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Making a Difference in Our Urban Communities

Measure Q Grant Programs Award Nearly \$1 million to Urban Open Space and Environmental Education Projects

June 19, 2018, San Jose CA: The Authority's Board of Directors has awarded \$938,511 of funding for 21 grants in the 2017-2018 grant cycle for both the Measure Q Urban Open Space and Environmental Education Grant Programs. The projects and programs span the Authority's jurisdiction and focus on environmental restoration, parks and trails, urban agriculture, and environmental education programs that teach about nature's health benefits, natural resources, water, and agriculture. The \$938,511 in grant awards leverages more than \$2 million in matching funds from the grantee organizations for a total urban open space investment of just over \$3 million.

When Measure Q was passed by voters in 2014, the Open Space Authority made a bigger commitment to invest in nature within our communities, and so the Measure Q Urban Open Space and Environmental Education Grant Programs were created. In its first year, the Urban Open Space Grant Program awarded over \$1.5 million in funding to 15 different organizations and the Authority was excited to see so many inspiring projects bringing nature to our neighborhoods. Now, a year later, those organizations are making a difference in our urban communities. Below are just two examples that underscore the benefits our grantees bring to urban residents.

Bay Area Wilderness Training trains teachers on how to take underserved and at-risk youth outdoors. With their Measure Q grant, they were able to expand their programs into the South Bay, which also included a Gear Library where teachers can rent outdoor gear for free. Through this expansion, programs like Citizen Schools were able to take a local girls club, whose access to nature is limited, on an overnight camping trip for the first time. (photos included in the media link)

"Bay Area Wilderness Training taught me and our passionate volunteers best practices on providing a safe learning experience for our girls club camping trip," said Seung Lee, Campus Director with Citizen Schools. "Most of the girls had never been camping before and our amazing volunteers were able to teach them not only how to pack a backpack and pitch a tent, but also how they can be safe in nature and enjoy it! Afterwards, all of the girls said they would go back in a heartbeat!"

The San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory used their Measure Q grant to create an Environmental Education program for students from Windmill Springs Elementary and Sheppard Middle School about our local birds and how they track migration patterns through banding. The program includes a classroom and field learning experience where kids get to see the banding process up close right along the Coyote Creek. The schools and students were so thrilled with the experience that they plan to come back next year! (photos and video included in the media link)



“Our Measure Q Urban Open Space Grant has allowed us to reach these underserved youth and get them out into the community to have an incredible experience that they would never be able to otherwise”, said Josh Scullen, Land Bird Program Director with San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. “It’s been such a wonderful experience to expose these youth to nature and help them understand a little bit more about the wildlife around them.”

Many South Bay residents, especially those in the urban core, don’t have ready access to nature and must overcome barriers related to transportation, income, language, and culture. The Measure Q Grant Programs are 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.

“Over the past 2 years through Measure Q we have invested just under \$3 million in more than 30 different projects that connect youth from underserved communities to nature,” said Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager for the Open Space Authority. “We’ve especially enjoyed seeing these youth with limited access to nature have opportunities to experience the outdoors and learn about this precious natural world that surrounds them. The Measure Q Grant Programs allow our dedicated grantees to create more positive experiences in nature for our communities.”

The Measure Q Urban Open Space Grant Program addresses the needs of urban communities, including areas that currently have limited access to preserves and parks. The grant program aims to fund projects that will improve the quality of life for urban residents. This program provides grants in one or more of four categories:

1. Environmental Stewardship and Restoration
2. Parks, Trails, and Public Access
3. Environmental Education
4. Urban Agriculture/Food Systems

The Measure Q Environmental Education Grant Program is a smaller, more streamlined grant program that aims to advance environmental literacy and nature-oriented experiences for children, adults, and families free of charge. This program funds nature and science-based environmental education programs and youth engagement projects. This program provides grants in one or more of these four categories:

1. Natural Resources
2. Water and watersheds
3. Agriculture
4. Nature’s health benefits

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 Santa Clara County. Each project submitted goes through a fair and transparent review process with opportunities for public input.



The Authority looks forward to the impact the 2017-2018 grantees will make in their communities over the coming year. We will be working closely with the grantees, regularly sharing progress and outcomes with the public through the Authority's website and our Urban Open Space Corner article series through our monthly newsletter. Those interested in receiving updates can register [here](#). A list of the 2017-2018 grantees can be found on our website for both the Measure Q [Urban Open Space](#) and [Environmental Education](#) programs.

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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 over 22,000 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.