

Instructions

QUINNIPIAC RIVER FUND GRANT AWARD - FINAL REPORT QUESTIONS

This form is to be completed by all nonprofit organizations that received a grant through the Quinnipiac River Fund.

Grant Details

Grant Details

Organization Name

Gather New Haven

Grant Description

to support the protection and care of the Quinnipiac Meadows and Long Wharf Nature Preserves, as well as to support efforts increase outreach programming, volunteer events and Schooner programs and to design and implement a Preserves Intern training program.

Total Grant Amount

15,000.00

Report Questions

1. List the specific objectives/outcomes of the project and tell how they were met during the grant period. Also, provide an update on any special conditions of the grant (if applicable).

1. Improvement/expansion of osprey nesting infrastructure at the Quinnipiac Meadows Nature Preserve

A new Osprey Platform was constructed with the assistance of Audubon Society volunteers in 2020 and has been occupied by a family of ospreys ever since (see pictures)

2. Increased active preserve management, to remove invasives, care for newly planted trees, remove trash and maintain the infrastructure that provides protection and public access to the Quinnipiac River watershed.

Gather New Haven staff made regular visits to the Quinnipiac Meadows and Long Wharf preserves to collect trash, cut back growth into the trails, and work on controlling invasives.

Casey Guahan, a summer intern, conducted extensive research on management of invasive species and developed a report with recommended activities for addressing them (available here)

Gather New Haven staff supported the development of a comprehensive plan and proposal for the advancement of the New Haven Harbor Watershed Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership , formed in 2013. Staff developed the Forest De-vining Project in partnership with Urban Resources Initiative and Emerge to deploy EMERGE crews to remove invasive species - available here

Staff developed a list of species sited at the preserve July 2020 here

3. Volunteer stewardship events that provide community members the opportunity to be involved in hands-on conservation work that helps to maintain the preserves and protect the watershed.

Staff organized at least four work days and cleanups in the Long Wharf and Quinnipiac Meadows preserves attended by at least 55 people, with required social distancing and mask wearing. This provided a welcome group, outdoor activity in the height of the pandemic lockdown.

4. Increased number of public educational events that highlight the importance of Quinnipiac Meadows and Long Wharf Nature Preserves for maintaining ecological diversity and promoting watershed health, offering the community a chance to engage with the Quinnipiac River and its surrounding ecosystems.

In person educational programming was shut down in the wake of the COVID-related restrictions on activities. We produced two successful events under the banner of Black Birders' Week 2021 and resumed some public nature walks in 2021.

5. Increasing the number of low income youth participating in summer camp programming from 375 to 415 in 2020, linking them to the Quinnipiac River ecosystem and conservation ideals through coastal exploration and learn to sail programming.

As we all know, COVID forced the cancellation of Schooner Camp along with most other group activities for children in 2020.

We quickly pivoted under the leadership of Schooner Camp Director Nikki Saccacia to offer an extensive array of online activities. We engaged our Schooner Camp families via email and zoom sessions throughout the summer, providing regular updates to resources to promote their individual exploration of nature in the preserves as well as in their backyards.

In 2021, Schooner was back in operation and scholarships totalled over \$30,000.

2. Please share your successes, challenges and any lessons learned through the implementation of your project. Were there any unintended consequences or lessons learned that may affect how you operate your program moving forward?

In 2020, a dominant force was the COVID pandemic which required the cancellation of all in-person events and Schooner Camp. This caused us to pivot to offer more programming online. Camp and Preserves Director Nikki Saccacia recorded a number of videos of herself in the field explaining aspects of the natural environment in the preserves.

Schooner Camp scholarship funds from this grant in the amount of \$4,500 were saved and committed and used in the 2021 Camp season.

Lessons learned included the very positive

3. What are the opportunities and needs of your organization as it continues to move forward with its work to positively impact the Quinnipiac River?

Opportunities and needs going forward include:

1. Continue to increase focus on preserve maintenance, care of newly planted trees, pollinator garden,

and invasive removal, with the assistance of volunteer stewardship events and new resources to partner with URI and EMERGE.

3. Expand summer educational programming to engage the New Haven community with the Quinnipiac River watershed. The hiring of an Environmental Educator should provide the personnel resource to advance this goal.
4. Design and implementation of a Preserves Intern Training Program in order to expand summer event offerings;
5. Continue to support an expanded number of low-income attendees of Schooner summer camp.
6. Pursue the acquisition of a 26 acre tract adjacent to the Quinnipiac Meadows Preserves. This was close to completion in 2018 before a last minute breakdown in the negotiations with the tract owner. Recent communications suggest that this may be revived as a project soon.

Attachments

Financial information (required): Please provide a detailed accounting of how the specific grant dollars were spent based on the budget submitted in the grant application.

Detailed Accounting
QR 2020 Budget Report.pdf

Pictures (optional): Please attach 1 to 3 pictures of activities that have occurred throughout the grant period (with a description for each) as a result of grant funding. All pictures should be submitted in JPEG format and may be uploaded to www.thequinnipiacriver.com and used in Foundation publications.

Picture 1
bird walk- QM.jpg

Description
Bird Walk and Bird Blind at Quinnipiac Meadows

Picture 2
lw celan up group.jpg

Description
Clean up at Long Wharf Preserves

Picture 3
platform build.jpg

Description

Building the Osprey Paltform in Quinnipiac Meadows