

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Closure Memo**

3/30/16

Project: Keeping Long Island Sound Healthy, Stormwater Social Marketing (CT)
Number: 1401.13.039260
Grantee: The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, Inc

Project Description:

The Maritime Aquarium (TMA) at Norwalk will use two manned interactive exhibits on the floor of the aquarium floor titled: Water Quality Station and Floatable Debris Station to present information and provide educational experiences to 125,000 visitors. This project “Keeping the Sound Healthy” uses community-based social marketing campaign to encourage adoption of activities that protect water quality. The focus of the exhibits will be on different activities which may be changed or adopted by individuals including: reuse and recycling; car washing and lawn care. Each exhibit will provide an activity that a visitor can engage in while at the station. Throughout the day at both exhibits, visitors will be asked to pledge to adopt a new behavior. Using an ipad, a picture will be taken of families who have written their pledge on a portable chalk board. With family’s permission, images will then be loaded into a slide show that will show on a monitor as a permanent part of the exhibit. Staff also will also conduct follow-up surveys with visitors to evaluate the impact of the project and commitment to the pledge. Each station will be manned by two educators who will interact with the public on key messages, organize the activities at each station, obtain pledges, take photos, and obtain information for evaluation purposes. Twenty volunteers and interns will prepare materials for the floatables debris station. The project aims to encourage activity changes in 75,000 citizens.

Final Products:

- **Created and Installed a Water Quality Station and Floatable Debris Station**
 - o Primary activities at the water quality station included: TMA’s Salt Marsh Avenger Story, Enviroscope Board and Selfie for the Sound.
 - o Primary activities for the Marine Debris Station included a selfie for the Sound and an interactive station that demonstrated the negative effect plastic bags and other debris could have on fish and wildlife in the Sound.

- **Results of Exhibits**

Exhibits encouraged citizens to use reusable grocery bags and to avoid plastic and single-use cups and bags, the importance of going to car washes instead of washing your car at home to minimize pollutants entering storm drainage, proper fertilizer use and lawn care;

- **32,876 people visited** the two exhibits during the life of the program (proposed goal 125,000) and estimated **19,068 people** would change their behavior calculated by the average of percentages of visitors who indicated that the program made a noticeable/very strong impact;
- **6,556 visitors signed pledges** (proposed goal 53,000) to change their behavior in a way that will benefit the health of Long Island Sound. Individuals decided their pledges to ‘Keep the Sound Healthy’;
- Volunteers were not used as planned due to scheduling and training needs of the program;
- Results of **137 surveys** suggest that the exhibit will be effective in changing citizen behavior. The final evaluation noted that visitors who participated in one of the floor programs were more likely to change a suggested behavior; however, the data also suggest that there were a high percentage of control and program group participants who already practice the recommended behavior.

TMA has not met some of the proposed metrics as described above due to several reasons. Staff vacancies accounted for a limited project management. A second reason is that TMA originally based the projection under the assumption that 100% of visitors to the Aquarium would pass the exhibits and would be reached by the outreach. Because TMA decided to report only those visitors who were actively engaged in the exhibits, they were not able to reach the proposed metrics. It was estimated that 9% of Aquarium visitors visited the exhibit.

- **2,000lbs of nutrients and 500lbs of floatable debris prevented from entering the Long Island Sound**

The amount of nutrients avoided and pounds of floatables reduced could not be estimated because few visitors were willing to share their contact information which made it impossible to follow up with participants to measure.

NFWF award: \$34,929.00

NFWF funds spent: \$34,928.41

Match requirement: \$35,268.00

Match spent: \$36,587.00 (NonFed)

I recommend closing this grant.