

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Closure Memo**

To: Jessica Lillquist
From: Chase Laing
Date: December 21, 2018

Project: Long Island Sound Summit and Video Project (CT)
Number: 1401.17.057877
Grantee: Solar Youth, Inc.

Project Description:

Solar Youth will engage up to 40 urban youth in a three-day Long Island Sound Summit that will include curriculum and lessons about watersheds and water pollution, hands-on conservation activities, and create a Youth Voice Video in New Haven, Connecticut. Cities have a large role in environmental problems facing the Sound and it is important to get citizens from urban centers to engage as stewards of their environment. In many cities there are few opportunities for urban residents to directly experience and learn about natural resources, how their own and others' behaviors affect the environment and remedies that may be used to improve it. Urban youth culture is often at the leading edge of change, and social media has helped them level the playing field by providing accessible outreach tools to address environmental problems in their communities. The project will increase urban youths' awareness, knowledge, skills and motivation to protect and restore Long Island Sound by: 1) Conducting a three-day Long Island Sound Summit and three educational and experiential field trips that focus on protection of the Sound; 2) Engaging youth in community service action projects focused on environmental stewardship of the Sound including cleanup of 300 Lbs. of floatable debris prevented from entering the Sound; and 3) Creating digital media through production of a Youth Voice Video to be featured on YouTube where students share what they learned and accomplished with the public.

Final Products:

Conduct a three-day Long Island Sound Summit and three educational and experiential field trips that focus on protection of the Sound

- Day 1, 4/16/2018, Kids Explore: Stewards were taken on a trip to Mystic Aquarium
 - Stewards learned about animals living in Long Island Sound (e.g. the sand tiger shark, sandbar shark, spiny dogfish, and smooth dogfish sharks, etc.)
 - Stewards were given a scavenger hunt to identify animals from Long Island Sound as they explored the Aquarium
- Day 2, 4/17/2018, Kids Do: Trip to Lighthouse Point Park and Beach where Stewards engaged in Long Island Sound exploration activities to learn about waterways they have access to in New Haven, and the importance of taking care of local waterways, including:

- Fred the Fish activity: Stewards learned about water pollution and the factors that can endanger the health of the animals and the water in Long Island Sound,
 - Stewards created mock scenarios, using sponges in mason jars filled with water and different types of pollution (such as trash, oil, etc.) to better understand how each factor can impact a fish in Long Island Sound
- Stewards used maps to identify and examine how water flows from New Haven into Long Island Sound; in this case Tuttle Brook and Morris Creek
- Day 3, 4/18/2018, Kids Teach: The original plan was to do a teach day at Meigs Point Nature Center, but unfortunately the site was not able to accommodate the group, and instead Stewards completed their trash cleanup and teach day at Edgewood Park in New Haven. Activities during this trip included:
 - Interns and Stewards created a model of the layers of soil in between the surface and groundwater, and ran water through a system to learn about purifying processes (i.e. capture and filtration)
 - Stewards learned how to use a microscope and about microbial life, collecting water and plant life from Beaver Pond and then looking at the samples under the microscope
 - Stewards learned about water pollution by building a runoff model. Stewards used food coloring drops to identify different types of pollution and then sprayed the model with water examine how water flows into Long Island Sound
 - Older Stewards were given water testing kits to practice and test the water bodies in Edgewood Park, particularly the West River

Engage youth in community service action projects focused on environmental stewardship of the Sound including cleanup of 300 Lbs. of floatable debris prevented from entering the Sound

- 32 individuals learned about and conducted service projects that address threats to Long Island Sound including 22 youth and 7 Interns between ages 5-18, and 3 adult staff
 - This was a lower number than initially anticipated (projected 40 individuals) as a result of the following factors:
 - An adult staff member resigned in Fall 2017 which decreased capacity to serve youth
 - Due to construction at one of the sites Solar Youth typically serves, it was no longer safe to provide services to youth there. Thus, services in that location were discontinued for the time being and capacity increased elsewhere
- Teams of Stewards conducted a trash cleanup at Edgewood Park where they were each given 13 gallon garbage bags and each team worked together to travel throughout the Park and fill their trash bags
 - Overall, Solar Youth teams collected 8 full bags of trash amounting to 80 pounds of waste
- The youth held a Public Education Forum (PEF) on May 19th 2018 to relay what Stewards learned during their Summit
 - The PEF was attended by Stewards, Interns, Green Job Interns, Steward families, and some Solar Youth partners

- Total overall attendance was 34 people - 14 presenters and 20 attendees
- Youth presented to the audience members, describing what they learned about Long Island Sound through project programming
 - Topics covered include: the effects of floatable debris and pollution on animals living in the Sound; water purification processes (specific to capture and filtration); polluted runoff and the connections between the City of New Haven and Long Island Sound (i.e. how water flows from the City into the Sound)
 - Youth Stewards created display boards as visual educational materials about their topics and to provide a summary their season with the Long Island Sound effort

Create digital media through production of a Youth Voice Video to be featured on YouTube where students share what they learned and accomplished with the public

- Solar Youth created a video to present what the Stewards learned and experienced throughout the Youth Summit and as way to educate others about the importance of protecting the Longs Island Sound
 - The footage was captured by youth during the three days and interns prepared the content and performed the voice over of the video
 - 30 participants helped create the video, ages 8-16 years old
 - The video is available on the Solar Youth website www.solaryouth.org; Facebook, www.facebook.com/solaryouth (1,383 Likes); and Twitter, www.twitter.com/solaryouth (776 Followers)
 - The video was promoted in monthly e-newsletter during October, which has 1,800 recipients; newsletter recipients are comprised of government agencies, funders, environmental action, and citizen action groups.
- The clean-up at Edgewood State Park was featured on News Channel 8 WTNH and promoted on Solar Youth's website: <http://solaryouth.org/news-events/press.html>

NFWF award: \$10,000

NFWF funds spent: \$10,000

Match requirement: \$7,500

Match spent: \$7,500

I recommend closing this grant.