

# One Water Delegations Commitments to Action

Tucson, Arizona



## People. Partnerships. Progress.

Collaboration—it's what drives the One Water movement and everything that we do at the US Water Alliance. The Board and staff of the US Water Alliance recognize Delegations as the heart of the One Water movement. We were thrilled to welcome 32 One Water Delegations to One Water Summit 2023.

These delegations are an impressive group of dedicated leaders representing diverse regions and constituencies from across the country. We thank our many partners who helped form these delegations.

Delegates are champions for an equitable, sustainable, and inclusive water future and are dedicated to sharing knowledge, building relationships, and bringing the learnings from One Water Summit 2023 back to their home regions or communities of practice. We look forward to working with these delegates and celebrating what they accomplish in the months and years to come.

Common themes across the commitments to action.



Delegations shared the following commitments to action during the closing plenary and in writing shortly after One Water Summit 2023 concluded.

### American Rivers Delegation

At American Rivers, we believe that all rivers—from remote mountain streams to urban waterways—should be clean, free, safe, and fun for everyone. To accomplish that vision, we commit to **launching a pilot of a new River Cities initiative in 2024**, through which we will work with local government and community leaders to celebrate and regenerate rivers and creeks in cities across the country. River Cities will be a cross-cutting program that brings together our work on floodplains, clean water, river restoration and protection, and community access to improve the health and accessibility of urban rivers for people.

### Green Infrastructure Leadership Exchange Delegation

The Green Infrastructure Leadership Exchange Delegation commits to **continue programming that furthers our theory of change and the achievement of our mission of activating local governments in the US and Canada to equitably implement green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) through the following:**

#### Implementation Assistance

- Complete the first section of our Framework of GSI Practice, an online compendium of standards and practices for implementing GSI equitably across North America, and raise funds to complete section two of the Framework of Practice.
- Successfully launch a new training arm where GSI-101 and 201 courses on equitable implementation are available online to GSI practitioners no matter their sector, level of experience, or membership status in the Green Infrastructure Leadership Exchange.

#### Evidence Building

- Raise funds to complete the triannual State of Public Sector GSI Survey, due to be launched in 2025.

#### Capacity

- Enhance communications and member recruitment efforts.



### Hawaii Fresh Water Initiative Delegation

One Water Honolulu was one of the first to pass a city ordinance formalizing the commitments of One Water for the City and County of Honolulu (for which Honolulu won the Outstanding Public Sector US Water Prize in 2022). Following up on the momentum, this year we were able to secure four million dollars in ARPA funding for our One Water efforts. With the additional resources, we are excited to commit to **developing the city's first One Water Plan** that will include climate adaptation projects. The delegation would be honored to host a future One Water Summit in Hawaii.

### Minnesota Delegation

The Minnesota Delegation will **improve community engagement around regional water issues** through education, communication, and co-creation while committing to regular check-ins and facilitating the partnership between community, public, and private entities.



## New Jersey Delegation

The New Jersey Delegation includes representatives from New Jersey that work in the water sector via nonprofit organizations, utilities, businesses, and governments. Many of the representatives participate in the Jersey Water Works collaborative, a statewide cross-sector collaborative of more than 600 members working to transform New Jersey's water infrastructure through investments in sustainable, cost-effective solutions that provide multiple community benefits. The Delegation will use its time to **explore new ways to advance statewide solutions**. These include highlighting funding opportunities to advance water and green infrastructure goals; promoting the need and prioritization of funding for water infrastructure projects to remove barriers that under-resourced and systemically marginalized communities face; pursuing partnerships to advance water workforce development and career pathways; enhancing understanding of the importance of clean, affordable access for all New Jerseyans to essential water, wastewater, and stormwater services via enhanced communication campaigns, education and outreach, and collaboration; and promoting best practices and policies for communities replacing lead service lines.



## Parks and Green Stormwater Infrastructure (PGSI) Initiative Delegation

The PGSI initiative is a two-year partnership launching at One Water Summit 2023 between the City Parks Alliance, the US Water Alliance, and the Green Infrastructure Leadership Exchange—funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Its goal is to increase and improve collaboration between water and parks agencies and their partners on implementing and maintaining green stormwater infrastructure in park lands that can increase green space, enhance climate resilience through stormwater management, and provide a host of other community benefits. The cohort includes water and parks practitioners from Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Raleigh, Seattle, and Tucson. Through the program's end in September 2025, we are committed to identifying the barriers to closer collaboration between our sectors to achieve these goals and benefits:

- **Providing recommendations** for how to change the culture around this kind of project collaboration from a challenging niche into mainstream practice that delivers myriad benefits for cities and stakeholders;
- **Meeting again in person** at the City Parks Alliance's Greater & Greener conference in Seattle in June 2024 and working together virtually between then and afterwards to develop our ideas;
- **Assisting the program partners to develop tools** to help practitioners, policymakers, and their community partners, possibly including case studies of success examples of GSI projects in parks, principles for doing the work, sources of funding, and other resources;
- **Sharing those—along with our experiences, lessons, ideas, and advice—with key audiences to foster systems change** that can bring much needed green space, stormwater infrastructure, placemaking, public health, community and economic development, and other policy goals to make our cities more equitable, sustainable, and vibrant in a time a major environmental challenges with broad economic and social impacts.



## Philadelphia Water Department Delegation

The Philadelphia Water Department Delegation commits to three key actions to advance water equity and workforce goals within the utility. First, the Delegation will focus on **internal relationship building**, aiming to empower and unlock existing employee talent. This may involve providing consistent opportunities for communication and collaboration between units and divisions, identifying training opportunities, and soliciting feedback from employees on current challenges and future goals. Secondly, we commit to **understanding PWD's current equity footprint**. This assessment, which will include data collection and analysis efforts, can be used as the basis for creating an action plan to establish and meet future equity goals. Lastly, we commit to **establishing PWD equity goals that reflect our role as a critical service provider and anchor institution within our communities**. This process will include convening an equity working group to begin the process of identifying, prioritizing, and determining actionable next steps. We will ensure we are building upon existing City of Philadelphia equity initiatives and updating public-facing materials, including our website and mission statement, as goals are established. Through our equity commitments, we will ensure we are including communities—especially historically underserved communities—in assessment and decision-making processes.



## Pittsburgh Delegation

Riding high from the enthusiasm, networking, and ideas shared at the 2023 One Water Summit, the Pittsburgh Delegation is ready to double down on the work that we began in 2019 as part of the Water Equity Network to **develop a road map for an equitable water future for our region**. This includes our work to expand the narrative about how important investments in water infrastructure are also investments in people. They are investments in public health, parks, and quality of life. For us, that means we will continue to focus on and communicate our progress in making sure that water is affordable, the water supply is safe, that stormwater is well managed, that the systems remain publicly owned, and that there is public trust in both the water supply and wastewater treatment. To achieve this, we must ramp up our investments in people and partnerships to develop a pipeline of workers that includes people who have been harmed by previous practices into the workforce at all levels of the water industry. We will get there by building on our strengthened learning relationships with the delegations from Milwaukee and Detroit.



## Spring Point Partners Delta Delegation

Spring Point Partners Delta (Delta) is a collaborative group of diverse organizations across the water sector that support emerging leaders in myriad ways from formal leadership development training cohorts to external recognition programs. These commitments are based on feedback from the peer dialogue hosted by the Delta Delegation on November 14. While these are our commitments and learnings that we will incorporate programmatically into our work at Delta, we invite everyone attending One Water Summit to take on these commitments individually to help lift the next generation of water leaders. Delta and our delegation dialogue partners' commitments coming out of the 2023 One Water Summit include:

- **Supporting emerging leaders** through listening, inclusion, coaching, putting others first, respect, mentorship, and the freedom to innovate;
- **Connecting youth and emerging leaders to resources** and one another, encouraging their involvement in purpose driven work/living their passions and to have a voice, and helping drive young people to the water sector;
- **Leveraging our networks** to share relevant leadership opportunities;
- **Modeling and empowering others** to show empathy, open mindedness, trust, and integrity
- **Increasing the provision of professional development opportunities** and skills trainings to our colleagues and creating career pathways to help them grow into the water leaders of the future;
- **Learning from our shared history** and encouraging systemic change through organizing, advocacy, and civic engagement;
- **Starting, growing, and/or finishing apprenticeship programs.**



## Soil and Water Conservation Delegation

The Soil and Water Conservation Delegation's commitment to action can be summed up in three words: equity, next-gen, and agriculture. We will utilize what we've learned from this Summit to **co-create equitable and inclusive opportunities for conservation professionals and conservation programming**. We will create an onboarding program that ushers in the next generation of soil and water leaders. We will create opportunities for mentorship, training sessions, and collaborative projects that provide the skills needed to champion the One Water approach. Lastly, we pledge to unite agricultural communities with the One Water movement around our shared value of water, fostering collaboration for holistic solutions.

## Tap into Resilience Delegation

Our commitment to action is to **educate local leaders and policymakers about distributed infrastructure**, including modernized water data systems, as a key One Water strategy and a pathway to strengthening trust between utilities and their communities. Localized, distributed, or onsite water infrastructure and water data provide resilient and affordable water management alternatives that can address a wide range of water resource challenges. They represent long-term investments offering both scalability and long-lasting benefits. We commit to elevating distributed water infrastructure and water data as a key One Water strategy by educating our local leaders and policymakers about the multiple benefits of these solutions. To ensure these benefits are realized in the neighborhoods and communities that need them most, we will promote community-centered implementation of distributed strategies and advocate for equitable, affordable, climate resilient distributed strategies to be incorporated into water infrastructure planning and capital budgets.



### Texas One Water Delegation

The Texas One Water Delegation commits to **deepening statewide, cross-sector collaboration**, both across our state and in our communities, to celebrate and accelerate One Water practices and policies that help us meet our future water needs, create healthier and safer communities and ecosystems, and enhance livability and long-term resilience of all Texans; continuing to **expand our understanding of One Water and water equity** within our state; and continuing to **meet throughout the 2024 year** to discuss, share, and celebrate critical One Water challenges, opportunities, and successes.

### Tucson Regional Delegation

This year, our commitments to action are centered on implementing the strategies identified in our One Water 2100 plan. We intend to launch our multi-year effort to **install smart meters for all commercial customers** and build strategies that leverage this technology to maximize water savings for our customers; **begin construction of new PFAS facilities** to accelerate cleanup of our groundwater supplies; **build on our green stormwater infrastructure investments**, exploring a larger-scale pilot project to capture stormwater runoff and infiltrate it into the regional aquifer; and **implement a new Low Impact Development ordinance** that mandates GSI in all new construction within the City of Tucson.

### Urban Water Funders

We will continue to **build relationships and shared understanding** to better serve our partners working to advance One Water, **directly engage with utility leaders** to better understand and support their advancement of water equity, **support communications and narrative change**, and work together in an effort to **bring more funders into the urban water space**.



### Vessel: America's Domestic WASH Collective Delegation

Vessel is a collective of national WASH organizations led by DigDeep and Water for People dedicated to addressing the water and sanitation crisis in the United States. Formed with the belief in collective action and the universal need for WASH access nationwide, the coalition aims to close the US water gap through collaboration, community engagement, setting actionable targets, knowledge exchange, policy advocacy, and raising public awareness. Together, Vessel members bring a diverse and powerful range of expertise on WASH access issues. We work to use our collective to share best practices, create a collaborative environment for exchanging ideas, and convene impacted communities, practitioners, and experts to link ongoing efforts in the future. In 2024, we plan to focus on three priority areas: **identifying and filling WASH data and knowledge gaps, pushing for shared policy objectives and increasing public awareness** using our collective voice, and **building out a shared communication strategy**. We are excited for the year ahead and look forward to continuing to grow Vessel's impact!

One Water, One Future.

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