

# Building Capacity for Conservation: *Engaging Local Teens*



## **CLEAR Webinar**

May 19, 2021

Amy Cabaniss & Nicole Freidenfelds

NRCA Program Coordinators

## CLEAR 2021 Webinar Series

Wednesday, May 19. 1-2pm



### Building Capacity for Conservation: Engaging Local Teens

Presented By **Nicole Friedenfelds** and **Amy Cabaniss**, Natural Resources Conservation Academy (NRCA), Dept. of Natural Resources and the Environment

[READ ABSTRACT](#)

[REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, May 26. 1-2pm



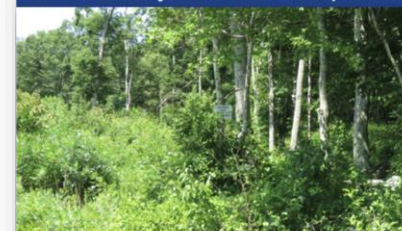
### Connecticut Trail Finder

Presented By **Kim Bradley**, UConn Extension Trails Program Coordinator

[READ ABSTRACT](#)

[REGISTER](#)

Wednesday, June 9. 1-2pm



Speaker Series:  
*Finding the Right Trees for the Right Time*

### Brave New Worlds for Trees: Assisted Migration and the Study of Hoffman Preserve Date

Presented By **Dr. Juliana Barrett**, Connecticut Sea Grant and UConn Extension

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<https://clear.uconn.edu/webinars/schedule>

## Building Capacity for Conservation: *Engaging Local Teens*



**Amy Cabaniss, Ph.D.**  
NRCA Coordinator



**Nicole Freidenfelds**  
NRCA Coordinator

## Meet Your Hosts



## Meet Our Guest Panelists



**Judy Rondeau**  
Eastern CT  
Conservation District



**Joy VanderLek**  
Coalition for a  
Sustainable Cheshire



**Becca**  
CAP 2020-2021



**Warren**  
CTP 2018-2019  
CAP 2019-2020



**Harper**  
CTP 2020-2021

# Webinar Outline

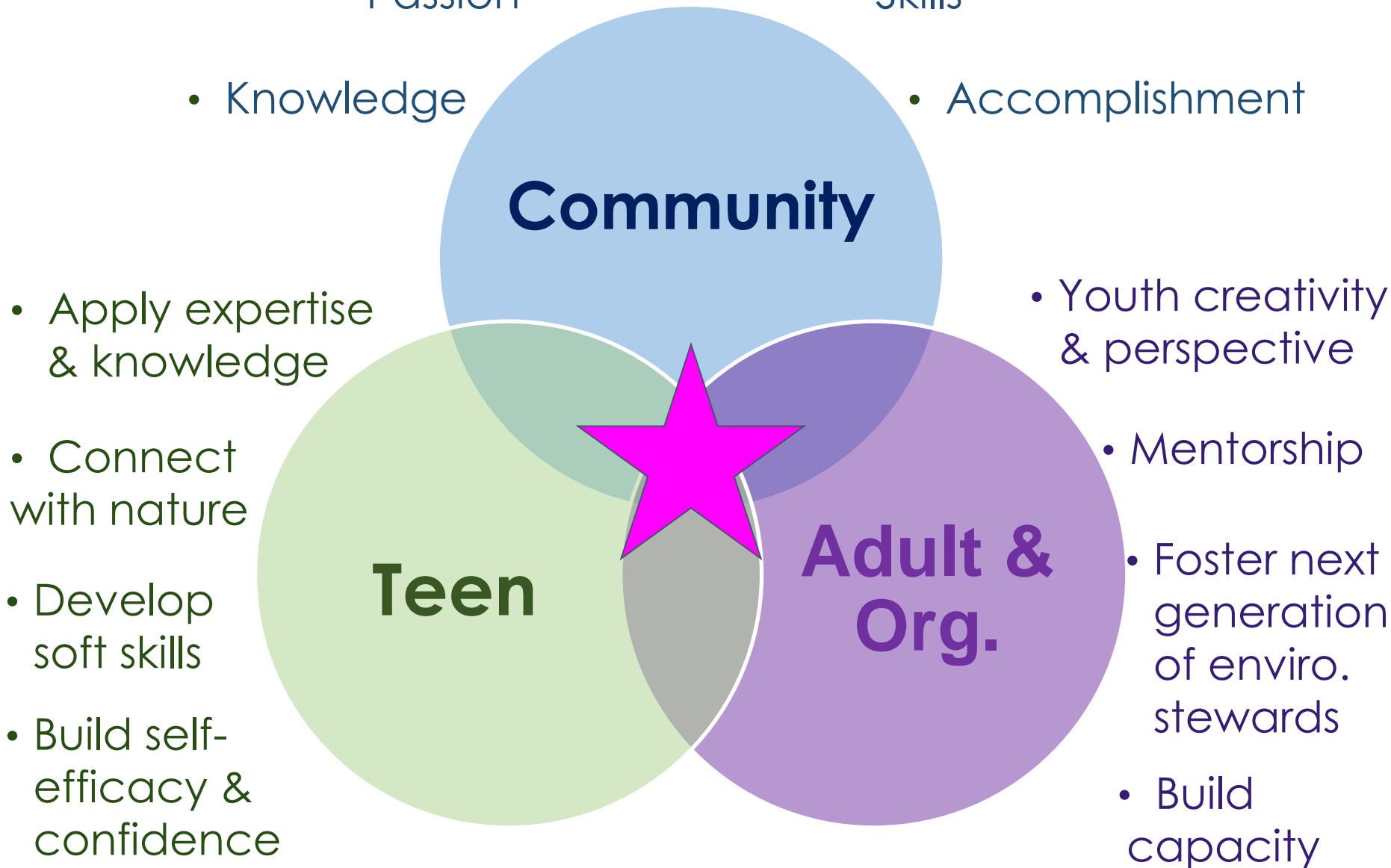
- Building Capacity with Teens
- Overview of NRCA Programs
- Conservation Project Examples
- Q & A

Take a moment to think about the  
**types of conservation projects** that  
benefit your organization...

## Building Capacity with Teens



- Passion
- Skills
- Knowledge
- Accomplishment









# Forging Connections for Success



## NRCA in a Nutshell

- Engage **teens** and **adults** in natural resource science and service-learning
- Participants carry out **community conservation projects** in their own towns throughout CT







**123** high  
schools

**591**

participants

**138** local  
organizations

Natural Resources Conservation  
**Academy**  
University of Connecticut

**125**  
towns

**260** community  
conservation  
projects

Long  
Island  
Sound

White Plain



## Conservation Training Partnerships

**Teen-adult teams** attend 2-day conservation & technology **workshop**

**Teams/partners** from the same general geographic area are matched together

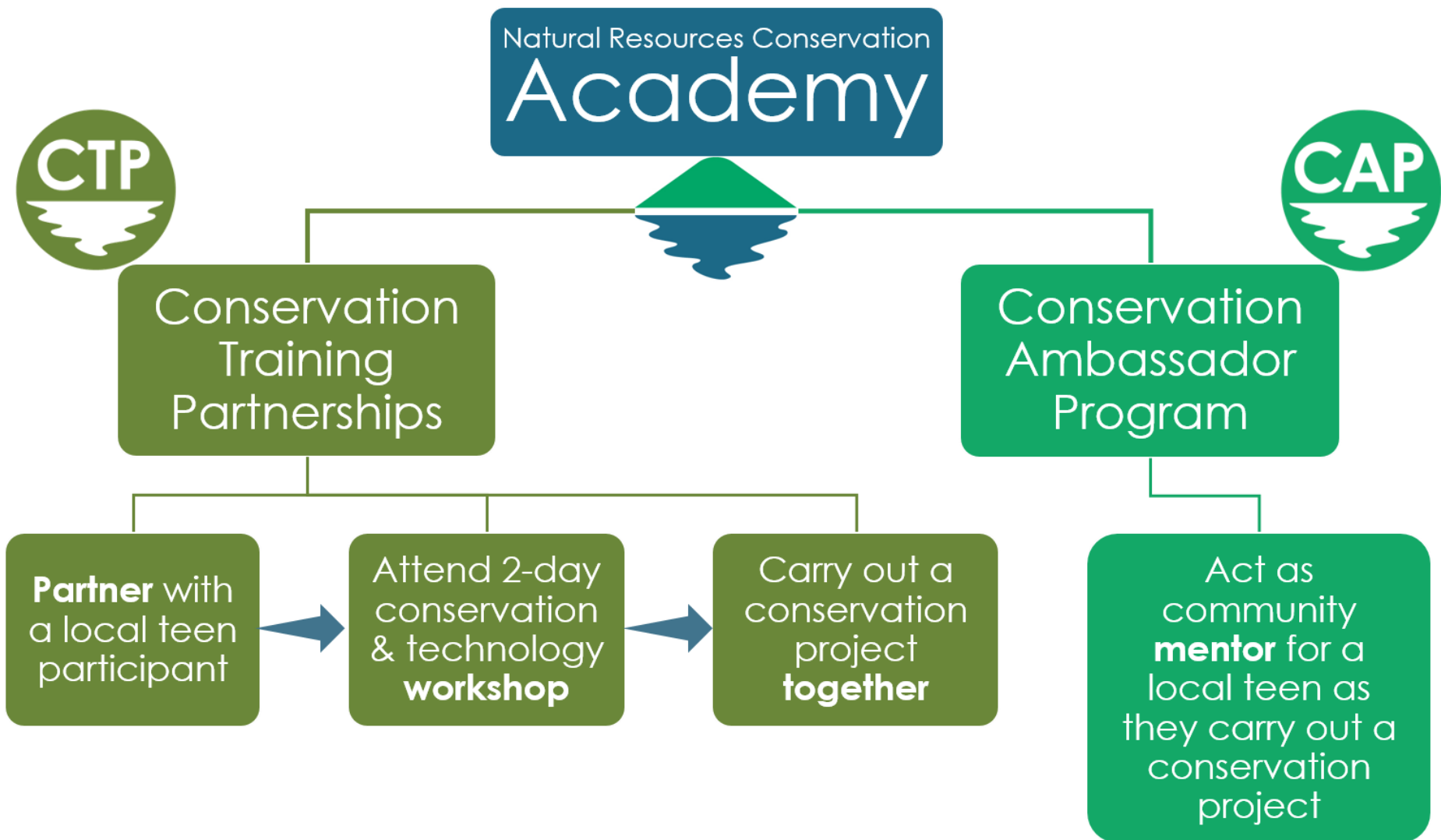
**Partners contribute equally** on their conservation project

## Conservation Ambassador Program

Group of CT high school students join **week-long field experience**

Each teen identifies a potential local **partner organization** for a conservation project

**Adult partner mentors the CAP teen** on their conservation project



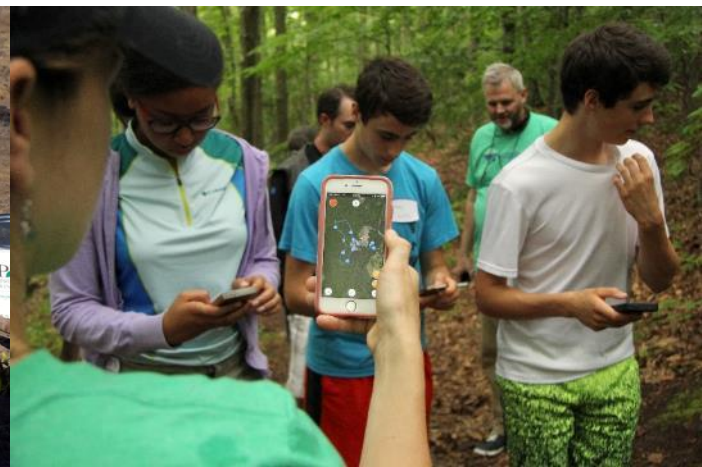
## NRCA Conservation Projects





## Project Goals

- Addresses **local conservation issue**
- **Mutually-beneficial** for both youth participant & partner organization
- **Tailored** to fit individual circumstances & meet community need



## Project Categories

- Inventory & Research
- Habitat Restoration & Stewardship
- Organization & Planning
- Education & Outreach
- Mapping & Geospatial Technology
- And more!





## Invasive Plant Species

- Survey property
- Remove invasives
- Educate public





## Wildlife Monitoring

- Birds & Mammals
- Amphibians & Reptiles
- Invertebrates  
(e.g., aquatic insects, pollinators)



A Story Map



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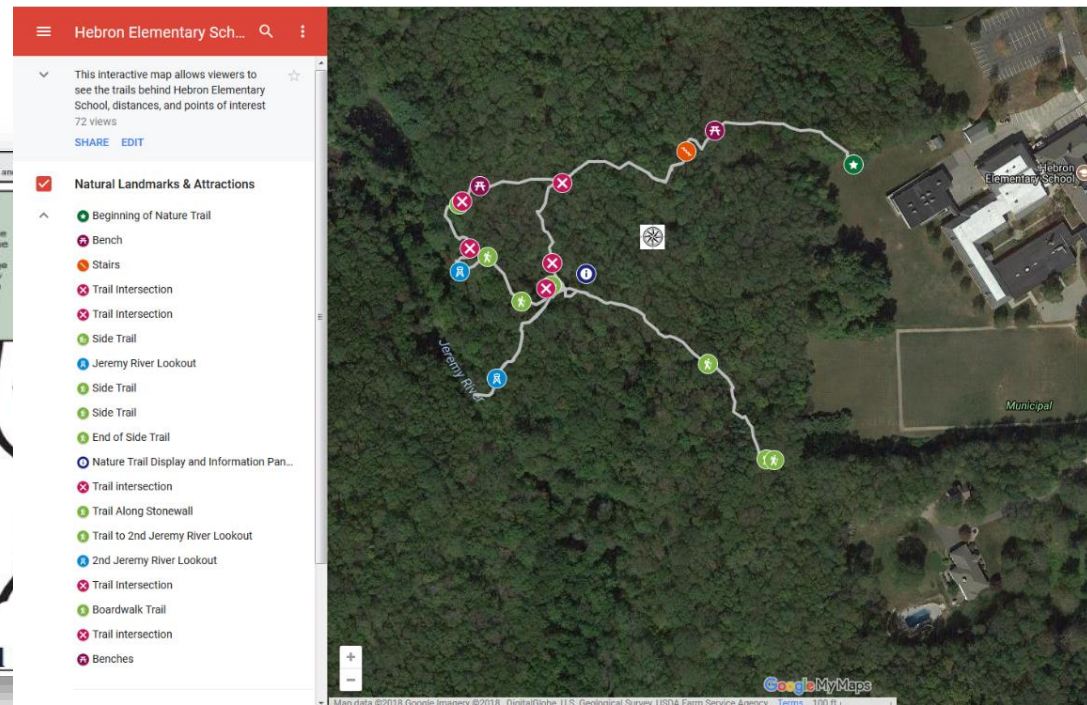
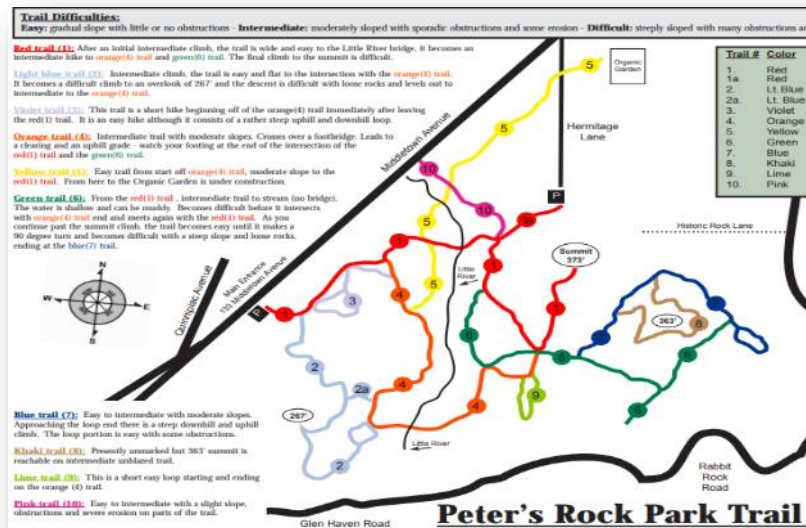
### The Beavers of Mendell's Folly

Mendell's Folly in Bethany, CT is home to many animal species, especially beavers. Beavers may be considered as a nuisance to some, however, they have proven to be a keystone species at Mendell's.



## Trail Mapping & Stewardship

- Create online interactive trail maps
- Identify key trail features
- Maintain trails



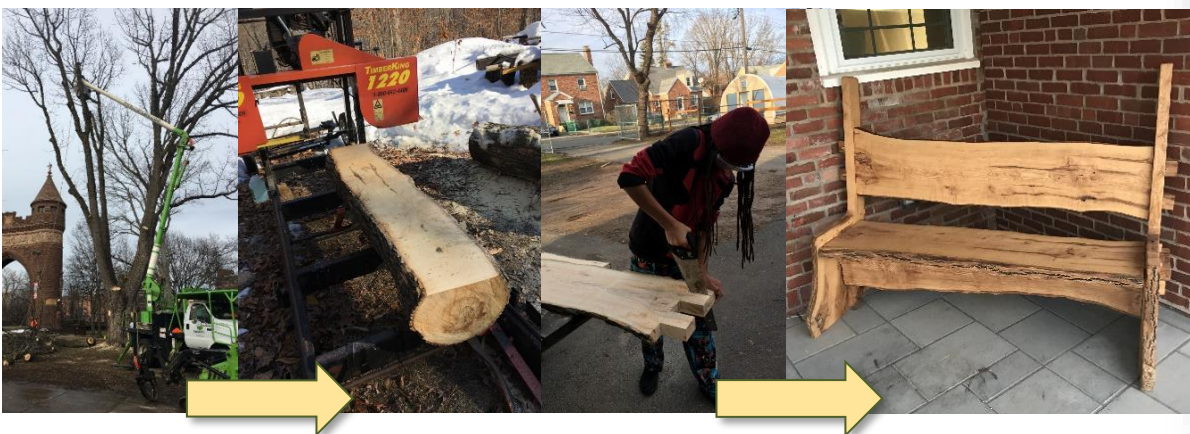


## Providing Solutions

- Green infrastructure
- Stormwater management
- Energy & water use
- Earn Sustainable CT credit



Seminar on Water Conservation





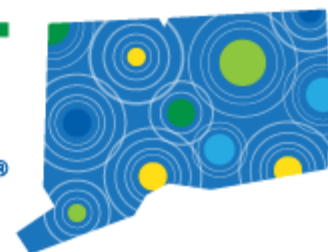
## NRCA & Sustainable CT

### \$1-to-\$1 Matching Grant for Public, Community-Led Sustainability Projects

- Up to **\$7,500** from Sustainable CT for any project that aligns loosely with a [SCT action](#)
- No application to submit & no deadlines
- Immediate turn-around
- Minimal reporting requirements

[sustainablect.org](https://sustainablect.org)

**Sustainable CT**  
Local Actions. Statewide Impact.®



## NRCA & Sustainable CT

The Match: **Crowdfunding**

- 50% of costs covered by SCT, with the other 50% raised through online [crowdfunding](#)
- SCT grant is a match to many **individual/community** donations to each project
  - **Challenge grant:** raise  $\frac{1}{2}$  from community, SCT matches  $\frac{1}{2}$
- Crowdfunding campaigns run with support from fundraising partner, [Patronicity](#)

## NRCA Projects Summary

- Fits participant **needs** & **interests**
- **Flexible** duration
- **Variable** magnitude





## More Projects!

### Filter

#### Categories

- ☐ Biodiversity/Wildlife/Fisheries
- ☐ Community Science
- ☐ Climate Change
- ☐ Food Waste
- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Green Infrastructure
- ☐ Human Dimensions
- ☐ Invasive Species
- ☐ Land Use
- ☐ Mapping/GIS
- ☐ Public Outreach
- ☐ Restoration
- ☐ Soils/Agriculture
- ☐ Trail Stewardship
- ☐ Water Quality/Conservation



#### The Influence of the Transylvania Brook on the Pomperaug River

 Poster



#### Success of Wildflowers: Pollination, Germination, and Stratification

 Poster



#### Factors Affecting Fishing Quality at the Branford Supply Ponds?

 Poster

Link 



#### View the Q

 Poster

StoryMap 



#### Digitizing the Windsor Locks Canal Trail

 Poster

Link 



#### Hebron Gardens & Trails: Encouraging the Local Community to Get Outside

 Poster

Map 

## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project



## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

### 1. Collaborate

- Develop project that ***merges:***
  - ***student interest***
  - ***your interests***
  - ***community need***
- Interest → sustained motivation → project completion
- Real impacts → empowers student
- Lead to CREATIVE conservation solutions





Listen	Give them a choice	Ownership of the project
Give them a voice	Work together	Relationship with the youth, not their guardians
Provide them with other opportunities	Venue for creativity	Be positive

## Collaborate to Promote Youth Empowerment

## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

### 2. Establish expectations & realistic goals

- Get to know student's availability
  - School hours & peaks in assignment deadlines/exams
  - Sports, theater, other extracurricular activities
  - Family commitments
  - **Avoid being discouraging if there is limited time; be flexible**

**Remember: an impactful project  
can be done in a short time**

## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

### 2. Establish expectations & realistic goals

- Be honest about the amount of time you can commit
- Make sure everyone is aware and understanding of changing time commitments
  - ***you can always adjust the project to fit changing schedules***



## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

### 2. Establish expectations & realistic goals

- ✓ Time commitment determined
- Determine what can to be accomplished
  - Be tuned into abilities and limitations
  - Manageable goals
  - Break project into multiple components
  - Can always delete a project component

## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

### 2. Establish expectations & realistic goals

- ✓ Time commitment determined
- ✓ Determine what can to be accomplished (manageable goals)
- Make sure it's clear what each persons' roles and responsibilities are for the project

**Remember: this may be the student's first independent/professional project**

## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

### 3. Communication

- Establish & maintain regular check-ins
  - Agreed-upon communication routine (include parents/guardians)
  - How often?
  - Meet students halfway:



Hangouts





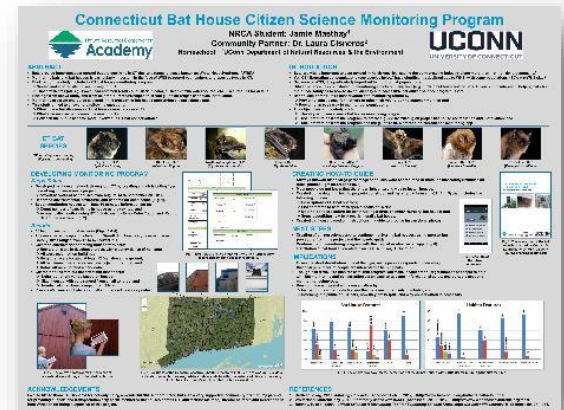
## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

### 3. Communication

- Respectful communication
  - Follow-up in a timely manner
  - Encourage student teammate's participation
  - Work through difference of opinions & listen
  - Serve as a role model
  - Be positive, understanding, etc.

## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

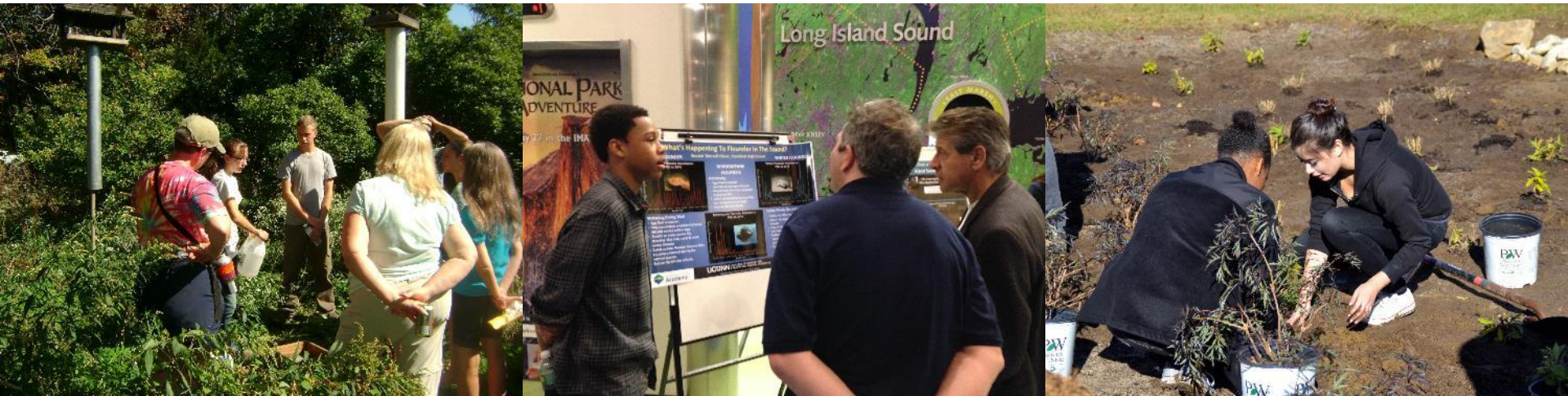
4. Determine how you will document & showcase project
  - **Set goals** to work toward at beginning of project
  - **Document:** data spreadsheet, report, legacy binder, poster, video, storymap, citizen science databases (iNaturalist, eBird)
  - Good documentation → build on in future



## Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

4. Determine how you will document & showcase project
  - **Showcasing:** put on a community event, present at organization meeting, present at a regional conference, distribute educational materials

**Empowers Student & Increases Impact of Work**





# Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

5. Have fun!



## Additional Team Project Resources

### • Project Development Documents

- Team Brainstorming activity
- Project Templates
- Working together reflection prompt

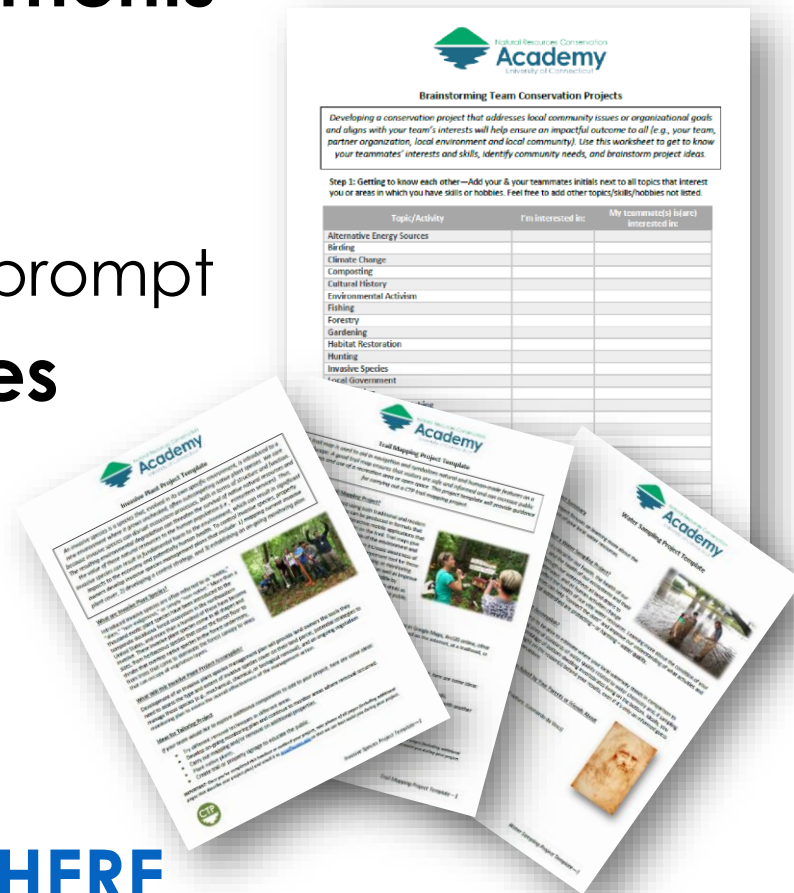
### • Tutorials & Reference Guides

### • Webinars

- Data Management
- Intro to StoryMaps
- Poster Development

### • And more!

[CLICK HERE](#)



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## Thank You!

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