

Office of Environmental Justice
Highlights: March 12 – April 16, 2019

ENGAGEMENT WITH EJAB:

EPA Small Communities Grant – OEJ partnered with DCNR, PA Western Conservancy and Urban Erie Community Development Corporation (UECDC) to help UECDC apply for an Environmental Justice Small offered through the EPA. The grant supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues. The proposed project focuses on providing training and education about benefits of trees and proper tree maintenance. EJAB member Gary Horton is the CEO of UECDC.

Philadelphia Roundtable Meeting – DEP partnered with EJAB member Jerome Shabazz and others to host an Environmental Justice Roundtable on April 12. Planning partners included community participants and elected officials including Representative Morgan Cephas.

Johnstown Roundtable Organizational Meetings – OEJ staff has been working with EJAB member Clea Hollis and other planning committee members to plan an Environmental Justice Roundtable on April 23.

OEJ INITIATIVES:

Workforce Development – OEJ staff has been working to create a workforce development initiative to support a pathway for people enter drinking water and wastewater operator careers. DEP is partnering with Delaware County Community College (DCCC) and William Penn School District to develop an initiative which will engage students, and potentially parents, from the District to offer Certified Operator Training in these fields. OEJ staff has been meeting with School District representatives, DCCC staff, and the Education Committee of the William Penn School Board about the initiative. The superintendent, school board members, and others in attendance were all enthusiastic about the opportunity to develop the program. OEJ intends this initiative to be a pilot for a statewide workforce development program for drinking water and wastewater operators.

EJ Mapping - OEJ Director Acevedo held a call on Friday, March 22 with Millie Piazza from the Washington State Department of Ecology to learn more about utilizing mapping to support education and dissemination of information around environmental impacts and cumulative impact. This meeting is part of an effort by OEJ around developing data about environmental impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION - OEJ is collaborating with PDE to develop proposal for a presentation at the North American Association for Environmental Education annual conference in October 2019 focusing on infusing environmental justice in school-based environmental education.

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RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT/PARTNER MEETINGS:

Anthracite Region for Progress Meetings – OEJ has participated in monthly meetings for the Anthracite Region for Progress in Shamokin, PA that focuses on environmental restoration and economic development in the region.

APA-PA Conference Call – Regional coordinator Dula participated in the Engagement Committee of the PA Chapter of the American Planning Association, Southeast Section (APA-PA-SE) calls, the group seeks to diversify the planning profession through outreach.

Capital Region Water Meetings – Regional coordinator Brakeall attended the Capital Region Water (CRW) monthly meetings.

PIHET Meeting – OEJ staff attends monthly meetings of the Pennsylvania Interagency Health Equity Team (PIHET) meetings as DEP's representative.

Meeting with Senator Hughes – OEJ Director Acevedo, Legislative Director Kauffman and OEJ Regional Coordinator Brakeall met with Senator Vincent Hughes and his staff on Wednesday, April 10 to discuss environmental justice issues and policy.

Future Forces Work Group Meeting – Regional Coordinator Dula participates in regularly scheduled Future Forces Work Group of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), which identifies forces that will affect the future of the Philadelphia region. The most recent meeting was on Thursday, May 11.

Meeting with William Penn School District – OEJ Staff met with Penn Wood High School guidance counselor and other administrators at the William Penn School District on Thursday, March 14 to discuss development and implementation of a wastewater and drinking water certified operator training program and career development initiative in the School District.

Meeting with Philadelphia Air Management Services – Regional Coordinator Dula participated in the quarterly meeting between DEP and Philadelphia Air Management Services on Thursday, March 21.

Meeting with Al Día – OEJ Director Acevedo and SERO staff met with Al Día news media on Friday, March 22.

Cancer and the Environment Symposium Follow-up: What's next – OEJ will participate in a follow up gathering to discuss next steps on addressing carcinogenic substances in the environment on Tuesday, April 16.

Chester Environmental Partnership Meeting – OEJ will participate in the Chester Environmental Partnership's (CEP) bimonthly meeting on Tuesday, April 16.

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Meeting with CRW – Director Acevedo and Regional Coordinator Brakeall will meet with representatives from Capital Region Water (CRW) on Tuesday, April 16 to discuss follow-up from the Harrisburg roundtable particularly around workforce development and diversity.

DVSGA Meeting – Regional Coordinator Dula will participate in the Delaware Valley Smart Growth Alliance meeting on Friday, April 5.

EXTERNAL INITIATIVES:

Transportation and Climate Initiative- Director Acevedo serves on the Investment and Equity Subcommittee of the Transportation and Climate Initiative, which meets weekly and focuses on building multistate strategies to reduce oil dependence and decrease greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector. The Investment and Equity committee addresses environmental justice and equity issues around investments in strategies to reduce greenhouse gases.

EJ POLICY:

Policy Review Process – OEJ recently completed revising the EJ Policy based on comments received. The EJ Policy will be reviewed internally and by the Internal Work Group in May, and by the EJAB in July. OEJ anticipates final release of the EJ Public Participation Policy in Summer 2019.

EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT:

EJ Update Email– OEJ is continuing to distribute a mass mailing email, *EJ Update*, to share opportunities on upcoming meetings, grant and scholarships, job opportunities and other information. The most recent mass email update was sent on Thursday, April 11.

Newsletter – OEJ will be distributing the 2nd edition of its quarterly newsletter, *EJ News: Your Environment Your Voice*, in May.

OEJ PUBLIC MEETINGS/EVENTS:

Merrion Oil and Gas Public Meeting – OEJ and OGM hosted a public meeting in Braddock, PA on Wednesday, March 27 to review the Merrion Oil and Gas permit applications. Approximately 200 individuals attended and approximately 40 individuals presented comments and asked questions directly to DEP staff and representatives of Merrion Oil and Gas and U.S. Steel. The event was heavily covered by local media.

Harrisburg Roundtable – Secretary McDonnell, OEJ and SCRO staff hosted a roundtable meeting at the Boys and Girls Club of Harrisburg on Friday, March 29 to discuss environmental justice issues and potential solutions.

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EJAB Meeting – The Environmental Justice Advisory Board held a meeting on Tuesday, April 9.

OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS:

LMIP Meeting for EnviroWaste, LLC. – Regional Coordinator Dula participated in the Local Municipal Involvement Process (LMIP) meeting on Wednesday, March 20 regarding EnviroWaste LLC.'s permit application.

Monroe County Brownfields Event – Regional coordinator Dula participated in a brownfields event in Monroe on Thursday, March 28.

Lower Darby Creek Area Superfund Site Public Meeting for Folcroft Landfill – Regional coordinator Dula participated in the EPA Folcroft Landfill (LDCA Superfund Site OU-2) public meeting on Thursday, April 11.

PFAS Action Team Meeting – OEJ staff attended the PFAS Action Team meeting in Abington on Monday, April 15.

ENGAGEMENT WITH FUNDERS:

Brownfields Grant – DEP's Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields (ECB) program and OEJ partnered with Northumberland County Planning and Economic Development to apply for an EPA Small Communities Grant. The grant would be utilized for training, capacity building and inventory of sites associated with brownfields redevelopment. The winners will be announced in summer 2019.

Call with Forbes Fund – Director Acevedo held a call with the Forbes Fund President and CEO, Fred Brown, on Wednesday, April 10 to discuss funding regarding environmental justice initiatives.

Claneil Foundation - Director Acevedo met with Claneil Foundation Executive Director Mailee Walker on Friday April 5 to discuss environmental funders in PA.