

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING 2015) RESOLUTION NO. 15-4635
NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS)
CONSERVATION EDUCATION COMMUNITY) Introduced by Chief Operating Officer Martha
GRANTS) Bennett in concurrence with Council President
) Tom Hughes

WHEREAS, in 2005, the Metro Council established an initiative designed to protect and restore our region's significant fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature as provided in Resolution No. 05-3574A, "Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods," adopted May 12, 2005;

WHEREAS, to fulfill the goals of this regional initiative, the Metro Council approved Resolution No. 05-3580A to establish the Nature in Neighborhoods grant program for local communities;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council reaffirmed the grant program's purpose, eligibility and funding criteria via Resolution No. 12-4398 when the council referred a 5-year local option levy for Metro's parks and natural areas to the voters, and called for the creation of a committee to review grant applications and make award recommendations to the Metro Council;

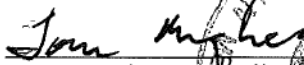
WHEREAS, in May 2013, voters in the Metro region approved the 5-year local option levy which included new and expanded funding for this grant program, referred to in the levy as Nature in Neighborhoods community grants;

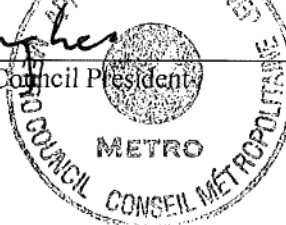
WHEREAS, Metro awarded the first round of Nature in Neighborhood Conservation Education grants in July 2014 via Resolution 14-4549;

WHEREAS, Metro has solicited and received applications for 2015 Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education grants, and the grant review committee has identified the proposals which best meet the grant criteria and the goals of the Nature in Neighborhoods community grant program; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council hereby approves the award of the 2015 Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education community grants to those recipients listed in Exhibit A and for the amounts listed for each individual award.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 09 day of July, 2015.


Tom Hughes, Council President



Approved as to Form:


Alison R. Kean, Metro Attorney

Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education Program
2015 (Second Round) Grant Awards
Grant Review Committee Recommendations to the Metro Council

Total award amount recommended: \$700,000

Program: Teaching the importance of STREAM (Science, Technology, Restoration, Engineering, Arts, Math) via Youth Engagement and Career Mentorship
Grant amount: \$93,940.00
Recipient: Adelante Mujeres
Partners: Tualatin Riverkeepers, Friends of Fernhill Wetlands, Clean Water Services and Jackson Bottom Wetlands

Long time partners Adelante Mujeres and Tualatin Riverkeepers will engage Latino youth, their families and the broader community to develop future conservation leaders. They will provide opportunities to explore the field of conservation and to share the learning with their peers.

Program: Asian Pacific Islander Youth Leaders in Nature
Grant amount: \$25,000.00
Recipient: Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)
Partners: Jade District, Audubon Society, OPAL Environmental Justice, Pacific Islander Student Association (PISA), Harrison Park School and Center for Diversity and the Environment

This projects strengthens partnerships between Asian Pacific Islander youth groups with local conservation and environmental literacy organizations to jointly plan retreats and action projects that build relationships, political skills and stewardship.

Program: The TALON Program (Teach, Advocate, Learn, Observe, Nurture)
Grant amount: \$100,000.00
Recipient: Audubon Society of Portland
Partners: ROSE, Hacienda and Bienestar Community Development Corporations, Friends of Nadaka, City of Portland's Parks and Recreation and Leach Botanical Gardens

TALON is a training and paid apprenticeship program designed to build diversity in the environmental community. This project will engage youth of color living in East Multnomah and North Clackamas Counties in professions in environmental education, stewardship, conservation advocacy and wildlife care.

Program: Home is Where the Watershed Is: Conservation Education for Low Income and Housing Insecure Families
Grant amount: \$25,000.00
Recipient: Community Partners for Affordable Housing, Inc. (CPAH)
Partners: Tualatin Riverkeepers, Beaverton School District English Language Learners/Somali Program and Good Neighbor Center

Home is Where the Watershed Is provides conservation education to ethnically diverse, low-income youth and their families in Washington County. Through enduring and innovative partnerships, they will offer culturally responsive opportunities to strengthen community stewardship of local natural areas.

Program: Ecology Education in North Clackamas
Grant amount: \$24,900.00
Recipient: Ecology in Classrooms and Outdoors
Partners: North Clackamas School District, Milwaukie Elementary, Oak Grove Elementary, Riverside Elementary, Ardenwald Elementary, Bilquist Elementary, Lewelling Elementary, Clackamas Water Environment Services, North Clackamas Parks and Recreation District, Oak Lodge Sanitary District, Portland State University and Institute for Permaculture Education for Children

The broader Ecology Education in North Clackamas program provides a series of hands-on ecology lessons and outdoor field experiences for 47 classrooms in six diverse and low-income schools in the North Clackamas School District.

Program: Friends and Neighbors for Environmental Diversity
Grant amount: \$91,869.00
Recipient: Friends of Tryon Creek
Partners: Neighborhood House, Center for Diversity and the Environment and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Friends of Tryon Creek has forged a dynamic partnership with Neighborhood House, Center for Diversity and the Environment, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to increase access by low-income individuals and people of color to outdoor nature programs. The long-term goal will be to achieve organizational change.

Program: St. Johns Community Conservation Program
Grant amount: \$93,676.00
Recipient: George Middle School
Fiscal sponsor: Portland Public Schools
Partners: Portland Metro STEM Partnership, Portland State University Graduate School Of Education, Portland State University Leadership and Sustainability Education, Slough School, Sauvie Island Center, Portland Public Schools, Wind & Oar Boat School, Clean Rivers Education and the City of Portland

The St. Johns Community Conservation program will facilitate the development of culturally responsive K-12 conservation education programming through community involvement and teacher professional development. Teacher capacity will expand through on-site and technology-based collaboration. Students' connection with nature will align with themes of equity and diversity.

Program: Kairos Learning Exploration Garden
Grant amount: \$15,478.50
Recipient: KairosPDX
Partners: Portland Community Reinvestments Initiative, Independence Gardens and Ask Mr. Science, LLC

KairosPDX is creating a learning garden to create cultivated and wild spaces where students can learn. This is project will create access to nature and experiential education, utilizing student-driven learning strategies in this rapidly changing neighborhood.

Program: Opportunity Corps & Beyond
Grant amount: \$15,000.00
Recipient: Momentum Alliance
Partners: Northwest Youth Corps, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Bureau of Land Management, Open Meadow and Outside In

Momentum Alliance and Northwest Youth Corps will collaborate to create a pilot five-week paid internship supplemented by wrap-around, year-round training and coaching. The program will start with ten underrepresented Youth Leaders to increase their connection with nature, improve environmental literacy, diversify conservation leadership among their peers, and create and evaluate a model for conservation equity region-wide.

Program: Exploring Language, Exploring Nature, Curriculum for Immigrants & Refugees
Grant amount: \$7,608.00
Recipient: People-Places-Things, LLC
Fiscal sponsor: Columbia Slough Watershed Council
Partners: City of Gresham Natural Resources Program, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services Green Street Steward Program, Multnomah County Libraries and Friends of Nadaka

This partnership between conservation professionals and an established English learning program for adults will bring conservation education to an underserved, highly diverse population and create a model for using the natural world as curriculum.

Program: Rosemary Anderson High School and Friends of Trees Student Crew Leader Training Program
Recipient: Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC)/Rosemary Anderson High School
Grant Amount: \$25,000.00
Partners: Friends of Trees, Portland Parks and Recreation, Friends of the Columbia Children's Arboretum and Ecology in Classrooms & Outdoors

POIC will partner with Friends of Trees, Portland Parks and Recreation, and Friends of the CCA to engage a group of eight to ten POIC/RAHS students in two unique applied learning experiences: invasive species removal and native restoration planting, and community outreach, education, and crew leadership.

Program: OakQuest Phase 2: Expanding education, empowering citizens & Native youth
Grant amount: \$15,478.50
Recipient: Urban Greenspaces Institute (UGI)
Partners: Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), Kingfisher Ecological Services LLC (KES), Mark G. Wilson, consultant, Portland State University Indigenous Nations Studies, Metro, The Intertwine Alliance, Tualatin Hills and North Clackamas Park and Recreation Districts, City of Portland Parks and BES, West Multnomah, East Multnomah, Clackamas, and Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Conservation Biology Institute, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland Audubon Society, Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation

Urban Greenspaces Institute and partners will mentor three Native American youths in career-building conservation education and hands-on experience and engage more than 50 citizen scientists to field-verify the final regional oak map.

Program: Verde Landscape
Grant amount: \$25,000.00
Recipient: Verde
Partners: East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, Metro Science & Stewardship Division, Portland Parks & Recreation, BestHQ, Innovative Changes and Hacienda Community Development Commission

Verde will support education, environmental and economic outcomes for Verde Landscape Crew Members. Verde Landscape, a nonprofit social enterprise, connects people with nature, builds environmental literacy and develops conservation leaders by recruiting and training low-income adults to restore the region's natural areas.

Program: Wisdom Workforce Program
Grant amount: \$75,000.00
Recipient: Wisdom of the Elders, Inc.
Partners: Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), Beaverton Schools Indian Education, Metro, Portland Parks and Recreation (City Nature East), Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Highland Park STEM Middle School, Oregon Health Authority, Portland Community College Career Pathway Program, Mt Hood Community College Workforce Development and Ecotrust

Wisdom's Native American environmental education and workforce development initiative embraces local partnerships to provide Native adults with culturally-tailored multimedia workforce training, environmental service learning, and career pathways. This program will expand classroom and hands-on service learning in local natural areas for Native youth, multi-cultural and STEM students.

Program: Farm School
Grant amount: \$67,050.00
Recipient: Zenger Farm
Partners: David Douglas School District, Lent School and East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

Zenger Farm seeks to build on the highly successful Farm School program by updating and expanding content and developing new partnerships with schools and organizations in the underserved communities of outer Southeast Portland.

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 15-4635, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING 2015 NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS CONSERVATION EDUCATION COMMUNITY GRANTS

Date: July 9, 2015

Prepared by: Heather Nelson Kent, 503-797-1739
Crista Gardner, 503-797-1627

BACKGROUND

For nearly two decades, the Metro Council has provided funding for grants to community groups, non-profits, local governments and other organizations designed to improve water quality and wildlife habitat and give people of all ages opportunities to learn about and connect with nature.

In May 2013, voters approved Measure 26-152, providing new funding for Metro's parks and natural areas and providing increased funding for Nature in Neighborhoods community grants. Grant program staff used the framework provided by Metro Council in Resolution No. 12-4398 to develop an outreach plan, application materials and evaluation criteria for these community grants, referred to as Conservation Education grants, as outlined in the approved levy work plan. Staff aligned Metro's Conservation Education grant criteria with state, regional and community initiatives in order to achieve multiple benefits. The Metro Council awarded the first round of Conservation Education grants in July 2014 (Resolution 14-4549).

Grant Evaluation Criteria

The Conservation Education grant criteria focused on three program categories for funding:

- Connect people with nature (capacity building, collaboration, activities across the conservation education sector)
- Environmental Literacy (access to nature education and programs for all ages, integration with formal education, increased knowledge and engagement about the environment and natural systems)
- Develop Conservation Leaders (leadership development, mentorship, workforce training)

Metro received 54 pre-applications, totaling \$1,952,346 in funding requests for \$700,000 in funding available. More than 350 individual applicants, partners or potential partners were listed in the pre-applications.

A demographic survey and staff analysis of applicants and their partners revealed that efforts to reach and build capacity within community based organizations that have not historically accessed these funds were effective. From the 54 pre-applications Metro received, 11 primary applicants, 20 program partners and 23 potential partners represented were either culturally specific organizations or community organizations primarily focused on supporting people with low-incomes. In addition, approximately two-thirds of the proposals were designed to reach underserved populations as defined by the Metro Council (Res. No. 12-4398) as low-income and/or communities of color.

Application review and selection

Participation on the grant review committee is by application, open and advertised to all community members. Natural Areas Program Director Kathleen Brennan-Hunter selected this year's review committee from a pool of applicants including local experts in education program management, philanthropy, grant management, fundraising, community partnership development and volunteer

management. The committee included conservation education practitioners and those involved in planning, program evaluation and policy development. Committee members declared any direct conflict of interest in the proposals and did not score or participate directly in the discussion or ranking of application where there was a conflict. Perceived conflicts were also noted and recorded in meeting minutes.

Due to the large number of applications, Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education community grant program follows a two-step process. The review committee evaluated pre-applications based on the information submitted by applicants, the stated evaluation criteria, and the review committee's professional and collective judgment. The purpose of the pre-application review is to determine the best proposals to invite for full applications.

After reviewing the 54 pre-applications submitted, the review committee invited 35 to submit full applications. The same committee reviewed the final proposals using the same evaluation criteria and recommended 15 for funding by the Metro Council (see Exhibit A).

2015 Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education Grant Review Committee

Lara Bjork, Xerces Society
Lara Christensen, Gray Family Foundation
Tony DeFalco, Verde
Marci Krass, Willamette Riverkeeper
Jen Nelson, Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District
Gaylen Beatty, Columbia Land Trust
Megan Hanson, City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Kristen Harrison, Metro STEM Partnership
Neil Schulman, Confluence Environmental Center
John Sheehan, Metro Parks and Nature Education Program Manager

2015 Conservation Education Awards

For the second round of levy-funded grants, the review committee focused on quality environmental education programming and appreciated proposals with clear descriptions of the program design and delivery, knowledge and use of best practices for achieving learning outcomes, and organizations that have used past challenges and successes to improve future programs.

The review committee found compelling environmental education programs that create a deeper connection to nature through repeat, multiple engagements. They also considered the numbers of people engaged and the frequency and length of programming. They appreciated programs that focused on longer-term engagement with a few individuals but also reached a larger audience through engagement with these participants' families or through community events. The review committee found school-based programs more compelling when connected to science standards and core curriculum. Committee members also appreciated applicants that demonstrated an understanding of evaluation measurements and outcomes, but acknowledged that the lens of review committee members about evaluation may not be relevant to all projects or cultures.

The review committee noted the importance of time for partner development and partner commitment as demonstrated by strong differentiated letters of support. Committee members found compelling programs that were co-designed by and mutually beneficial to partners and the community at large, especially in youth, low-income populations or communities of color. Strong youth program proposals included leadership and career development. They also appreciated programs outside of traditional school settings, such as those involving justice-involved youth.

Applications for community garden, agriculture-based or food production programs were judged against the grant program criteria, especially how well the program included conservation education curriculum about native plants, habitat, natural areas and natural systems in combination with reaching underserved communities (e.g. low-income or communities of color). These applications were found to be more compelling when they connected programming to science curriculum, provided teacher development opportunities, or offered an entry point to food-insecure communities.

Total award amount recommended is \$700,000. Grant projects will begin July 1, 2015. Grant applicants may have up to three years to complete their projects.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. Known Opposition

None.

2. Legal Antecedents

Resolution No. 14-4549, For the Purpose of Approving the 2014 Nature in Neighborhoods Conservation Education Community Grants.

Resolution No. 12-4398, For the Purpose of Referring to the Voters of the Metro Area a Local Option Levy for the Purpose of Preserving Water Quality, Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Maintaining Metro's Parks and Natural Areas for the Public.

Resolution No. 05-3574A, Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods.

Resolution 05-3580A, Transferring \$1,250,000 from the Balance of the FY 2004-05 Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve to a General Fund Reserve for Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Projects.

Ordinance No. 07-1160B, Transferring \$250,000 from the Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund for Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Projects.

Ordinance No. 09-1215B, Approving \$92,500 in the FY 2009-10 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement grants.

Ordinance No. 10-1235B, Approving \$150,000 in the FY 2010-11 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement grants.

Ordinance No. 12-1274A, Approving \$200,000 in the FY 2012-13 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement grants.

3. Anticipated Effects

This Resolution approves the award of 2015 Nature in Neighborhood Conservation Education community grants and begins the individual contract award process for the selected grant applicants with an anticipated project start date on or after July 1, 2015. Projects may be up to three years in length.

4. Budget Impacts

This Resolution authorizes award of contracts in an amount previously identified by the Metro Council in the budget for this purpose. The adopted FY 2015-16 budget includes the necessary appropriation authority for reimbursement of these grants.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Chief Operating Officer recommends adoption of Resolution No. 15-4635.