

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

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Organization Name

Southwest Conservation District, Inc.

Grant Description

to support a Quinnipiac River Watershed Coordinator position.

Total Grant Amount

12,000.00

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).

The Southwest Conservation District allocated staff to doing work specifically in the Quinnipiac River Watershed. This staff person coordinated efforts in the watershed with local stakeholders, and continues to do so. Through the efforts by SWCD in the watershed, stakeholder meetings were held via zoom and included municipal land use staff and commissioners, members of environmentally focused Non governmental Organizations, members of the general public and students.

In addition, the watershed coordinator developed and planned water quality sampling runs on tributaries to the Quinnipiac River. These streams were: Ten Mile River in Cheshire, Muddy River in North Haven, and Wharton Brook in Wallingford. There were three monitoring locations in Ten Mile River watershed, two locations in Muddy River watershed, and 5 locations in Wharton Brook. there were more locations in Wharton Brook due to discovering that Allen Brook (a smaller tributary) actually seems to be carrying an elevated bacteria load, so SWCD added more investigation of locations on that smaller stream. SWCD generated at least 8 data points on most of these stations. Data analysis , graphing and reports are being finalized by interns under the direction of the Coordinator.

Presentations for the data analysis and reports will be offered to municipal staff in each Town. Report documents will also be shared on the SWCD website.

Additional work conducted by the Coordinator was to organize and plan streamwalking activities. Streamwalks were mapped out in a google mymaps application. Segments were created to be less than 1 mile long and revisions were made with stakeholder input during zoom meetings. 10 segments were mapped focusing on the same steam systems where monitoring was occurring , with one exception, a segment on the main stem of the Quinnipiac in Meriden.

A streamwalk training was organized and conducted in Wallingford. Six volunteers showed up for this session and a 0.4 mile section of Muddy River was walked and evaluated for any water quality issues. Additional stream walking did not occur under the grant period due to temperature changes and difficulty accessing streams due to ice.

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?

SWCD successfully coordinated a group of stakeholders to discuss water quality issues in the Quinnipiac Regional watershed. These meetings laid the framework and starting point for additional data collection and investigation of water quality issues in the watershed. We also successfully generated useful water quality data and trained interns on sampling technique, data analysis and development of presentations. A major challenge for us was losing an intern at the peak of our sampling season in July. This created a bandwidth gap for our timeline and sampling obligations. SWCD had promised to collect certain numbers of samples at each monitoring station to meet CT DEEP requirements for submittal. This included sampling locations for this funding and other monitoring obligations for SWCD with other partners.

The Quinnipiac Coordinator ended up doing sampling runs within the watershed for this project to continue to use her time on program work relevant to the grant. However, this meant she was unable to use that time to plan streamwalking activities and locations. Both the monitoring and streamwalking are components of this funding. It took several weeks for SWCD to find and hire new interns for the water monitoring and sample collection efforts. Once the new interns were hired, the Coordinator handled the training of sampling and lab techniques in addition to initial sampling runs for the sites in the Quinnipiac watershed. Once the new interns were up and running the Coordinator circled back to planning streamwalks within the watershed.

SWCD learned that having two interns is better than only one to allow for support sample collection efforts. There are added costs to the operating budget, but the additional bandwidth provides for full-time staff to be able to focus on the planning and coordinating of tasks for the jobs. This will help with the upcoming sampling season as SWCD has already posted to hire two individuals as lab analyst interns this spring/summer.

A consequence of the bandwidth issue for the coordinator was that streamwalk planning and therefore actually doing the walks was delayed for many weeks. By the time segments had been mapped out and discussed with stakeholders for local feedback on access and usefulness, it was mid to late fall. A training streamwalk was planned and held in Wallingford on Muddy River. But additional training sessions were not completed before colder temperatures arrived and streams started to be freeze, which hampers stream walking. Due to this delay, not all stream segments planned for streamwalking were conducted in the timeframe of this award.

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?

There is still work to do in the Quinnipiac watershed including the aforementioned streamwalk segments. Additional water sampling is needed to get better data sets and for source tracking of potential sources of bacteria loads.

The existing water quality data can still be presented to stakeholders and interested parties in the tributary watersheds to help with implementation project planning and additional awareness of water quality issues. There is also the opportunity to do some additional water monitoring using bio-indicators such as mayfly larvae and other invertebrates.

SWCD continues to house staffing that can continue as the Coordinator for Quinnipiac watershed efforts. Additional financial support will help SWCD with budgeting for the staff time and help cover costs of monitoring supplies for the bacteria lab analysis sampling. The lab process includes many consummable pieces such as water sampling bottles, bacteria media, pipettes and other objects. These can add up to significant expenses. Providing support for even a portion of the lab consummables is helpful for longer term budgeting and planning.

SWCD plans to cover the costs of lab analyst interns from existing operating expenses. There are efforts underway to look for funding sources for the interns, including conversations with CT DEEP, but there is nothing lined up for the immediately looming sampling season.

SWCD also continues to see the work in the Quinnipiac watershed as a way to build networks and partnerships with municipalities and their staff plus other NGO organizations. Building these networks for support can strengthen future implementation project funding requests. The value in bringing together interested stakeholders is more than just gaining local insights and information, the dialogue in these sessions can lead to grant proposals and other financial partnerships to further improvements on water quality within the Quinnipiac watershed.

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

budget expenditures table.docx

Pictures (optional): Please attach one to three pictures in JPEG format, in the highest resolution possible, of activities that have occurred throughout the grant period as a result of grant funding. By providing pictures, your organization is consenting to unlimited use of the pictures by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and/or the Valley Community Foundation in publications in print and online (including www.thequinnipiacriver.com). Please include a description of each photo and, when known, the photographer to be credited.

Picture 1

Description and Photo Credit

Picture 2

Description and Photo Credit

Picture 3

Description and Photo Credit

