



# Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program

## NFWF CONTACTS

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## PARTNERS

Major funding is provided by:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- FedEx
- Southern Company
- Salesforce

To learn more, go to  
[www.nfwf.org/fivestar](http://www.nfwf.org/fivestar)

## ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$8.1 billion. NFWF is an equal opportunity provider.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)



Youth environmental stewardship in San Diego, California | Credit: Outdoor Outreach

## BACKGROUND

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program seeks to develop community capacity to sustain local natural resources for future generations by providing financial assistance to diverse local partnerships for wetland, forest, riparian and coastal habitat restoration, stormwater management, outreach and stewardship with a particular focus on water quality, watersheds and the habitats they support.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The program focuses on the stewardship and restoration of coastal, wetland and riparian ecosystems across the country. Its goal is to meet the conservation needs of important species and habitats, providing measurable and meaningful conservation and educational outcomes.

1. Engage broad coalitions and partnerships for collaborative conservation
2. Increase resources for conservation and community stewardship
3. Support innovative and sustainable community-based solutions
4. Recover and sustain viable and healthy ecosystems including healthy urban rivers and streams
5. Through outreach and education, shape and sustain behavior to achieve conservation goals

(continued)

## RESULTS

Since 1999, the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program has supported more than 1,000 projects through more than \$15.2 million in federal funding and \$13.2 million in private and corporate funding. These grants have leveraged \$89.4 million in matching contributions.

These projects are expected to:

- Engage more than 1.8 million community members across the country in conservation efforts
- Restore approximately 70,000 acres of land and wetlands

## PROJECT ELEMENTS

Each Five Star and Urban Waters project incorporates four main elements. These fundamental pieces tie together the cornerstones of sustainable community-based conservation projects.

All projects must have:

- On-the-ground activities such as wetland, river or coastal habitat restoration and/or targeted green infrastructure creation and monitoring
- Community partners united to achieve ecological and educational outcomes
- Integrated education, outreach and training into the restoration project through broad community engagement activities or participation and integration with K-12 environmental curriculum
- Measurable ecological, educational and community benefits

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

### Restoring Urban Riparian Corridor at the Blue Heron Nature Preserve in Atlanta (GA)

The Blue Heron Nature Preserve (BHNP) restored 1.5 acres of riparian corridor and 500 feet of creek in the Mill Creek Watershed in Atlanta by removing invasive plant species along the creek, supplementing the area with appropriate native plantings, and connecting with two other Five Star restored areas. Mill Creek is part of the Nancy Creek Watershed, identified as a 303(d) impaired stream. This project site has been recognized in the Atlanta Department of Watershed Management's Nancy Creek Watershed Improvement Plan as the top priority because of the project's ability to remove total suspended solids, proximity to 303(d) listed streams, cost benefit, recreation and green space visibility, protection of infrastructure and improvement of safety. BHNP and partners, with funding support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Southern Company, restored 2,200 contiguous feet of riparian habitat and engaged 135 community volunteers through seasonal plant surveys and regular trash pickups within the Nancy Creek watershed. The installation of new green infrastructure in the form of a dry creek bed trailhead will mitigate urban stormwater runoff and flooding and illustrate how the use of landscaping can improve urban water flow issues.



Tree planting in Memphis, Tennessee | Credit: Wolf River Conservancy

### Using Goats in City Parks for Invasive Plant Management and Landscape Restoration (PA)

Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy (PPC), using innovative methods, targeted and removed invasive plants on 3 acres in the woodland of Frick Park as part of an integrated invasive plant management plan. The nonnative species removed at this site included bush honeysuckle, milea minute, multiflora rose, poison ivy, porcelain berry, oriental bittersweet, and garlic mustard. Dense thickets of bush honeysuckle dominated the site, outcompeting desirable native woodland species and creating deep shade that prevented germination of native plants. The project introduced a herd of 10 goats to the restoration site to complete three, month-long periods of browsing. Volunteer park stewards, with direction from PPC's horticulture staff, removed any residual bush honeysuckle and other invasive plants following each period of browsing. In addition, staff and volunteers restored the forest understory through successive plantings of trees, native shrubs, and plants, beginning in spring 2020. PPC and partners provided community members and students with educational programming focusing on the negative impact of invasive species, volunteer training and citizen science monitoring of plants and birds as well as developed and published guidelines to assist city and park managers considering similar programs elsewhere.

### Tijeras Creek Watershed Protection through Stewardship Education (NM)

Talking Talons Youth Leadership (TTYL) undertook a project to restore and protect the Tijeras Creek Watershed by providing watershed protection education through classroom sessions, field trips, teacher workshops and stewardship sessions. TTYL and partners, with funding support from the U.S. Forest Service, were able to remove invasive species such as Siberian elm and toadflax on 5 acres, planted 75 trees, and engaged 955 youth, teachers and community members.