Ensuring One Water Delivers for Healthy Waterways

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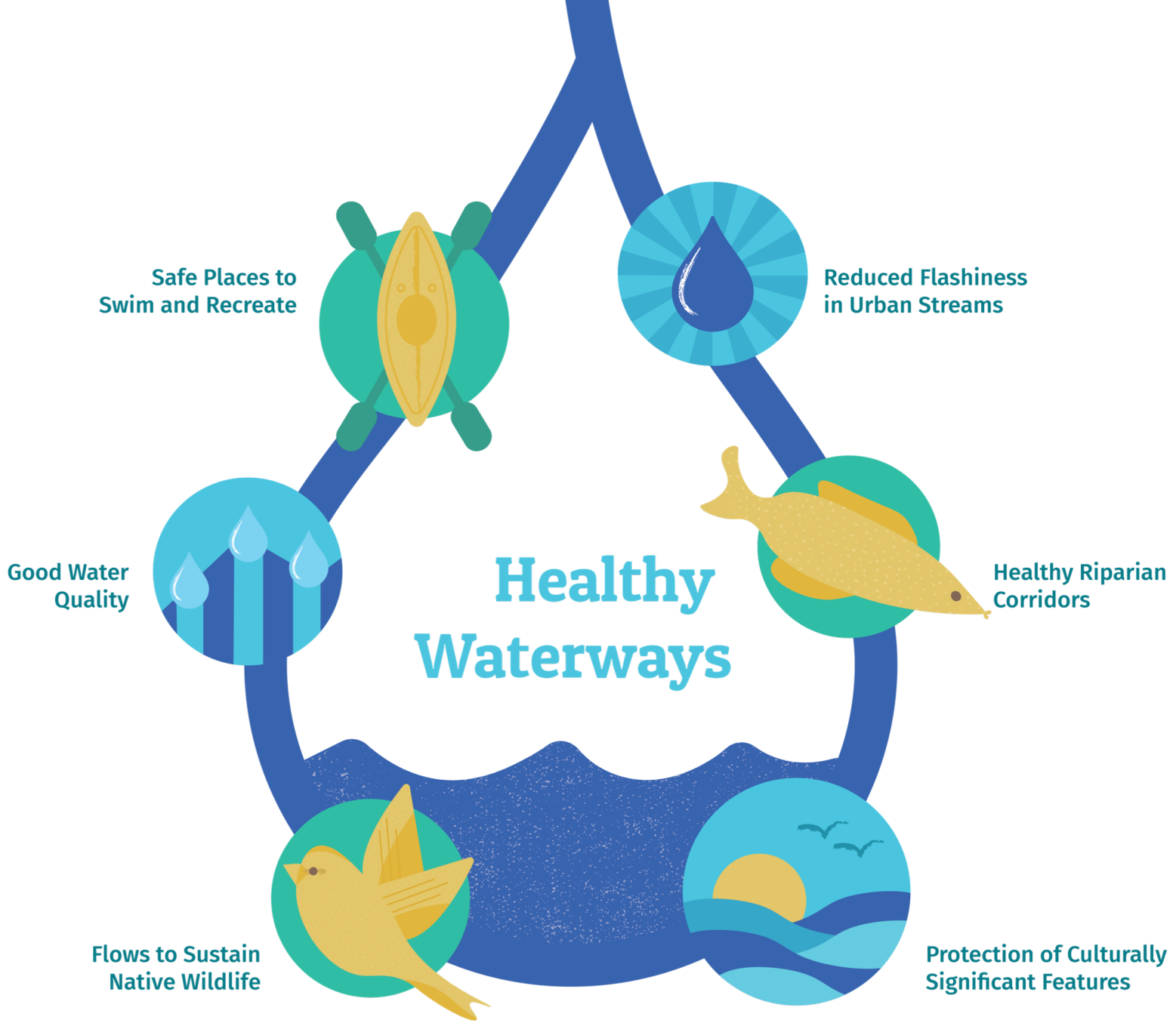
One Water Summit
Austin, Texas

One Water Defined:

One Water is an integrated planning and implementation approach to managing finite water resources for long-term resilience and reliability, meeting both community and ecosystem needs.

Definition: Blueprint for One Water, Water Research Foundation



One Water & Healthy Waterways Survey

- Goal: Explore the current “state of practice” in order to determine whether the One Water approach is realizing its potential to ensure healthy waterways

- Interviewees
  - Utility staff
  - Urban and water planners
  - Scientists

One Water & Healthy Waterways Survey

- What are the planning challenges your community is currently facing?
- How do you consider environmental benefits and impacts in planning?
- Did One Water planning lead to environmental gains or impacts in your community?

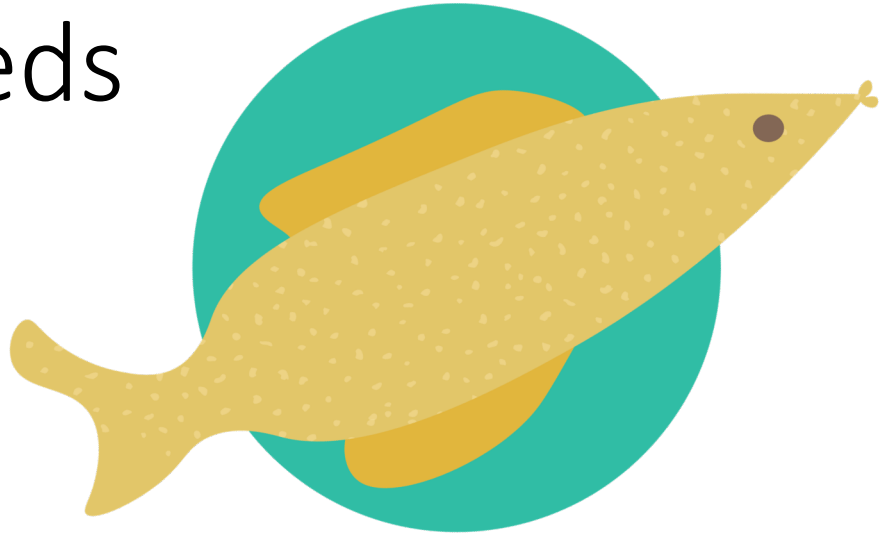
Experiences of “One Water” Cities

In general, quantified assessments of One Water impacts to river flows are not a formal part of One Water planning efforts.

Some cities are encountering unintended adverse waterway consequences of One Water projects – even when those projects were implemented with water conservation and sustainable practices in mind.

1. Competing Environmental Needs

How do communities achieve environmental benefit when we no longer have enough water to do all that a natural system could do in a waterway?



2. Competing Social Needs

Balancing affordability for ratepayers is a challenge and does not always lead to the best environmental outcomes.

3. Good Intentions Overridden by Regulatory Drivers

We created a plan to provide for aquatic health, habitat and flooding management…then encountered Clean Water Act compliance issues and had to relocate projects to optimize compliance, rather than optimizing the multiple benefits that might otherwise be achieved through the investment.

4. Loss of "Functional Flows" to the Natural and Built Systems

High urban efficiency = reduced wastewater flows.

- *Challenge because wastewater treatment requires a certain amount of flow to effectively and economically process.*
- *With higher efficiency and reduced wastewater flows there is less water available for reuse.*
- *Wastewater return flows are important for downstream ecosystems, so putting those flows fully into reuse cannot be assumed to be a good thing.*

What Would it Take to Ensure That One Water Planning Results in Healthy Waterways?

VISION

LEADERSHIP

CASE STUDIES

FUNDING & INCENTIVES

EVALUATION METHODS

We Hope to Hear From You!

Pop-Up Think Tank

Achieving the Multi-Benefit Promise of One Water

Hosted by Pacific Institute & National Wildlife Federation

Friday Sept 20
Room 502
2 – 4 pm

Refreshments Served!

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Texas Living Waters Project

Thanks!

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