

# **Environmental Finance Center Network Syracuse University - Region 2 1998 Annual Report**

---

## **ANNUAL REPORT 1998**

**Environmental Finance Center  
Syracuse University  
U.S. EPA Region 2**

---

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[Executive Overview](#)

[Summary of Accomplishments](#)

[Accomplishments](#)

Environmental Finance Center Network Forum (description)

Environmental Finance Technical Assistance Program

"Critical Review of Water Resource Development Plans"

"Environmental Resources for Rural Communities: An Assessment of the Funding Process"

Pollution Prevention Education Program Rate Setting and Capital Management Workshops and Training  
Brooklyn Brownfields Redevelopment Project

Capacity Development Strategic Plan for New York State

[EFC Collaborative Activities Summary](#)

[New Initiatives for 1999](#)

[EFC Organization - Management](#)

[Environmental Finance Center Network Forum](#)

---

[EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW](#)

---

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Region 2 Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs was established in October, 1993. Since its establishment, the Maxwell EFC has aggressively undertaken a wide range of environmental financing projects and activities, and built a considerable record of accomplishment. The focus of the EFC has included full-cost pricing of environmental services, the value of intergovernmental cooperation in addressing environmental improvement projects, collaborative planning among public and private environmental service providers, and the coordination of technical assistance services available to rural communities. In each of these areas, the EFC has either provided customized assistance to communities or facilitated the coordination and delivery of services from public and private agencies. The EFC is making information available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/exed.efc/default.htm>

## Summary of Accomplishments

During 1998 the EFC continued to assist communities with the use of an EPA supported windows-based computer software program for setting financially responsible water and wastewater rates. This computerized rate model was developed for use by local water and wastewater systems. Other presentations focused on topics of public finance, capacity development, capital budgeting, and topics relative to the broader area of environmental governance. The highlight of EFC activities in 1998 was the planning and execution of the EFC Network Forum, a two-day event that brought other EFC representatives to Syracuse for the purpose of demonstrating their areas of expertise and sharing expert advice with representatives from rural New York communities. The Forum was well-received and has resulted in numerous requests for a similar program to be conducted in the future. Furthermore, the Forum served as the impetus for additional Network collaborations to ensue. Currently, the Maxwell EFC is collaborating with EFC 10 and EFC 6 to assist the New York State Department of Health in developing a strategic plan to meet the capacity development requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The EFC continued to participate in and further establish collaborative relationships with other government-supported programs, public agencies, institutions of higher learning, and environmental technical service providers. These relationships have continuously fostered new and exciting opportunities for the EFC to enhance the strength of its program and the capacity it has to deliver much needed services to local governments. Rural communities have become a particular focus of the EFC, particularly since the relationship with the New York State Rural Development Council has developed into a dynamic partnership of great activity in the past year.

The EFC also collaborated with the City of Syracuse to plan a pollution prevention education program and participate in its planning for the redevelopment of area brownfields.

Currently, the EFC and its various partners are planning a network of projects that will prove to assist communities in planning environmental improvement and infrastructure activities. Syracuse University faculty and students have also begun participating in specific EFC projects. Faculty member Stuart Bretschneider, a world renowned expert in the forecasting field, is leading the planning of a survey project to assess the experiences of rural businesses with environmental regulations. It is anticipated that up to six agencies or organizations will fund the survey. Several faculty members, with expertise in international affairs and public finance, have assisted the EFC in the development of a proposal to provide environmental financial technical assistance training to government managers in the Newly Independent States, China, and other regions of the globe. The proposal is scheduled for submission to the EPA Office of International Activities in January, 1999. In May, 1998, six Master of Public Administration students from the Maxwell School dedicated three intense weeks to researching the criteria used to determine the eligibility of communities for environmental funding programs. The Rural Development Council and the New York State Department of State sponsored the research which will be built upon by a new set of students in May, 1999.

The EFC expects 1999 to be a year in which the efforts of all past and present activities will bear results that will serve to further stimulate partnerships and generate enduring programs and, thus, enhance the services it provides to EPA Region 2.

## **Summary of Activities**

### ***Conferences, Special Projects, and Presentations***

December, 1997-December, 1998, prepared "Environmental Financial Technical Assistance Program" as a proposal for submission to the EPA Office of International Activities. The proposal involves the delivery of environment-related public finance training to government managers in countries seeking to pursue environmental remediation and infrastructure projects.

December, 1997-February, 1998 collaborated with economists and environmental experts from Cornell University and State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry to prepare a proposal to provide assistance to five economically depressed counties in the Catskills Watershed region on New York.

In February, 1998, collaborated with the Water Industry Council and the New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials to conduct a survey of municipal decision-makers regarding their interest in privatization of water systems.

February-June, 1998, collaborated with the Rural Utility Service of the United States Department of Agriculture to assist a small township in developing plans to create a water district and build a new water system.

In March, 1998, in collaboration with the Water Resource Institute of Cornell University and the State University of New York at Buffalo, presented, "Critical Review of Water Resource Development Plans" to the Genesee County Legislature in Batavia, New York. The presentation was the result of a study undertaken by the three academic institutions to assess five separate approaches to build a new water system in western New York. The EFC portion of the study was presenting alternative strategies of cost recovery for each engineering approach.

In May, 1998, presented, "Environmental Resources for Rural Communities in New York: An Assessment of the Funding Process" to the New York State Department of State and the Rural Development Council. The presentation was the research product of six Master of Public Administration students who studied the eligibility criteria of environmental improvement funding programs in New York State. Included in the study was an assessment of the extent to which municipalities meet the eligibility criteria and actually use the programs.

In June, 1998, planned and facilitated the EFC Network Forum, a dynamic two-day event that brought together four other EFCs to demonstrate their areas of expertise and to provide assistance to community leaders attending the forum.

In June, 1998, collaborated with the City of Syracuse Department of Community Development, Division of Neighborhood Planning to propose for funding, "Pollution Prevention Education Program", in response to an EPA Environmental Justice Program request for proposals.

In June, 1998, collaborated with State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, New York State Rural Water Association, Atlantic States Rural Water Association, and New Jersey Rural Water Association to prepare a proposal for a small water systems project.

In July, 1998, facilitated a discussion between City of Syracuse representatives and neighborhood leaders regarding the planning of a brownfields redevelopment project.

In August, 1998, responded to a request from the Bushwick Economic Development Corporation in Brooklyn, New York, to provide assistance in planning a brownfields redevelopment project.

In September, 1998, participated with technical service providers in a panel discussion about environmental programs serving communities throughout the country. The discussion was facilitated by the Maxwell Career and Alumni Services Department at Syracuse University.

In September, 1998, collaborated with the Environmental Facilities Corporation, the Tug Hill Commission, Rural Community Assistance Program, and the Rural Development Council to plan a program to coordinate environmental technical assistance providers in New York. A proposal for funding evolved and was submitted to the New York State Rural Planning Federation, with awards to be announced by the end of December.

In September, 1998, presented, "Water and Wastewater Rate Setting" and "Capital Budgeting" at two separate training conferences sponsored by the New York Rural Water Association.

In October, 1998, presented, "The EFC Network", to the National Securities Studies Program at Syracuse University. Students of the program were high-ranking military leaders and Senior Executive Officers of the United States Department of Defense.

In October, 1998, facilitated "Economic Development and Community Partnerships", a segment of an environmental conference sponsored by the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

In November, 1998, presented, "Water and Wastewater Rate Setting" and "Capital Budgeting" at two separate training conferences sponsored by the New York Rural Water Association.

In November, 1998, demonstrated EPA-supported software used for water and wastewater rate setting to officials from the City of Batavia.

In December, 1998, facilitated the first Capacity Development Planning Committee meeting for the New York State Department of Health.

### **On-Going Programs and Projects**

Attendance at professional association meetings and presentations on capital planning and financing; the concepts of water and wastewater rate setting; environmental governance; intergovernmental cooperation; collaborative planning; capacity development; sustainable community issues; and brownfields redevelopment.

Maintaining database of past EFC program attendees, prospective clients, and technical service providers.

Participating in planning prospective projects with the Rural Development Council (RDC). In 1997 the EFC facilitated the creation of physical space at the Maxwell School facilities for the RDC to locate its headquarters. The close proximity has resulted in a continuous flow of information exchanges, mutually beneficial professional consultation sessions, and the creation of prospective collaborative projects.

Supporting the New York State Department of Health in preparing a Strategic Plan for the capacity development component of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The EFC is committed to facilitating the process by hosting all meetings, conducting follow-up tasks, and ensuring that all interests are included and their input into the plan is elicited.

Collaborating with the Tug Hill Commission to develop projects that address issues of economic sustainability and capacity development within a 62 township area.

Collaborating with the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utility Services to provide assistance to rural communities seeking to address environmental problems.

Serving as a content provider to government and non-profit organizations that conduct workshops for municipal

decision-makers.

Continued emphasis on collaborating with other universities and non-profit organizations to develop proposals addressing environmental concerns.

Continue to host and facilitate meetings and programs on behalf of the Infrastructure Working Group of the Rural Development Council.

Developing a scientific survey with public and private partners to assess the experiences rural businesses have with environmental regulations

## Accomplishments

### **Environmental Finance Center Network Forum**

#### **Project Description**

In June, 1998, there were six EFCs operating at universities in six separate EPA regions. Each EFC has a reputation for providing assistance to state and local governments in general, but each also has a particular area of expertise. The EFCs routinely exchange information about projects and assist one another when appropriate. Although the collective value of the EFCs as a resource is frequently used in projects, most municipal decision-makers have been unaware of the resource they have accessed in the Network. In an effort to demonstrate the value and availability of the EFC Network, the forum was planned. Funded by the EPA, it was organized to impart general information on the EFC Network as an organization, water and waste water rate setting, brownfields redevelopment techniques, strategic planning for capacity development, the availability of environmental finance tools information from the EPA through the Internet, and the use of the charrette technique to address environmental finance issues. Additionally, it was decided that attendees would benefit significantly if provided the opportunity to receive hands-on assistance to the extent possible over a two-day period. EFC 2 and EFC 3 selected a community to participate in a charrette. The other EFCs committed to engaging in direct consultations regarding specific issues of attendees.

#### **Project Activities**

The EFC Network Forum occurred June 4-5. Dr. John Palmer, Dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, opened the event with a warm welcome to EFC staff and Forum attendees. The first day was dedicated to introducing attendees to the EFC Network, concepts of water and waste water rate setting, brownfields redevelopment techniques, strategic planning for capacity development, the availability of environmental finance tools information from the EPA through the Internet, and the use of the charrette technique to address environmental issues faced by communities. The second day was dedicated to the provision of hands-on workshops in rate setting and capacity development, and the facilitation of a charrette for a pre-selected community.

#### **The EFC Network**

Vera Hannigan, Coordinator of the EFC Network at the Environmental Finance Program of the U.S. EPA in Washington, DC, began the conference by describing the origin and chronology of the EFC Network. She discussed the various components of the Environmental Finance Program's services and the interest and commitment that the Program has in providing assistance to communities in developing finance related options to environmental problems and projects.

#### **Charrettes**

Jack Greer, Director, EFC 3, introduced forum attendees to the concept "charrette", explaining that the technique is used to bring "stakeholders" of an environmental project together to fully examine the issue at hand and develop a menu of options to solve a problem. He explained the process nature of the charrette technique, using examples of communities he had worked with. On the second day of the Forum, Greer facilitated a charrette for a small community in the throes of a serious water system problem.

## **Long Eddy Charrette**

To demonstrate the value of the charrette technique, the community of Long Eddy, NY, was selected for participation in a charrette that would be open to a limited number of outside observers. For a ten year period, Long Eddy had been struggling with a major water system problem. The water plant, located off the side of the highway, was little more than a frame of cinder blocks filled with water and covered with dark plastic. The treatment facility was a dilapidated shed that intermittently functioned and prompted the New York state Department of Health to issue a continuous boil order. The system operators consisted of town volunteers, most of significant age and deteriorating health and one who was a part-time resident during the summer months.

The Long Eddy water system had thirty-six users. One factory was located in Long Eddy, but the owner had water brought in. When fires occurred, any structures involved typically burned down because fire fighters had to pump water from the river and could not pump it fast enough. The length of the problem was a result of a multitude of issues, including an inadequate rate structure, poor tax base, the lack of capital budgeting or planning, and the general inability of the township to finance a water system improvement project.

Over the course of the past three years, representatives of the Rural Utility Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA-RUS), Syracuse Environmental Finance Center (EFC), Cooperative Extension Services of Cornell University, United States Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Sullivan County Planning Department, New York Department of Health (DOH), Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP), and other agencies began to collaborate with residents and officials of Long Eddy to devise a solution to the problem. Through a series of meetings and various forms of research, options in financing came to the fore. No option could be entertained as a possible solution, however, because preliminary tasks such as engineering reports and a hydrogeology assessment had either not been performed or what existed was outdated. Since Long Eddy was actually a hamlet that fell under the managing jurisdiction of a separate township, there were also political issues involved. For example, although a State senator had arranged for a \$25,000 appropriation to Long Eddy for the preliminary tasks to be accomplished, the managing township would not authorize the performance of the tasks until the funds were in hand. This presented additional delays in fulfilling the publication of bid notices for engineering firms. The purpose of the charrette was to bring the community stakeholders and agency representatives together and develop a viable plan of action.

In the months preceding the EFC Network Forum, EFC 2 collected data and prepared a historical account of the Long Eddy water system problem. The charrette began at 10 a.m. with agency representatives and community residents in attendance. Jack Greer began the charrette by having participants relate the circumstances and history of the problem. He then facilitated the process of examining options that were known to exist and options that might be explored. The charrette culminated at 3:00 p.m. with participants clapping their hands at the value they believed the experience gave them. A plan on how to proceed had evolved. Six months after the charrette Long Eddy is vigorously pursuing all tasks associated with the building of a new water system and the creation of a water district. HUD and DOH have presented grant funds to the community, thus alleviating the problem of cost recovery for debt service. Rate structures are being formulated to ensure the availability of standard maintenance, operator certification, and future repairs. Most important, the concept of an improved water system ten years ago has become an achieved reality today.

The charrette in and of itself did not resolve the problem in Long Eddy. What it did do was foster organization in the development of solid plans with which the community could work towards a resolution. In addition to the numerous government and non-profit agencies, the involvement of EFC 2, and, subsequently EFC 3 through the Forum, served as an indicator to funding sources the severity of the problem and the commitment to a resolving it.

## **Environmental Finance Tools Guidebook**

Tim McProuty of the Environmental Finance Program of the U.S. EPA introduced Forum attendees to the "Environmental Finance Tools Guidebook", which is available through the EPA web site. To accommodate communities that cannot readily access the Internet, he arranged to prepare hard copies of the Guidebook. The information McProuty imparted was evaluated to be very relevant to attendees, all of whom reported to have

sought the resources it contains. In the time since the Forum, EFC 2 has received numerous inquiry calls regarding the Guidebook.

### **Water and Wastewater Rate Setting**

Bill Jarocki of EFC 10 at Boise State University presented the general concepts and practices of water and wastewater rate setting through a computer presentation at the overview session of the Forum on the first day. At the workshop held on the second day he demonstrated a computer software rate setting program developed for EPA. During the workshop session and at events in between, Jarocki engaged in discussions with government agency representatives and municipal decision-makers concerned with specific problems in the communities they serve.

### **Capacity Development**

During the overview session of the Forum, Heather Himmelberger of EFC 6 at the University of New Mexico explained the intended meaning of "capacity development" with respect to the Safe Drinking Water Act. She engaged the attendees in a discussion focused on processes useful to states pursuing the preparation of a capacity development strategy, including the distribution of material on states she had worked with. The workshop Himmelberger conducted on the second day attempted to address the issues that New York State agencies will face as they pursue the development of a strategy. Her expertise was highly regarded and, as a result of her presentation and prior work, she remains in consultation with the New York Department of Health.

### **Brownfields Redevelopment**

Kirsten Toth of EFC 5 at Cleveland State University presented specific case examples of brownfields redevelopment projects that had taken place in EPA Region 5. Much of her presentation focused on involving the community and consensus building and the observation that funding issues were not generally as significant or as problematic as ensuring community support for redevelopment planning efforts. Attendees from economic development offices later confirmed that their own observations were similar and were interested in processes used by EFC 5 to fully engage all community members.

### **Other Events**

Keith Stack, of New York State Department of State, was the guest speaker at a reception held during the Forum. He spoke of the value of collaboration and the enthusiasm the NYS DOS has for the prospect of working with the EFC Network in the future.

Dave Miller, of the Rural Utility Service of the USDA, was the guest speaker at a Forum luncheon. He focused his speech on the value of coordinating resources that serve rural communities and the recent experiences the USDA has had with EFC 2 in New York.

### **Outcome**

The Forum ended with attendees praising the effort and asking if might be repeated in future years. EFC 2 was proud to organize this event and will be pleased to assist in future events. It raised the level of over all awareness about the services the EFCs provide individually and collectively. There are frequent inquiries about Network activities and references to the Network in planning meetings at which external programmatic resources are discussed. It is also worth noting that many attendees reference the Forum on occasions when EPA outreach efforts are discussed. The Forum was perceived as yet another demonstration on the part of EPA to offer assistance to communities grappling with environmental problems. The most significant outcome was that attendees were introduced to new concepts and allowed the opportunity to receive expert consultation on pressing problems they are involved with at various community levels. They gained knowledge, assistance, and access to a new and expanding resource. Another outcome of the Forum was the development of EFC training videos. The Forum was videotaped in its entirety on the first day. The Long Eddy charrette was videotaped the second day. The charrette tape is currently circulated at request.

### **Environmental Finance Technical Assistance Program**

## Project Description

In the fall of 1997, the EPA's Office of International Activities (OIA) approached EFC 2 about the prospect of conducting an environment-related public finance training program for government managers in the Newly Independent States (NIS). The EPA-OIA asked EFC 2 to lead the EFC Network by preparing a proposal to provide a technical assistance training program in the NIS. Located at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, which is known worldwide for its public finance expertise, EFC 2 was positioned to tackle a challenge that would require a combination of experience in international affairs, environmental policy, and public finance. The EPA-OIA initially planned for the technical assistance program to complement a separate proposal that would establish a bond guaranty fund in the NIS. As the concept was being developed by EFC 2, it became clear that a training program of this kind could complement most existing United States-initiated environment-related projects throughout the international community.

## Project Activities

EFC 2 held a number of strategy sessions with faculty members, students from countries with environmental remediation needs, and field consultants to fully examine the dynamics of a training program involving NIS government managers. Issues such as language and culture, technology, political status, and environmental remediation needs were explored in each of these sessions. Over time, EFC 2 developed a proposal that can deliver technical assistance not only to the NIS, but also to other countries of the international community, most notably in China where Syracuse University currently enjoys a strong partnership. EFC 6 (New Mexico) has also provided substantial input into the proposal. The University of New Mexico enjoys existing partnerships in Russia.

The Environmental Finance Technical Assistance Training Program (EFTAP) incorporates a series of processes to accommodate the specific needs of countries in customizing training programs that will provide immediate assistance in addressing environmental problems and also foster enduring finance practices. The students involved in the strategy sessions all had current or prior professional positions in the governments or government-related organizations of their home countries. Their insight and experiences were significant to the emphasis EFC 2 placed on preliminary assessment activities and the concept of the development of the Public Finance Institute for advanced training and networking in the future. EFTAP can best accomplish its mission to deliver high quality public finance training if the various realms of political, economic, cultural, and technological capacities of participating countries are understood and incorporated into all planning efforts. Participating countries can best achieve the development of high standards and best practices of environmental public finance if their specific histories and current needs are accommodated.

Syracuse University faculty, public finance professionals, federal government representatives, and personnel of programs that deliver services internationally provided substantial information, derived from professional experience, about the political, economic, cultural, and technological conditions in the international community. EFC 2 considered all perspectives as the EFTAP proposal was developed. Thus, EFTAP is a comprehensive training program that can be customized to accommodate most situations of the international community. In September, representatives from EPA-OIA visited Syracuse University and met with a number of faculty members and international students.

Highlights of the EFTAP proposal include:

- assessing municipalities for strengths in current public finance practices
- planning for and accommodating language and cultural differences
- establishing enduring in-country partnerships
- developing a Public Finance Institute in the United States for government managers from the international community to attend and learn techniques and best practices from practitioners at the state and local levels of government



- transferring successful United States-based practices to other countries and accommodating different government and operating procedures into the practices

EFC 2 has generated the interest of academic, public finance, and environmental professionals who are currently prepared to begin planning the delivery of EFTAP when the funding status is known. Partnerships with organizations, such as the International Public Administration Institute, have been formed and members of the EFC Network have also contributed to the design of the program. In a recent trip to China, EFC Director Bill Sullivan, met with officials in China who indicated a strong interest in EFTAP and are currently in the process of addressing the environmental remediation needs of the country. Furthermore, as representatives from the international community have visited Syracuse University, EFC 2 staff members have met with them to establish foundations for partnerships to deliver EFTAP.

### **Outcome**

The EPA-OIA has continued to work with EFC 2 to finalize the development and execution plans of EFTAP. It is anticipated that planning the delivery of the program will begin in early 1999. There will be an initial period of assessment activity (estimated to occur during the first year and become ongoing thereafter) and a plan for five years of formal training activities that will enable government managers from participating countries to become self-sufficient in their ability to establish and manage sound public finance practices for environment-related remediation and infrastructure projects. The countries will be prepared to access the capital bond market and other related financing tools.

The Public Finance Institute (PFI) will be established as an ongoing international and domestic training program for government managers. Annual conferences and regularly scheduled courses will be included in the services provided by the program. The PFI will offer managers the opportunity to expand their skills, network with counterparts from other countries, participate in exchange programs, and receive opportunities to receive advanced training on new technology and practices.

## **Critical Review of Water Resource Development Plans**

### **Project Description**

In 1997, the EFC was asked to participate in a critical analysis of a set of three engineering and financial approaches to a water system improvement project in Genesee County, located in the western upstate region of New York. As a member of the Environmental Community Assistance Consortium (ECAC), the EFC had previously participated in the project through the facilitation of planning and discussion meetings focused on examining the alternatives available to address the problem. As various approaches surfaced, the Genesee County Legislature and officials of the municipalities within the county asked ECAC to examine the viable approaches and provide a critical analysis of the cost recovery and economic impact values of each. The Great Lakes Research Institute of the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo took the lead in designing the study. The role of the EFC was to research prospective rate setting methods for each of the approaches, and prepare for the study examples of potential rate setting structures. The Genesee County Legislature appropriated \$25,000 for the study.

### **Project Activities**

SUNY Buffalo team members organized regular meetings with the study team to assess the viability of up to eight separate alternatives to the development of new water systems in Genesee County. During the earlier planning sessions, there were two primary approaches presented. One involved the delivery of water from the Monroe County Water Authority, located north of Genesee County. The other involved replacing and redesigning the system located in Batavia, the Genesee County seat. Batavia had long planned to improve its water system and had even included it in a capital budget plan. Surrounding towns, some of which received water from Batavia, became involved in the planning discussions. All municipalities were interested because all had an interest in improving their own water system, regardless of the current supplier. Eventually two separate engineering firms were retained, one by the City of Batavia and one by Genesee County. The firms were charged with designing systems and providing supporting documentation of the construction costs, ability to extend

services, and the general long-term viability of the system. In addition to the system designs produced by the engineering firms, some of the municipalities put forth alternatives such as resourcing well water from their own areas. Although the alternatives were mentioned at meetings, for the most part they were not regarded as viable or, if constructed, not sustainable in the long term.

Over time, the project became a significant priority in Genesee County communities as officials, businesses, and other interested parties developed preferences for one approach over another. The public learned about the water system issue through weekly reports in the local newspaper. The EFC collaborated with the Water Resource Institute at Cornell University and Cornell University's Genesee County Cooperative Extension Services to conduct interactive presentations to enhance the understanding citizens had of the water system project. Two evening events were organized to accomplish the task. Model simulations of water systems were used to illustrate the effects of dilapidating systems. An animated skit, "Drip and Drop", was staged for younger audiences to emphasize the importance of a high quality water system. Prior to the public events, area high school students were engaged in a project to poll citizens on their preferred water system approach and their general knowledge of the issue. Results of the poll indicated that citizens had a general understanding of the problem and that they overwhelmingly preferred that the Monroe County Water Authority supply water to Genesee County.

The "Critical Review of Water Resource Development Plans" study was completed in April, 1998 and presented to the Genesee County legislature in May. The report did not place a preference on one approach over another, but it did provide detailed information regarding the values, and absence of values, in each. At this writing, Batavia is committed to further researching the issue and plans to make a decision by January, 1999. Batavia is in the unique position of being able to proceed on its own, using its own water source. The alternative of Monroe County Water Authority supplying the water to Genesee County requires the inclusion of Batavia. The role of the EFC in the project ended with the report, although Batavia has continued to seek information regarding rate setting.

### **Outcome**

At first glance, the primary outcome of this project is the research document. The document carefully explores the viable approaches to the Genesee County water system issue, providing municipal officials and the legislature information necessary to render sound decisions. Equally important outcomes to this project include:

- documentation of the process of planning and assessing the water system approaches; intergovernmental planning and cooperation;
- public awareness and involvement in government planning; and
- the assistance available to local governments through academic collaborations, including academic programs that receive partial support from federal sources.

## **Environmental Resources for Rural Communities: An Assessment of the Funding Process**

### **Project Description**

The EFC in EPA Region 2 is located at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. The Maxwell School is known world wide for its superior program in public administration. Students seeking a Master in Public Administration (MPA) are required to participate in a capstone project at the end of the academic year. The capstone project component is for the purpose of providing students an opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills to an actual public policy-oriented project. The EFC collaborated with the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) and the New York State Rural Development Council (RDC) to sponsor a capstone project for six MPA students of the 1998 graduating class. Collectively, the collaborative partners were familiar with anecdotal reports from rural communities concerning the difficulty in obtaining funds (grants and loans) for environment-related projects. It was agreed that a capstone project would be a superb

opportunity to examine the extent to which rural communities were accessing funding programs for environmental projects. The students were required to dedicate three full weeks to the project, performing the work in the same manner as salaried professionals. Furthermore, the students, under faculty supervision, were required to design the instruments and methods of the research. The RDC provided \$2500 to the EFC for the costs of supplies, travel, and communications associated with the project.

### **Project Activities**

The RDC was regarded as the "client" of the project. The students proceeded in developing the project tasks based on the information provided by the RDC. Among the organizations consulted about funding programs available and communities assisted were the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Community Assistance Program, and New York Self-Help. The students were put in contact with community clerks and officials who had direct experiences in seeking funding for environmental projects. This resulted in the collection of a variety of qualitative data useful to the over all assessment value of the project.

Early in the project, the students determined that there were numerous funding programs supported by state and federal dollars. The programs they considered the most prominent were administered by the Rural Utility Service division of the USDA and the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYS-EFC). The decision was made to focus inquiries primarily on these programs in the short three weeks available to complete the project. The fact that only two funding programs were widely known, in and of itself, served as an indicator to the students that municipal administrators did not have a full awareness of available funding and, thus, were not able to access a full range of options.

A total of seventy incorporated rural townships were contacted by phone to provide anecdotal accounts of the environmental projects they had pursued funding for. The survey sought information regarding the type of project, the amount of funding needed, the extent to which the project had been incorporated into capital budgeting plans, current progress or completion status of the environmental project, and the success the communities had in first accessing funding programs, and second, the success in actually receiving funds for environmental projects. In addition to the telephone survey activity, students met with USDA-RUS and NYS-EFC representatives and administrators of five separate communities.

Presentation of the report was scheduled to take place in June when members of the RDC Infrastructure Working Group and the NYS DOS Rural Planning Department had a meeting planned. Since this coincided with the graduation of the Maxwell MPA class, an EFC summer intern from Brown University who had worked with the MPA students presented the report. The general findings of the report included:

Municipal administrators are generally unfamiliar with funding programs and, consequently, have great difficulty in addressing environmental problems or performing tasks necessary to achieve compliance with new environmental regulations.

Capital budgeting is not a widespread practice among rural townships and when environmental projects are called for, the tendency is for elected and paid officials to rely on external resources.

The applications and application deadlines for funding are very confusing to administrators, who typically identify the lack of coordination among and cooperation between agencies and programs as an impediment to successfully receiving funding for projects.

Representatives of funding programs were aware of the confusion in the application process and reported that progress was being made to develop a simplified application form for all programs and to more vigorously notify rural administrators of deadlines and related information.

### **Outcome**

Beyond the findings of the report, the outcome of the project for the EFC was multi-faceted. It was the first time that the EFC initiated a project to provide a learning experience to Maxwell students. The effort has since served

to heighten the value of the EFC within the university, particularly among faculty members. External support for and sponsorship of the project reinforced the ability of the EFC to introduce the availability of bright students as resources. This is significant to EFC clients who frequently have incidental research needs but lack the ability to conduct it. Although time and funding constraints prohibited this research project from rendering conclusive scientific data, it was informative. The RDC has included it as a project to be continued by a new group of students at the end of the Maxwell 1998-1999 academic year. From an internal perspective, other outcomes included:

- Solidifying the partnership between the RDC and the EFC.
- Providing students an opportunity to apply their newly acquired public administration skills.
- Introducing rural communities to a new resource of students and the EFC as a service provider.
- Building the level of confidence and support for the EFC by a state agency (NYS DOS).
- Heightening the value of the EFC to Syracuse University.
- Opening up the prospect of performing similar projects in the future.

## **Pollution Prevention Education Program**

### **Project Description**

In March, 1998, the EFC collaborated with the City of Syracuse, Office of Community Development, Division of Neighborhood Planning and Parks, Recreation and Youth Services to design a pollution prevention educational program and prepare a proposal to submit to the EPA Environmental Justice division for funding. The underlying theme of the "Pollution Prevention Education Program" (PPEP) was that the key to preventing pollution in the future is education, and that educational efforts must begin early and be delivered continuously for community members. The area in Syracuse targeted to benefit from the program included the most impoverished neighborhoods and neighborhoods with the highest population of minority groups. These are typically the areas with the highest concentration of pollution-causing activities and behaviors.

### **Project Activities**

Representatives from the two City of Syracuse agencies involved, Division of Neighborhood Planning (DNP) and Parks, Recreation and Youth Services (PRYS), met with the EFC staff to discuss the development of a program that would impart pollution prevention education, techniques, and participatory strategies within targeted neighborhood communities. The EPA Environmental Justice Division published a request for proposals for such projects, with an April submission deadline. It was agreed that the EFC would facilitate the process of developing and preparing the proposal for submission.

An open meeting to introduce communities to the concept was immediately scheduled. Representatives of grass roots neighborhood organizations and facilitators of a City of Syracuse neighborhood program, Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today (TNT), were all invited. A sound proposal could not be developed without integrating the residents of the target areas or the leadership of groups that continuously worked for change within Syracuse neighborhoods. At the end of this initial meeting, neighborhood representatives expressed a strong support for the PPEP concept and requested a second meeting at which they could present the EFC with specific perceptions residents had of their areas. Furthermore, TNT participants had previously addressed the adverse environmental conditions in the targeted neighborhoods and wanted to share with the EFC the various project ideas they had developed, including appropriate ones in the proposal. A second community meeting was scheduled.

During the time between the first and second meetings, a number of organizations were recruited to support and be involved in PPEP. These new partners included target area businesses, institutions of higher learning (students and faculty), public schools, and major corporations of Syracuse. At the second meeting, City of Syracuse, EFC, TNT, and neighborhood representatives agreed that the most suitable pollution prevention program for the targeted areas would include:

- A multi-tiered approach requiring residents and businesses to collaborate to start an actual pollution prevention campaign in which models were designed to allow for hands-on demonstrations and learning

opportunities. The City agreed to dedicate portions of park space for the project.

- A continuous cycle of activities that focused on education, planning and implementation, and sustainable outcomes.
- Project activities that incorporated the needs of a multi-generational population base. The notion here was that elementary-aged children, young adults with vehicles and housing responsibilities, and elders had equally compelling needs for involvement in activities that could produce behavioral change and intellectual knowledge relative to pollution prevention.
- A commitment to include PPEP goals into all future neighborhood planning, particularly with respect to the sustainable outcomes component. This included a commitment to including PPEP activities into the budget process of other programs beyond the initial funding period.

The proposal that was submitted highlighted the educational activities and the collaborative commitment to PPEP. Using park space for developing model sites that contained small-scaled acrylic-framed models of pollution consequences as a teaching tool, and planned space for models of recycling or removing pollutants was outlined in detail. Additionally, methods for continuous neighborhood participation and partnership building to make PPEP an enduring local program were expounded upon. The effort did not result in federal funding. However, it significantly raised the level of awareness Syracuse residents had of the general concept of "environmental justice" and the need to include environmental issues in neighborhood discussions and planning.

### **Outcome**

These types of projects require a commitment of time that may or may not result in the award of funds. The EFC staff believes that the outcomes of the efforts are well worth the time whether or not funding is achieved. Building relationships and partnerships with communities and agencies is critical to the long term viability of the EFC and its ability to serve the public. In this regard, the project served to achieve the following:

- Introducing the public at large to the EFC and its resources to communities.
- Fostering relationships with local government agencies and creating links for other activities.
- Heightening citizen and local government awareness of the need for pollution prevention activities that add significant value to other economic development and neighborhood planning efforts.

Developing a pollution prevention education program that can be "recycled" and included in future activities, or can be separated by component and used at either the grass roots or government agency level.

An immediate consequence to this project was realized when a neighborhood organization contacted the EFC to facilitate meetings concerning how to use a \$100,000 grant to redevelop a brownfield site into a neighborhood plaza at which recreational activities, gardens, and craft or produce kiosks could be located. Such a request is an indicator of the trust and confidence placed in the EFC by the community. Additionally, the project served as impetus for the City of Syracuse Office of Community Development to regularly contact the EFC about prospective collaborative opportunities with other environment-related requests for proposals. A secondary benefit has also been realized for the federal level of government - this project reinforced to local government representatives and community residents the sincerity of the EPA in conducting outreach efforts in a manner that is workable and not laden with bureaucratic complications.

## **Rate Setting and Capital Management Workshops and Training**

### **Project Description**

In the past, this EFC routinely planned and executed workshops and training sessions on rate setting and other public finance-related topics. Since 1994, the EFC has accomplished introducing numerous professional organizations to concepts in rate setting and the Rate Mod software program available through the EFCs. Presentations in capital planning and other areas of public finance have also been accomplished on a number of occasions to a multitude of public managers.

As the EFC was planning the content and dates for 1998 workshops, several technical service providers were consulted for their knowledge of local government needs in the communities that make up EPA Region 2. The consensus was that virtually all municipalities had managers who would benefit from either introductory or supplemental presentations focused on public finance issues, particularly those with application in environmental projects. Previously unknown to the EFC, technical service providers believed the EFC duplicated the training components of their services and in many instances the primary difference in the training was that the EFC tended to impart information to higher level public officials instead of the practicing administrative levels of management. This sharing of information led to the creation of a collaborative opportunity for the EFC in which it became a content provider of the workshops conducted by technical service providers who supported continuing education requirements for water and waste water plant operators. It also established a relationship between circuit riders in the field and the EFC. The circuit riders now call the EFC as a resource for communities facing particular problems.

### **Project Activities**

EFC staff responded to requests from the New York State Rural Water Association to conduct a total of four separate workshop and training sessions on rate setting, public finance, and capital budgeting during September and November. Staff members presented the training to municipal managers from approximately 80 communities total.

Each session incorporated the use of rate setting methods as a cost recovery tool for water and waste water improvement projects. EFC staff developed illustrations of the Rate Mod software techniques to project costs and provide various options in rate setting. In some instances EFC staff dedicated time, or made separate arrangements, to demonstrate the actual use of the software. This includes a demonstration at Syracuse University for managers and officials of Batavia and Genesee County.

The topic of capital budgeting and financing was of great interest to the participants at all conferences. The EFC learned that the vast majority of municipalities in rural New York State do not have capital budgets. Consequently, if the municipality is out of compliance with an environmental regulation, or if an event occurs that requires significant repair costs, the municipalities enter into crisis modes. EFC staff prepare the presentations to impart information on capital budgeting as a best practice in public management and capital finance methods to respond to unanticipated events.

Conference participants are encouraged to ask questions specific to the problems of the municipalities they serve. On numerous occasions, EFC staff have performed research functions to accurately respond to the questions, particularly those that involve certain legal issues. An example is a question a participant had regarding the legality of capital replacement reserve funds in New York. EFC staff followed up on the question and reported back to the participant.

### **Outcome**

These workshop and training sessions enable the EFC to have direct contact with public managers and to provide pertinent rate setting and public finance information, including financing options for specific issues of a given municipality. The EFC staff is proud of the opportunity to collaborate with the New York State Rural Water Association and other technical service providers to deliver this kind of training. Not only does it accomplish imparting new, updated, and useful information, it illustrates the resource value of the EFC to rural governments. At a time when municipalities are grappling with a variety of environmental issues, accessing available resources is critical to their success in developing appropriate plans and achieving implementation goals.

Aside from the training value of the sessions, a significant value of this EFC activity is that it has reinforced to the technical service providing community that the EFC seeks to supplement and complement, rather than duplicate, existing efforts. Thus, opportunities to fulfill the EFC mission of assisting local governments and the EPA mission of conducting outreach are accomplished.

## **Brooklyn Brownfields Redevelopment Project**

## **Project Description**

In August, 1998, a representative of the Bushwick Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) contacted the EFC seeking assistance in the redevelopment plans for three brownfields in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn, New York. Over a three year period, BEDC had been involved in a number of meetings and minor projects concerning the brownfields, but no plan was firmly in place. The Bushwick section of Brooklyn is extremely impoverished and the prospective plans that had been expressed for the sites could prove exceptionally beneficial to Bushwick residents. The BEDC was most interested in learning the typical stages and procedures of brownfields redevelopment.

## **Project Activities**

EFC staff members arranged to meet with the BEDC staff and also tour the brownfields in order to develop a stronger sense about previous efforts. The EFC was provided the work product of a prior study done on the sites by the Columbia University Urban Planning and Development Program. This work was primarily a zoning plan and an architectural rendering of prospective uses of the sites. Private developers had expressed interest in locating a large grocery store and various small businesses on one of the sites. New York City Department of Parks and Recreation had expressed an interest in converting the other two sites into a park and athletic field.

EFC staff members queried the BEDC on the meetings that had occurred, specifically seeking information about what government agencies had been involved, the prior use and history of the sites, environmental assessments, and stakeholder interests. The largest site had once housed a beer brewery. The physical structures had been demolished several years ago to reduce loitering and vagrancy problems that had evolved. The other sites are currently filled with old tires and other waste. Although there had been meeting regarding the development of the sites, it was quite apparent that a meeting at which all stakeholders, including potential private sector developers, were present had never been held.

The EFC took the information about the brownfields and prepared a summary of the possible avenues that could be taken to establish a progressive planning pattern for the sites. The BEDC asked the EFC to return to Brooklyn and meet with New York State Assemblyman Vito Lopez who represents the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. At this meeting, EFC staff members provided information regarding the government agencies that might be useful to involve in all stages of the planning as well as the technical processes that might have to be pursued in order to have factual information on the need, or lack of need, for environmental remediation activities. Meeting participants all agreed that progress could not be made until such information was available.

An environmental assessment is due to be provided in early 1999. After the assessment is provided, the EFC has agreed to collaborate with the BEDC to facilitate the process of developing solid plans for the brownfields redevelopment project. At this writing it has not yet been determined the extent to which the EFC will work with the project. It may serve in an entirely research and resource oriented role or it may conduct forums, similar to the charrette technique, that bring stakeholders together for a series of meetings and planning sessions.

## **Outcome**

The Brooklyn Brownfields Project is new to the EFC. Because the role of the EFC has not yet been determined, it is difficult to anticipate events that will occur after this report is submitted. To date, however, the primary outcome has been that the BEDC has developed an awareness of the procedural requirements of brownfields redevelopment. Furthermore, they are aware of options in the planning process, particularly the total involvement of stakeholders.

## **Capacity Development Strategic Plan for New York State**

### **Project Description**

During the EFC Network Forum referred to at the beginning of this section, representatives of the New York State Department of Health learned of EFC activities in the area of capacity development with respect to the Safe Drinking Water Act. In August, the NYS DOH asked the EFC to facilitate the process of developing a capacity

development strategic plan for the State. They believed the plan would be widely accepted and received if an external party facilitated its development. The location and reputation of the EFC as a neutral program with extraordinary resources also contributed to their decision to request assistance.

### **Project Activities**

NYS DOH and EFC staff met in September to discuss methods of developing the Capacity Development Strategic Plan for NYS. It was decided that the EFC would host and facilitate all meetings. The NYS DOH took the responsibility of producing a list of individuals and organizations to serve in an initial Steering Committee. The NYS DOH and the EFC both collaborated to prepare material regarding the purpose of the capacity development planning meetings and important deadlines established by the federal government.

Prior to the first meeting, EFC 2 collaborated with EFCs 6 and 10 to develop a process facilitation model. EFC 10 Director Bill Jarocki came to Syracuse to serve as a technical resource at the initial meeting, held on December 4. EFC 6 Director Heather Himmelberger provided guidance on stakeholder concerns and facilitation techniques by phone. The purpose of the first meeting was to begin building a statewide "team" of stakeholders committed to developing the strategic plan. Technical information and decisions regarding the content of the plan were not to be prioritized. Instead, priority was placed on eliciting input to establish a governance structure for the working groups that would eventually make up the entire statewide team.

The NYS DOH provided the EFC with a list of fifteen individuals to invite to serve on the Steering Committee. These included public and private sector representatives. The morning hours were dedicated to outlining legal and demographic information about New York water systems. During the lunch and afternoon hours, meeting participants were asked to evaluate some tentative governance models prepared by the NYS DOH, and then diagram their own concepts of a viable statewide governance structure. Participants then identified individuals and organizations they believed should be involved, or at least informed of the project. A meeting to decide the most appropriate governance model has been scheduled for January, 1999.

### **Outcome**

The obvious anticipated long term outcome of this project will be a capacity development strategic plan for New York State. As a project in progress, the outcomes to date include the formation of a collaborative effort among EFCs 2, 6, and 10; the first project EFC 2 has had that simultaneously includes every region of New York State; and the promotion of the EFC as a resource for state and local governments.

## **EFC Collaborative Activities Summary**

### **EFC Network**

All EFCs collaborated to plan and execute the EFC Network Forum for June, 1998. The Forum would not have enjoyed the success it did had the other EFCs not actively participated in planning the content and format of all components.

EFC 10 provided ongoing support and direct expertise in rate setting to clients served by EFC 2. This includes functioning in a support role for clients who choose to use EPA-supported rate setting software.

EFC 6 and EFC 10 are currently collaborating with EFC 2 to assist the New York State Department of Health develop a Capacity Development Strategic Plan.

EFC 6 and EFC 2 have collaborated extensively on the Environmental Financial Technical Assistance Program proposal. EFC 6 will partner with EFC 2 to promote capacity development as well as the use of water meters and rate setting in the Newly Independent States.

### **Other Collaborative Partners**

New York State Rural Development Council -- to promote dialogue between technical assistance providers, rural advocacy groups, funding agencies, and academic researchers, and to plan projects.



City of Syracuse, Office of Community Development, Division of Neighborhood Planning - to discuss pollution prevention, brownfields redevelopment planning, and sustainable community programs, and assess prospective grants to jointly apply for.

Environmental Community Assistance Consortium - for purposes of providing communities assistance in proposal development and capacity building.

State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry - to plan graduate student projects and plan research-oriented projects.

Maxwell School Center for Technology and Information Policy and Center for Environmental Policy Administration --to plan scientific survey assessing the experiences of rural businesses with environmental regulations.

United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Services - to assist rural communities in accessing technical assistance and funding programs for environment-related projects.

New York State Tug Hill Commission - to improve the coordination of the delivery of technical services to the Tug Hill region on New York.

New York State Rural Water Association - for purposes of providing training and workshops in rate setting, public finance, and capital budgeting to water system operators and public managers.

### New Initiatives for 1999

Conducting a scientific survey that will assess the experiences of rural businesses with environmental regulations.

Collaborating with the Tug Hill Commission, Rural Development Council, the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utility Service, and others to formally coordinate technical services available to rural New York communities. This will include establishing an interactive web site at which local government managers can receive rapid responses to inquiries from a wide range of service providers.

Developing layperson models of public finance issues relative to environmental projects for the purpose of providing local governments a useful community outreach tool.

## Syracuse EFC Organization

### Management

William J. Sullivan, Director  
Environmental Finance Center  
Maxwell School of Public Affairs  
Syracuse University

EFC/Syracuse University  
219 Maxwell Hall  
The Maxwell School  
Syracuse University

Phone (315) 443-3759  
fax (315) 443-5330  
wjsulliv@maxwell.syr.edu

Kimberly J. Collins  
Director of Projects and Initiatives  
Environmental Finance Center  
Maxwell School of Public Affairs,  
Syracuse University

EFC/Syracuse University  
219 Maxwell Hall  
The Maxwell School  
Syracuse University  
Syracuse, NY 13244

Phone (315) 443-9438  
fax (315) 443-5330  
kjc01@maxwell.syr.edu

William P. Kittredge  
 Research Associate  
 Environmental Finance Center  
 Maxwell School of Public Affairs,  
 Syracuse University

EFC/Syracuse University  
 219 Maxwell Hall  
 The Maxwell School  
 Syracuse University  
 Syracuse, NY 13244

Phone (315) 443-4881  
 fax (315) 443-5330  
 wpkittre@maxwell.syr.edu

Kevin T. Farrell  
 Research Associate  
 Environmental Finance Center  
 Maxwell School of Public Affairs,  
 Syracuse University

EFC/Syracuse University  
 219 Maxwell Hall  
 The Maxwell School  
 Syracuse University  
 Syracuse, NY 13244

Phone (315) 443-4881  
 fax (315) 443-5330  
 ktfarrel@maxwell.syr.edu

Bradley Meurren  
 Research Associate  
 Environmental Finance Center  
 Maxwell School of Public Affairs,  
 Syracuse University

EFC/Syracuse University  
 219 Maxwell Hall  
 The Maxwell School  
 Syracuse University  
 Syracuse, NY 13244

Phone (315) 443-4881  
 fax (315) 443-5330  
 bmeurren@maxwell.syr.edu

Ken Miller  
 Student Intern  
 Environmental Finance Center  
 Maxwell School of Public Affairs,  
 Syracuse University

EFC/Syracuse University  
 219 Maxwell Hall  
 The Maxwell School  
 Syracuse University  
 Syracuse, NY 13244

---

### [Environmental Finance Center Network Forum](#)

The Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center (EFC) organized and hosted the Environmental Finance Center Network Forum June 25-26, 1998 that brought together the collective expertise of six university-based EFCs. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) partially funds the EFC Network. The EPA sponsored the Forum to demonstrate the transferability of EFC-developed environmental finance tools from region to region. An equally important function of the Forum was to inform public and private sector environmental service providers, as well as public administrators, of the EFC Network and the environmental finance tools available to assist communities. By all measures, the Forum was successful in imparting meaningful information to participants. This report will summarize the activities of the Forum and conclude with recommendations for future EFC Network Forum or similar events.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) partially funds the EFC Network. The EPA sponsored the Forum to demonstrate the transferability of EFC-developed environmental finance tools from region to region. An equally important function of the Forum was to inform public and private sector environmental service providers, as well as public administrators, of the EFC Network and the environmental finance tools available to assist communities.

#### **EFC Network Forum Concept**

The EPA recognizes that public managers and private sector environmental service providers routinely face significant challenges in financing environmental protection for the communities they serve. The concept of

organizing the Forum was based on providing these professionals a unique opportunity to learn about and participate in the portfolio of financial outreach services developed by the EFC Network.

Through a series of internal meetings among EPA and EFC representatives it was decided that the Forum would yield the greatest benefit to the target audience if their input concerning the challenges in their communities was included in the planning process. The Syracuse University EFC asked representatives of government, non-profit, and private sector entities to provide insight into what would best serve the needs and interests relative to the communities they serve. Overwhelmingly, the representatives identified the following issues as the primary environment-related areas of concern:

- capacity development and strategic planning
- water and waste water rate setting
- intergovernmental cooperation and collaborative planning among municipalities
- brownfields redevelopment
- community/citizen involvement and outreach
- problem-solving and consensus-building to effect environment-related improvements
- inadequate capital budgeting and planning
- general public finance methods and techniques relative to environmental infrastructure development

The representatives expressed an interest in participating in the EFC Network Forum, but also expressed that they would be most likely to attend if the format was "different" from the conferences and meetings they routinely attend. When asked to identify a format that would appeal to them most, the responses included:

- foster an environment conducive to interactive learning
- avoid politicizing the event and select participants based on their role in providing or needing environmental services
- limit concurrent workshops and provide the opportunity to participate in all presentations or demonstrations
- allow time for participants to discuss their specific concerns with EFC representatives

EFC Network directors and staff took the information provided and created a program that incorporated the suggestions. This effort proved to be very important. Throughout the Forum, several participants made a point to comment about the agenda and format.

### **The Forum**

The first day of the Forum consisted of detailed presentations of EFC Network tools. Each EFC discussed the range of values of the tools, providing illustrations and demonstrations of applications in communities and municipalities. The collective of the presentations included:

EPA Environmental Finance Tools Guidebook: Forum participants were introduced to the Guidebook, available at the EPA web site. Tim McProuty and Vera Hannigan (EPA/Washington DC) offered a computer disk version or printed copy if preferred.

- **Charrettes**: Jack Greer (EFC3/Maryland) discussed the concept of a charrette to communities facing environmental finance issues. He shared specific issues in which EFC3 used the charrette to clarify a problem and create a menu of possible options and solutions by bringing all stakeholders together for an intense day of facilitated discussion and information exchange.
- **Utility Rate Setting**: Bill Jarocki (EFC10/Idaho) demonstrated the value of using a computer software program to create viable rate structures. He explained the range of options available in determining

appropriate rates and the ability the software has to generate reports for the various scenarios.

- **Environmental Governance:** Kim Collins (EFC2/New York) introduced Forum participants to the broad concept of environmental governance and discussed the trends towards collaborative planning, intergovernmental cooperation, and public-private partnerships.
- **Capacity Development:** Heather Himmelberger (EFC6/New Mexico) provided Forum participants a glimpse at the technical engineering assistance EFC6 provides the states in its region. She discussed the capacity development planning processes taking place in response to the Safe Drinking Water Act, illustrating how the EFC can work with government agencies to facilitate the process. Heather also touched on various tribal issues and associated EFC6 projects.
- **Brownfields Redevelopment:** Kirstin Toth (EFC5/Ohio) presented the steps taken by EFC5 to pursue brownfields redevelopment projects. She discussed the nuances of community development, socio-economic dimensions, and the research necessary to plan projects. A highlight of her presentation was a discussion about the need for strong leadership in brownfields redevelopment projects, that leadership can be much more significant than funding sources.

Forum participants responded favorably to all presentations. Discussions took place at the end of the presentations and representatives of two separate agencies approached EFC Network members about providing collaborative assistance in rate-setting and capacity development. EFCs 2,9, and 6 will begin to plan in the near future. Virtually all participants expressed an interest in having a charrette at some point in the future. Three representatives from the City of Syracuse are interested in EFC5 collaborating with EFC2 to assess brownfields redevelopment plans in Syracuse.

The second day of the Forum offered participants the opportunity to participate in workshops on capacity development and rate setting, in addition to observe a charrette. Workshop participants were able to discuss some of their specific problems with EFC representatives. The workshops were scheduled in the early morning hours. The charrette was scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. This allowed workshop participants to have some time available to observe the charrette process. Because the charrette requires the stakeholders to openly discuss a range of issues, it is important for the work environment to be somewhat casual and intimate. There was some concern that observers would be distracting. Furthermore, EFC2 had arranged for the charrette to be videotaped for training purposes. As it turned out, observers were quiet, attentive, and in some cases, able to provide additional expertise.

### **The Long Eddy Charrette**

Long Eddy is a hamlet on the Delaware River in New York. A descriptive case study of Long Eddy's water situation is attached to this report. The primary problem is that the water treatment facility is inadequate and users are continuously under a boil order issued by the Department of Health. There are 36 users on the system and there is an interest in creating a water district and building a new system. Long Eddy has been dealing with the problem for more than ten years, but funding, politics, and the absence of clear leadership have impeded the ability of the community to find a viable solution.

The charrette offered Long Eddy residents and officials the first opportunity ever to meet with government agency representatives and prospective funding source representatives at the same time to discuss all possible options in full. At the conclusion of the charrette, the residents of Long Eddy gave a round of applause and expressed their gratitude for being selected to participate. Charrette participants left with a plan to begin the process of resolving the water treatment facility problem. Residents from this tiny community were awestruck that a federally funded program -- the EFC Network -- would provide such assistance to them. Agency and funding representatives expressed the desire to use the process in other situations.

### **Lessons Learned / Recommendations**

In terms of the over all quality of the Forum, participants rated it as an excellent event. EFC staff and participants were asked to comment on aspects they might change if the Forum was held again. The responses were:

- **Provide more networking opportunities** -- The luncheons and a reception were the only times available for networking. Only one luncheon did not have a guest speaker. Although the speakers were complimented and well-received, it was suggested to schedule outside speakers during the program presentation time.
- **Encourage participants to discuss their work** -- The participants were all either hands-on technical providers or administrators of technical assistance delivery systems. Although there was a fair amount of discussion opportunity, it would have been beneficial for participants to have some information about one another.
- **Reduce the overview presentation time and offer a sequence of hands-on workshops** -- Participants expressed that they learned quite a bit from the overview presentations of the first day, but that workshop presentations encourage more interaction.
- **Provide greater incentive for attendance** -- No fee was charged to attend the Forum. Invitations were mailed to 350 public and private environmental service providers in EPA Region 2. Instructions were given to register by June 10. At one point attendance numbered 50. It changed throughout the first day as some people left, new people arrived, and others left intermittently. On the second day, attendance numbered as high as 32. The weather on both days consisted of heavy rain in the morning hours. Additionally, quite a bit of construction work was taking place in the Syracuse University vicinity. There was no risk of losing money if one registered, but did not attend. On the other hand, if one did not call and register, there was a risk of lost space availability. Although incentive or motivation might factor into actual attendance rates compared to the number of registrations, the EFC Network might consider a stronger marketing approach in the future. This was a first-time event and there was uncertainty on best methods to attract participants.
- **The facilities and amenities were excellent** -- All presentations and breaks were done within the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

The EFCs regularly collaborate with one another and others to assist communities with environment-related finance problems. The EFC Network Forum was an opportunity to share the collaborative strength of the Network with environmental service providers. If the Forum can be replicated in other EFC service regions (and beyond), the EPA will be providing a tremendous service to communities that may not otherwise know of the assistance available.

---

[ [EFP Home](#) | [Search EFP](#) | [Comments](#) | [Browse](#) | [Search EPA](#) | [EPA Home](#) ]

6/29/99

URL: <http://www.epa.gov/efinpage/syrann.htm>