Negley Run Watershed Task Force Meeting

Date: July 17th, 2025

Attendees: Sarah Christian, Sandra Glass, Garett Green, David Hance, Matthew Huber, Kathryn Hunninen, Alina Keebler, Emerson O'Donnell, Kyla Prendergast, Koa Reitz, Jo Anne Tippett, Matt Zambelli,

Agenda Items

- RAND Health and High Water Presentation - Linnea Warren May - "Join us for an overview of the Health and High Water project, which examines basement flooding and wetness in Pittsburgh's Hill District and Homewood neighborhoods. We'll share preliminary findings from surveys and environmental sampling, highlighting residents' flooding experiences, perceptions of risk, and impacts on health and housing. The talk will also explore how these insights inform strategies like green stormwater infrastructure to address flooding in underserved communities."
    - Homewood Children's Village will use data to action model to develop resident led solutions to basement wetness
    - Employed residents as data collectors for project
    - This study builds on work done with PHRESH participants
    - Findings that they will share
        - Indoor air quality - focus on radon
        - Experiences and conceptions of basement wetness and GSI
        - HHW participants primarily use basements for storage and laundry
            - 23% report mold
            - 73% go in their basement at least weekly
            - Less than 20% of people use their basement for bedrooms, recreation
            - 31% using dehumidifiers

        - High radon readings observed in a relatively large proportion of our sample
        - 27 households (~22%) had average radon readings
        - Developed a protocol in collaboration with partners to report back
    - Main takeaway - basement wetness is common but respondents didn't see a big risk
        - 48% are somewhat worried
        - 75%
    - Seepage was the most common cause of basement wetness
        - More sewage backups in Hill District than Homewood
    - 27% of Homewood residents report "extensive knowledge" of cause of flooding vs 9% in the Hill District
    - 76% of Homewood residents are familiar with GSI
        - 33% of Hill District residents are familiar
        - More Homewood residents viewed GSI as effective compared to Hill District residents
    - Key Takeaways -
        - Basement dampness vs flooding are important distinctions
            - Disconnect between actual wetness and expectations of flooding. Possibly because people minor wellness as normalhttps://www.alleghenycounty.us/Projects-and-Initiatives/Economic-Development/Authorities/Redevelopment-Authority-RAAC/Gaming-Economic-Development-Tourism-Fund
            - Radon testing and mitigation is important as they co-develop solutions
            - Awareness will play an important role in generating support for GSI.
    - Questions/comments
        - Kyla suggested reaching out to folks in the Hill District after hearing from someone there that is interested in learning about M19 sewershed issues
- Highland Park Trails & The Friends of Highland Park - Matthew Huber
    - Right now, Highland Park operates as kind of an 'island park' with more limited connectivity and accessibility (*"a disconnected archipelago of green space")*

- Connections: Allegheny Rivertrail park is working to connect with Sharpsburg, Etna, eventually Millvale; Brilliant Line envisions connecting Aspinwall with Pittsburgh, eventually connecting Homewood and N Point Breeze
- Question of how can cycling lanes be a source of connectivity and activation of trails
- The zoo can operate as a hub instead of an isolated entity with consolidated parking
- AVR Right-of-way could be used to connect Heths Run Hollow trail network + zoo with Damn #2 overlook and on to Brilliant Line and Washington Blvd.
- Opportunity to use trail loop on the former children's railroad site to connect Heth and Highland Park
- Expanding the regional park network will also expand access to communities lacking in walkability and pedestrian access
- Construction of a new pump house near Heth's Run Trails
    - PADEP has designated the reservoirs as dams– all of trees growing on the surface have to be cut down; city will have to plant approx 6,000 new trees to make up for the loss
- Questions/comments:
    - What is the first step working towards the volunteer trails?
        - Getting community input on potential locations based on the preliminary mapping, figuring out which sites are actually feasible (physically and fiscally)
    - PWSA has plans for fencing around the reservoir (?), need to check in with them to calculate how much of a buffer would be necessary
    - The replacement trees don't need to all be planted at once, there will be a forestry fund to replace the cutdown ones
    - Look at Hazelwood Greenway as a model
        - NRPA, Landforce, Allegheny Goatscape… as partners to help build trails in the greenway
        - Contact **Tiffany Taulton**
    - Consider hosting hikes for community members to get familiar with and engage with the spaces that are being discussed
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- Lincoln-Lemington Greenway CMU Capstone Course Project - Sarah Christian and John Stephen
    - Overview of structure of past capstone classes: ~35 students of different engineering disciplines, site visits in early September, conceptual design presentation for stakeholders, [missed the second bit]
    - Looking for people with knowledge of the site to help the participating students
    - More information will be coming
- Rain Reclaim Project Community Meeting Report-Out and Project Update - Kyla Prendergast
    - Still collecting a lot of feedback from community members
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- Watersmith Guild First Waves of Negley Run Project Update - John Stephen
    - 15 - 20 team leads, video and editing (?)
    - Opportunities for students to take videos of river roots, what is the youth vision for the future? How do they want to define and steward the wilderness?
    - Will be looking for video artists as well for specific content
    - Screening of videos at River Roots happening in September. More details to come!

Events

- Allegheny Cleanways Dumpbusters Cleanup Homewood 7/25 & 7/26 9 am to noon 7222 Everton St Pittsburgh PA 15206
    - https://www.alleghenycleanways.org/volunteer.html
- Lincoln Lemington Belmar Community Day 8/2 11 am to 3 pm at Catalyst Academy 7061 Lemington Ave Pittsburgh PA 15206
    - https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=769261832446528&set=a.163363666369684
- Pittsburgh's Got the Runs! 8/27 5 to 7:30 pm - A dynamic, family-friendly, educational celebration of Pittsburgh's Cricks, Runs, and Hollows. Learn what's hurting them & how to fix it!
    - https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pittsburghs-got-the-runs-tickets-1458540677429

Next meeting in October.