



Wetskills-USA 2016

Press-release: BrainHurricane
(English)

Former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis opens Wetskills in Boston

Boston, Massachusetts, USA – Young Water Professionals from Netherlands and United States meet in Boston! After a successful team-building event, the Wetskills Water Challenge Boston officially kicked off on Monday, June 13, with the BrainHurricane event. Professor Joan Fitzgerald of Northeastern University and former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis opened the BrainHurricane with an inspiring talk about the need to cooperate internationally on water-related problems. Julie Wormser (Boston Harbor Now) gave a good impression on the current and future water challenges Boston faces related to high tide and climate change.

A select group of American and Dutch participants will work in mixed teams on four water-related cases set around Boston in a two-week program. They are challenged by US and Dutch businesses to find creative and original solutions for problems, such as flooding risk due to climate change; create green urban infrastructure; and develop a resilient Boston. The participants will work on their solutions for two weeks and then present their solutions for their case at the Workshop **Boston's "Urban Metabolism" – What Keeps the City Alive and Growing** on Thursday, June 23. An American-Dutch jury will be present and will select the winning team, based on the most out-of-the-box and practical concept.

Water Challenges in Boston

The aim of the BrainHurricane event is to collect input from experts for case studies of the teams. Renowned experts in the industry supported each team with their knowledge and expertise. This is with some relevant presentations. Ms. Karen Frost (Water Council) gave the students a demonstration of the Water Portal, which the students can use during the Wetskills USA 2016 to gather information for their cases.

Professor Michael Dukakis and professor Joan Fitzgerald opened the Wetskills on behalf of Northeastern University, School of Public Policy & Urban Affairs, while Ms. Julie Wormser (Boston Harbor Now) explained the major water challenges for Boston as a city between the ocean and rivers, and the urgency to take action now to tackle the future impacts of climate change. Finally the Wetskills programme and its achievements were explained by Mr. Johan Oost (Wetskills Foundation).

More information: www.wetskills.com

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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Speed dates with professionals

The second part of the morning was a speed-date session with six professionals from various organizations. They helped each team with information and input. The experts were transdisciplinary with a relevant background for the cases: a.o. Julie Wormser (Boston Harbor Now), Mia Goldwasser (City of Boston), Karen Frost (Milwaukee Water Council), Kathleen Baskin (Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environment), Charlie Jewel (Boston Water and Sewer Commission) and Joan Fitzgerald (Northeastern University).

Water related cases

In this Wetskills edition, the study cases are about climate proofing Boston's Seaport district, creating a business case for storm water harvesting, city governance and resilience, and flood safety of the Federal Reserve Bank office. Engineering firm ARCADIS USA, Water Authority Delfland, Deltares USA & the Federal Reserve Bank Boston and KWR Watercycle Research Institute, provided and formulated the cases.

Wetskills USA 2016

This Wetskills program started on June 12 and ends on June 23. It is the 20th edition overall and the second edition in United States. In a two-week programme in Boston, 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.

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.

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Partners

This year's Wetskills USA 2016 Boston brings together local partners and hosts including innovative American and Dutch organizations, businesses and institutions:

- Wetskills Foundation (The Hague, The Netherlands)
- Northeastern University - School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs, Boston
- Holland Innovation Network in Washington, DC and Boston, MA
- Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York City

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

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

Suppliers

- Cambridge Innovation Center in Boston
- Top Sector Water (The Netherlands)
- Water Council in Milwaukee
- H₂Oost (Amsterdam)
- StellaSpark (Utrecht)



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Invitation for press

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: 16.30-17.00

Additional interviews with participants, case owners or the Event organisers can be arranged.

Information about previous Wetskills editions: www.wetskills.com/publications/

For More information contact:

Website: www.wetskills.com

Twitter: @Wetskills, #WetskillsUSA

Facebook: Wetskills

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