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| Application ID | 2170894 |
| Submitted | Jan 14, 2026 |
| Status | Awaiting review |
| Applicant(s) | Laura Kinter (laura@gathernewhaven.org) |
| Organization | Gather New Haven 495 Blake Street Unit C, , CT, 06513, United States |
| Program and cycle | TCF: Quinnipiac River Fund Grant cycle |
| Tags | No tags |
| Forms | TCF: Quinnipiac River Fund Final Report |

Grant Details

Organization Name

Gather New Haven

Grant Description

to support the restoration, conservation, and maintenance of the Quinnipiac Meadows/Fargeorge and Hemingway Creek Nature Preserves.

Total Grant Amount

\$20,300.00 USD

Report Questions

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). *

Outcome 1. Remove invasive species from 14 upland acres of the Quinnipiac Meadows (10 acres of upland of the 35 total acres) and Hemingway Creek Preserves (4 of the 8 acres owned by Gather) following a detailed plan. To be completed by March 2025.

Gather met this outcome by hosting one 2 hour work day each at Quinnipiac Meadows Preserves and Hemingway Creek. Eleven people volunteered their labor and removed oriental bittersweet, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and multiflora rose.

Outcome 2. Engage community volunteers to participate in 5 invasive removal work sessions under the guidance of expert contractor Chris Ozyck/Alfresco Landscape & Design.

Chris trained and educated groups of volunteers in invasives mitigation and supervised them working in the preserves.

Outcome 3 (anticipated). Engage Gather Corps (Gather's high school intern program) participants in invasive removal in the preserves for 20 hours across 5 weeks in the Summer (including training) and 12 additional hours during the 12-week fall program in 2025.

Staffing changes left Gather unable to implement Gather Corps. Under our current Interim CEO, we have restructured and will again hire teen interns to help maintain our preserves, farms, and gardens. Gather's Director of Community Agriculture and Nature Stewardship (an experienced environmental educator who formerly served as our Development and Community Engagement Manager) will assign tasks and provide supervision.

Outcome 4. Perform continuing community outreach to recruit volunteers for ongoing stewardship of the preserve.

Gather maintained a stream of volunteer stewards by developing and maintaining relationships with the Yale School of Public Health and other schools at Yale and neighboring institutions of higher learning, Incredible Days and other faith groups, and New Haven Promise to access youth volunteers to help manage preserve tasks

Outcome 5. Work with preserve neighbors to form a Fargeorge Quinnipiac Meadows/Hemingway Creek Preserve Committee to collaborate with Gather on preserve work, management, and volunteer recruitment.

In 2024, Gather commissioned management plans for our preserves paid for by a CT DEEP Urban Forest Equity. ConnWoods Forester completed assessments and detailed stewardship plans not long before our staffing challenges impeded our outreach work. Our current lean and highly skilled team is planning outreach to form this committee this season.

Outcome 6. Provide Schooner Camp Scholarships to students living in under-resourced neighborhoods to build their knowledge of and engagement in the preserves.

Campers learned about near shore and coastal ecology while exploring Long Wharf Nature Preserve. In 2025, 20% of Schooner's 278 campers lived in households earning less than \$48,000 per year, and 20% of families received scholarships.

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 2025, our successes and challenges were intertwined, and the lessons we learned, especially around staffing limits and possibilities, have led us on the current path to stability and sustainability.

Staff turnover has demonstrated to us that while hard skills and deep and broad community relationships are critical characteristics for some organizational responsibilities, they are not sufficient for successful leadership. To shore up our programs, relationships, and finances, the board hired Laura Kinter, a seasoned nonprofit leader to serve as Interim CEO. In her 6 months on the job, Laura has revitalized Gather's operations, re-connected with its portfolio of funders, and has introduced innovative solutions to staff capacity challenges. While the work is ongoing and Gather is experiencing a year of intense change, the board, staff, and community are confident in Gather's continued growth and success.

During this period of financial scarcity, Laura is implementing some structural changes to Gather's programs that recenter our vision of neighbors and nature thriving together. Since Gather lacks a dedicated staff position for property maintenance, we plan to transfer some program leadership functions back to the community. For our community gardens, we recently hired community garden leaders to assist Gather with garden resource sharing, communications, and property inventory. We plan on reinvigorating "Friends Of" groups to maintain preserves. We also plan to further leverage Gather's Farm Based Wellness Program to deepen the impact of New Haven's growing food as medicine movement.

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? *

Gather's preserves along the Quinnipiac River contain critical riparian buffer areas that help protect wildlife habitat and water quality. Maintaining these urban natural areas requires continual work to contain invasive plants, clean up garbage, educate residents and business owners on the benefits of Quinnipiac River conservation, recruit and manage volunteer labor, and work with neighbors to align their property maintenance strategies with conservation goals.

Ongoing efforts include Gather's long-term and fruitful collaboration with invasives warrior Chris Ozyck to educate, train, and lead volunteer groups in invasives mitigation in the preserves. Our Director of Community Agriculture and Nature Stewardship Zion Jones is capitalizing on her successful community outreach efforts to build partnerships with local high schools, with a goal of institutionalizing conservation volunteer opportunities at each school. Gather is also currently working with community contacts to institute a "Friends of Gather Preserves" group modeled on successful parks friends groups around the city.

Attachments

Detailed Accounting*

See Quinnipiac_River_Fund_Financial_Report_2025.pdf

Picture 1

See schooner little explorers.docx

Description and Photo Credit

Schooner Camp participants exploring near shore fauna and learning about invasive species. Credit-Schooner staff

Picture 2

See Hemingway Creek invasives.docx

Description and Photo Credit

A view of the invasives problem at Hemingway Creek Preserve. Credit - Gather staff

Picture 3

See IMG_9470.jpeg

Description and Photo Credit

Preparing for a cleanup at Quinnipiac Meadows. Credit - Gather staff