**Philly parks champion Justin DiBerardinis tapped to lead Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership**

PHILADELPHIA, PA — Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership (TTF) has named Justin DiBerardinis as its new executive director. DiBerardinis will sustain the nonprofit’s award-winning work protecting and improving its namesake 30-square-mile urban creek system, and he will grow efforts to create culturally resonant outdoor experiences through community and business partnerships in North, Northeast, and Northwest Philadelphia and eastern Montgomery County.

"The Tookany/Tacony Creek has the potential to be one of the region’s defining natural lands assets, serving communities across the lines of class and culture and across the urban-suburban divide," shared DiBerardinis. "I am thrilled to help lead this remarkable coalition. The sky’s the limit for this creek, this park, and the communities they serve."

A lifelong Philadelphian and advocate for equitable, community-led public space, DiBerardinis served most recently as Senior Director of Programs and Partnerships at Bartram’s Garden in Southwest Philadelphia, and as Director of FDR Park in South Philadelphia where he notably helped launch the popular Southeast Asian Market. He also ran for Philadelphia City Council as an at-large candidate in 2019. DiBerardinis launched his career as a grassroots organizer in Kensington, where he’s from, and served as a legislative aide to Councilmember Maria Quiñones Sánchez.

“I could not be more excited and confident about handing over the TTF reins to Justin,” said Julie Slavet, TTF’s executive director since 2011, who will stay on to support DiBerardinis as an advisor until she retires in June. “His passion, energy, experience, skills, and commitment to the values of deep community engagement and outstanding public spaces will enable him to carry on our impactful work.”

To celebrate the passing of the baton and TTF’s ongoing commitment to the people of the watershed, its Board of Directors has pledged $5,000 toward the $15,000 needed to extend the Tacony Creek Park People of the Park project. This unique project celebrates the untold stories of diverse everyday park users who love Tacony Creek Park through four signs located in the park between the Cheltenham Avenue and Tabor Road gateways. TTF will create and install an additional two signs in the Park south of Roosevelt Boulevard.

“I love his energy and passion and his ability to listen. I value his track record of being able to work with different constituents and audiences and how it relates to the organizations he worked with in the past,” said Marilyn Torres, co-president of TTF’s Board of Directors.

Joanne Dahme, the other co-president of TTF’s Board, added, “Justin is uniquely positioned to accept Julie’s watershed preservation baton. His passion for environmental protection and dedication to empowering our watershed residents are equally inspiring. The Board is thrilled to
have Justin lead this next phase of TTF’s mission.”

DiBerardinis begins in his new role on Mar. 18.

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