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Charting New Waters Explores Water Security in Water-Scarce Regions of the United States

Thought Leaders Explore New Approaches to Urban Water Management to Ensure Future Water Supply Resiliency

RACINE, Wis. (December 11, 2013) – Today, The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread partnered with the National Science Foundation’s Engineering Research Center for Re-inventing the Nation’s Urban Water Infrastructure (ReNUWIt) in convening a diverse group of leading water experts to examine the implications that water scarcity has for the nation’s water infrastructure.

Over the next three days, conference participants will identify key technical uncertainties and institutional impediments that must be resolved to ensure reliable and resilient future supply in water-scarce parts of the country. The convening comes shortly after the Obama Administration’s introduction of the interagency National Drought Resilience Partnership - a new partnership between seven federal agencies to help communities better prepare for droughts.

“Cities in certain regions of the United States could be caught unprepared to meet water demands during an extended drought if they do not take proactive steps now to diversify their water supply,” said Lynn Broaddus, Director of the Environment Program at The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread. “Getting out ahead of our water security challenges and achieving long-term sustainability of the nation’s water resources in the face of climate change, energy constraints, diminishing groundwater supplies, financial challenges and other resource constraints is going to take a comprehensive and cross-sector approach to the issue.”

Participants come from different regions of the United States coping with water scarcity or anticipating future shortages and include representatives from the municipal water supply sector, government, industry, non-governmental organizations and academia. Together they will explore what communities are, or should be, doing to secure water supply for drinking as well as industrial, commercial and other residential uses.

"We recognize the importance of changing the ways we manage urban water and identifying different solutions to secure water supplies, including potentially transformative water technologies and management strategies," said David Sedlak, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at University of California, Berkeley and Deputy Director of ReNUWIt. "This diverse group of collaborators can help catalyze the process of converting great ideas into practical and sustainable solutions."

“The country’s water sectors are currently facing many challenges, including those from severe weather and climate impacts that threaten our nation’s water supply,” said Roger Gorke, Senior Policy Advisor for the Office of Water at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. “In bringing together this group of key stakeholders and water experts, The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread has created a pivotal opportunity to envision ways to transform the country’s water infrastructure and help build resilient communities that can withstand an array of climate and weather related occurrences.”

The dialogue is part of [Charting New Waters](#), an initiative bringing together experts to examine freshwater challenges, successes, innovations and potential solutions that can bridge geographies and inform national policy.

The Johnson Foundation formally launched Charting New Waters in 2010 as an effort dedicated to catalyzing new solutions to U.S. freshwater challenges. Charting New Waters is the work of a diverse group of leaders from business, agriculture, academia and environmental organizations that have publicly committed to improving U.S. freshwater resources by advancing the principles and recommendations of the group. These recommendations were captured in a consensus report: *Charting New Waters: A Call to Action to Address U.S. Freshwater Challenges* issued in Sept. 2010. Download the report [here](#).

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[The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread](#) is dedicated to serving as a catalyst for change by bringing together leading thinkers and inspiring new solutions on major environmental and regional issues. For additional information about *Charting New Waters*, or to learn more about The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, please visit www.johnsonfdn.org.