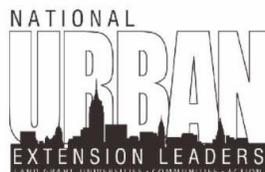




March/April 2020

WATER PAGES eNEWSLETTER

National Urban Extension Leaders at Work



At Work

Green Infrastructure Champions Program

Issue

In urban communities, stormwater runoff causes localized flooding and creates water quality problems. When many of these older communities were built, stormwater management was not required, which resulted in stormwater runoff from most streets, parking lots, roads, and rooftops to be quickly conveyed to local waterways without any treatment. If localized flooding and improved health of local waterways is a goal to a better quality of life, these communities must be retrofitted with green stormwater infrastructure. To achieve this goal, local leadership is needed. Green Infrastructure Champions is an Extension program that was created to empower local stakeholders to play a dominant role in encouraging municipalities and other property owners to implement green stormwater infrastructure practices. They are provided with a series of training opportunities to increase their knowledge about stormwater issues and green stormwater infrastructure solutions. After participating in five workshops, these individuals are certified as Green Infrastructure Champions and become key players in implementing green infrastructure as a stormwater management approach in their community. Once certified, the Green Infrastructure Champion has access to technical



support from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program staff.

Action

An educational program was created to train and certify Green Infrastructure Champions. Green Infrastructure Champions will be key players in implementing green infrastructure as a stormwater management approach town by town. Green Infrastructure Champions will be able to: 1) enhance their knowledge through green infrastructure workshops, seminars, and personal research, 2) engage community leaders to adopt green infrastructure as a stormwater management solution by updating ordinances and municipal master plans, 3) encourage local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and schools to incorporate green infrastructure in their existing landscaping, 4) secure funding for green infrastructure, and 5) publicize implementation of green infrastructure through social media channels. In 2019, nine two-hour workshops were offered on various topics. To become certified, you must take at least five workshops.

Funding

In 2019, this pilot program was partially funded by the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium and was a collaboration of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program and the Green Infrastructure Subcommittee of Jersey Water Works. In 2019, nine workshops were offered for free. In 2020, ten workshops were offered, a \$20 fee was charged for each workshop, and Duke Farms was added as a partner.





Impacts

Here are statistics from 2019 pilot program.

- nine training sessions (average attendance = 35)
- 72 people attended at least one session
- 23 municipals represented
- 20 NGOs/Partnerships/Nonprofit Organizations/Academic represented
- 7 private organizations represented
- 37 certified as Green Infrastructure Champions

Several of the certified Green Infrastructure Champions have begun to implement green infrastructure projects in their community. One received a \$20,000 grant to complete a green infrastructure action plan and strategic plan. Several are giving talks on green infrastructure within their communities and at local schools. By the end of this year, it is anticipated that the Green Infrastructure Champions will coordinate the installation of at least 12 rain gardens, which will manage over 800,000 gallons of stormwater per year.

Public Value Statement

The RCE Water Resources Program will continue to work with the Green Infrastructure Champions to help them secure funding and implement projects. Within the first six months of completing the program, over \$30,000 in funding had been secured to purchase materials to implement green infrastructure projects. Since most projects are being constructed by local department of public works, the in-kind contribution from municipalities will be substantial. In New Jersey, existing development is a major cause of flooding and poor lake and stream water quality. A local champion is one of the best ways to empower communities to move forward with implementing green infrastructure for managing stormwater runoff from existing development.

Future Success

The Green Infrastructure Champions Program was successfully piloted in Burlington County, making the program available to people from the central part of the state. In 2020, the program is being offered 50 miles further to the north, and in 2021, the program will be offered in the southern part of the state. There has been a strong demand for the program. Each session has been filled. Funding will be needed to provide technical support to the certified Green Infrastructure Champions. We are currently seeking grants to secure this funding.



For more information about this project, please contact:



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Green Infrastructure Champions Program

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We will be providing the final sessions of the 2020 Green Infrastructure Champions Program as free webinars and would like to give you the opportunity to join us.

If you are interested, please register at the link below, and the confirmation will provide you with the information to join the Webex webinar.

We hope you can join us! <https://forms.gle/Kn16got94dCayD98>

To learn more about the 2019 and the 2020 Green Infrastructure Program, please click **HERE!**

Live "Earth Day at Home" Webinar Series - Join us on Mondays, starting April 20th, at 6:30pm to learn from experts at Rutgers Cooperative Extension!



Municipal Action Teams' Green Infrastructure Initiative Updates

MARCH 2020

Harrison TIDE (Transforming, Infrastructure and Defending our Environment) had a conference call on March 18th in lieu of an in-person meeting. The group discussed the rain garden at Harrison Library which continues to do well but is in need of some regular maintenance. The rain garden at Washington Middle School is doing well, too and will be coming alive again for the spring. The bulk of the discussion revolved around the CSO Long Term Control plan with a focus on how the mayors are discussing whether it will be approached with a regional plan or by individual municipalities. The cost may be reduced on a regional scale, but the mayors must come to an agreement on how the individual municipalities will be responsible for implementing and maintaining it. Mott McDonald continues to work on a plan for Harrison as an individual municipality in the event a regional plan doesn't come together.

Perth Amboy SWIM (Stormwater Infrastructure Management) members met at the Raritan Bay YMCA on March 4th at 2PM to hear presentations from three attendees. Heather Fenyk of the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership presented results and discussion points from the citizen science campaign to sample the Raritan River during the summer of 2019. Kelley Forsyth presented a conceptual project to install a city-owned tree farm in Perth Amboy that doubles as a stormwater management project. Mo Kinberg reported on the current state of the CSO Long Term Control Plan for Perth Amboy. During the month of April, two demonstration green infrastructure projects were also completed by contractors: a rain garden at the American Legion Post 45 and two parking lot rain gardens at the St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Perth Amboy SWIM will hold remote meetings, with dates and times TBA.

Jersey City START (Stormwater Treatment and Resiliency Team) members Jersey City members met online via Zoom on March 27th and discussed a variety of subjects such as the green infrastructure challenge, which is meant to incentivize Jersey City residents to install green infrastructure on their property. Climate Action Plan community meetings are being rescheduled for a remote set-up. The Sustainable Jersey City Certification program is now online. Sustainable Jersey City is also working on a tree census as presented to the Shade Tree Committee and is working on an updated green infrastructure guide for developers with George Vallone from Hoboken Brownstone. The Canco Park Conservancy is working on geo caching program to engage the community despite social distancing requirements.

APRIL 2020

Camden SMART (Stormwater Management and Resource Training) met on April 8th via Zoom as a part of a Camden (CCI) all working groups meeting. The group focused on how COVID-19 has affected the city and provided many resources that are available to residents. Please see the click [here](#) for information from Camden City regarding COVID-19. Many projects and programs such as tree plantings and the PowerCorps program are suspended until further notice, but project partners continue to work to plan future projects however

Municipal action teams have been formed to foster collaboration and collective action that helps the municipality speak with a common voice and achieve a common goal while advocating for green infrastructure. Updates on the various municipal action teams across the state are listed in this newsletter.

Technical assistance provided to these municipal action teams by the RCE Water Resources Program is funded in part by the Surdna Foundation, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission with support from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), and our local partners.

Camden SMART

Gloucester City Green Team

Harrison TIDE

Jersey City START

Newark DIG

Paterson SMART

Perth Amboy SWIM

Trenton Green Infrastructure Partners

they can. The next monthly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13th via Zoom.

Trenton Green Infrastructure Partners (GIP) members met on online via Zoom on April 28th at 3PM and discussed new strategies for accomplishing goals in a new way during shelter-in-place directives. The team also discussed the need for new leadership for the Green Team beyond 2021. The plans for a new Community Forestry Management plan, created in assistance with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) were also discussed, and new remote review procedures were presented and evaluated. Green infrastructure projects are being prioritized for next year, with plans to complete at least two more demonstration projects in 2020. Members will be meeting via Zoom every third Tuesday until further notice.



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