

## 2023 EE Grants Program Awards

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) 2023 Environmental Education Grants Program awarded \$1,014,162 to 73 projects addressing water, and/or climate change. Additionally, 83% of the grant funds will support projects that engage youth and adults living and/or working within Environmental Justice areas.

Grants were awarded to schools, institutions, conservation districts, and environmental and community organizations. 42 projects were awarded local mini grants of up to \$5,000. 30 projects, reaching regional and/or statewide audiences, received general grants of up to \$30,000 and one project, designed to engage students and teachers at the local, state, and national levels, received a grant of \$65,981.

The grants program prioritizes projects that engage youth and/or adults living, working and/or attending school with Environmental Justice Areas. Awarded projects deliver environmental education programs that help audiences:

- Develop practical solutions and adopt actions to help Pennsylvania communities become more sustainable and resilient in the face of Climate Change; and/or
- Identify effective ways to reduce nonpoint source and source water pollution to protect or improve local water quality.

The [Environmental Education Grants Program](#) was established by the Environmental Education Act of 1993, which mandates setting aside five percent of the pollution fines and penalties DEP collects annually for environmental education in Pennsylvania. Since its inception, the Environmental Education Grants Program has supported over 2,200 projects with awards totaling more than \$13.3 million.

## Projects by County:

### Allegheny

- Allegheny County Conservation District: Work with municipal managers to elevate their knowledge of watersheds, watershed planning, and BMP implementation, to remedy non-point source pollution and some impacts of climate change, such as localized flooding. Host field workshops that offer effective, straightforward, low cost, and time efficient solutions. (\$4,999)
- Chalfant Run/Thompson Run Watershed Association: Hold four classroom workshops and four outdoor sessions that connect students (grades 3-6) with some causes of local water pollution such as litter, stormwater, and abandoned mine drainage (AMD) impacts, and solutions for improving water quality, such as successful stream restoration. (\$4,494)
- Communitopia: (2 Projects) Conduct a Climate Change Learning Institute for teachers (grades 7-12) that combines classroom learning with climate friendly adventure activities (kayaking, biking, hiking). Teachers will be prepared to engage students in local, hands-on climate change learning and solutions. Additionally, the project will provide three Climate Change Adventure field trips to the students including interactive Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) learning stations addressing local causes, effects, and solutions to climate change. (\$29,995); and Conduct two PA Department of Education Act 48 approved workshops to expose K-12 teachers to a student-centered curriculum model emphasizing creative expression as an effective teaching strategy for exploring climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice. Participants will gain an understanding of how to initiate small scale (home or classroom) or large scale (school, district wide, or community) climate solutions using artwork, and other forms of creative expression. (\$5,000).
- Michael Brothers Hauling, Inc.: Hold 7 workshops, led by industry experts and environmental justice community members, on urban ecology issues. Case studies will help spark a larger conversation on climate change. Workshop topics will include urban water infrastructure, compost, green building, vermiculture, permaculture, recycling, and solar energy.(\$4,540)
- Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light: Engage 40-50 students who are enrolled in after-school programs and summer camp programs. Through hands-on workshops & urban farming experiences, students will increase their understanding of watershed protection, and energy, water and waste conservation. Students will be encouraged to work with their family and friends to take actions that will reduce the effects of Climate Change and improve community and individual health. (\$29,965)

- Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy: Implement state standards, climate change education and meaningful action projects with high school students attending Pittsburgh City schools. The program will consist of three 3-hour sessions during the fall, winter, and spring in the parks, as well as an optional in-school orientation session. Topics will include habitat improvement, tree planting, and highlight stormwater mitigation strategies. (\$25,533)

- Venture Outdoors: Provide twenty environmental education activities and field trips to 120 (K-8th grade) students. The lessons will engage students in watershed, climate change, and environmental education through activities such as hiking, kayaking, biking, gardening, and environmental STEM. (\$20,000)

#### **Armstrong**

- Armstrong Center for Community Learning: Host two workshops for residents. *Energy & Water Conservation* attendees will learn how water and energy conservation can help reduce greenhouse emissions while lowering utility bills. *Celebrate the Trees* will focus on improving air, water quality, and human health while supporting wildlife habitats and biodiversity. (\$6,439)

#### **Beaver**

- RiverWise: Conduct a county-wide Summer Sustainability Institute for high school students from 6 Environmental Justice areas in Beaver County. Institute teaching, field trips, group discussions, and activities will be captured through film and photography. Footage will be shared using various social media and web-based platforms, thereby extending the reach of the project. (\$18,900)

#### **Bradford**

- Bradford County Conservation District: (Two Projects) Supply six school districts with the necessary materials, curriculum, resources and guidance to fully implement an Eels in the Classroom interdisciplinary, Pa Standards-based, educational experience throughout the 2023/2024 school year and beyond. (\$4,912). A Forestry Education Symposium will provide two Forestry Education events for private landowners, forestry professionals, and logging professionals who are interested in expanding their knowledge of forest practices, sustainability, and forest health. Eight conservation districts as well as the Northern Tier Hardwood Association will partner to host the events. Each event will include multiple guest speakers and a field tour. (29,942)

#### **Bucks**

- Bucks County Conservation District: Develop county-wide education programs, including presentations for youth (K-12) and multi-municipality public events. Programs will be accessed through a website menu of curriculums with associated displays, brochures, and hands-on materials. (\$17,500)

- Heritage Conservancy: Host four professional development teacher training sessions that provide the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary to implement Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) with students (grades 4-12), including student-driven environmental action projects. (\$30,000)

#### **Butler**

- Butler Area School District: Deliver teacher trainings that emphasize hands-on outdoor learning at the Connoquenessing Outdoor Appreciation campus, including access of a nature trail equipped with webcams. (\$5,000)

#### **Cameron**

- Cameron County Conservation District: Hold several elementary and high school student field studies, along with adult based workshops and community events. Hands-on activities and demonstrations will address water issues involving flooding and climate change. (\$5,000)

#### **Carbon**

- Wildlands Conservancy: Provide hands-on, PA standards-based climate change programming to Panther Valley High School (8th and 9th grade) students. Students will identify meaningful actions that can be taken in the Lehigh River Watershed. (\$19,719)

#### **Centre**

- Bald Eagle Area Middle/High School: Develop a high school environmental science curriculum that addresses water and climate change. Create units based on the United Nations Sustainable Development goals including: (1) Life on Land, (2) Clean Water and Sanitation, (3) Affordable and Clean Energy, (4) Climate Action, (5) Zero Hunger, and (6) Responsible Production and Consumption. Students will compare local watershed policies/issues to those within designated EJ areas. (\$30,000)

- The Pennsylvania State University: Extend the duration of the "Nature Explorers" summer camp an additional week, to help further engage youth (grades 2-4) in an expanded air quality curriculum. Using air quality monitors, participants will collect real world air and water quality data, report their findings, and learn how to be better stewards. (\$5,000)

### **Chester**

- Green Valleys Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania: Host an after-school water club for Middle School students that provides them with useful classroom information and stewardship skills. Each of the seven 3-hour club meetings begin in a 7th grade classroom, then transition to a field site. Two separate sessions will be held each week to accommodate the students' high level of interests. (\$4,588)
- The Garage Community & Youth Center: Host 24 workshops for attendees of year-round youth development programs. The workshops will provide education, hands on activities, field trips, monitoring of frequently flooded waterways, gardening, and practical hands-on green practices. Students (grades 6-12) will create an environmentally friendly outdoor classroom space to showcase their learnings for the bilingual community members. (\$30,000)

### **Columbia**

- Columbia County Conservation District: Partner with the Borough of Berwick to construct and install approximately 15 downspout planters at homes along main streets in the Borough. Hold at least one public workshop addressing benefits of downspout planters and other ways to reduce stormwater runoff, non-point source pollution, and improve water quality. (\$4,998)

### **Cumberland**

- Saint Patrick Parish and School Charitable Trust: 7th grade students will explore the Cumberland Valley watershed and participate in a student-driven Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) project. (\$5,000)
- The Pennsylvania State University: Increase the capacity of the environmental education network. The project begins with training adult volunteers to administer the Future Master Watershed Stewards (FMWS) program. The second step is to provide educators with training and classroom resources to use on their own or with a FMWS volunteer partner. (\$30,000)

### **Dauphin**

- Dauphin County Conservation District: In conjunction with municipal partners, host Stormwater Management for Homeowners workshops about non-point source pollution and stormwater management strategies. (\$5,000)
- Friends of Wildwood Lake Nature Center, Inc.: Provide PA standards-based wetlands education programs to students in grades 4-12. Students will observe aquatic life, perform water quality studies, and determine sources of point and non-point source pollution within a watershed. (\$5,000)

### **Delaware**

- Delaware County Conservation District: Host a one-day sustainability conference, located within an Environmental Justice area, that aligns with the 2021 PA DEP Climate Action Plan and the 2022 Delaware County Sustainability Plan. Multiple tracks will engage K-12 and college students, academics, community members and leaders, citizen scientists, non-profits, and businesses. (\$5,000)

### **Erie**

- Asbury Woods: About 500 fifth graders, from public, private, and home schools, will participate in hands-on water use conservation activities that are led by professionals. (\$4,999)
- Regional Science Consortium: Work with the Iroquois School District to establish an Outdoor Classroom including 7 learning stations focused on water quality and climate change. Teachers from multidisciplinary departments will engage students in hands-on, immersive activities. (\$30,000)
- The Goodell Project, Inc.: Establish an edible demonstration garden and host nature-based field studies for children. Partnering with the Erie Farm-to-School Program, students will be involved with the garden installation while learning about innovative strategies for growing food in urban areas. (\$4,921)

### **Fayette**

- Connellsville Area School District: Hold bi-monthly after school club meetings, open to 4th and 5th grade students, that address local watersheds/waterways. The club meetings will provide hands on activities that include STEM focused lessons and visits to local sites to learn about the importance of waterways to our community and region. (\$4,370)
- Mountain Watershed Association: Expand outdoor education into the greater Connellsville area by offering a once monthly afterschool program for grades 3 to 5, a monthly community workshop, and two professional development trainings for formal and non-formal educators. Program topics will include watershed conservation, basic ecology, climate change, and local environmental impacts. (\$29,999)

### **Forest**

- Forest Area School District: Environmental Science and Chemistry students will participate in hands-on experiments to evaluate multiple indicators of a healthy water system. Students will visit a water treatment

facility, research government roles related to water quantity and quality, and research local and state career opportunities. (\$3,882)

- Pennsylvania Firefly Festival: Host three day-long interactive STEAM programs for grades K-6 focusing on Pennsylvania's State Insect, the Firefly. Students will explore firefly biology, bioluminescence, environmental concerns, and mathematical applications (i.e. synchronicity). Students and families will be encouraged to consider habitat conservation, reduced pesticide use and land/water protection. Families will be invited to attend an exclusive viewing of the fireflies at a June 2024 event. (\$4,475)

#### **Indiana**

- Indiana County Conservation District: Incorporate environmental education principles into public outreach efforts. The initiative will incorporate current and relevant climate change and water quality information, hands-on materials, engaging activities, age-appropriate lessons, and in-person workshops. (\$8,955)

#### **Jefferson**

- Jefferson County Conservation District: Hold a 3-day outdoor camp for women and girls to increase knowledge about the environment, climate change, and sustainability. Lessons and demonstrations will be presented by a variety of knowledgeable instructors. (\$4,795)

#### **Juniata**

- Juniata County Conservation District: Increase public awareness about storm water pollutants. Collaborate with the Borough Council maintenance department to stencil "only rain in the drain" at approximately 60 borough storm water grates. (\$1,440)

#### **Lackawanna**

- Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation: Provide in-classroom programs and hands-on, standards-based field experiences addressing Climate Change and Water for 4th and 5th grade students who attend elementary schools that serve environmental justice areas. (\$4,961)
- Lackawanna County Conservation District: Create a permanent three-station stormwater BMP demonstration area and hold three stormwater and local water quality hands-on events for multiple audiences over the course of area's development and beyond. Student activities will address PA academic standards. (\$30,000)

#### **Lebanon**

- Lebanon County Conservation District: Hold two Riparian Landowner Workshops, including presentations, materials and hands-on macroinvertebrate stream studies, to learn about assessing stream health. (\$4,758).

#### **Lehigh**

- Lehigh County Conservation District: Develop an educational garden laboratory in a vacant school courtyard to improve students' understanding of local climate change and water issues, and other real-world sustainability issues. (\$5,000)

#### **Luzerne**

- Pittston Area School District: Train teachers on water sampling and analysis techniques so they are able to effectively guide student water investigations and action projects. Teachers will create water units addressing Pennsylvania's new science standards. (\$5,000)

#### **McKean**

- The Pennsylvania State University: Provide interactive, hands-on programming for students (K-12). Topics including climate, habitats (including waterways) and PA's threatened wildlife will be explored through discussions, stories, games, show and tell, and other activities. Lessons will incorporate PA E&E standards and the Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) framework. (\$5,000)

#### **Mercer**

- Mercer County Conservation District: Conduct a 3-week "camp" for middle school who will become engaged outdoor activities that address Climate Change and Water issues. Additionally, students will be made aware of science and/or environmentally themed careers. (\$3,385)

#### **Montgomery**

- Montgomery County Intermediate Unit: Create an environmental education mobile lab to provide authentic local field experiences for students. The mobile lab will offer at least two visits (one in the fall and one in the spring) to an estimated 20-25 schools/cycle. (\$29,789)
- Riverbend Environmental Education Center: Utilizing the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience framework, conduct a summer institute for elementary and middle school teachers. Continuing support will be provided through monthly virtual meetings and pairing with an environmental educator. Additionally, the project will engage students in an outdoor experience at their school, leading to a student driven action project. (\$28,780)

- Souderton Area School District: ReWild some campus areas, beginning with the High School, in an effort to return some of the land back to native species to support the environment and encourage climate change awareness. Students will participate in lessons, gather native seeds, propagate the seeds, prepare the grounds, and plant the seedlings. (\$4,952)

#### **Northumberland**

- Bucknell University: Pilot a Resiliency Workshop series to be held in key places around town. Experts will share information with residents on topics such as food waste, native plants, energy efficiency, water quality, and alternative forms of energy. A fun activity will be developed to foster community engagement. (\$5,000)

#### **Perry**

- LEAF Project Inc.: Develop a pilot program, in collaboration with a local school district, that helps students understand their connections with food, farming and the environment. (\$20,200)

#### **Philadelphia**

- Bottle Underground: Address climate change by organizing 3 education events, and a social media campaign composed of 3 informational videos to increase awareness and encourage environmentally responsible behaviors involving single-use waste and glass reuse. (\$4,275)

- Fishtown Neighbors Association: Educate residents and visitors about the rebounding Delaware River ecosystem by creating a bold, interactive plant and animal block-long mural, executed by local public arts high school students. Programs and activities will be delivered during events, such as an annual festival, which attracts thousands of visitors. (\$30,000)

- Friends of Adaire: Organize year-long student stewardship efforts for grades Pre-K to 8th, and their teachers and families, focusing on the rain garden and greenspace in this Philadelphia public school located less than 3,000 feet from the Delaware River. Students will participate in hands-on activities that enrich classroom learning and deepen their understanding of how their schoolyard influences water quality of the nearby river and supports native plants, animals, and insects. (4,888)

- Lankenau Environmental Science Magnet High School: In partnership with the Water Department and other organizations, the Mussel project will engage at least 90 high school students in hands-on interdisciplinary classroom and field experiences. A recirculating aquaponics system will be used to cultivate mussels for the cleaning of waterways. (\$4,999)

- Philadelphia Solar Energy Association: Expand implementation of its Solar Power Resource and Innovation for Teachers and Students (SPRINTS) program for middle school students focusing on practical solutions to climate change. The project, suitable for formal, nonformal and after-school programs, includes lesson plans, activities, teacher training, and interactive materials. Additionally, PSEA will provide support to schools that have or plan to install solar systems. (\$30,000)

- School District of Philadelphia: Develop a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience, addressing environmental literacy and climate change. Selected classroom teachers and students will plant and maintain trees in 4 Philadelphia schoolyards. (\$30,000)

- Spirit and Truth Fellowship: Working with its partners in the low-income community of Huntingdon Park, Philadelphia, the project will: 1) Expand the climate leader network representing at least 5 regional religious congregations. The leaders will be trained to educate and equip their congregations to take meaningful climate crisis action. 2) Run two neighborhood climate education classes; 3) Start a new 8-week cool roof coating training course for residents and develop a system for subsidizing cool roof coating costs; 4) Run two 14-week courses on solar installation and develop a system for supporting graduates in their employment search. (\$20,252)

#### **Potter**

- Potter County Conservation District: Use a stream simulation table to help municipal officials and workers understand stream processes and concepts related to stream management and in-stream construction. (\$5,000)

#### **Schuylkill**

- Potter's Farm LLC (2 projects): Minersville Elementary students (Grades 2-6 ) and Pine Grove Middle School Afterschool and summer program students will explore their watershed during 12 interactive sessions, including classroom sessions and outdoor investigations. Students will use professional research and data collection methodologies and lead restoration projects to improve local water quality and reduce soil erosion. (\$10,000)

#### **Snyder**

- Snyder County Conservation District: Host two rain barrel workshops for residents and business owners of Snyder County who are interested in learning about storm water management. Each participant will receive one complete rain barrel and rain gutter garden for installation at their property. (\$3,298)

### **Somerset**

- YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh: Provide watershed teacher training and Middle School student instruction about watersheds. Participants will travel to an outdoor location and engage in hands-on activities that will enable them to plan and execute a service project. Students will present their experience to an elected official and the community. (\$4,895)

### **Susquehanna**

- Susquehanna County Conservation District: Host education activities for school groups and community members along an interpretive trail. Trail signage features five points of interest highlighting climate change and regional water quality topics. (\$19,722)

### **Washington**

- California Area School District: Create an Outdoor Science School curriculum for grade six that is aligned with the new PA State Science Standards (Next Generation Science Standards). The curriculum will be taught entirely outdoors, offering students 100% hands-on experiences. Students will incorporate STEAM environmentally sustainable practices into their local environmentally themed, civic action projects. (\$30,000)

### **Westmoreland**

- Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art: Coordinate a Pennsylvania Master Naturalist training in the Laurel Highlands. After a 13-week core training, up to 10 adults will complete 30 hours of service to conservation organizations, municipalities, schools and more as they become trained volunteers and leaders to address conservation needs and challenges. (\$4,813)
- Seton Hill University: Provide three professional development workshops for faculty so they are able to incorporate sustainability topics into their individual disciplines. Provide staff with education on sustainability practices that can help reduce the campus's environmental footprint. (\$5,000)
- Westmoreland County Conservation District: Provide stormwater education to 40 students attending the Mosaic Community Development Center's after school program. The conservation district will present two, in-person educational programs for the students and work with the Center to develop a rain garden demonstration project that incorporates the lessons learned. (\$5,000)

### **York**

- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Harrisburg: Utilize a new greenhouse to incorporate sustainability education into the school's K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) curriculum.(\$5,000)
- York County Conservation District: Hold 2 community seminars for residents about York county's watersheds. The seminars will provide in-depth information on how citizen actions can make a difference, even if they do not have a waterway or a water body on their property. (\$4,039)

### **Multiple Counties and/or Statewide Projects**

- National Audubon Society: Host workshops in Montgomery and Philadelphia counties that promote establishing native pollinator plants in a variety of settings ranging from small urban settings, to suburban gardens to larger public and private spaces. Attendees will learn how native plants can help provide clean water, healthy soil, and a balanced ecosystem. (\$30,000)
- Pennsylvania Envirothon Inc: Pennsylvania Envirothon supports classroom learning and field opportunities for high school student teams at the county, state and national levels. Students analyze issues and identify solutions (individually and/or collectively) involving five natural resource categories: Soils/Land Use, Aquatic Ecology, Wildlife, Forestry, and a Current Environmental Issue (i.e., climate change, water quality/quantity, and green infrastructure). 62 county teams are expected to participate at the state level events. (\$62,981)
- Pennsylvania Resources Council: Conduct 8 Backyard Composting workshops designed to reach 250 households in Allegheny and Delaware counties. Attendees will increase their awareness about waste minimization in the home and make connections with broader issues such as climate change, water pollution, soil health, and gardening. Participants will receive a compost bin and necessary instructions. (\$19,525)
- Stroud Water Research Center, Inc.: Create outdoor learning spaces on school campuses, located in Berks, Lancaster and Chester counties, that provide meaningful opportunities for teachers and K-12 students while creating water quality and wildlife habitat benefits. Schools will provide input at all phases of the project, ensuring a sustainable, engaging, and meaningful model for other schools to adopt. The spaces will allow communities to engage with the school while learning about the local watershed. (\$20,000)

- The Watersmith Guild: Provide educational workshops that empower underserved youth in Cambria and Indiana counties with skills and knowledge to improve their lives and create lasting impacts on the environment. Students will work with professional instructors and mentors to become proficient river surfers, paddlers, and waterway stewards through activities and curriculum that include tree planting, water sampling, stream biology, and whitewater paddle boarding. Through hands-on education in filmmaking and digital media, students will create films about their experiences that inspire an appreciation for watersheds and the power of outdoor connections for personal and community enhancement.