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Measure Q Urban Open Space Grants Awarded Exceed \$1.5 million *Fifteen Organizations Receive Funds to Bolster Local Conservation Projects*

November 21, 2016, San Jose CA: The Board of Directors for the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority has awarded \$1,553,077 in the initial grant cycle for the Measure Q Urban Open Space competitive grant program. Fifteen organizations serving Santa Clara County residents, including nonprofits, schools, cities and the County, received grant funds for community gardens, outdoor leaders training, environmental education, homeless stream stewards, sustainable food systems and more. The \$1.5 million in grant awards leverages more than \$1.1 million in matching funds from the grantee organizations for total urban open space investment of more than \$2.6 million.

“Many South Bay residents, especially those in the urban core, don’t have ready access to Nature,” said Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager for the Open Space Authority. “They must overcome many barriers related to transportation, income, language and culture. We are fortunate to have some incredible schools, nonprofits, cities and county departments in the region that are helping people break down these barriers. But many of these organizations need financial help. The Authority is proud to invest in fifteen such organizations with their creative, impact-rich projects that connect people to Nature, such as bringing kids from Title I schools on field trips to visit a creek, building community gardens and making connections to regional trails.”

The Measure Q Urban Open Space Grant Program was designed to connect people with Nature within their own neighborhoods and focus on areas that do not have ready access to parks, community gardens and urban trails. Criteria used to evaluate grant proposals included the project focus and its alignment with open space conservation goals, level of community engagement and support, project plan, goals, budget, impact, sustainability and the organization’s capacity to complete the project. Proposals won extra points for addressing underserved communities, community- building, demonstrating leadership and innovation – and providing more than 25% in matching funds.

In this inaugural grant cycle, the Authority received twenty-seven eligible applications requesting a total of \$3.3 million. The Authority’s staff evaluated the proposals and held a special Citizens Advisory Committee meeting for further review and public comment that was attended by over forty community members.

“We were absolutely thrilled by the quality, variety and creativity of the proposals that we received,” said Megan Dreger, Grants Administrator for the Authority. “We fully expect these grant-funded projects to have a transformative impact in many communities and greatly increase access to the benefits of Nature and open space throughout our County. We will be working closely with the grantees, regularly sharing progress and outcomes with the public through the Authority’s website and our newsletters. Those interested in receiving updates can register [here](#).”

The Measure Q Urban Open Space Grant Program provides grants in one or more of four categories. In many cases, the grant funded projects provide multiple benefits and can fall under several categories. Categories include:

- Environmental Stewardship and Restoration
- Parks, Trails, and Public Access
- Environmental Education
- Urban Agriculture/Food Systems

The Authority awarded grants in each of its seven districts, bringing benefits to communities throughout the jurisdiction, which includes Milpitas, San Jose, Santa Clara, Campbell, Morgan Hill and unincorporated parts of the county. Many projects are site-specific such as the Morgan Hill Community Garden and the City of Campbell - Nido Neighborhood Reforestation, while others such as the wayfinding and interpretive project of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council are broader in scope and reach. Details of several projects representative of the range of grantees are provided below.

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, which operates in Guadalupe River Park & Gardens, received \$24,987 for its environmental education program. "For many local children, Guadalupe River Park is as close to wilderness as they've been," said Leslee Hamilton, Executive Director of the Guadalupe Garden River Park Conservancy, "After we discuss what they might find (no, there are no bears), get them into waders, and turn them loose to find macro-invertebrates, measure stream flow and turbidity, or test oxygen levels, they gain an appreciation for the river and a huge boost in confidence." The program serves Title I schools serving low-income families and the Boys & Girls Club of Silicon Valley.

Latinos United for a New America (LUNA) received \$250,000 for Nuestro Lugar, a multi-use open space along a quarter mile of Midfield Avenue in East San Jose. The entire length of the proposed open space is bordered by a sound reduction wall that separates Midfield from Highway 101. The project touches multiple grant categories: environmental restoration through the planting of native vegetation, park space for families and community gatherings, and a community garden to promote urban agriculture.

"The most important lasting impact of this project is that it will create a new capability in the Midfield community to act on its own behalf," said Chava Bustamante, Executive Director of LUNA. "The current community members are isolated from each other, are often victims of crime, and live in cramped conditions in order to afford rent. This project will unite residents in a common cause, bring them together as they share their new (and only) open space, and will establish a relationship between the residents and government entities and elected officials that will lay the groundwork for further action to improve the community."

Bay Area Wilderness Training (BAWT) received \$40,000 for its South Bay Capacity Building Project (Getting Underserved Youth Outside). The project will increase the number of program partners and environmental educators in Santa Clara County, which leads to more opportunities for diverse youth to experience the outdoors. "Many teachers and youth workers want to bring youth outdoors but lack experience organizing such outings and are unfamiliar with the logistics, equipment and safety skills involved," said Scott Wolland, Executive Director for Bay Area Wilderness Training. "BAWT addresses this barrier by educating them through our hands-on leadership training courses, giving them the knowledge and confidence needed to take their youth on outdoor trips."

All 2016 Measure Q Urban Open Space Program grantees and projects are listed below and additional details are available at openspaceauthority.org.

Grantee	Award	Categories
Bay Area Ridge Trail Council - Gateway to Trails and Parks: Ridge Trail Interpretive, Wayfinding and Outings Project at Berryessa BART	\$51,401	Parks, Trails, and Public Access
Bay Area Wilderness Training - South Bay Capacity Building Project (Getting Underserved Youth Outside)	\$40,000	Parks, Trails, and Public Access; Environmental Education
City of Campbell - Nido Neighborhood Reforestation	\$48,829	Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
City of Morgan Hill - Morgan Hill Community Garden Expansion and Relocation	\$248,012	Environmental Restoration and Stewardship; Parks, Trails, and Public Access; Environmental Education; Urban Ag/Food Systems
Friends of Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County - The Master Gardener Community Education Center at Martial Cottle Park: Supporting the Environment at Your Own Home	\$132,353	Environmental Restoration and Stewardship; Environmental Education; Urban Ag/Food Systems
Guadalupe River Park Conservancy - Environmental Education for Title One Students and Boys & Girls Club Members	\$24,987	Environmental Education
Joseph George Middle School / Citizen Schools - Joseph George Learning Lab / Community Garden	\$25,000	Environmental Education; Urban Ag/Food Systems
Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful - Coyote Meadows Park Community Planning and Concept Project	\$76,703	Environmental Restoration and Stewardship; Parks, Trails, and Public Access
Latinos United for a New America (LUNA) - Nuestro Lugar	\$250,000	Environmental Restoration and Stewardship; Parks, Trails, and Public Access; Urban Ag/Food Systems
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory - Coyote Creek Field Station Environmental Education Program	\$34,500	Environmental Education
San Jose State University Research Foundation - CommUniverCity: Growing Sustainably	\$166,740	Environmental Education; Urban Ag/Food Systems
Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition - Coyote Creek Homeless Stream Stewards Trash Free Coyote Creek	\$12,142	Environmental Restoration and Stewardship
Santa Clara County Food System Alliance - Small-Scale Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture in Santa Clara County	\$24,999	Urban Ag/Food Systems
Santa Clara County Public Health Department - Park and Play Initiative	\$250,000	Parks, Trails, and Public Access; Environmental Education
The Regents of the University of California / UCCE Santa Clara County - Development of a Small and Urban Beginning Farmer Learning Hub at Martial Cottle Park in Santa Clara County	\$167,411	Environmental Restoration and Stewardship; Urban Ag/Food Systems

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The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority conserves the natural environment, supports agriculture, and connects people to nature, by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations. Since 1993, the Open Space Authority has protected nearly 20,000 acres of open space, preserving the region's scenic beauty, protecting water resources and other natural capital, and providing outdoor recreation opportunities for Santa Clara County residents. Visit openspaceauthority.org or call 408-224-7476.