



SPOTLIGHT

Through a 2014 EPA Urban Waters Small Grant, Wilderness Inquiry, Inc., is creating opportunities for minority and underserved youth to experience, enjoy and learn about the Delaware River and its tributaries. A main program component is the Wilderness Inquiry Canoemobile. The Canoemobile is a roving fleet of six 24-foot, 10-passenger Voyageur canoes, staffed by seven highly trained outdoor educators. The Canoemobile spent three days in each of the four cities (Chester and Philadelphia, PA, Camden, NJ, and Wilmington, DE) where 2,400 underserved school children paddled the Delaware River or a major tributary, learned about the watershed and their community, and collected water samples for analysis and study.



ABOUT THE URBAN WATERS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

The mission of EPA's Urban Waters Program is to help local residents and their organizations, particularly those in underserved communities, restore their urban waters in ways that also benefit community and economic revitalization. One of the ways the Urban Waters Program is accomplishing this mission is through the [Urban Waters Small Grants Program](#). This program recognizes that healthy and accessible urban waters can help grow local businesses and enhance educational, recreational, social, and employment opportunities in nearby communities.

Building a Movement One Partnership at a Time: The Urban Waters program strives to make a visible difference by working with a diversity of partners to support community-driven solutions that connect the intrinsic value of urban waters with improving the livability and economic health of the community.



Past UWSG Recipients:

The Urban Waters Small Grants are competed and awarded every two years. Since its inception in 2012, the program has awarded approximately \$6.6 million in Urban Waters Small Grants to 114 organizations across the country and Puerto Rico, with individual award amounts of up to \$60,000.

Eligible applicants include States, local governments, Indian Tribes, public and private universities and colleges, public or private nonprofit institutions/organizations, intertribal consortia, and interstate agencies.

In general, projects should meet the following four program objectives:

- Address local water quality issues related to urban runoff pollution;
- Provide additional community benefits;
- Actively engage underserved communities; and
- Foster partnership

2015/2016 UWSG Recently Awarded!

In October, 2016, EPA awarded approximately \$1.3 million to 22 organizations in 18 states to help protect and restore urban waters, improve water quality, and support community revitalization and other local priorities. Projects awarded this year address local water quality issues related to urban runoff pollution, provide additional community benefits, actively engage underserved communities, and foster partnership.

IMPACT STORIES FROM PAST UWSG RECIPIENTS:

Integrating Environmental Justice

The Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition/Technical Advisory Group (Seattle, Washington) is implementing the Healthy River/Healthy Communities project. This project established a community-based Health Equity and Revitalization Task Force to prioritize, refine, and help implement recommendations for EPA's proposed cleanup plan for the Lower Duwamish River, a federal Superfund site. These recommendations are expected to include creating greenspace and public access at riverfront cleanup areas; training and hiring local residents for cleanup jobs; providing healthy alternatives to contaminated fish; and protecting residents from gentrification exacerbated by cleanup.

Water Quality Report Cards

Columbia Slough Watershed Council (Portland, Oregon) program is involving the watershed's youth, focusing on minority, low-income, and indigenous communities and others in the design, planning and performance of water quality sampling and data collection activities. Students engage in hands-on science inquiry projects through the Slough School Education Program, collecting and testing water samples at Whitaker Ponds Nature Park sites and upstream and downstream on the adjacent Whitaker Slough to determine the water quality of the Slough and Ponds.

Job Training

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) is providing focused information and training to a variety of constituencies within the Tookany/Tacony Frankford (TTF) watershed, including inmates of the Philadelphia Prison System through their Roots to Re-Entry program, to build interest and provide skills needed to implement and maintain simple storm water green infrastructure projects. This project is encouraging the development of more green infrastructure within the watershed, furthering community beautification efforts, increasing the capacity of a variety of constituencies to implement and maintain green infrastructure and ultimately contributing to improved water quality and community involvement. Through these efforts, it is also raising the importance of protecting the watershed among the larger TTF watershed community.

Green Infrastructure

Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District (Albuquerque, New Mexico) is improving the water quality of the Rio Grande on a watershed basis, by educating the public about stormwater management and green infrastructure. Through hands-on classroom presentations, they have reached hundreds of middle school-aged students about protecting the quality of their water, understanding the issues they face with stormwater runoff, and recognizing the need for natural resource management in their watershed. In addition, through outreach events, distribution of information and materials about the Middle Rio Grande Urban Waters program and opportunities to become involved has reached approximately 1,000 community members.

(Note: these are past UWSG recipients and some activities may no longer be eligible under current or upcoming cycles)



2012-2014 grant recipients across the nation

We encourage all applicants to view lessons and resources from past and current grantees on the **Urban Waters Learning Network**, a peer-to-peer space where urban waters practitioners contribute lessons, solutions, and tools. See more on the web at <http://www2.epa.gov/urbanwaters/urban-waters-learning-network>