

# WATER BLUES GREEN SOLUTIONS

DISCUSSION AND EVENT GUIDE

PENNSTATE



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**PUBLIC MEDIA**



## INTRODUCTION FROM THE DIRECTOR

During the two years we spent producing the documentary *Water Blues Green Solutions*, we became keenly aware of a central requirement for making green infrastructure sustainable: the necessity of community engagement to adopt and maintain green solutions to solve our water blues.

To inspire citizens and communities to get involved, we have created tools that communities can use for raising awareness about local water blues of flooding, water pollution, and scarcity and the creation of solutions based on nature.

This public engagement toolkit will help you plan community discussions about the water blues and green solutions featured in the documentary. We designed the guide for public broadcasting stations, municipalities, community groups, students, and others interested in using the documentary to help communities understand and address the challenges and solutions for creating a sustainable water future.

Frank Christopher, Director  
*Water Blues Green Solutions*



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# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Why Hold a Discussion?

*Water Blues Green Solutions* is an interactive film project, telling the stories of communities creating green solutions for our water blues: flooding, pollution, and scarcity. This public service media project is an integrated initiative designed to promote public education and awareness of what has become known as “green infrastructure” and how natural processes can interface with and complement existing gray infrastructure. The ultimate project goal is an informed citizenry that can intelligently assess and influence policy and practice.

The film can act as a catalyst for community discussions where people can share ideas, communicate local issues, build lasting relationships, and plan for the future.

## Issues and Topics

When choosing what issues to discuss and the goals of your community discussion, the following topics may be of interest to your local audience:

- Adapting green infrastructure in your home and landscaping
- Community green infrastructure needs and ideas

## Meeting Format

- **Panel Discussions:** Panel discussions may bring in partner organizations, water professionals, public officials, and community members. Your local public television station may want to hold a panel discussion in conjunction with the *Water Blues Green Solutions* broadcast.
- **Local Call-in Shows:** Local public television or radio stations may want to produce call-in shows that invite the public to share their opinions in response to the airing of the documentary.
- **Local Productions:** Local public television stations may be interested in filming their own 30-minute production to review the ways that their local water infrastructure affects the local economy and to interview experts and leaders for their perspectives. The local production could fit into the broadcast schedule immediately following the airing of the 60-minute film.
- **Public Screenings of the Documentary:** Environmental organizations, municipalities, and civic groups may want to show the entire 60-minute documentary or a segment of the documentary at a public meeting. At the end of the screening, partners or local representatives could address questions from community members.
- **Community Meetings:** The 15-minute overview can be shown as part of a special community meeting on green infrastructure, or as part of a regularly scheduled meeting of environmental, professional, or civic organizations.
- **Local Events:** At local events such as fairs, conventions, or environmental holidays (e.g., Earth Day, World Water Day), groups may wish to use the preview to stimulate interest in seeing the documentary on local television or attending a community discussion.
- **Create an Event:** See the *Water Blues Green Solutions Event Guide* for helpful ideas on how to create your own event.

## Icebreaker Questions

- What was your reaction to what we just watched?
- What issues and/or solutions in the documentary were you already aware of? What issues and/or solutions surprised you?
- What issues are similar to the issues in our community?
- What additional information do you feel you need/want?

## Community Problem Solving

- What do you believe is the most pressing water issue in our community?
- In what ways can our community implement green solutions?
- In order to promote big changes in our community, the majority of the public needs to fundamentally think it is the right thing to do. What practices could we adopt in our community and how do we communicate them?
- Who are the key players—groups and/or individuals—in making changes in our community?
- What is the first step in bringing these groups together?
- What can you individually be doing in your homes?
- How would your community pay for green infrastructure improvements? Who in the community should be a part of those decisions?

## MEDIA RESOURCES

# *Water Blues* *Green Solutions DVD*

The *Water Blues Green Solutions* DVD has been chaptered for your convenience. View the entire documentary, or pick and choose from the segments that are applicable to your community and water issues.

### **Introduction**

An introduction to our nation's water blues and green solutions and the virtual journey across the country that our host will guide us on, in search of communities that are adopting new ways of thinking about how to protect, restore and preserve our rivers and sources of drinking water.

### **Philadelphia**

Beginning of the Philadelphia segment. Philadelphia, like most older cities, has a combined sewer system that can be overwhelmed by as little as ¼ inch of rain, which causes stormwater, pollutants from the street, and raw sewage to pollute the city's rivers and its sources of drinking water. In response, the city of Philadelphia has committed to spend \$2 Billion over 25 years to rely on green infrastructure as the primary solution to stop the pollution of its rivers.

### **Portland**

Leaders from the Philadelphia Water Department toured Portland to learn how to manage stormwater with green infrastructure. Their guide was a landscape architect that worked for the Environmental Services Department and has helped Portland become a national leader in developing solutions that worked with nature to prevent stormwater pollution.

### **Green Solutions at Home**

The Philadelphia Water Department is helping homeowners install rain gardens, downspout planters, porous pavement and other green tools to prevent stormwater runoff.

### **Green Solutions at Work**

The stormwater fee that the Philadelphia Water Department is charging businesses, based on the amount of non-pervious surfaces, has motivated some businesses to find ways to harvest rainwater for use in its industrial processes.

### **Green Solutions in Government**

Philadelphia has found that the way to make green infrastructure affordable is for government agencies to construct green amenities like green streets or tree trenches at a time when the normal repair of the city's roads, sewer system and other infrastructure would occur, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars.

### **Green Solutions at School**

Parents at an elementary school in the heart of Philadelphia have driven the process of transforming their schoolyard, from an asphalt parking area that contributed to stormwater run off into the nearby river, into a play area surrounded by trees for use by students in classroom study and a play surface that allows rainwater to be absorbed into the soil, rather than run off into the nearby river.

### **Green Solutions in the Neighborhood**

Grass roots organizations partnered with the Philadelphia Water Department to work with residents in a low-income neighborhood to install downspout planters to capture rainwater from the roofs, and also they helped to create a neighborhood garden in a vacant lot.

### **San Antonio**

Beginning of the San Antonio segment



## Conserving Water

San Antonio depends on the Edwards Aquifer as its source of drinking water. But since the late 1990s, access to that water has been restricted in order to preserve habitat for species that depend on the Aquifer. This restriction has forced the citizens of San Antonio to develop a culture of water conservation that has helped them survive years of chronic drought.

## Watering Lawns

During periods of drought, San Antonio Water System restricts the frequency of watering lawns and enforces restrictions by issuing misdemeanor citations, and at the same time it encourages the use of xeriscaping and other landscapes that require less water.

## Reusing Waste Water

To help San Antonio citizens have access to water for non-potable purposes, San Antonio Water System is turning sewage into water for irrigation, cooling and for maintaining the water level of the River Walk, while producing compost and methane gas for sale.

## Urban vs. Rural Water Use

During periods of drought, there is high demand for the water of the Edwards Aquifer by both urban and rural users.

## Conserving Land

The Edwards Aquifer is vulnerable to pollution from contaminants that enter the limestone caverns when it rains. The city of San Antonio is attempting to protect its precious source of water by conserving land from development in areas where the Aquifer is recharged by rainwater.

## The Bronx

Majora Carter grew up in the South Bronx and helped to create the first waterfront park along the Bronx River in 60 years.

## Restoring Lives & Rivers

Rocking the Boat trains high school students to build and navigate sail boats that are then used by the students to introduce people from the community to the Bronx River, and for conducting science experiments by the students to help clean pollution from the river.

## Bronx River Greenway

The creation of Hunts Point Riverside Park, the first waterfront park on the Bronx River in 60 years, inspired the community to develop the Bronx River Greenway, a series of parks and greenways along the Bronx River from Connecticut to the Long Island Sound.

## Bronx River House

The Bronx River Alliance is constructing its future headquarters along the Bronx River, a LEED building that will harvest rainwater, preventing stormwater runoff into the river, and cool the surrounding area by transpiring water through vines growing on the exteriors of the building.

## Restoring Biodiversity

A local photographer documents the restoration of the Bronx River and the return of wildlife to the once severely polluted river.

## Green Jobs

Sustainable South Bronx prepares members of the Bronx community for green jobs.

## Close

Majora Carter concludes a virtual journey across the nation and suggests that we can learn from people in the documentary to help us create a sustainable water future for our own communities.

## Credits

Production and funding credits.

# ***Water Blues Green Solutions Website***

When you enter the *Water Blues Green Solutions* website at [www.waterblues.org](http://www.waterblues.org), you will have an opportunity to create your own pathway through the stories and resources to provide the most relevant content for your audience.

## **Introduction**

From the moment you enter the website, you are presented with choices: to watch the Introduction to the documentary or Explore Stories within the website. Even if you choose to watch the Introduction, once it is finished playing, you will be able to access stories and resources that are most relevant to you and your community.

## **Explore Stories**

By choosing to Explore Stories, you will be able to watch an entire segment of the documentary: Philadelphia, Portland, San Antonio or The Bronx, as well as stories about the green solutions being created at Penn State. You can also create a playlist of stories by selecting the theme (or themes) that are most applicable to your community and water issues. You can then watch or listen to several video or audio stories based on the theme(s) that you have selected.

## **Additional Resources**

At any time, you can scroll down from any media component to access relevant resources that will help you adopt green solutions to solve your water blues. These resources could be: a guide to the costs and savings of building a green roof on a location of your choosing, or an entire curriculum based on managing water in an urban watershed.



# SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

## Philadelphia Discussion

In April of 2012, City of Philadelphia leaders partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and signed **Green Cities, Clean Waters**—a plan to change one third of the city’s hard surfaces with green infrastructure to stop the polluting of its rivers. Learn more about **Green Cities, Clean Waters** with the Philadelphia Water Department. <http://bit.ly/1gWKLze>

- Homeowners and communities can take part in green home projects such as rain gardens, container gardens, downspout planters, green roofs, depaving, porous paving, or tree planting. For ideas and instructions, download the Philadelphia Water Department’s **Homeowners Guide to Stormwater Management**. <http://bit.ly/1drJgXg>
- Businesses in the city of Philadelphia are encouraged to commit to stormwater reduction and management and can earn stormwater credits and awards. Find out more information by downloading the Philadelphia Water Department’s **Developer’s Guide to Stormwater Management**. <http://bit.ly/JLuVMk>
- Greenfield Elementary, in the heart of Philadelphia, was one of the first schools in the city to redesign its schoolyard to prevent stormwater runoff. Learn more through the Philadelphia Water Department’s **A Guide to Stormwater Management on School Campuses**. <http://bit.ly/1fspDzO>
- Learn more about community partnerships, find your watershed (Philadelphia residents), and learn more about green stormwater infrastructure by visiting the Philadelphia Water Department’s website. <http://bit.ly/JLv7eA>

- Download a homeowner application for a homeowner in need of essential repairs, organize a block build, or for more information on community projects through Rebuilding Together Philadelphia, visit the outreach section of their website. <http://bit.ly/1i867wV>

## San Antonio Discussion

Read more about San Antonio’s conservation programs that help keep water rates low while saving water: SAWS Conservation.

<http://bit.ly/1jqhyS0>

- Dos Rios Water Recycling Center is one of three water recycling treatment facilities in San Antonio. Learn about the locations and water recycling treatment process with the San Antonio Water System. <http://bit.ly/1bVtHry>
- Discuss Major Julian Castro’s statement that many people have the expectation that their lawns need to be lush year round: habits are hard to change. Learn more about Xeriscaping with the San Antonio Water System’s **7 Steps to Xeriscaping**. <http://bit.ly/1hrH8Sb>
- Homeowner Susan Beldon discusses her interest in saving money and reducing her water bill. What are “water wasters” in our homes and community? What are ways we can reduce our water usage and bills?
- Learn more about the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program Conservation Easement program through the city of San Antonio’s **Conservation Easement FAQ’s** <http://bit.ly/1fsr7KC> and find out more information on the Recharge Zone protection and management with the Edwards Aquifer Authority. <http://bit.ly/1fsrgO0>
- The Habitat Conservation Plan is to help resolve the conflict between the federal mandate to protect threatened species in the Edwards Aquifer and the region’s dependence on the same aquifer as its primary water resource. Learn more about the **Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan**. <http://bit.ly/1fMb7nk>

## Portland Discussion

Portland's Environmental Services works for sustainable stormwater management. Learn more about the city's Sustainable Stormwater Management projects that mimic nature. <http://bit.ly/1drKCRT>

## Bronx Discussion Supplemental Resources

- Learn more about the Bronx River with the Bronx River Alliance. <http://bit.ly/19YbdUn>
- Find out more information on the Rocking the Boat programs. <http://bit.ly/1kqDgn3>
- View more details on the Bronx River Greenway Plan. <http://bit.ly/1cWVPM8>
- Sustainable South Bronx addresses economic and environmental issues throughout New York City with green job training, community greening programs, and social enterprise. Learn more about their programs. <http://www.ssbx.org/>

## Additional Discussion Ideas (Resources may be found at [waterblues.org](http://waterblues.org))

- How to conserve water in your home.
- How to monitor your water bill.
- Make your own green project: rain gardens, container gardens, downspout planters, green roofs, porous paving, or tree planting.

# EVENT GUIDE

## Event Planning Checklist

### PREVIEW RESOURCES

- Preview the documentary resources from *Water Blues Green Solutions* and decide on what you would like to show and discuss. (See sample issues and topics in the “Discussion Guide” section.)

### SELECT EVENT

- Name of the event
- Type of event (i.e., screening, town hall, activity)

### SELECT DATE

- Event time
- Has the date/location been approved by all of the necessary parties?
- Does the date conflict with other events?

### SELECT LOCATION

- Event location
- Is it accessible to the public?
- Is it handicapped accessible?
- What is the room capacity?
- Obtain permits and legal paperwork when necessary

### CREATE EVENT SCHEDULE

- Be sure to include setup and break down times with your venue
- Are you scheduling any pre-event activities (e.g., coffee and snacks)?
- Event start and end times

### SELECT COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- In what capacity are partners needed?
- Who needs to be acknowledged in remarks and print materials?
- Do they need to approve decisions/plans?

### CREATE INVITATIONS

- Create an invitation list
- How will invitations be distributed (e.g., email, mail, newsletter, newspaper advertising)?
- Who needs to approve the invitation design and guest list?
- What is the event capacity? What is your target goal for attendance?
- Are RSVPs necessary? If so, who will be coordinating them? What is the RSVP deadline?

### DEVELOP MARKETING PLAN

- Can social media be used to spread the word?
- Decide on event promotions
- Will the event require a release to be sent to the media?
- Should the press be invited to the event?

### DECIDE BUDGET/EXPENSES

- Decide on the budget and anticipated expenses
- Can you secure sponsors to help offset expenses?

### DECIDE ON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- See Discussion Guide

## Event Logistics Checklist

- Audio/Visual  
(Microphones, DVD, TV/projector, Screen)
- Coat Rack/Check
- Name Tags
- Parking
- Public Facilities
- Seating
- Setup
- Catering/Food and Beverages
- Decorations
- Notepads/Pens
- Directional Signs
- Agendas

## Event Activity Ideas

- Build a community rain garden.  
<http://bit.ly/1cyaGM8>
- Organize a river or waterway cleanup.  
<http://bit.ly/1gdzQ3E>
- Host a rain-barrel building workshop.  
<http://bit.ly/1eiqHW3>
- Evaluate your community playgrounds and schoolyards. <http://bit.ly/1fspDzO>
- Bring in a landscaper to discuss and demonstrate low-water use planting.
- Form a committee to investigate ways that you can improve stormwater runoff in your community.

## Community Partner Ideas

You may consider finding local partners for your event. Different groups bring a variety of perspectives, relationships, networks, expertise, and organizational assets to the table.

- Public television stations (managers, programmers, and community relations staff)
- Public radio stations
- Municipalities
- Water utilities
- Local and regional partners of *Water Blues Green Solutions*. For a complete list, visit [waterblues.org](http://waterblues.org).
- Civic groups
- City or county managers
- Government officials
- Realtors' associations
- Chambers of commerce
- Service organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary, and Lions clubs
- Community or university libraries
- Property owners, developers, and neighborhood associations
- Fraternal organizations such as VFW and Elks
- League of Women Voters
- Environmental groups or clubs
- Local college or university faculty, students, or clubs (i.e., check with the Landscape and Architecture department)
- Sustainability clubs or groups

# Event Format Ideas

- **Panel Discussions:** Panel discussions may bring in partner organizations, water professionals, public officials, and community members. Your local public television station may want to hold a panel discussion in conjunction with the *Water Blues Green Solutions* broadcast.
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- **Local Events:** At local events such as fairs, conventions, or environmental holidays (e.g., Earth Day, World Water Day), groups may wish to use the preview to stimulate interest in seeing the documentary on local television or attending a community discussion.
- **Create an Event:** Chose an activity where participants can help with or create a community or home project.