

2025 – 2026 Grant Report

Watershed Explorers & Watershed Protectors Program Development

Amount Awarded: \$8,900

Summary

The American Canyon Community and Parks Foundation (Parks Foundation) requested \$20,000 in funding from the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission. Of this \$20,000 request, \$8,900 was awarded. By securing additional funding sources and the NCWC funding, the Parks Foundation met most of the grant goals successfully.

With the support of the Wildlife Conservation Commission. grant, the Parks Foundation delivered over 2,388 hours of environmental and wildlife education to more than:

- 311 Watershed Explorers
- 112 new students in Napa
- 85 Watershed Protectors
- 110 Watershed Trainees

Additionally, over 44 parents and guardians participated in programs to learn about the local wetlands and the Napa River Watershed. Wildlife Conservation Commission. funding supported the delivery of the full Watershed Explorers program to every school in American Canyon, the new Watershed Protectors 5th grade pilot program at Napa Junction Elementary, and the expansion of programming with Napa RCD up valley.

Program Description and Implementation

During the Watershed Explorers Program, students participated in a three-part series that protects the watershed by getting them involved in hands-on learning. Session 1 is a one hour in-class presentation about the Napa River Watershed, its connection to the San Pablo Bay, and the unique wildlife habitats that exist there. Students learned about the American Canyon Wetlands and its attributes as a filter for the entire water system, reclamation, and biodiversity. Students learned how to make scientific observations, formed hypotheses, and utilized a nature journal to lead into the field day.

During the second session, students participated in a three-hour field day at the Wetlands trails. There they get hands on and rotate through four 30-minute stations from program partners including Suscol Intertribal Council, Napa Solano Audubon, Napa Resource Conservation District, and City of American Canyon Water Reclamation services. The third session brought the Outdoor Connection mobile classroom to the school, allowing students to continue making scientific observations in their nature journals utilizing microscopes and nature specimens as well as learn hands on about the watershed with the water table.

New Program Highlight

Wildlife Conservation Commission. funding also supported the launch of a four-part Watershed Protectors program, designed to equip students with the knowledge and hands-on skills needed to actively engage in wetland restoration. Three 5th-grade teachers at Napa Junction Elementary Magnet School participated in the pilot during fall 2025 and spring 2026, integrating the program into their classroom learning.

The Watershed Protectors program is designed as a multi-session, inquiry-based experience that blends classroom learning with hands-on environmental stewardship. Students begin with an in-class introduction to wetlands, where they explore the definition, ecological importance, and role of these ecosystems in supporting biodiversity and providing essential ecosystem services. Building on this foundation, students learn to distinguish between native and invasive plant species, identify common invasive plants in local wetlands, and understand the impacts these species have on ecosystem health.

Following classroom presentation and preparation, students receive fieldwork training through teacher-led instruction supported by a short video developed by Parks Foundation staff and Teen WILD Volunteers. Students then participate in field experiences at local wetlands where they remove invasive iceplant, collect and disperse native seeds, and document their restoration efforts by mapping and measuring cleared areas. Subsequent monitoring sessions allow students to return to the site to observe plant regrowth, assess soil and habitat conditions, and record the presence of insects and wildlife. Community engagement is an integral component of the program, with local environmental organizations, experts, and family members participating in field days.

Original Program Goals

The Parks Foundation sought to deliver environmental and wildlife education across American Canyon and Napa County, expand access to hands-on watershed learning, and strengthen partnerships with local environmental organizations. A key goal was to continue implementation of the Watershed Explorers program while expanding programming opportunities and reaching approximately 300 Napa County students through the Watershed Trainees program. The development of new programming pathways, including increased stewardship opportunities, was also a priority.

Program Challenges and Adaptation

During the 2025–2026 school year, the Watershed Trainees program faced unexpected challenges that significantly limited the ability to reach the planned audience of 300 Napa County 2nd-grade students. Recent changes to Napa Valley Unified School District’s field trip approval process resulted in the cancellation of participation from three multi-class cohorts.

Despite active outreach and coordination, these administrative barriers constrained program delivery and reduced overall student access during this cycle. In response, the Foundation adapted its approach and successfully implemented the program with one new cohort, serving 110 3rd-grade students at Canyon Oaks Elementary School. While this represents a meaningful impact, it falls short of the intended reach. Moving forward, the Parks Foundation is collaborating closely with teachers, school administrators, the district, and fellow environmental education partners to better navigate and inform the revised field trip approval system, with the goal of removing participation barriers and expanding access in the 2026–2027 school year.

Outcomes

With the support of Wildlife Conservation Commission. unding, the Parks Foundation delivered over **2,388 hours of environmental education** and reached **618 students** and **44 community members**. The Watershed Explorers program was successfully implemented across all schools in American Canyon, ensuring broad access to watershed education.

The Watershed Protectors pilot program resulted in meaningful environmental and educational outcomes, including the removal of more than **2,500 square feet of invasive iceplant**. Students demonstrated a strong sense of pride in their accomplishments and developed a deeper sense of responsibility for their local environment. One student remarked, “Who knew 11-year-olds could do this? We made a big difference!”

Family and community engagement also increased during this grant period. The Foundation supported family nature visits by providing take-home wetlands maps and nature journals and offering free, family-friendly educational opportunities and conservation days outside of school hours. These efforts extended learning beyond the classroom and encouraged continued exploration and connection to the Napa River Watershed within the broader community.

Program Quality and Sustainability

The programs continue to provide high-quality, hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences that connect students to their local watershed and wildlife habitats. Partnerships with organizations such as Napa Resource Conservation District, Napa Solano Audubon, Suscol Intertribal Council, and the City of American Canyon strengthen program delivery and enrich student learning.

The success of the Watershed Protectors pilot program demonstrates strong potential for long-term sustainability. Teachers have already committed to continuing the program in the 2026–2027 school year, pending land use approval by the California State Lands Commission. The program aligns with California Science Content Standards and supports ongoing stewardship and environmental literacy.

Acknowledgment and Future Plans

The Parks Foundation acknowledges the support of the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission.. This funding was essential in delivering environmental education programming and in supporting the launch of the Watershed Protectors pilot program, a key advancement in student stewardship opportunities.

Looking ahead, the Parks Foundation plans to expand the Watershed Protectors and Watershed Trainee programs to additional classrooms, increase student participation in Napa County, and continue working with school districts and partners to address access challenges. These efforts will build on current successes and further strengthen opportunities for students to engage in meaningful watershed and habitat conservation work.

The American Canyon Community & Parks Foundation

INV # 6-10-2026

Expense Invoice: June 12, 2026

Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission Grant 2025/2026

Attn: Pamela Arifian

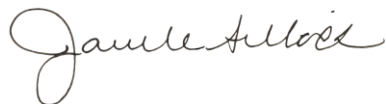
September 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026

Remit payment to The American Canyon Community & Parks Foundation for the following amount: **\$8,900**

Salary and Wages	Hours	Rate	Total
Education Director	112	\$45	\$5,040
Naturalist	89.77	\$43	\$3,860
Benefits			
Subtotal Personal Services			\$8,900

Operation Expenses (Covered by additional funding)	
Administrative Overhead (Covered by additional funding)	
Total	\$ 8,900

Warmest Regards,



Janelle Sellick, Executive Director
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Original Budget Request

Watershed Explorers Grant Budget						
County Grant Request (\$20,000)						
Item	Rate/hour	Units/ Description	Requested Funds	Matching Funds	Total Budget	Description
Personal/Staffing						
Education Director	\$ 45.0	400	\$7,000	\$11,000	\$18,000	
Education Naturalist	\$ 43.0	400	\$7,200	\$10,000	\$17,200	
Student Intern/ Program Assistant	\$ 20.0	200	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$4,000	
Totals:			\$15,700	\$23,500	\$39,200	
Program Expenses						
WE - Day 1 In Classroom Supplies			\$500	\$500	\$1,000	Nature journals, pencils, crayons, nature materials
WE- Day 2 Watershed Field Day Supplies			\$250	\$250	\$500	Journals, First Aid, etc
WE- Day 3 Trailer Day Supplies			\$500	\$500	\$1,000	Replacement Scopes and scientific tools
WP - General Classroom Supplies			\$500	\$500	\$1,000	
WP - Conservation Supplies			\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000	
Student snacks			\$400	\$600	\$1,000	Student snacks for field days
Office, printing materials, etc.			\$650	\$1,850	\$2,500	
			\$4,300	\$5,700	\$10,000	
Total Requested Funds			\$20,000	\$29,200	\$49,200	

The program was awarded \$8,900 by the Napa County Wildlife Commission, with the remaining funding gap covered through additional support from the Napa Valley Community Foundation, the Whale Tail Grant, and the Napa Sierra Club.

Watershed Explorers



Powerful Plankton



First People



Sea level Rise



Birding



Mobile Classroom



Mobile Classroom



Nature Journaling



Wastewater



Macro-invertebrates

Watershed Protectors



Spreading Seed



Iceplant Removal



Ice Plant



Site Monitoring



Site Monitoring



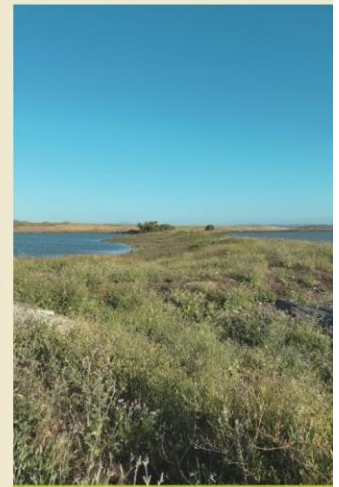
Iceplant Compost Pile



Hauling



Site Monitoring



New Growth

Thank You Cards

