

Southeastern PA Group (SPG)

Conservation Committees

2017 Year-End Report

Prepared by Jim Wylie, SPG Conservation Chair, with input from 13 Conservation Committee Leaders

Introduction

SPG has many conservation committees with various levels of organization, active leadership and collaboration with other organizations. In totality more than 50 volunteers have played a role in taking action or helping to increase awareness about environmental issues or opportunities in the greater Philadelphia region or beyond.

This report intends to:

- summarize the kinds of issues SPG is involved in
- highlight some of the actions or accomplishments for 2017
- identify the orgs that we are working closely with
- set goals or expectations for 2018
- record feedback on group and chapter support
- identify needs for success in 2018

Conservation Committees

Committees covered in this report include:

- [Ready For 100](#) – teams in each of 5 counties
- [PennEast Pipeline](#) and Delaware River Water Quality
- [Mariner East 2](#) Pipeline
- [Bishop Tube](#) Land and Water Contamination
- [Public Lands](#) and Utah Wilderness
- [Fossil Free SEPTA](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Water Pollution](#) & Outings
- [Open Space Preservation](#)
- [Don't Spray Me](#)

There are a few other conservation issues that are being worked on by our volunteers, but no contribution was made available for this year-end report: Urban Air Quality, ELCON Hazardous Waste Plant, Defense of EPA.

Most of the committees listed above are being worked on in collaboration with other environmental organizations. Only the Ready For 100 projects are made up of primarily of Sierra Club volunteers.

Budget - Summary

2017 Budget Forecast (approved by SPG ExCom) = **\$2,650**

Grants Received (chapter pipeline, RF100 M4CE) = \$4,000

Targeted Fundraising (Hudgings Memorial, Paint Chester County) = \$2,200

2017 Actual Expenditures

Ready For 100 – Launch Event	\$997
WCU Film Series	\$479
ME2 Pipeline – permit study, other	<u>\$1,648</u>
Total Expenditures	\$3,124

There may still be some reimbursement requests outstanding. We spent more than we predicted at the beginning of the year, but this was only for projects that we knew had additional funding from grants and targeting fundraising. Our surplus funding (about \$4,600) can be applied to the 2018 conservation budget. [see detailed [budget info](#) in later section]

Top 3 Takeaways

The three biggest things we would like the reader to get out of this report are:

1. **Advocating for solutions**, like renewable energy with 35+ volunteers, **is by far the biggest motivator for our volunteers**. The well-organized leadership and resources from the national Ready For 100 team is also a major contributor to success.
2. **There is an opportunity to support and organize around other issues**. The tone and impact of a committee is very much dependent on the skills and motivation of the volunteer leader(s) and the push/pull of organizing support is different for each team.
3. **2017 was a banner year for volunteer activity**. A wave of people raised their hands to volunteer with the Sierra Club in the greater Philadelphia area. **But** few have emerged as organizing leaders and some of the initial enthusiasm after Nov 8, 2016 has melted away or shifted to follow organizations that have more local structure and direction.

Other Observations

1. We should follow the lead of Don't Spray Me, Open Space and Water Pollution committees to look for opportunities to connect conservation issues with outings, education and social events.
2. A "conservation committee" is loosely defined. Sometimes it is all SC volunteers. Sometimes lead by and SC volunteer with collaboration w/ other orgs. Sometimes SC is a minor player in a multi-org committee, but the resources and branding of an SC connection are always welcome.
3. We did not do a good job of predicting our budget needs for 2017.
4. It should be noted that many volunteers spend their own money for small printing, food contributions at gatherings, etc. This is surely appreciated and recognized as part of our volunteer resource.

Conservation Committee Reports

PennEast and the Delaware river

Objective: to stop the PennEast pipeline, but also, to institute a permanent and complete ban on fracking and fracking related activities in the entire Delaware river Basin area throughout all four states.

In 2017 we have spoke on these issues at rallies and meetings, have written letters to the editor, have addressed the press about these issues on several occasions, have partaken of actions in Harrisburg with Governor Wolf about these issues.

In 2018 we plan to continue working on getting Resolutions in front of all Bucks County municipalities along the River and beyond to enact a permanent ban on fracking and all fracking related activities, if they have not already done so.

Regarding possible help from SPG and chapter organizers: not sure yet....this is very new and just rolling. however, potentially, we might need some input into a database of relevant names of folks who live in the targeted municipalities.

Leader: Sharon Furlong
Email: sfurlong5@verizon.net
Team Size: 3 +
Meetings: No
Collaborating Orgs: Bucks Environmental Action; Delaware Riverkeepers Network; Berks Gas Truth; New Jersey Sierra club; Damascus Citizens council; Catskill Mountainkeeper; NRDC; 350.org; Food and Water Watch
Needs: Volunteers, Communications
Web:
www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/southeastern/penneast-pipeline

Bishop Tube PA Hazardous Site

A coalition of community members living near a severely contaminated, old industrial site (TCE and heavy metals) organized to protest a developer's plan to partially mediate the site with Pennsylvania tax-money grant, and build over 200 homes on the site. The extent of contamination includes bedrock, soil, groundwater, and the Little Valley Creek that flows to an Exception Value stream, Valley Creek. Progress was to get the support of the E. Whiteland Township supervisors and Senator A. Dinniman to withdraw their support for the grant to the developer. Also, a SLAPP suit by the developer to stop those from speaking about this, was stopped by Chester County Court; an appeal by the developer was also rejected.

However, the DEP has not completed assessment and no cleanup plan has been developed, and these will be ongoing issues, as well as the developer's persistence, in the upcoming year.

In 2018 we are planning another SC outing or two that combines environmental education with service and citizen science.

We would appreciate a Co-leader, help with posting it on SC sites, which I received previously.



Leader: Carol Armstrong

Email: mnem.np@gmail.com

Team Size: 2 +

Meetings: Yes

Collaborating Orgs: Stroud Water Research Center, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Green Valley Watershed Assoc., PennState Ext. Master Watershed Steward Program; Valley Creek Restoration Partnership; PennEnvironment

Needs: Communications

Web: [Presentation](#)

Mariner East 2 Pipeline

Objective: To inform the residents of Chester County of the risks to their health, safety and environment associated with the Mariner East 2 project and to prevent further pipelines from crossing our County.

As a direct result of the above forum East Goshen Safety and Environmental Advocates was formed. We have our own website and newsletter.

Om 2018 we will continue to keep the public aware of the hazards associated with Mariner East 2 and press for local ordinances to prevent the construction of future pipelines.

Hopefully the grants I have received from the State chapter will be renewed. They have been extremely helpful in publicizing the Safety Forum, printing of brochures and the establishment of a website. Would welcome program support from the State chapter and/or National headquarters. It is anticipated that many pipeline operators are interested in crossing our County with natural gas liquids obtained from Marcellus Shale on the way to Marcus Hook for export overseas.

We (EGSEA) have been working closely with Lynda Farrell of the Pipeline Safety Coalition.

Leader: Bernie Greenberg

Email: Hikerbern@comcast.net

Team Size: TBD

Meetings: Yes - coalition

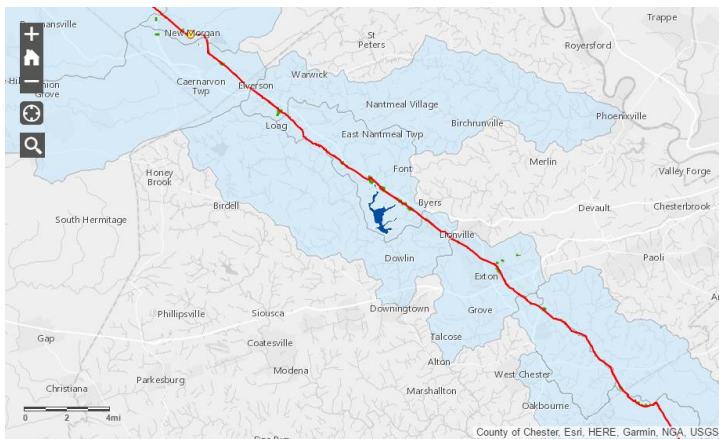
Collaborating Orgs: East Goshen Safety and Environmental Advocates (EGSEA)

Needs: Volunteers

Web:

www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/southeastern/mariner-east-pipeline,

www.eastgoshenadvocates.org/



Public Lands and Utah Wilderness

Spreading awareness among members and Legislators about National Monuments, Wilderness and in particular about America's Redrock Wilderness Act (ARRWA). Lobby for cosponsorship of ARRWA. Lobby against current administrations depredation against National Monuments and Public Lands

In 2017 we met with Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-8), and staffers at Senators Casey and Toomey to lobby against Zinke's actions against Bears Ears and other National Monuments. Also lobbied for co-sponsorship of ARRWA. Notably, Senator Casey has cosponsored ARRWA

In 2018 we plan to get Congressman Fitzpatrick to cosponsor ARRWA and oppose any attacks on National Monuments or the Antiquities Act if this were to come up in Congress

Sharon Furlong from Bucks County Sierra Club, Emily Davis from SPG and Mike Salaski the SUWA rep for PA have been the most consistent partners in this effort. Clayton and Ann Mckibbin were incredibly helpful with tips on lobbying around National Monuments, Antiquities Act. We also collected a lot of documentation on the economic benefits of National Monuments as cover for our Republican Congressman from Headwaters Economics

Leader: Prasad Ramnath
Email: prasadramnath@msn.com
Team Size: 6
Meetings: Yes
Collaborating Orgs: SC - Utah Wilderness team - Clayton Daughenbaug and Anne McKibbin, Southern Utah Wilderness Association
Needs:
Web: none



FossilFree SEPTA

Prevent SEPTA from building a gas-fired power plant in Philadelphia, and speed up SEPTA's transition to electric buses, powered by clean energy.

Members of the campaign have spoken at almost every SEPTA monthly board meeting; numerous rallies, phone and post card campaigns; petition with 500+ signatures; letters of opposition to SEPTA by several elected officials.

This campaign is led by 350.org, I have been assisting on behalf of Sierra Club, and communicating about the campaign with ExCom, and local volunteers via emails and the quarterly newsletter.

For 2018 we will continue to put pressure on Air Management Services to deny the final needed permit for the gas plant; move the conversation with SEPTA from "we are committed to purchasing 525 more diesel-hybrid buses over the next 5 years" to a position of willingness to make the later year buses electric, and to setting aggressive renewable energy targets.

Chapter and SPG support as is already being provided.

Leader: Karen Melton
Email: karen.melton59@gmail.com
Team Size: 30
Meetings: Yes
Collaborating Orgs: 350/Philly
Needs: Volunteers
Web:
350philadelphia.wordpress.com/septa/



Transportation

Advocate for alternative transportation modes & zero emission vehicles, zero emission buses at SEPTA; pedestrian safety (Vision Zero); traffic law enforcement (including electronic speed and red-light enforcement)

In 2017 we organized indirect lobbying at the local and national level for meaningful transportation funding, clean vehicles, and alternative modes.

In 2018 we mostly have the same goals & responding to new related opportunities.

Leader: Dennis Winters
Email: dennis.winters@verizon.net
Team Size: Up to 6 (including other Chapters & Groups)
Meetings: No
Collaborating Orgs: SC - Clean Vehicles & Demand Management, Clean Air Council, 350.org, and Bicycle Coalition
Needs: Volunteers & return of youthful vigor
Web: none

Water Pollution/Outings

Southeast PA service and citizen science outings.

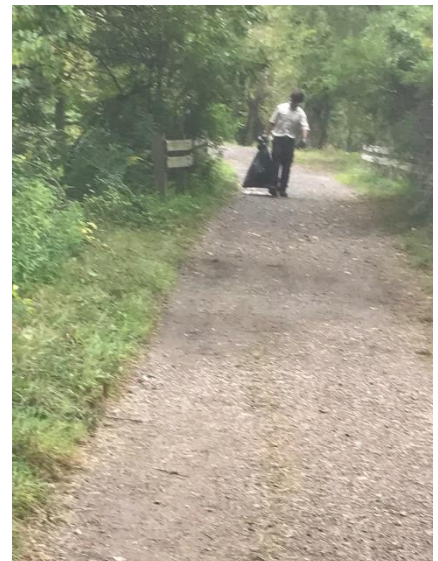
In 2017 we organized Marine Restoration. Participate in International Marine Debris Clean-up day by working on the Heinz NWR to remove all human made objects from the tidal marsh. Created inventory of all debris removed and submitted to Ocean Conservancy international database.

In 2017 I led an outing that combined kayaking, citizen science, and service for the Heinz National Wildlife Refuge during International Marine Debris week. A hearty group of Sierra Club volunteers (14 in all) joined with the rangers (3) of the Fish and Wildlife Service to pick up garbage, with kayaks provided by L. L. Bean. Data was sent to Ocean Conservancy and combined into the international database. Other related outings will be planned for the next year.

In 2018 we plan to have more service and citizen science outings.

Help from SPG and chapter organizers would be appreciated with broadcasting of the events to maximize volunteer participation which is particularly important for service outings.

Leader: Carol Armstrong
Email: mnem.np@gmail.com
Team Size: 14
Meetings: Yes
Collaborating Orgs: John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge; Stroud Water Research Center
Needs: Volunteers, Communications
Web: none



Open Space Preservation

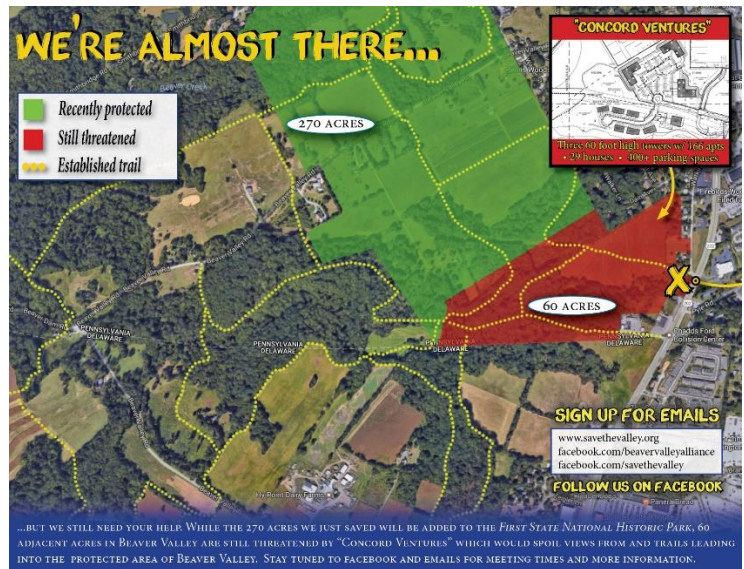
To advocate for greater open space protection by municipal governments in our region and to increase public awareness of the necessity of doing so.

In 2017 we will announce soon that 175 acres of forest in the center of Delaware County will be permanently preserved. The "Don Guanella Woods" in Marple Township will most likely become a county park in Delco. Another group I work with, Neighbors for Crebilly, has grown in just one year to over 2,000 likes on facebook and 500 email address. We have several fundraisers and this year at different venues, including "[Paint Chester County](#)" at Galer Winery in November.

In 2018 we hope to Save Crebilly Farm and make it a county park for Chesco.

From SPG and chapter organizers we need help to make the Crebilly story become national news. Since it's part of the Brandywine Battlefield and the most iconic farm in eastern Chester County, any help the PA chapter could offer to help the fight against Toll Brothers get picked up by a national news outlet would be most appreciated. This would also help Chester County Sierra Club as well as the national Sierra Club get on people's radar.

Leader: Ken Hemphill
Email: kenne.hemphill@gmail.com
Team Size: 30
Meetings: Yes
Collaborating Orgs: Beaver Valley Preservation Alliance
Needs: Volunteers, Communications
Web: www.neighborsforcrebilly.org/



Don't Spray Me

Don't Spray Me! is a citizens' organization committed to protecting the health and environment of our local communities by working to reduce the use of harmful chemicals, including synthetic pesticides. We collaborate with local governments and relevant agencies, educate citizens about natural methods of controlling mosquito populations, and promote the use of safe, effective alternatives to harmful chemicals. Founded in 2015 by residents of West Chester, PA and surrounding communities, we engage with all who share our concerns.

In 2018 DSM plans to start up chapters in Downingtown, Kennett Square, and Phoenixville. And DSM will be instituting an Adopt a Storm Drain program, modeled on one in San Francisco.

We have a need for volunteers with specific skills, like graphic design, more block captains in nearby communities and we have identified needs for about \$2,000 for yard signs, public events and rallies.

<< see separate [annual report](#) from the Don't Spray Me board with much more detail. >>

Leader: Margaret Hudgings, Nathaniel Smith

Email: mhudgings@gmail.com,
nathanielbsmith@earthlink.net

Team Size: 10 Leaders + 250 block captains, science advisers, displayers of our yard signs, and other supporters

Meetings: Yes

Collaborating Orgs: West Nile Virus Task Force, WC Boro Sustainability Adv Cmte

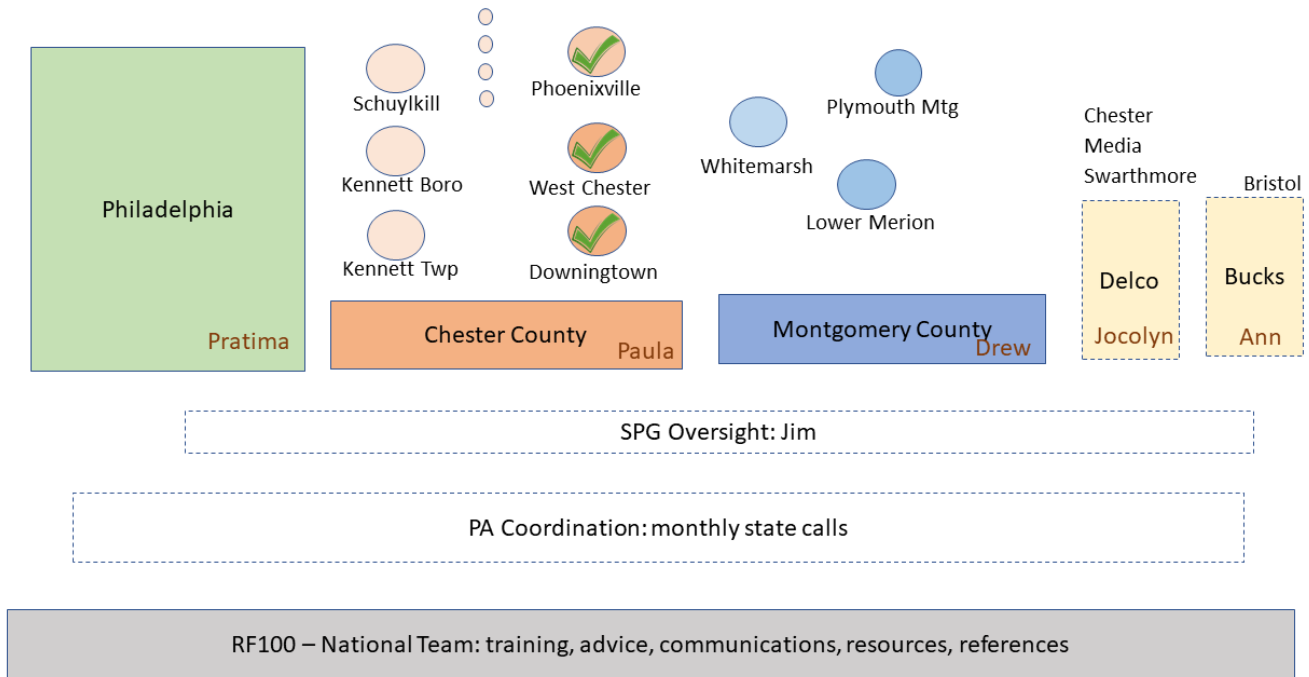
Needs: Volunteers, Money, Communications

Web: dontsprayme.com/



Ready For 100

Ready For 100 actually has layers of organization in the SPG area. It has evolved significantly through 2017. As of December, we have a structure that looks roughly like this:



The **Ready For 100 national team** provides training, advice, communications resources, expert resources and references and are generally available when needed. They are available to communicate with team leaders at any level and encourage an open minded and inclusive process, realizing that every city is different and every volunteer committee has different skills and needs. In addition to the team in Oakland, Eva Resnick-Day, an RF100 national staffer in Pittsburgh, has been available for consult and has helped with PA coordination calls.

The **chapter coordination from Tom Torres** offer general organizing advice and resources. Tom has been especially available to help with organizing the large team in Philadelphia.

Jim Wylie provides some of the glue that is needed to do local organizing and volunteer building. Jim also helps with incubation of new teams and promotes the RF100 projects at regional events. Jim also manages the digital resources: web pages, shared folders, conference calls, etc.

The rubber meets the road in the county level committees, with Philadelphia being the largest in terms of number of volunteers and size of task. Following is a write-up from the 5 leaders about their RF100 projects:

RF100 - Bucks County

100% clean energy goals and transition for Bristol Township. In 2017 we organized [#ActOnClimate](#). June 10th in Levittown.

We need help from SPG or chapter support for a new local-to-me event to drum up local supporters outside of the Sierra reach. Public Outreach.

Leader: Ann DiCampello
Email: anndicampello57@gmail.com
Team Size: 1
Meetings: No
Collaborating Orgs: 350.org (Fossil Free), DRBC, Heritage Conservatory, GOAL, Bristol Township EAC
Needs: Volunteers
Web: none



Regional Stats - Bucks

Population: 626,000

Municipalities: 23 Boroughs, 31 Townships

SC Members: 700

Mayors Signed M4CE: none

RF100 - Delaware County

To get the communities of Chester City, Media and Swarthmore and then eventually the other 46 Delaware County municipalities to adopt RF100 clean, renewable energy plans that has each municipality source all its energy needs from clean and renewable energy sources by 2050.

On 12/8/17 we are planning a showing of the movie *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth To Power*, to raise awareness about the RF100 campaign and enlist more participants.

We need help from SPG and chapter support for outreach.

In 2018 we plan to meet with a lot more people about the Ready for 100 campaign and gain their support and participation in it.

Leader: Jocelyn Bowser-Bostick
Email: jbowserb@yahoo.com
Team Size: 5
Meetings: No
Collaborating Orgs: None
Needs: Money, Volunteers, Communications
Web: none

<u>Regional Stats - Delaware</u>	
Population: 563,000	Municipalities: 27 Boroughs, 21 Townships
SC Members: 600	Mayors Signed M4CE: Swarthmore

RF100 - Montgomery County

Initiate RF100 campaign in Montgomery County, PA

In 2017 we got campaign started end of October. Members applying for positions on EAC's and anxious to move things forward. Working on resolutions to present to our local governments. Looks like there will be likely 2 meetings per month going forward.

We haven't really set goals for 2018 yet. Probably multiple municipal resolutions, jumpstart PV installations in the County, Fill seats on 10 EAC's.

We are not really organized enough yet to know what are support needs are.

Leader: Drew Melman
Email: ajmelman@comcast.net
Team Size: 10
Meetings: Yes
Collaborating Orgs: 350.org, CCL LCV, PennFuture
Needs: Money, Volunteers
Web: none

Regional Stats - Montgomery
Population: 821,000 **Municipalities:** 22 Boroughs, 34 Townships
SC Members: 1,000 **Mayors Signed M4CE:** none

RF100 - Chester County

Effort to promote resolutions and action county wide in Chester County, PA.

In 2017 we had 5 mayors sign the Mayors For Clean Energy Pledge, 3 boroughs passed RF100 resolutions, formed a local elected officials clean energy group.

In 2018 we plan to get 5 more boroughs and 20 townships to pass 100% renewable resolutions, hold 2 -6 stakeholder meetings, initiate renewable energy projects, form an on-going elected officials working group at the county level.

We would appreciate continued help with media outreach.

Leader: Paula Kline
Email: kline.paula@gmail.com
Team Size: 10 to 20
Meetings: Yes
Collaborating Orgs: PA IPL, Eco-Justice Collaborative, Food and Water Watch
Needs: Money, Volunteers
Web:
www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/southeastern/ready-for-100-chester-county



Regional Stats - Chester
Population: 516,000 **Municipalities:** 15 Boroughs, 57 Townships
SC Members: 700 **Mayors Signed M4CE:** Kennett Sq, Downingtown, West Chester, Atglen, Phoenixville

RF100 - Philadelphia County (drafted by D Moscatello)

Commit Philadelphia to transition to 100% clean, renewable energy.

Goals for 2018 are to get Philadelphia City Council to pass a Ready for 100 Resolution (early in 2018), and then look for ways to promote and execute a plan to achieve these goals. We will have a brainstorming meeting in early 2018 (hopefully after the resolution passes) and set priorities and projects that engage our volunteers with initiatives that inspire them.

Leader: Pratima Agrawal
Email:
pratima.agrawal0224@gmail.com
Team Size: 10 to 20
Meetings: Yes
Collaborating Orgs: 350/Philly, Green Philly Justice
Needs: Volunteers
Web: ReadyFor100.org/philly

We would like to see SPG and chapter organizers exhibit fewer silos. Am I the only one wondering why Philly Climate Works and Rf100 aren't working hand-in-hand?





Regional Stats - Philadelphia

Population: 1,500,000

Municipalities: 1 city

SC Members: 900

Mayors Signed M4CE: Philadelphia

Budget - Details

	<u>Budget Forecast & Approved from SPG</u>	<u>Mid-Year Targeted Fundraising</u>		<u>Actual Expenses</u>
Pipelines	\$ 300	\$ 2,000	chapter grant	\$ 1,648
Urban Air - monitors	\$ 800			
RF100	\$ 200	\$ 2,000	M4CE grant	
RF100 Launch	\$ 250			\$ 997
Don't Spray Me & WCU Film Series		\$ 1,100	Graham Hudgings Memorial Fund	\$ 479
Open Space		\$ 1,100	Paint Chester County	
Totals	\$ 1,550	\$ 6,200		\$ 3,124
Surplus for next year		\$ 4,626		

There may still be some reimbursement requests outstanding. We spent more than we predicted at the beginning of the year, but this was only for projects that we knew had additional funding from grants and targeting fundraising. Our surplus funding (about \$4,600) can be applied to the 2018 conservation budget.