**2025 MWMC Carl Weber Award – Ken Belt**



Dr. Ken Belt has played a pivotal role in advancing watershed awareness, advocacy, and stewardship throughout Maryland by translating complex academic theories into practical, community-level engagement and policy guidance across governmental, civic, and educational sectors.

Drawing on his diverse background as a municipal engineer, research hydrologist, and aquatic ecologist, Dr. Belt brings a uniquely integrated perspective to urban water systems. His work bridges the divide between engineered "grey infrastructure" and natural stream ecology—a synthesis he formalized in the influential *Urban Watershed Continuum (UWC)* framework. This model has become foundational for understanding and addressing the socio-ecological challenges facing urban waterways.

In recent years, Dr. Belt's most visible contributions have come through dedicated volunteerism that empowers local communities with professional-grade scientific tools. For the past four years, he has served as the volunteer Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Curator at the Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM), where he leads the "Go with the Flow Stream Exploration" community science initiative.

He also teaches *The Art and Science of Urban Stream Ecosystem Restoration* through the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) Odyssey program. This course takes a multidisciplinary approach—incorporating historical, eco-engineering, and cultural perspectives—to demonstrate how ecologically grounded engineering can restore biodiversity and vitality to urban streams.

Dr. Belt serves on the steering committee for the Friends of the Jones Falls (FTJF) Strategic Plan, a landmark community-led initiative to chart a holistic future for the Jones Falls watershed. His participation ensures that the planning process is grounded in advanced ecological science, particularly the principles of the UWC framework.

As an active member of the Maryland Water Monitoring Council, Dr. Belt has contributed to statewide coordination efforts among governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in water quality monitoring. His expertise has been instrumental in addressing challenges such as declining fish populations in urban streams, helping to bridge communication between federal researchers and local/state agencies.

In summary, Dr. Belt's impact extends well beyond traditional academic research. By embedding his expertise within Maryland's civic and educational institutions, he has provided both the intellectual foundation and practical tools to elevate environmental literacy, advocacy, and stewardship across the Baltimore region's complex urban watersheds.