

## QUINNIPIAC RIVER FUND SIX MONTH AND FINAL GRANT REPORT

Please complete and submit completed form via e-mail to [dcanning@cfgnh.org](mailto:dcanning@cfgnh.org) at The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven by September 26, 2014.

Date: 9/26/14

Group/Organization Name: \_\_\_New Haven Land Trust\_\_\_

Address: 458 Grand Ave, Suite 111.

City, State, & Zip: New Haven CT, 06513

Telephone #: 203-562-6655

Project Name: Quinnipiac Meadows Educational Program

Grant Number: \_\_20140149\_\_\_\_\_

Name & title of person completing this form: Justin Elicker, Executive Director

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Please respond to the following statements:

1. Give a brief summary of what your group/organization's 2014 project is.

The New Haven Land Trust owns and manages the Quinnipiac Meadows/Eugene B. Fargeorge Nature Preserve, a property that provides critical ecological benefits and an important access point for residents of New Haven and the surrounding community to recreate and learn about the environmental benefits of the Quinnipiac River and its surrounding ecosystem. This 35-acre preserve includes tidal wetlands, coastal forest and coastal grasslands. There are two loop trails on the preserve and a bird blind overlooking the salt marsh and river. The preserve is an unrivaled vantage point in New Haven from which to explore the river.

To encourage use and expand the knowledge of this special place, the New Haven Land Trust designed and ran a series of educational programs. By providing this high-quality programming, the Land Trust encouraged area residents to explore the natural beauty and learn about the ecology of New Haven's open lands and waterways. These programs served as an introduction to the Quinnipiac Meadows and the Quinnipiac River for new visitors and provided deeper knowledge for those who may already be familiar with the land and water.

2. What has been accomplished to date? Please frame your answer in terms of attainment of the outcomes framed in your proposal.

In the Grant Proposal, the New Haven Land Trust outlined two objectives: bring new visitors to the preserve and increase knowledge and understanding of the preserve by adults and children. We successfully accomplished each objective.

**A. Bring new visitors to the preserve:**

The New Haven Land Trust held a bird walk and live bird event with Audubon Connecticut and Menunkatunk Audubon Society. This drew around 50 people including many who had never been to the preserve before but heard about the event through our advertising and through our partnership with these two groups. This was also the first time at this preserve for some of the Audubon staff members who helped lead the walk. They were impressed by the variety of birds that lived on the Quinnipiac Meadows Preserve. The event helped us further our relationship with Audubon and discuss future areas of potential collaboration – such as hosting additional bird walks on the property. It also increased the visibility of the preserve and likely spawned further opportunities for people to use and learn from the Land Trust and preserve.

In addition to the bird event, the Land Trust also hosted several volunteer days on the preserve to attract more residents to the preserve, assist with preserve maintenance and educate the public on the values of maintaining the ecosystem. The events focused on invasive species removal and trail maintenance. Each event attracted between ten and 25 participants.

**B. Increase the knowledge and understanding of the preserve by adults and children.**

The educational programming we provided, including a bird watching walk, live bird show, canoe trip and several workdays, increased the knowledge and understanding of the preserve by adults and children. The live bird show and bird walk taught New Haven residents about the birds that rely on the Quinnipiac Meadows Preserve for either a home or as a resting place during their migration. The event discussed the importance of the salt marsh as a food source and underscored the importance of preserving native plants and keeping out invasive plants in order to preserve this habitat.

On the canoe trip we brought approximately 20 people to the preserve. We paddled through small channels taking us through the preserve's salt marsh, allowing participants to see the preserve from a new perspective. A few of the participants on this trip had never been in a canoe and learned a new skill. We also were joined by many people who remarked that they had not seen the preserve from this angle and who were amazed at the vast amount of salt marsh that was protected by the New Haven Land Trust. The participants all expressed an interest in coming back to the preserve to further explore. From the vantage point of the canoes, participants enjoyed views of the osprey who nest on several platforms designed specifically for these birds and egrets and other birds who live right at the edge of the preserve.

Our educational programming was extremely successful thanks to the Quinnipiac River Fund. We introduced many new people to the preserve, highlighted the unique qualities of the property, and provided education about the many birds that live on this land. Thanks to this grant, we will be able to build on this foundation to continue to provide educational programming for the future to the New Haven residents who became excited about and eager to continue to learn about, the Quinnipiac Meadows preserve, through our work this summer.



Canoe Trip, Quinnipiac Meadows, August 2014



Canoe Trip, Quinnipiac Meadows, August 2014



Bird Walk, Quinnipiac Meadows, July 2014



Live Bird Show, Quinnipiac Meadows, July 2014



Invasive Species Removal, Quinnipiac Meadows, May 2014



Trail Maintenance, Quinnipiac Meadows, July 2014