

Office of Environmental Justice
Highlights: August 14, 2019 – October 22, 2019

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS

Small Communities Technical Assistance Grant – OEJ and ECB from Central Office and NCRO hosted a kick-off meeting in Shamokin, Northumberland County on Thursday, October 3 to commence work under the Small Communities Technical Assistance grant. The purpose of the grant is to assist a small, disadvantaged community on providing training, research and technical assistance for addressing brownfields redevelopment. The meeting was attended by Shamokin's Mayor, City Council, Zoning Board, Planning Board and members of the public. DEP is currently hiring a contractor to perform the work outlined in the grant's Scope of Work and working with Bucknell University to identify opportunities for students to assist the work.

College Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP) - OEJ, EPA, Misericordia University and Nanticoke City representatives are working collaboratively to implement a CUPP project in Luzerne County to support Nanticoke City. The program partners college and university students and resources with underserved communities. This project is being led by the university, but DEP is managing collaboration with community partners and helping to identify community environmental needs and economic development opportunities.

ENGAGEMENT WITH EJAB:

Health Subcommittee Conference Call – The Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB) Health subcommittee held a conference call on Wednesday, September 4.

EJAB Conference Call – The Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB) convened via conference call at 9 am on Tuesday, October 8.

CEP Meeting on PQ Corp – OEJ participated in a meeting hosted by Chester Environmental Partnership (CEP) on Tuesday, September 17 to discuss a civil penalty levied against PQ Corp for air emissions violations. OEJ also worked with Reverend Strand Chair of the Chester Environmental Partnership ahead of the meeting to provide him with contact information for a representative of PQ Corporation and facilitate the meeting.

CEP Meeting – OEJ and DEP participate in the bimonthly Chester Environmental Partnership (CEP) meetings and deliver presentations and provide resources regularly.

EXTERNAL PARTNER ENGAGEMENT:

Environmental Justice and Health Hearing – Regional Coordinator Dula testified at the hearing hosted by Rep. Kenyatta in Philadelphia to discuss the structure and history of the Office of Environmental Justice.

APA-PA Board Meeting – Regional Coordinator Dula participates in regular meetings of the American Planning Association, Pennsylvania Chapter (APA-PA) as the chair-elect. Dula also participated in the annual conference in Reading from Sunday, October 20 to Tuesday, October 22 and presented on Environmental Justice in two sessions.

Office of Environmental Justice
Highlights: August 14, 2019 – October 22, 2019

PES Meetings – OEJ has been participating in in the Refinery Advisory Group Community Committee meetings and Business Committee meetings regarding the status and future of Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES).

Shamokin Tour with EPA –OEJ participated in a tour of Shamokin with EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice, US Forest Service (USFS), DCNR, and other partners on Monday, October 7 to discuss interagency collaboration on improving Shamokin.

Lehigh Valley Environmental Justice Roundtable Planning – Regional Coordinator Dula has been holding roundtable planning calls to develop a strategy for the proposed roundtable in the Lehigh Valley.

CBP Diversity Workgroup Meeting – OEJ met with the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Diversity Coordinator and DCNR’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator to provide an overview of the CBP Diversity plans and programming.

DVRPC Long Range Plan Meeting – Regional Coordinator Dula participates in the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s (DVRPC’s) Long Range Plan and Healthy Communities Task Force meetings.

Walkable Communities Collaborative – Regional Coordinator Dula is a regular participant in the Walkable Communities Collaborative initiative and meetings.

DVSGA Meeting – Regional Coordinator Dula is a regular participant in the Delaware Valley Smart Growth Alliance initiative and meetings.

Healthy Communities in PA – Regional Coordinator Dula is a regular participant in the Healthy Communities in PA initiative and meetings.

Meeting with PennFuture – OEJ held a meeting with representatives from PennFuture to discuss environmental justice issues.

Lancaster GSI Tour – Regional Coordinator Brakeall participated in a tour of Lancaster City’s green infrastructure with Capital Region Water and their community ambassadors on Friday, August 16.

Delaware County Planning Department – Regional Coordinator Dula met with staff at the Delaware County Planning Department to discuss environmental concerns and interactions with the City of Chester on Wednesday, August 21.

West End Fair – Regional Coordinator Dula tabled a community event with NERO staff at the West End Fair in Gibson, Monroe County on Thursday, August 22.

Southwestern PA Commission- Director Acevedo met via conference call on September 17 with EJAB member Allison Robinson and Chuck Imbrogno, Data Manager from the Southwestern PA Commission about data regarding climate change and EJ.

House ERE Hearing on Climate Change – OEJ staff attended the House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee hearing on climate change on Thursday, September 19.

Office of Environmental Justice
Highlights: August 14, 2019 – October 22, 2019

Social Venture Partners – Director Acevedo attended Social Venture Partners’ Information Session on October 2, 2019. Social Venture Partners engages local community leaders in collaborating and providing resources to support organizations that alleviate poverty and support community development.

Drink Philly Tap – Regional Coordinator Dula met with contacts from Drink Philly Tap to discuss ways to collaborate on this program educating Philadelphia residents on the benefits of tap water over bottled water on Wednesday, October 23.

Philadelphia EJ Workgroup Meeting – OEJ will participate in the City of Philadelphia’s EJ Workgroup meeting on Wednesday, October 23.

Meeting with Senator Hughes – Director Acevedo, Director Kauffman, and Director Shirley met with Senator Vincent Hughes’ Chief Counsel on Monday, September 23 to discuss draft legislation on environmental justice that he proposed to introduce this fall.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

ARP Meeting – Regional Coordinator Brakeall is a regular participant in the Anthracite Region for Progress (ARP) monthly meetings in Shamokin.

Capital Region Water Community Meeting – Regional Coordinator Brakeall is a regular participant in Capital Region Water’s (CRW) monthly community ambassador meetings.

INTERNAL & INTERAGENCY MEETINGS:

Diversity Planning – OEJ has met with DEP’s Policy Office to discuss addressing diversity on DEP boards and commissions. Director Acevedo meets with DCNR to discuss diversity initiatives and interagency EJ strategies.

BHM School Subcommittee Meeting – OEJ is serving on the Black History Month Planning Committee and Director Acevedo is chairing the School Subcommittee, which focuses on engaging school districts and increasing participation among schools in the Black History Month event.

PIHET Meeting – OEJ participates in the monthly Pennsylvania Interagency Health Equity Team (PIHET) meetings.

Meeting with Agriculture – Director Acevedo met with Agriculture Special Assistant Scott Sheely to discuss urban agriculture and workforce development initiatives on Thursday, October 10.

Meeting with PUC - Director Acevedo met with PUC staffperson Hayley Book to discuss possible connections between EJ communities and PUC resources for low-income consumers.

EJ POLICY:

Policy Review Process – The EJ Public Participation Policy and Comment-Response document are currently under review for final publication.

Office of Environmental Justice
Highlights: August 14, 2019 – October 22, 2019

EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT:

NAAEE Conference – OEJ Director, Allison Acevedo, and PDE's Environment & Ecology Content Advisor, Tammie Peffer, together with a team of other PA educators, attended and delivered a presentation at the North American Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE) conference in Lexington, Kentucky from October 16 – 18. The theme of this year's conference is Educating for a Just and Sustainable Future.

Temple University Class Presentation – Regional Coordinator Dula presented to a Temple University Class on Politics and Administration on Thursday, October 17.

Gear Up Program – Regional Coordinator Dula and SERO staff met with Norristown Area School District representatives to learn more about the program to work with local school students on environmental careers on Thursday, October 17.

PUBLIC MEETINGS:

PES Advisory Group Meeting – OEJ participated in the PES Advisory Group meeting on Wednesday, September 25.

Philadelphia City Council – Director Acevedo testified before the Philadelphia City Council Environment Committee on Wednesday, October 2 regarding legislation around the Environmental Justice Committee.

Philadelphia Park Lead Contamination Meeting – Regional Coordinator Dula participated in a meeting held by Rep. Hohenstein to discuss the lead remediation plan for Philadelphia parks that have been closed due to lead contamination on Thursday, October 3, 2019.

Eastwick Lower Darby Creek Area CAG Meeting – Regional Coordinator Dula participated in the Eastwick Lower Darby Creek Area Community Advisory Group (CAG) on Wednesday, October 23. The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council's (NEJAC) Superfund Task Force Working Group also attended this meeting to seek advice from the group in producing policy recommendations.

ENGAGEMENT WITH FUNDERS:

Meeting with Forbes Fund – Director Acevedo meets monthly with CEO of the Forbes Fund, Fred Brown, to discuss funding for environmental justice initiatives.