

# Announcing the **URBANWATERS**

## **Collaborative of NonGovernmental Organizations and Academic Partners**

**November 9, 2021**

**A**s nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions aligned with the Urban Waters mission and actively supporting one or more Urban Waters locations, we join in celebrating the Urban Waters Program at its tenth anniversary.

During the past decade, the Urban Waters movement has strengthened connections of underserved communities with local waterways, waterfronts, and watersheds to generate environmental, social and economic benefits. Together with federal agency and local partners, we have collaborated with residents and community partners through small grants, technical support, training, research and networking to build capacity and generate just outcomes in the 20 Urban Waters locations.

### **STATEMENT OF SUPPORT**

This *Statement of Support* sets a path for broadened engagement of nongovernmental and academic institutions in advancing the Urban Waters agenda. We, the signatory organizations, commit to helping communities more easily conserve, restore, and revitalize America's urban waterways and surrounding lands. Likewise, we commit to supporting associated needs related to equity and justice, public health, affordable and safe housing, increased climate resilience, local civic leadership, and conditions promoting sustainable and equitable economic development. We will help institutionalize the existing Urban Waters Program by employing our individual and collective expertise. We will seek to share Urban Waters' knowledge and other resources with more communities. We seek to increase the Program's visibility to help leverage more funding for Urban Waters Ambassadors and community-directed restoration and improvement projects.

### **INTENT TO CREATE A COLLABORATIVE**

To facilitate this cooperation and coordination, we pledge to participate in a new *Urban Waters Collaborative of Nongovernmental Organizations and Academic Partners*. In collaboration with our Federal and local partners, we will harness the power of our combined networks to create the required resources and conditions to bring wide-spread implementation of locally-scaled solutions that result in healthy watersheds and sustainable and equitable urban waterway communities.

Initial activities of the Collaborative are likely to include the following:

- 1) Hold quarterly meetings.
- 2) Hold small group and/or multi-sectoral discussions to develop and implement action plans on priorities. Recent discussions have identified strong interest in locational funding, youth activation, jobs and metrics. Strengthening these areas will increase the value of the Urban Waters' designation.
- 3) Participate in site visits to gain on-the-ground understanding of hurdles and best practices.
- 4) Establish memoranda of understanding to formalize substantial commitments of non-governmental organizations and academic institutions to the Urban Waters Program.





## COMMITMENTS

***“American Rivers believes all people should have healthy rivers and clean water. Unfortunately, many urban rivers and communities that depend on them have suffered from years of disinvestment, pollution and aging infrastructure. The Urban Water Federal Partnership is a key part of restoring and connecting urban rivers and communities and providing important federal resources to do so. American Rivers is proud to participate in and support the Urban Waters Federal partnership program as part of our work to restore damaged rivers and ensure clean water for people and nature.”***

**— Tom Kiernan**

*President and CEO, American Rivers*

***“The Urban Waters Program is our call to action for the convergent infrastructure planning of healthier cities with living rivers as a central feature and for orchestrating ‘youth power’ in the transformation of blighted areas to inclusive places of celebration of nature. Our mission in Los Angeles is to create an “Emerald Necklace” natural infrastructure network of river greenways (parks, trails and green schools) in underserved areas throughout the Los Angeles Basin, connecting the Mountains to the Sea, offering equitable access to nature, protecting our environment and protecting urban communities from the threats of climate change.”***

**— Claire Robinson**

*Managing Director,  
Amigos de los Rios - Emerald Necklace Group*

***“The Water Quality Management department at Red Rocks Community College supports the commitment by providing education and resources about conservation, restoration, and revitalization of America’s urban waterways and surrounding lands.”***

**— Chelsea Campbell**

*Department Chair/Faculty Lead, Water Quality  
Management Technology, Red Rocks Community College*

***Through an inclusive, citizen-driven process, the San Antonio River Authority collaborated with Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other local and federal entities to complete one of the nation’s largest urban riverine ecosystem restoration projects. The success of the Mission Reach Project has helped the San Antonio River Walk garner an international reputation for its combination of riverfront development, ecosystem restoration, and cultural connections to the San Antonio Missions, which are designated as a World Heritage site. The San Antonio River Authority has been an active supporter and participant in the Urban Waters Program since its inception. We join in the 10th Anniversary celebrations and offer our ongoing support to help communities more easily conserve, restore, and revitalize America’s urban waterways and surrounding lands.”***

**— Steven Schauer**

*Direct of External Communications,  
San Antonio River Authority*

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## COMMITMENTS

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***“The Conservation Fund pursues a mission of conserving the Nation’s land and water resources to ensure they are sustainable for people who depend on them for their economic livelihood, cultural heritage, physical and emotional well-being. By focusing attention and resources on the restoration and revitalization of degraded or ignored urban waters and communities and promoting stewardship for all water resources, the Urban Waters program serves as a catalyst for realizing a thriving environment for all. We are proud to align with the Program’s partners - federal, state, and local governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations - in pursuit of this vision.”***

**— Erik Meyers**

*Vice President, Climate and Water Sustainability,  
The Conservation Fund*

***“Its efforts to create a national coalition to improve water quality in our urban areas is vital to providing safe, clean water for our citizens living in our most densest population centers and the watersheds our urban areas are situated in.”***

**— Stanton Lambert**

*Executive Director,  
Wabash River Enhancement Corporation*

***“The Urban Waters Federal Partnership is a critical multi-sector approach to both preserving and protecting our nation’s waterways and connecting communities to the recreational, economic, and health benefits of access to nature. Wilderness Inquiry connects people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to each other and the natural world through shared outdoor adventures. Public lands and waterways are vital to our programs and mission to create equitable opportunities in the outdoors for our diverse community of partners and participants.”***

**— Julie Edmiston**

*Associate Executive Director, Wilderness Inquiry*

***“The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) strongly supports the Urban Waters Program. WCS advocates for the ecological restoration, protection and improvement of the Bronx River and Coney Island Creek in New York City by leveraging the platform of the Bronx Zoo, New York Aquarium and its full network of wildlife parks. WCS seeks to monitor, protect, and restore the health of these important urban waterways by engaging, informing and empowering community stakeholders whose actions can affect positive conservation outcomes and benefit surrounding communities.”***

**— John F. Calvelli**

*Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, Wildlife  
Conservation Society*



## SIGNATURES

### **American Rivers**

Tom Kiernan, *President and CEO*

### **American Rivers**

Destinee Henton, *Associate Director*

### **Amigos De Los Rios-Emerald Necklace Group**

Claire Robinson, *Managing Director*

### **Anacostia Watershed Society**

Erin Borgeson Castelli, *Senior V.P./Chief Operating Officer*

### **Arbor Day Foundation**

Alana Tucker, *Program Manager, Tree City Programs*

### **Clean Water Action**

Lynn Thorp, *National Campaigns Director*

### **Conservation Legacy**

Amy Sovocool, *Chief Operating Officer/  
Acting Chief Executive Officer*

### **Earth Force**

Vince Meldrum, *President & CEO*

### **Groundwork USA**

Steve Burrington, *Executive Director*

### **Heartland Conservation Alliance**

Samuel Bennett, *Interim Executive Director*

### **Ironbound Community Corporation**

Drew Curtis, *Senior Equitable Development Manager*

### **Missouri State University**

R.T. Pavlowski

### **Mystic River Watershed Association**

Patrick Herron, *Executive Director*

### **National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)**

Kristina Surfus, *Managing Director, Government Affairs*

### **One World One Water Center at Metropolitan State University of Denver**

Nona Shipman, *Associate Director*

### **Proctor Creek Stewardship Council**

Donna Y. Stephens, *Co-chair*

### **Red Rocks Community College**

Chelsea Campbell, *Department Chair/Faculty Lead, Water  
Quality Management Technology*

### **River Network**

Nicole Silk, *President*

### **San Antonio River Authority**

Steven Schauer, *Direct of External Communications*

### **Save the Dunes Conservation Fund**

Katie Hobgood, *Program Director*

### **Society of Municipal Arborists**

Earl Eutsler, *Board of Directors*

### **St. Louis University**

Jason Knouft

### **The Conservation Fund**

Erik Meyers, *Vice President, Climate and Water Sustainability*

### **The Greenway Foundation**

Ryan Aids, *Deputy Director*

### **University of Missouri Extension**

Misti Ritter

### **US Water Alliance**

Scott Berry, *Director of Policy and Government Affairs*

### **Valparaiso University**

Julie Peller, *Professor of Chemistry*

### **Wabash River Enhancement Corporation**

Stanton Lambert, *Executive Director*

### **Wilderness Inquiry**

Julie Edmiston, *Associate Executive Director*

### **Wildlife Conservation Society**

John F. Calvelli, *Executive Vice President, Public Affairs*