

Community

Watershed Stewardship Program

2012–2013 PROJECT

Groundwork Portland's Summer Green Team



Stormwater runoff can impact water quality in rivers and streams. Natural resources, like urban streams, forests, and wetlands manage stormwater naturally to protect water quality, public health, and the environment. Green infrastructure reduces flooding and erosion, provides cool, clean water to our rivers and streams, and adds wildlife habitat and urban green space for healthier watersheds.

Project overview

Groundwork Portland and partner organizations involved 12 teenagers in their summer Green Team program. Green Team members worked on green infrastructure projects around the city, while also learning about environmental justice issues and career opportunities, and gaining leadership experience. Green Team members received stipends for their work.

Community issues addressed by the project

Young people from communities of color have disproportionately high unemployment rates, and often lack access to jobs in the new green economy. Meanwhile, air and water pollution, contaminated soil, and other urban environmental problems are often concentrated in neighborhoods with a high percentage of people of color and low-income residents.

Community benefits

Groundwork's Green Team provided young people with summer employment while also empowering them to be environmental justice advocates for their communities. Team members learned about stormwater management, pollution and bioaccumulation, environmental justice issues,

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Citywide

WATERSHED: Multiple

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES:

Leadership, education and work experience for 12 young people from underrepresented communities; stipends to compensate youth for their work

WATERSHED OUTCOMES:

Contributions to a number of watershed health projects throughout the city, including ecoroofs, bioswales, invasive plant removal, and preserving natural areas near trails

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.groundworkportland.org



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
CITY OF PORTLAND

working for clean rivers

*in partnership with
Portland State University*

brownfields and career opportunities in a number of green jobs fields.

Brownfields are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. ~U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Watershed benefits

The Green Team worked on projects that protect water quality and keep stormwater out of the combined sewer system. Projects the team worked on include ecoroofs, bioswales, rain gardens, green street facility maintenance, invasive plant removal, and native plant installation.

Community member profiles

Nabin is a Cleveland High School student who was part of Groundwork's Green Team. He enjoyed working on a variety of projects over the course of the summer, but also found value in what he learned about environmental issues, and about the opportunities that exist for future work in the field. "I thought it would be just working, but it was a lot of learning," Nabin said. "I had a golden opportunity to learn about construction, ecoroofs, bioswales, environmental justice, brownfields, and more." Nabin is eager to share what he has learned with his community." A lot of people don't know about environmental justice, so talking about it leads to taking action and making changes."

Environmental justice is the principle that everyone deserves to live, work, and play in places free from contamination and other environmental hazards. **Environmental justice seeks to "avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations."** ~U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Ra'eesah attends Portland Community College. She takes pride in the work she did as a member of the Green Team, saying "I like the building and the painting because it's something I can look back on and say I did!" Ra'eesah sees a direct connection between her Green Team experience and her future. "We got the chance to take in knowledge and work ethics that could help us years from now. We have a lot of opportunities to help better our lives, and options to look towards to give us something to look forward to, such as college and jobs with good pay!"

Additional sources of support

- East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District: Partners in Conservation grant
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Superior Glove Works, Ltd: In-kind donation of work gloves
- City of Portland, Office of the Mayor: SummerWorks program



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Nabin, Cleveland High School student

The Community Watershed Stewardship Program (CWSP) offers grants of up to \$10,000 to help Portlanders improve their neighborhoods and communities, while also improving the health of our streams and rivers.

More information at
www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/stewardship or 503-823-7917

Funding subject to City Council budget approval.