

Media Relations

January 22, 2014

UNH Stormwater Center Awarded Nearly \$1M from EPA for Philadelphia Green Infrastructure Project



Tom Ballestero, director of the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center, in Philadelphia for the announcement of a major EPA grant to address water management issues in that city. Credit: Lahne Mattas-Curry, EPA Communications

DURHAM, N.H., and BOSTON, MASS. – The University of New Hampshire is one of only five universities or colleges selected to share grant funding to study green infrastructure practices in urban areas, using Philadelphia as a pilot project. Further, due to the [UNH Stormwater Center's](#) significant expertise on urban stormwater issues, UNH is the only institution outside of Philadelphia area selected in this program.

UNH is receiving the grant of \$992,759 as part of EPA's safe and sustainable water resources research program. The project, [Green Infrastructure for Sustainable Philadelphia Communities](#), will help build municipal capacity in a subset of the greater Philadelphia urban watershed for green infrastructure, which uses soils and vegetation to manage rainwater where it falls.

"Investing in green infrastructure technologies not only helps reduce the impacts of flooding and polluted runoff, but these projects can also beautify our communities, protect our waterways and create local jobs in our cities and towns," said Curt Spalding, regional administrator [for EPA's New England office](#). "The UNH Stormwater Center has been a real leader not only here in New England, but across the country, finding practical, cost-effective and aesthetically-pleasing solutions for how we reduce pollution from stormwater runoff from harming our environment."

"We're pleased to join our Philadelphia research colleagues in this effort to bring education and support for green infrastructure to the city's stormwater management issues," said UNH Stormwater Center director Thomas Ballestero, who is associate professor of civil engineering at UNH. "We'll share some of the success we've had throughout New England in helping communities evaluate, implement, and embrace green infrastructure."

Ballestero joined Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter, Nancy Sutley, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and EPA deputy administrator Bob Perciasepe, among others, at a press conference

announcing the grants in Philadelphia yesterday (Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2014). In addition to UNH, the following universities received grants of roughly \$1 million as part of the project: Villanova University, Villanova, Pa.; Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa.; Temple University, Ambler, Pa.; and the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

“Green infrastructure investments are vital to creating healthy, livable communities,” said Perciasepe. “This pilot project with Philadelphia’s Green City, Clean Waters program will help us yield results and gain knowledge to help apply these practices in cities from coast to coast. And, these results can be increasing green spaces, creating jobs, saving energy and reducing urban heat island effects that contribute to climate change.”

“EPA’s support has been key as we implement Philadelphia’s Green City, Clean Waters plan,” said Nutter. “This forward-thinking plan will not only result in better water quality for the city, but it will also provide a multitude of benefits for Philadelphians like cleaner air, revitalized green spaces, and even new economic opportunity. EPA’s commitment to making Green City, Clean Waters a model for the nation is confirmed by the creation of this grant program.”

Philadelphia is one of about 800 cities across the country that uses a combined sewer overflow system (CSO). These systems, which combine sewage and stormwater pipes, typically feed into water treatment facilities where polluted wastewater is treated. During heavy rainstorms, the large amount of water running off pavement and roofs in cities can overwhelm these systems, sending untreated wastewater directly into waterways.

Green infrastructure is a cost-effective way to reduce runoff from overflowing combined sewer systems in urban areas. The goal of green infrastructure is to retain or redirect water into the ground where plants and soil will naturally filter the water. By reducing the volume of rain entering sewers, these green infrastructure practices lessen the frequency and volume of sewer overflows.

In addition to several test sites on the UNH campus, the UNH Stormwater Center has helped implement green infrastructure [projects](#) throughout New Hampshire’s Seacoast region and beyond.

The UNH Stormwater Center is a dynamic research, testing and educational facility which serves as a technical resource for water managers, planners, and design engineers in New England and throughout the United States. The primary functions of the center are twofold: Research and development of stormwater treatment systems, and to provide resources to the stormwater management community currently challenged by the effective design and implementation of required stormwater management. It is part of UNH’s [Environmental Research Group](#).

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

Photograph available to download: <http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2014/01/images/ballesterophilly-3623.jpg>

Caption: Tom Ballestero, director of the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center, in Philadelphia for the announcement of a major EPA grant to address water management issues in that city.

Credit: Lahne Mattas-Curry, EPA Communications

Media Contact: [Beth Potier](#) | 603-862-1566 | UNH Media Relations | [@unhnews](#) | [@unhscience](#)

Secondary Contact: [David Deegan](#) | 617-918-1017 | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/NE Regional Office/New England Regional Office

Copyright © 2018, The University of New Hampshire • Durham, NH 03824 • UNH main directory: (603) 862-1234.

[Media Relations](#) is a unit of [Communications & Public Affairs](#) which is a division of University Advancement.

[ADA Acknowledgement](#) | [Contact the Webmaster](#) | [UNH Today](#) | [UNH Social Media Index](#)