



# Beyond the Basics 2022: Weathering the Storm: Building Resilient Communities Through Design



February 24th, 2022

8:00 - 11:30 AM

BEYOND THE BASICS  
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

**8:00 - 8:15**

## **Welcome Remarks**

*Brook McDonald, President, The Conservation Foundation*

*Jim Zay, Chairman, Stormwater Management Committee, DuPage County*

**8:15 - 9:00**

## **Climate Action for the Chicago Region**

*Edith Makra, Director of Environmental Initiatives, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus*

Recently, diverse community leaders pulled together to create the first [Climate Action for the Chicago Region](#) to guide climate mitigation and adaptation, while staying focused on equity. The European Union mentored the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and its collaborators to create this pioneering regional plan – only the third such plan in the United States. Edith Makra, co-author of the Plan will provide an overview and demonstrate how local leaders can use it to take meaningful actions towards resilient communities.

**9:00 - 9:10**

## **Questions**

**9:10 - 9:15**

## **Break**

**9:15 - 9:50**

## **Ditch Your Ditch: Village of Downers Grove Bioswale Program**

*Kristin Dykema, Environmental Scientist, Hampton Lenzini & Renwick (HLR)*

*Julie Lomax, Stormwater Administer, Village of Downers Grove*

The Village of Downers Grove has a commitment to stormwater management, to reduce flooding, and improve stormwater quality. This project originated in 2016 with the construction of 15 bioswales within existing roadside ditches at various residential locations within the limits of the Village of Downers Grove. The bioswales were created with four primary functions in mind: storing, conveying, infiltrating, and filtering stormwater. Together these functions work to reduce the volume and rate of runoff (i.e. flood control) as well as improve water quality.

**9:50 - 9:55**

## **Questions**

**9:55 - 10:00**

## **Break**



This program is sponsored in partnership with  
DuPage County Stormwater management.





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**10:00 - 10:35 The Preserves of Highland Park**

*Tim Pollowy, Senior Landscape Architect, Hey and Associates, Inc.*  
*Rebecca Grill, Natural Areas Management, Park District of Highland Park*

The Preserve of Highland Park converted the landscape of a former golf course into an interactive nature experience. The project site is bisected by the Skokie River with much of the site located within the river's regulatory floodplain and floodway. In addition to trails traversing the site, the project also includes numerous amenities appropriate to the site including nature-play areas, enhanced wildlife habitat, several overlooks and rest areas, a nature maze, interpretive/educational signage and wayfinding, and a sensory garden.

**10:35 - 10:40 Questions**

**10:40 - 10:45 Break**

**10:45 - 11:20 The Role of Community-Based Partnerships in Advancing DEI in the Water Industry**

*Laura Adams, Green Infrastructure Practice Lead, Black & Veatch*  
*Michael Burke, Director, Business Inclusion & Capacity Development, Clean Water Partnership (CWP)*

This presentation will provide insight into the CWP framework for participants to use as a model as they realize the importance of utilizing mandates as an opportunity to invest in their communities and reconsider how they structure infrastructure programs to include significant social and environment equity metrics. It will also highlight how the program has evolved over the course of seven years and provide an outlook for what's to come.

**11:20 - 11:25 Questions**

**11:25 - 11:30 Closing Comments**

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# Beyond the Basics 2022 Speakers



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## Keynote Speaker



**Edith Makra** directs sustainability initiatives for the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, a coalition of 275 mayors in the greater Chicago region. She leads programs to advance sustainability and environmental stewardship for municipalities. Makra developed the Greenest Region Compact, a consensus sustainability pledge now adopted by 140 Chicago-area communities, forming the largest regional municipal sustainability collaborative in the US. She has led the creation of the first climate action plan for the Chicago region.

Makra previously served as the first environmental advisor to Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and has directed state-wide and regional environmental programs in Illinois and Massachusetts.

She has a B.S. in Forestry from the University of Illinois; an Executive Sustainability Certificate from Harvard University; and is an International Society of Sustainability Professionals –Sustainability Excellence Professional.

## Speakers (alphabetical order)

**Laura Adams** is the National Green Infrastructure Practice Lead for Black & Veatch. She brings 15 years of experience in nature based solutions, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, and watershed planning. Over the past few years, she has focused on alternate, performance and outcome-based delivery of green infrastructure: providing technical guidance to develop programs, forging innovative partnerships, and leveraging construction expertise to inform design. Laura co-chairs the Alternative Funding & Finance Subcommittee for WEF Stormwater. In Kansas City, she sits on the Cultivate Kansas City Board of Directors to help build a healthy local food system for the community. Laura holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas in Civil Engineering.

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# Beyond the Basics 2022 Speakers



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**Michael Burke** has been the Director, Business Inclusion & Capacity Development at the Clean Water Partnership (CWP) since February 2016 and has worked in supplier Diversity, Equity and Inclusion on P3 projects for twenty years. He is responsible for the design, development, and oversight of the CWP's Contractor Development, Mentor Protégé, and Emerging Landscapers Programs. These programs were established to maximize the participation of small, local, women, veteran, and minority-owned business enterprises (SLMBEs) on all CWP projects. Michael leads contractor outreach and sources and supports SLMBEs in capacity-building activities to build a larger pool of GI competent contractors. Michael is a Board Vice-Chair of Employ Prince George's (County Workforce Agency) and a Low Impact Development Center board member.

**Kristin Dykema** is an environmental scientist with six years of experience controlling invasive plant species throughout the Chicagoland area, including plant identification, chemical and mechanical removal of invasive plants, seeding/collection, planting, and matting. She has been working with Julie on the Downers Grove Bioswale Program for the last four years.

**Rebecca Grill** has her Masters, Natural Resources and Environmental Science, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has worked managing natural areas for the Park District of Highland Park for over 18 years.

**Julie Lomax** is the Stormwater Administrator for the Village of Downers Grove. She works closely with both the engineering and operations divisions of Public Works to maintain and improve the stormwater management system – including approximately 12 miles of creeks, 130 miles of storm sewer and 140 miles of roadside ditches. She also coordinates with the Village's Community Development Department to enforce the Stormwater and Floodplain Ordinance for all development. Among her duties is managing regulatory programs, such as the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Community Rating System (CRS) program, and the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). She also works with residents on drainage issues, manages the bioswale program, and partners with the Conservation Foundation on programs such as a native plant and rain barrel sale and the DuPage River Sweep.

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Prior to joining Downers Grove, Julie worked for an engineering consulting firm and as a project manager in commercial construction. Julie has a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign and a Masters of Project Management from Northwestern University.

She is currently the Community Rating System (CRS) Chair for the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (IAFSM).

**Tim Pollowy** - Built upon an education in landscape architecture and natural resources from the University of Illinois, Mr. Pollowy has over 28 years of experience in landscape architecture, environmental planning, and ecological restoration. Areas of expertise include sustainable and resilient site design, green infrastructure, the restoration and management of natural areas, transportation, and parks and recreation.

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