

Shapiro Administration Awards Over \$980,000 To Environmental Education Projects That Engage Youth And Adults

Projects Will Foster Environmental Stewardship By Encouraging Kids And Adults To Play A Role In Protecting Clean Air And Water. Nearly Every Project Supports Environmental Justice Communities.

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Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is awarding **\$980,256** in Environmental Education Grants to **56 projects** that will promote environmental education and stewardship across Pennsylvania. Nearly all of the projects will support people in environmental justice communities

(/pages/dep_details.aspx?newsid=1797), communities composed of Pennsylvanians that are more threatened by climate change, air pollution, and water pollution.

“These projects help connect people to the ways we can protect the air we breathe and the water we drink, and many of them encourage learning at any age whether you're a kid or an adult,” said **DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. “Nearly every grant we are awarding will support people in environmental justice communities to improve educational opportunities and people’s connections to their environment.”

The DEP Environmental Education Grants program prioritizes proposals that engage youth or adults who live, work, or attend school in environmental justice areas. Funding for 48 projects (97 percent) support educational activities that will benefit people living in environmental justice areas.

The 2024 funded projects will deliver a wide range of environmental learning opportunities including providing youth with unique immersive field experiences, engaging community residents in practical climate mitigation projects, supporting school districts’ efforts to develop

(https://www.pdesas.org/Page/Viewer/ViewPage/58/?SectionPageItemId=12998) new **STEELS**  standards-based curriculum, and many more.

A complete list of projects is listed below. More information about the

Environmental Education Grant program

(<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/EnvironmentalEducation/Grants/Pages/default.aspx>)

is available on DEP's website.

Meaningful environmental education programs provide opportunities for participants to make informed decisions leading to actions that result in sustainable communities and a healthy environment.

Environmental Education grant applicants include schools and colleges, environmental and community-based organizations, county conservation districts, and eligible businesses.

Applications for the

2025 Environmental Education Grants Program

(<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/EnvironmentalEducation/Grants/Pages/default.aspx>)

will likely open in August 2024 with an application deadline of mid-November 2024.

The Environmental Education Grants Program was established by the Environmental Education Act of 1993, which mandates setting aside 5 percent of the pollution fines and penalties DEP collects annually for environmental education in Pennsylvania. To date, DEP has awarded more than \$14 million in Environmental Education Grant funding to support more than 2,200 projects.

Allegheny

- Allegheny County Conservation District was awarded \$30,000 for the “Development Patterns and Municipal Engagement for Optimal Natural Resource Outcomes” to host workshops for municipalities and citizens to promote sustainability as a framework for building climate resilient, vibrant communities and promote resident health.
- Communitopia was awarded \$24,501 for the “Climate Adventures Club” program to combine climate friendly adventure activities with real-life field science and research experiences for students in grades 9-12.
- Green Building Alliance was awarded \$28,200 for the “Inspire Speakers Series Lectures and Workshops” to hold three public lectures and three community workshops to help attendees draw connections between climate, health, economy, and equity.
- Venture Outdoors Inc. was awarded \$24,700 for the “Youth Outdoor Leadership Cohort” project to provide 25 environmental education lessons and field trips addressing climate change and watersheds to over 120 middle and high school students throughout the 2024-2025 school year. In addition, the project will include a special Saturday cohort session during the Fall and Spring semester.

Armstrong

- Armstrong Center for Community Learning was awarded \$8,685 for the “Youth Water Quality Education and Engagement Program” to deliver a year-long water quality education program for high school students in Armstrong and surrounding counties. The program will inform students about clean water and water conservation and engage them in a variety of hands-on activities.

Blair

- Blair County Conservation District was awarded \$3,649 for “Blair County BioBlitz” to host four Blair County BioBlitz Days for approximately 100 students to explore how human activities can impact biodiversity. Students will use the iNaturalist app, collect stream data and learn about microplastics within their watershed.

Bucks

- Bucks County Audubon Society at Honey Hollow was awarded \$5,000 for the “Bucks Audubon Summer Camp 2024” program to hold a weeklong Wetlands & Watersheds summer camp for children, ages four-12. The camp program will engage campers in hands-on educational activities and field experiences.
- Heritage Conservancy was awarded \$30,000 for “Utilizing the MWEE Framework to Integrate Environmental Literacy Across the Bucks County Curriculum” to host two teacher professional development training sessions, adapt existing educational resources to address local needs, and develop an online resource page to support teachers.

Chester

- Stroud Water Research Center Inc. was awarded \$5,000 for “Discovering the Connections between Streamside Forests and Climate Change” program to create and implement a new PA STEELS Standards-based lesson addressing the vital role streamside forests play for mitigating climate change impacts on freshwater resources.

Dauphin

- Dauphin County Conservation District was awarded \$5,000 for the “2024 Stormwater Management for Homeowners” project to conduct six Stormwater Management for Homeowners workshops with municipal partners. The workshop is designed to address runoff and other sources of non-point source pollution.

Erie

- Asbury Woods Partnership Inc. was awarded \$4,954 for “Asbury Woods Outreach to Erie County Community Schools” to conduct environmental education after-school on-site programming for Erie County Community Schools.

Foundation for Erie's Public Schools was awarded \$5,000 for "Exploring Climate Change Through Community Field Experiences" to host six different field experiences for elementary school students and family members, designed to increase awareness and explore solutions that lead to a Climate Action project.

- Regional Science Consortium (RSC) at Presque Isle Center was awarded \$29,992 for "The Regional Science Consortium Ship to Shore Program: Water monitoring on Lake Erie." Students will investigate urban watershed concepts, and collect water, plankton, and benthic samples while aboard the Lettie G. Howard ship. Students will analyze the samples at the RSC labs to identify actions to help address water quality issues.
- School District of the City of Erie was awarded \$4,980 for the "2024-2025 Residential Garden Program," designed for middle school students who will participate in the Erie Farm to School Garden Club program. Students will learn about home gardening, water conservation and storm water management.

Jefferson

- Jefferson County Conservation District was awarded \$4,144 for "Backwoods Chicks Outdoor Camp 2024" to host a three-day camp designed for women and young girls. Through demonstrations and a variety of activities participants will experience the outdoors while exploring climate change issues and sustainability practices.

Lawrence

- Lawrence County Conservation District was awarded \$4,952 for the "Nature Camps for Lawrence County" to host three separate nature camps for county residents. The Nature Camp, Advanced Nature Camp and Grownup Nature Camp will provide lessons and hands-on activities that explore the relationship between climate change and water quality.

Lehigh

- Lehigh County Conservation District was awarded \$5,000 for "Bee-autiful Watersheds: Making Climate Change and Pollination Connections" program to deliver three outdoor education field experiences to 325 students. Youth will expand their understanding of how human actions can contribute to environmental issues involving climate change, water quality of local watersheds, and pollination.

Lycoming

- Bucknell University was awarded \$5,000 for the "Fireflies at Sylvan Dell: Art, Science, Nature, and the Land" project to host a film, walk and talk and multiple children's art activities to teach the public how to become involved with firefly conservation efforts and create Interpretive signs on fireflies and their habitats.

Mercer

- Mercer County Conservation District was awarded \$3,696 for the “Mercer County Discovery Camp 2024” to host middle school students twice a week for three weeks. Students will meet with local environmental and STEM professionals and learn about local climate change impacts, water quality, natural resource topics, and environmentally related careers.

Montgomery

- Centro De Cultura Arte Trabajo Y Educacion was awarded \$5,000 for the “Roots of Knowledge: A Community-Driven Environmental Education Initiative” to host interactive workshops to empower the Latinx community with knowledge and skills so they are equipped to implement positive urban forestry action projects.
- Lower Merion Conservancy was awarded \$30,000 for “Connecting our Community to a Salty Situation for Better Water Quality and Climate Resilience” to engage students and teachers in nonpoint source water pollution lessons and real-time stream data collection. The program will conduct public workshops to share information and implement planting events.
- Montgomery County Intermediate Unit #23 was awarded \$29,982 for “MCIU Empowering Educators: Phenomena-Driven Environmental Education” to conduct a three-day immersive environmental literacy summer institute for teachers emphasizing climate change, habitat management, and invasive species.
- Riverbend Environmental Education Center was awarded \$29,881 for “Nature Based STEM Community of Practice for MWEEs” to utilize the Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) framework and provide support to teachers as they incorporate environmental education lessons and activities that address academic goals across multiple disciplines.

Northampton

- The Nurture Nature Center was awarded \$4,998 for the “Connecting Youth to Local Watersheds: A Placed based Multi-disciplinary Watershed Education Program” to expand its Create and Learn series and youth watershed education programming, to connect Lehigh Valley youth to their local waterways. The program will build stewardship and resilience through science education, hands-on creative activities, and field studies.

Philadelphia

- Friends of FDR Park was awarded \$5,000 for the “FDR Park Nature Center” to establish a free library of equipment and educational materials, rotating environmental displays, and an expanded slate of free, hands-on programs for all ages, but especially for elementary-age children.
- Green Woods Charter School was awarded \$5,000 for its “Empowering Tomorrow's Climate Leader” program to provide middle school students with the knowledge and skills needed to

- address climate change impacts. Students will gather and analyze climate data, share information with the community, and engage in service projects.
- National Audubon Society was awarded \$25,000 for the “Engaging Environmental Justice Communities in Environmental Mitigation in North & West Philadelphia” project to develop a seven-part climate resilience and community health workshop series to increase awareness and knowledge about local environmental issues and support community action.
 - Philadelphia Outward Bound Center was awarded \$15,447 for the “Watershed and Wildlife Education for Middle /High-Schoolers and North Philadelphia Communities” project to deliver three environmental education programming streams: a watershed expedition for high schoolers; a series of public "Discovery Days" programs about wildlife and watershed issues; and a 22-week "Environmental Service and Leadership" internship for high-schoolers.
 - Philadelphia Solar Energy Association was awarded \$30,000 for the “Solar Education in Environmental Justice Communities” project to strengthen understanding of solar energy and its key role in mitigating climate change in schools and communities across the region. Project activities will include updates to existing middle school curriculum, providing teacher trainings on a new 9th grade curriculum, publishing an “Electrify Your Life Guide,” and hosting the Junior Solar Sprint event and the Imagine a Clean Energy Future student contest.
 - School District of Philadelphia was awarded \$30,000 for the “School District of Philadelphia, Fox Chase Farm: Jr. MANRRS Ambassadors Program” to launch a new civic action initiative allowing high school seniors to engage primary school classes in PA STEELS standards-based agricultural and natural resource activities. The program will develop a website to house demonstration videos that encourage sustainable practices and environmental stewardship at school, home, and in the community.
 - West Mt Airy Neighbors was awarded \$29,985 for the “Addressing Tree Equity Across Mt Airy through Education and Action” program to provide a series of initiatives that inform residents about impacts created by neighborhood heat islands and encourage individuals to plant and nurture trees. The program includes canvassing neighborhoods, hands-on tree tending workshops, and Certified Tree Tender training programs.

Pike

- Pike County Conservation District was awarded \$1,326 for “Microplastics in Pike County Waters” to deliver a public program to increase participants' awareness of the connections between water quality, plastics, and climate change. The program will include water sampling and discussions on potential alternatives to single use plastics.

Potter

- Potter County Conservation District was awarded \$2,307 for “Supporting Place-based Water Quality Education in Northern Potter High School” to train Northern Potter High School teachers

on how to use water quality monitoring equipment to support place-based learning while addressing water quality and environmental issues.

Schuylkill

- Conrad Weiser Middle School was awarded \$3,527 for the “National Environmental Education Development (N.E.E.D.) Camp Lessons and Programs.” Sixth graders will attend N.E.E.D, a five-day residential program. Students will engage in hands-on investigations to increase environmental awareness and knowledge.

Snyder

- Susquehanna University was awarded \$29,978 for its “Place-based environmental education in watershed restoration for climate-resilient ecosystems” project. Susquehanna University’s Center for Environmental Education and Research (CEER) will host climate change workshops for high school students and educators, featuring hands-on watershed stewardship and field-based restoration activities. A summer institute for high school teachers will also be available.
- Snyder County Conservation District was awarded \$4,220 for the “West Snyder Elementary Outdoor Classroom Enhancements” project to work with West Snyder Elementary School to increase the students' watershed and land use educational experiences. The program will deliver new, hands-on resources and outdoor classroom upgrades.

Somerset

- Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium was awarded \$29,915 for the “ICC Summer Camp” to host four weeks of day camps for youth ages seven-12 where participants will be engaged in unique learning experiences involving elephants. Youth will learn about climate change, the importance of habitat protection and sustainability actions.

Venango

- Venango Conservation District was awarded \$3,062 for the “Enhancing the Stream Investigation Program at the Venango Conservation District” to create interactive aquatic macroinvertebrate tanks that enhance its current stream investigation program and increase its capacity to provide meaningful, water education programming to youth and adults in Environmental Justice areas.

Warren

- Warren County Conservation District was awarded \$1,602 for a “Soil Health Workshop” project to educate farmers and landowners about best management practices, water infiltration, and soil fertility.

Washington

California Area School District was awarded \$30,000 for the “Bringing Biology to Life” project to create an environmental education program for high school biology curriculum that is aligned with the new Pennsylvania State Science Standards.

Wayne

- Delaware Highlands Conservancy Inc. was awarded \$30,000 for the “Conservation Education Programming 2024-2025” to develop climate resiliency programs focusing on water quality, land management practices, and environmental justice.

Westmoreland

- Westmoreland Conservation District was awarded \$2,107 for the “Streambank Stabilization Resources for Homeowners” project to develop a multi-media approach about streambank stabilization best management practices for homeowners with streambank erosion issues on their properties.

Multi-County Projects

- Allegheny College was awarded \$5,000 for “Creek Connections 2024-2025.” The project will deliver monthly Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability standards-based learning experiences for the entire school year to at least eight western Pennsylvania schools located in Crawford, Erie, Allegheny, and Beaver counties. In addition, the project will provide water quality monitoring equipment and teacher training to guide hands-on, inquiry-based investigations leading to student driven action projects.
- Pennsylvania Envirothon Inc. was awarded \$53,938 for the “2025 Pennsylvania Envirothon” to engage high student teams whose knowledge is tested in five natural resource categories: Soils/Land Use, Aquatic Ecology, Wildlife, Forestry, and Current Environmental Issues. The statewide program features an oral component whereby the teams are required to prepare and present a solution to a given environmental scenario. The high-ranking team will have an opportunity to further their Envirothon experience at the national level.
- Mountain Watershed Association was awarded \$30,000 to conduct “Expanding Outdoor Education in the Youghiogheny River Watershed” in Fayette, Somerset, and Westmoreland counties The project will facilitate a wide range of activities for all ages to promote watershed education and environmental stewardship. Programming includes, monthly afterschool and community-based programs, four professional development trainings, and two high school service-learning field trips.
- Pennsylvania Resources Council Inc. was awarded \$27,060 for hosting “Stormwater Equity: Increasing Access to Rain Barrels for Overburdened Communities” in Allegheny, Fayette, and Delaware counties. The project will host eight education workshops focused on watershed protection, stormwater management, and environmental literacy.

- Philadelphia Ethical Society was awarded \$5,000 for the “Camp Linden Children's Summer Program 2024-25.” The project will host summer camp sessions that engage at least 150 school-age children from Chester and Philadelphia counties in lessons and activities addressing climate change and water pollution.
- Spirit & Truth Fellowship was awarded \$20,512 for the “Faith-Based Climate Justice Educational Initiative in Philadelphia.” Engaging residents in Chester and Delaware and Philadelphia counties, the project will host a church-based climate education project, involving a fall leadership training, monthly meetings, local education events, and an annual conference.
 - Stroud Water Research Center Inc. was awarded \$30,000 for the “Development of Outdoor Learning at Five School Sites: Cohort 24-25” program. In collaboration with five partner school districts, located in Chester and Philadelphia counties, the project will create curricula and support outdoor learning spaces on school campuses to provide meaningful outdoor learning opportunities for teachers and K-12 students. The learning spaces will also provide water quality and wildlife habitat benefits.
 - The Pennsylvania State University was awarded \$25,656 for the “Environmental Stewardship for Beginners” project. The project will deliver a 20-hour, online/hands-on Environmental Stewardship Trainee program to 18 volunteers so they can lead climate and water quality projects in Blair, Dauphin, Lackawanna, Susquehanna, and Wyoming counties.
 - The Pennsylvania State University was awarded \$30,000 for “Creating a Robust Environmental Education Pipeline within Science-U Summer Camps.” The project is designed to inspire, engage, and educate participants, from Centre and Huntingdon counties, about humans' connections with the natural world. The activities are learner-driven and will explore pressing environmental issues and solutions through action steps and related career paths.
 - The Pennsylvania State University was awarded \$29,150 for the “Penn State Sustainability, EnvironMentors: Recruiting, Retaining, and Advancing Minority Youth in Environmental STEM” project. The EnvironMentors program will utilize undergraduate student and faculty mentors to work with high school students from Centre, Dauphin, Mercer, and Schuylkill counties while they explore environmental STEM topics and associated fields of study. Workshops and tours will help increase participants' scientific, environmental, and sustainability literacy.
 - The Pennsylvania State University was awarded \$27,442 for “Environmental Stewardship Taking Action Again.” The program will deliver online and hands-on Environmental Stewardship Trainee programs to 18 volunteers who will, in turn, lead at least 80 citizens from Huntingdon, Lehigh, Monroe, Philadelphia, and Pike counties in climate and water quality projects.
 - The Pennsylvania State University was awarded \$28,958 for the “PSU + K12 Summit on Sustainability” project. The project will host a Sustainability Summit for 40 education leaders from 20 school districts in Huntingdon, Centre, and other counties throughout the state.

The Watersmith Guild Inc. was awarded \$26,750 to implement its “First Waves” project in Allegheny, Butler, Cambria, Erie, and Indiana Somerset counties. The project will provide transformative educational workshops for youth to become proficient paddlers and waterway stewards. Youth will be exposed to stream biology and climate change investigations, tree plantings, water samplings, paddle boarding, and digital media training.


- Women for a Healthy Environment was awarded \$30,000 for implementing the “Eco-Students & Sustainable Schools” project in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties. The Eco-Students program will cultivate environmental stewardship among 9th to 12th graders, using a tailored curriculum and community service projects.


For more information on the

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