



## PRESS RELEASE

# Kickstart of Wetskills-USA with the Brain Hurricane event!

**Water experts from the Milwaukee region help Wetskills teams during the Brain Hurricane of Wetskills-USA 2015**

**Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Seventeen students from the Netherlands, United States and Canada are participating in the Wetskills Water Challenge USA 2015. Recently the students met with several experts from the water sector in the Milwaukee region for the Wetskills Brain Hurricane session, on five specific water issues.**

### **Brain Hurricane**

The Brain Hurricane event was kicked off by Dean Amhaus, President of the Milwaukee Water Council and Klaas van der Tempel, Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Chicago U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin officially opened the Wetskills USA through a video message to the attendees. Afterwards the Wetskills teams engaged in a speed dating session with a variety of water experts from Wisconsin. **Koos Bok (Utrecht University) said, "The great thing about the Brain Hurricane was that the experts really put their effort into helping us out. Most had a lot of knowledge about both the region of Milwaukee and the actual in-depth background of the case. Some of the experts engaged us in a role playing game as a means to widen our perspective on the case study and see the problem from different angles. I found it to be a unique experience!"**

Karen Sands, sustainability expert from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District: "The cases are terrific and the students had great questions, they challenged me to think".

### **Next dates**

- **The students will make their presentations to the Wetskills international jury on June 23.**
- **The winner of the competition will be announced at the Milwaukee Water Summit on June 24.**

### **Wetskills United States 2015**

Wetskills Water Challenge is a joint initiative between water businesses in Milwaukee and the Netherlands. With its high population density, intensive agriculture and industry, the Netherlands often receives international acclaim for its ability to literally keep its head above water through innovations in water management and technology, and for succeeding in producing high quality drinking water without using chlorine.



Milwaukee is among the world's most significant hubs for water research, education, technology development and industry. The Global Water Center is a water research and business accelerator center in Milwaukee's Walker's Point neighborhood. It houses water-related research facilities for universities, existing water-related companies and accelerator space for new, emerging water-related companies.

### **Wetskills**

Since 2010, more than 200 water graduate students and young water professionals from more than 40 international universities and organizations have participated Wetskills Water Challenges, held in Canada, Mozambique, Romania, the Netherlands, Egypt, South Africa, Oman, Indonesia, Morocco and China. Wetskills is founded and managed by enthusiastic professionals in the water sector.

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#### **Wetskills Water Challenge**

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## **Wetskills-USA 2015: overview of study cases**

### ***Case 1: KWR Watercycle Research Institute***

#### **Metal recovery from sewage – transforming wastewater into business**

The vision that wastewater is not a waste, but a resource for water, energy, nutrients and other components, becomes more and more widespread. In a circular economy the recovery and reuse of such resources is key to success. KWR Watercycle Research Institute is currently involved in the development of breakthrough technologies for efficient resource recovery from wastewater. One of the latest areas of focus is the recovery of (rare earth) metal resources from wastewater. Recovering these resources from the water cycle could be of strategic importance to Europe and American countries, as natural reserves of rare earth metals are scarce on those continents. Wetskills participants will investigate the (economic) potential of resource recovery of those materials.



### **Case 2: Berson UV**

#### **Resource recovery from a governance perspective: a bright future for UV in disinfection and the re-use of water, energy and nutrients?**

Making the transition from traditional wastewater treatment to an integrated water, energy and nutrients recovery facilities requires a high level of investments. In addition, current priorities among the stakeholders that are involved are not always clear. Therefore, BersonUV, as a specialist in UV water disinfection systems, is interested to develop a clear and concise decision structure that facilitates municipalities and governments to decide on wastewater treatment investments (with particular attention to UV systems). This tool should aid governments in making the transition towards modern water treatment plants in a smooth and financially responsible way.

### **Case 3: Cadens**

#### **Maximizing power production of a multi-turbine micro-hydropower system**

Study case owner Cadens develops and deploys micro- to small, low-head hydropower turbines. The turbines are tailored to the unique hydraulic characteristics of the basin in which the turbines are deployed using state of the art technology such as 3D printing. In order to maximize efficiency of such small-scale installations, optimal control of the turbines and reservoir is desirable. The Wetskills participants are expected to come up with a solution that integrates traditional and non-traditional information resources and control practices that improve the operation of Cadens' small-scale hydropower facilities.

### **Case 4: Water Authority Delfland**

#### **Polluters be(a)ware! Raising water quality awareness among greenhouse entrepreneurs**

Fresh water to use in greenhouses is not a scarce product in the Netherlands. Compared to other substantial financial expenses for greenhouses like energy and wages, it is actually quite cheap. But the environmental impact of discharging water (containing nutrients and pesticides) to the nearby canals or ditches is very large. In areas with much greenhouse activity the water quality is low despite regulations from the government. Therefore Water Authority van Delfland is looking for a way to create more awareness among the entrepreneurs so that they feel responsible for their own pollution. The challenge to the participants: which technical, social or other solution is necessary to create such awareness for water quality issues?

### **Case 5: InSinkErator and Waternet**

#### **The Efficacy of Food Waste Disposers in the Netherlands**

Even though common in the US, the use of food waste disposers is currently prohibited in the Netherlands due to concerns of potential negative impacts on sewage infrastructure and wastewater treatment plants. Yet within the broader trend of transforming wastewater treatment facilities into resource recovery plants, adding additional organic load to the wastewater could be the key to making resource recovery of various products viable. InSinkErator and Waternet therefore challenge the Wetskills participants to come up with an evaluation of the potential benefits and impacts of food waste disposers on the urban water cycle.