

2013 U.S. EPA Community Involvement Training Conference

Poster Presentation & Technology Demonstration Application Form

Presenter Information

Name:

Presenter:

Justin Bousquin, M.B.A.

Authors:

Marisa Mazzotta, Ph.D.

Walter Berry, Ph.D.

Justin Bousquin, M.B.A.

Caroline Gottschalk Druschke, Ph.D.

Kristen Hychka, Ph.D.

Organization:

Atlantic Ecology Division, Office of Research and Development, National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Address:

27 Tarzwell Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882

Email address:

mazzotta.marisa@epa.gov; druschke.caroline@epa.gov

Poster/Tech Demo Information

Poster title:

Supporting Managers, Hearing the Public: A Decision Support Approach for Evaluating Ecosystem Services and Social Benefits from Urban Wetland and Stream-Buffer Restoration

1. Do you consider this submission a technology demonstration? **NO**
2. Will you be using a laptop computer or other equipment for your poster or tech demo? **NO**

Please write a brief description of your poster or tech demo (2-3 sentences)

This poster introduces our work to create a practical and user-friendly benefit assessment approach to wetlands and riparian restoration that will help to prioritize restoration projects. We are relying on input from land managers and the general public to build an approach that evaluates the ecosystem services provided by wetlands and riparian areas. Our goal is to support restoration decision-making by addressing both the functional and social benefits of freshwater restoration projects.

Please provide a detailed summary of your poster or tech demo in a short paragraph below. Please specifically address how this poster or tech demo will facilitate community involvement work.

Public officials and environmental managers face difficult decisions about how to allocate limited funds to the most beneficial restoration projects and how to define what a “beneficial” project is. Beneficial to what? Or to whom? And where? Traditionally, managers have looked to functional assessment tools – tools that assess the habitat, hydrology, and water quality of a particular wetland – to prioritize projects. While these tools are useful for understanding more about the ecological health of a particular wetland, they do not focus users’ attention on the ecosystem services (the resources and services provided by the natural environment) or social benefits of wetlands and riparian areas. In addition, these tools often require a level of expense and expertise that render them impractical at the local level. Because of these challenges, we are working in Rhode Island’s Woonasquatucket watershed to create a practical and user-friendly benefit assessment tool for wetlands and riparian restoration that will help decision-makers prioritize restoration projects. We are doing that by focusing on the ecosystem services provided by wetlands and riparian areas and paying special attention to community members’ impressions of, concerns about, and hopes for freshwater restoration projects. The goal of our work is to support restoration decision-making throughout Rhode Island by offering an assessment tool that focuses on both the functional and social benefits of freshwater restoration projects. Because successful restoration projects require both sound science and community support, we expect that our research will lead to the creation of a benefit assessment tool that focuses on community needs, perceptions, and understandings and empowers local managers and community-based watershed groups to consider both wetland function and social benefit when prioritizing freshwater restoration projects to take best advantage of limited funding.