

Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: Lehigh Gap Nature Center
(LGNC)

Color of Nature Conservation Leadership Training (Awarded 2018)

SUMMARY

Since 2012, Lehigh Gap Nature Center's Color of Nature initiative has trained and employed students from the Lehigh Valley's diverse, urban communities to be conservation leaders. Through partnerships, Color of Nature interns lead bilingual education and recreation programs and assist with conservation projects throughout the region. As the Color of Nature initiative has grown and matured over the past several years, LGNC has identified the need to train new leaders and to formalize the program. Lehigh Valley Greenways funding has allowed LGNC to train four new interns, create program branding, and assemble internship training kits.



CHALLENGE

Despite its many victories over the past century, the conservation movement faces one serious challenge to its long-term success: our ability to overcome a general *lack of diversity* that exists among those who work in the conservation field, and among those who experience nature through education and recreation. In order for conservation to be equitable and sustainable, it must involve an inclusive community of people working together to tackle environmental issues. Thus, LGNC and others must strive to engage communities who have historically been left out of the conservation conversation.

Locally, growing trail systems and expanded greenways provide new educational and outdoor recreational opportunities for area residents and visitors. Yet, a combination of barriers – from language and culture, to cost and lack of transportation – limits the accessibility of these resources for certain members of our communities, especially in the inner city. All of these barriers must be overcome in order to broaden support for conservation locally, regionally, and globally.

FUNDING

Grant Award:
\$5,000.00

Match:
\$21,358.75

Total Project Cost:
\$26,358.75

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

- Air Products Foundation (financial partner)
- Community Bike Works (education partner)
- DCNR (education partner)
- Fowler Family Foundation (financial partner)
- PPL (financial partner)
- The Century Fund (financial partner)
- Trexler Trust (financial partner)
- Wildlands Conservancy (education partner)
- William Penn Foundation (financial partner)



SOLUTION

LGNC created the Color of Nature initiative with the goal of making conservation more inclusive. Through this program, LGNC actively recruits, trains, and employs students from communities historically underrepresented in the conservation field to be conservation leaders within and beyond their communities. As the Color of Nature leaders partner with organizations, government agencies, and others to engage their peers in conservation through education and recreation, they develop skills and build connections that prepare them for careers in conservation or other fields. At the same time, the leaders are positive role models in the Lehigh Valley's diverse, urban communities, sparking an interest in nature and conservation among their peers.

RESULTS

During the summer of 2018, LGNC trained four new Color of Nature interns to lead inclusive conservation programs. Training consisted of organized instruction, independent study aided by the use of field guides and other resources, and shadowing LGNC staff and experienced Color of Nature leaders. By the end of the training season, the four trainees confidently led bilingual programs on their own.

In all, the Color of Nature trainees led or assisted with a total of 70 bilingual programs throughout the summer. Color of Nature activities included summer school classes for the Allentown School District; Allentown summer park programs in partnership with Wildlands Conservancy; community programs in partnership with Community Bike Works, DCNR, Northern Lehigh Recreation Authority, and others; and education and conservation support at LGNC.

LGNC additionally developed two new Color of Nature logos, branded apparel, and a branded tablecloth for outreach. We also assembled four reusable training kits containing field guides, binoculars, and other gear for future interns and trainees. LGNC's new Color of Nature webpage (http://bit.ly/Color_of_Nature) highlights the achievements of the initiative and acknowledges the critical support of Lehigh Valley Greenways.

Contact



www.LVgreenways.org

Claire Sadler, Dir. Trails & Conservation

Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage
Corridor

2750 Hugh Moore Park Road
Easton, PA 18042

610-923-3548 ext. 226

Claire@delawareandlehigh.org

www.delawareandlehigh.org

Diane Kripas, Division Chief

PA DCNR Bureau of Recreation and
Conservation

717-772-1282

dkripas@pa.gov

www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cli

