



# Wetskills-USA 2016

## Media Advisory

## Wetskills for the first time to Boston

Boston, Massachusetts, United States – After 19 successful editions worldwide in the last six years, of which two in North America, the Wetskills Water Challenge will be organized in Boston for the first time. Last year the Wetskills Water Challenge was organized in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

This Wetskills program will start at 12 June and end at 23 June. Young professionals and students in the American and Dutch water industry will compete to develop an innovative concept for four case studies to create solutions for water issues in a changing world.

This year's Wetskills Boston will bring together local partners and hosts including innovative American and Dutch organizations, businesses and institutions. Five bright, enthusiastic young teams will learn from and work with local professionals and water experts on challenging water case studies posed by the sponsors. Under the broad theme of Resilient Cities, cases are now being assembled including such topics as stormwater management, deployable flood defense systems, geothermal and thermal exchange energy systems, and coastal master plan development. Additional potential cases are still being explored.

The teams will present their out-of-box concepts at the Workshop *Boston's 'Urban Metabolism' – What Keeps the City Alive and Growing* on Thursday June 23.

### Case topics

During the Wetskills program, participants, water experts and companies will compare views on global water innovations, share best practices, and find new solutions on several topics, playing in and around Boston, including:

- Storm Scale Water Harvesting Measures (case owner: Water authority Delfland)
- Climate proofing Boston's Seaport District (case owner: ARCADIS USA)
- Creating a Blue Boston – City Blue Print as indicator for water management (case owner: KWR Watercycle Research Institute)
- Towards a resilient Boston Federal Reserve Bank (case owners: Deltares USA and Federal Reserve Bank Boston)



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Wetskills USA 2016 is supported by:  
the Northeastern University - School of Public Policy & Urban  
Affairs, The Holland Innovation Network and  
the Netherlands Consulate General in New York





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### About Wetskills: international and out of the box

Wetskills was first organised in 2010 and became an independent Foundation in 2015. It uses an innovative approach of experimental learning and international networking for students and young professionals with different professional backgrounds. The Challenges take place worldwide, usually during international water related events. The challenges that participants work on are real life cases from companies and (governmental) organisations. Their challenge is to think out-of-the-box and - develop realistic solutions. Since 2010 19 Wetskills events have been organised worldwide, in 14 different countries. In total about 400 students and 100 universities and organisations were involved.

More information: [www.wetskills.com](http://www.wetskills.com) or [johan.oost@wetskills.com](mailto:johan.oost@wetskills.com)

### Partners

The following organizations are working together to produce the Wetskills Water Challenge:

- Wetskills Foundation (The Hague, The Netherlands)
- Northeastern University in Boston - School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs
- Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Washington
- Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York
- Netherlands Office for Science & Technology in Washington and Boston

Case owners (organisations that formulated the cases for the teams);

- Delfland Water Authority
- ARCADIS USA
- KWR Watercycle Research Institute
- Deltares USA and Federal Reserve Bank in Boston

### Suppliers

- Cambridge Innovation Center in Boston
- Top Sector Water (The Netherlands)
- Global Water Centre in Milwaukee
- University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
- H2Oost (Amsterdam)
- StellaSpark (Utrecht)



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## Invitation for press

Invitation for press to the main parts of the Wetskills programme in United States 2016  
Members of the media are invited to all the events. Of particular interest are the following parts of the program:

- Wetskills kick-off event: *The BrainHurricane* on Monday 13 June 9.00-13.00 (Northeastern University, Renaissance Park-room 310, 1135 Tremont St, Boston, MA), an interactive brainstorming event where participants will learn about the case studies, contact the case owners, and learn more about the water challenges in. A special speed date session will be organized with 6 American and Dutch experts from the water industry.
- Team presentations to the (international) jury during the Workshop *Boston's 'Urban Metabolism' – What Keeps the City Alive and Growing* in Boston (Location: CIC Boston, 50 Milk Street, Boston): Thursday June 23 2016 11.30-13.45:
  - Pitch competition: 11.30-12.15
  - Poster Market: 12.15-13.30
  - Announcement of the winner of the Wetskills Water Challenge: 13.30-13.45

Information about previous Wetskills editions: [www.wetskills.com/publications/](http://www.wetskills.com/publications/)

For More information contact:

Website: [www.wetskills.com](http://www.wetskills.com)

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## Overview of the cases

### Case 1: Hoogheemraadschap van Delfland

#### A Business case for Storm Scale Water Harvesting Measures

Climate change increases the risk, frequency, and intensity of certain extreme events like intense heat waves, heavy downpours, flooding from intense precipitation and coastal storm surges, and disease incidence related to temperature and precipitation changes. For years, the Hoogheemraadschap van Delfland therefore invested in the water system by widening the watercourses and increasing the capacity of the pumps. However, because public space in our cities becomes increasingly scarce, they believe it is necessary to enter the private domain and increase the water retainability in the cities with small-scale rain water harvesting measures. The Wetskills participants are challenged to develop an innovative way to roll out small scale storm water harvesting measures on private properties on a larger scale with the aim to prevent urban flooding and drought in the face of climate change. The method should be broadly applicable, with the Dutch city of Delft and US city of Boston as focus areas.

### Case 2: ARCADIS USA

#### Climate proofing Boston's Seaport District

Recent studies by the Climate Ready Boston and University of Massachusetts Boston have shown that cities in the Northeast of the US like Boston are likely to see sea levels rise by 2 feet by mid-century up to possible 6 feet by the end of the century. These sea level rise projections are three to four times higher than the global average. In addition to flooding, climate change effects such as increased precipitation and extreme heat will affect the infrastructural, environmental and social systems that citizens rely on every day. This case of Arcadis is focusing on one of the most distressed areas in the downtown city center, the Boston Seaport District. The area has seen a massive redevelopment in the recent past and is now facing the challenge to adapt to climate change, and explore and retrofit flood protection strategies over time. The Wetskills participants are tasked to assess climate implications for the Seaport District and propose innovative strategies to mitigate vulnerabilities and guarantee long term business continuity of this vibrant area.



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### **Case 3: KWR Watercycle Research Institute Creating a Blue Boston**

Cities play a prominent role in our economic development as more than 80% of the Gross World Product comes from cities. However, modern day trends such as rapid urbanization, climate change, inadequate maintenance of water infrastructure and poor solid waste management may lead to flooding, water scarcity, water pollution, adverse health effects, and cause rehabilitation costs that may overwhelm the resilience of cities. City governments therefore need a comprehensive way to see how their city performs in terms of water management, which is why KWR developed the City Blueprint. This is a quick benchmarking method that gives a concise overview of current management practices in the urban water cycle, accounting for themes such as water quality, solid waste, basic water services, wastewater treatment, infrastructure, climate adaptation and governance. KWR challenges the Wetskills participants to create a City Blueprint of Boston and to develop an innovative plan for improving the City Blueprint scores in a cost-effective way.

### **Case 4: Deltares USA & Federal Reserve Bank Towards a resilient Boston Federal Reserve Bank**

The Federal Reserve Bank building in Boston, constructed in the early 70s of last century, is located along the waterfront of the Fort Point Channel. At the time the office was built, issues of climate change and sustainable development were still behind the horizon. But sea level rise, increased frequency and volumes of torrential rainfall and more frequent and more intensive heat waves threaten functioning of the building. Moreover, the call to reduce energy consumption for heating and cooling and motorized transport – to achieve CO<sub>2</sub>-emission reduction - is louder than ever. And so is the call to reduce consumption of natural resources such as water, building and office material. Harvesting water and thermal and electrical energy as well as use of local resources and recirculation of material and energy flows can make the building more self-sufficient and resilient. Central question for the Wetskills participants is how the Federal Reserve Bank can make its building flood proof “under any condition” for the next 100 years.



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