

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Closure Memo**

To: Lynn Dwyer & Mike Lagua
From: Shoshanna Jiang
Date: 4/3/17

Project: Creating a Network of Schoolyard Habitats to Engage Students in Conservation of Long Island Sound (CT)
Number: 1401.15.049627
Grantee: National Audubon Society, Inc.

Project Description:

Connecticut Audubon will support 10 enrolled and expand the Schoolyard Habitats program to three elementary schools and in the broader community of New Haven and Stamford, Connecticut. Many barriers exist for Connecticut residents to directly connect with Long Island Sound along urban waterfronts; and students in urban communities often have limited opportunities to engage in outdoor, hands-on experiential learning in their curriculum, or to steward natural resources in their communities. Major project activities to address these challenges: 1) enhancing 1.3 acres of habitat in 13 urban schoolyards; 2) providing 60 teachers with professional development about using the outdoors as living classrooms and fostering development of student work that addresses real-world problems related to the Sound; 3) exposing 4,000 members of the public to a “call to action” concerning the Sound by conducting 31 events including Stewardship Team meetings, workdays, a leadership workshop and a Schoolyard Habitat Summit where Audubon and project partners will present program information; 3) fostering and evaluating increases in knowledge and sharing best practices among 1,250 students, teachers and 22 Leadership and Summit attendees; and 4) engaging 80 Schoolyard Habitat Stewardship Team members and 1,094 volunteers comprised of students, parents, and community members in training to create and maintain the sites.

Final Products:

- **3.74 acres restored by removing invasives.**
In total, restoration projects removed 3.74 acres of invasive plants removed, restored 4.68 acres of habitat, and planted 2,162 native plants. Of the 4.68 acres restored, 0.44 acres were from new habitat created at the 3 new schools during this grant period. The acreage restored through invasive species removal exceeded the proposed goal of restoring 1.48 acres
- **13 schools participated**
In addition to the 10 schools already participating in the project at the start of the grant period, 3 new schools were enrolled in the Schoolyard Habitat program: Columbus Magnet School (Norwalk), Conte-West Hills (New Haven), and Bishop Woods (New Haven). The 3 newly enrolled schools worked with

Audubon staff to survey schoolyard habitats, evaluate habitat health, and develop 3-year Master Habitat Plans to serve as a guide for long term development of the new habitat. Each of the newly enrolled schools unveiled the developments of phase I of the plan in 2016: In June the Columbus Magnet school finished themed planting boxes and outdoor seating for learning and Bishop Woods school completed rainbow bird and pollinator habitat; In September, Conte West Hill finished bird and pollinator plantings and a trail to access habitats and vegetable gardens.

The 10 schools that continued participation in the program continued to implement the work in their Master Habitat Plans. Audubon staff continued to work with the schools to enhance habitat and expand projects through plant selection and site design.

The Green Job Corp Program is a yearlong environmental career and leadership development program open to students of Common Ground High School. Through the Urban Oases Program the Common Ground's Green Jobs Crew aided new schools in creating phase I habitats, and assisted continuing schools with habitat enhancements. The number of schools that participated in the project met the proposed goal.

- **92 workshops, webinars, meetings held to address project activity**
92 workshops and meetings were held which included 2 summits, 1 teacher training, 20 habitat work days, 5 urban refuge partner meetings, 3 walk throughs and 3 habitat assessments, and 56 school meetings. The number of workshops and meetings held exceeded the proposed goal of 36.

Teacher workshops were held to train teachers in the Audubon Schoolyard Habitat Curriculum Guide and to increase teacher confidence in teaching outdoors. 36 teachers were trained to use their schoolyard habitats as outdoor classrooms in new teacher workshops held in January. 19 new teachers from Bishop Woods, Conte Hill, and Columbus magnet were taught in on-site teacher workshops in Spring 2016. 57 teachers and staff from 22 schools across Connecticut attended the first summit of the Community of Practice in October 2015. 70 teachers, staff, and parents attended the second summit in October 2016. 39 teachers were trained in leadership workshops in November 2015 and 2016. In total, 75 teachers received professional development through trainings to use their habitats as outdoor classrooms.

- **1,094 volunteers participated in projects (goal 680)**
1,094 volunteers from schools and the community participated in restoration projects. 465 adults and children participated in habitat creation, stewardship, and maintenance activities at their schools. 82 teachers, parents, and staff from all 13 schools participated in schoolyard habitat leadership teams to aid the school in developing and implementing the Habitat Master Plans. The number of volunteers exceeded the proposed goal of 680.
- **2,201 people with knowledge (goal 1,343)**
65% of students showed an increase in attitudes and content gain due to participation in the program (anticipated 70% of students). This was determined

through pre-and post- attitude surveys and tests. 46% of students showed an increase in knowledge and attitudes about the Long Island Sound. 35% of participating students pledged to commit to conservation actions in their homes and communities.

- **6,505 people targeted by outreach, education, and technical assistance activities (goal 4,000)**

Many outreach programs involved the Schoolyard Habitat Program. 60 people attended an outreach event in Hartford to celebrate Connecticut's Urban Bird Treaty Cities, over 500 people attended the Migration Festival for International Migratory Bird Day at East Rock Park, and 1,200 people attended the green fair in New Haven's rock to rock event. The Schoolyard Habitat Program was presented at several events and conferences after the project period ended.

2,000 students were engaged in outdoor learning through Schoolyard Habitat programming. Audubon educators led outdoor lessons for 1,066 students in schoolyard habitats. This connected students to their schoolyards for learning and served as professional development for teachers on outdoor teaching strategies. Through participation in this program, 2,000 students learned about the Long Island Sound, local natural resources, and actions they can take to improve watershed health.

In addition to the students that participated in the Schoolyard Habitat Program, 4,499 students from schools across New Haven took field trips to Common Ground to learn about the flagship Schoolyard Habitat project and participate in habitat related after school programs. The total number of people reached by outreach, education, and technical assistance exceeded the proposed goal of 4,000

- **26 educational signs installed**

3 new interpretive signs were developed by educators at the Yale Peabody Museum and placed at the newly enrolled schools. The signs included student artwork, a welcome statement for the school and the community to enjoy the habitat, and a mission statement. 20 signs existed at the 10 already established sites. The number of signs created met the proposed goal of 26.

NFWF award: \$34,993.56

NFWF funds spent: \$34,993.56

Match requirement: \$46,935.00

Match spent: \$47,434.96 (NonFed)

I recommend closing this grant.