation Impacts

- Accomack: Housing stock is 4.5x more likely to lack complete indoor plumbing than Virginia as a whole
- Northampton: 3.3x more likely
- Indoor Plumbing Rehab needs directly impact the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries as well as drinking water supplies.
- Skeo conducted a week-long windshield survey to identify the locations of many homes lacking IPR. (More survey work is needed.)
- Resulted in a prioritized framework for addressing IPR needs through creative funding sources (environmental, environmental justice and quality-of-life funders).



Accomack County



Northampton County

Flint and Baltimore: The Need for Safe Drinking Water

- **Flint residents have been without safe drinking water since 2007.**

[Flint's water crisis, explained in 3 minutes](#)

- **Baltimore public school children are about to have safe drinking water fountains again after 10 years.**

[Do drink the water: Baltimore school system aims to make the fountains safe again](#)



West Virginia Rivers Coalition: Building Cross-sector Networks

- Challenge: expand conversations about clean water
- Collaborative approach to source water protection planning created the opportunity to:
 - Build diverse community partnerships
 - Engage a broader set of community members
- Conducted two Community Leaders Meetings to build a cross-sector network with non-traditional partners.
 1. Relationship building, understanding connections between socio-economic conditions and local source water protection challenges.
 2. Developed culturally-appropriate outreach materials and an outreach plan for public comment forum.
- Successful community engagement becomes the template for building cross-sector networks in four additional West Virginia counties.



West Virginia Rivers Coalition: Building Cross-sector Networks

“The network showed us that watershed organizations can play a critical role as conveners for source water protection and building resilient communities.”

Angie Rosser, Executive Director



Need for Equitable Distribution of Funding

A 2015 study found Environmental Justice disparities in watershed restoration and mitigation funding distribution in Maryland:

- Explored the distribution of funding for wetlands restoration in the state of Maryland by race, socioeconomic status, and geography.
- Found disparities in programmatic wetlands projects by race and geography.
- Found disparities in Clean Water Act 319 funding by race and geography.
- Disparities in distribution of funding by socioeconomic status.

For more information: Dernoga, Wilson, Jiang and Tutman.

[Environmental justice disparities in Maryland's watershed restoration programs](#). Environmental Science in Policy, vol 45. January 2017. pages 67-78.

Connecting DEI and EJ to CBP's Vision

Facilitated Discussion



CBP's Vision

Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable

Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a diversity of engaged citizens and stakeholders.

Group Discussion: Making the Connection

Facilitated Discussion:

1. How can DEI and EJ help advance the vision of CBP?
2. What barriers and opportunities exist to including DEI and EJ criteria in decision-making?
3. What barriers and opportunities exist to conducting work that has a DEI or EJ focus?

Additional Questions for Personal Reflection:

4. What strategies or types of projects could CBP work groups implement right away?
5. Which might require additional support to implement? And what kinds of resources or support are needed?