

# 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](#)

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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



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



**Becca**  
CAP 2020-2021



**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

**Community**

- Apply expertise & knowledge

- Connect with nature

- Develop soft skills

- Build self-efficacy & confidence

**Teen**



**Adult & Org.**

- Youth creativity & perspective

- Mentorship

- Foster next generation of enviro. stewards

- Build capacity





# 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

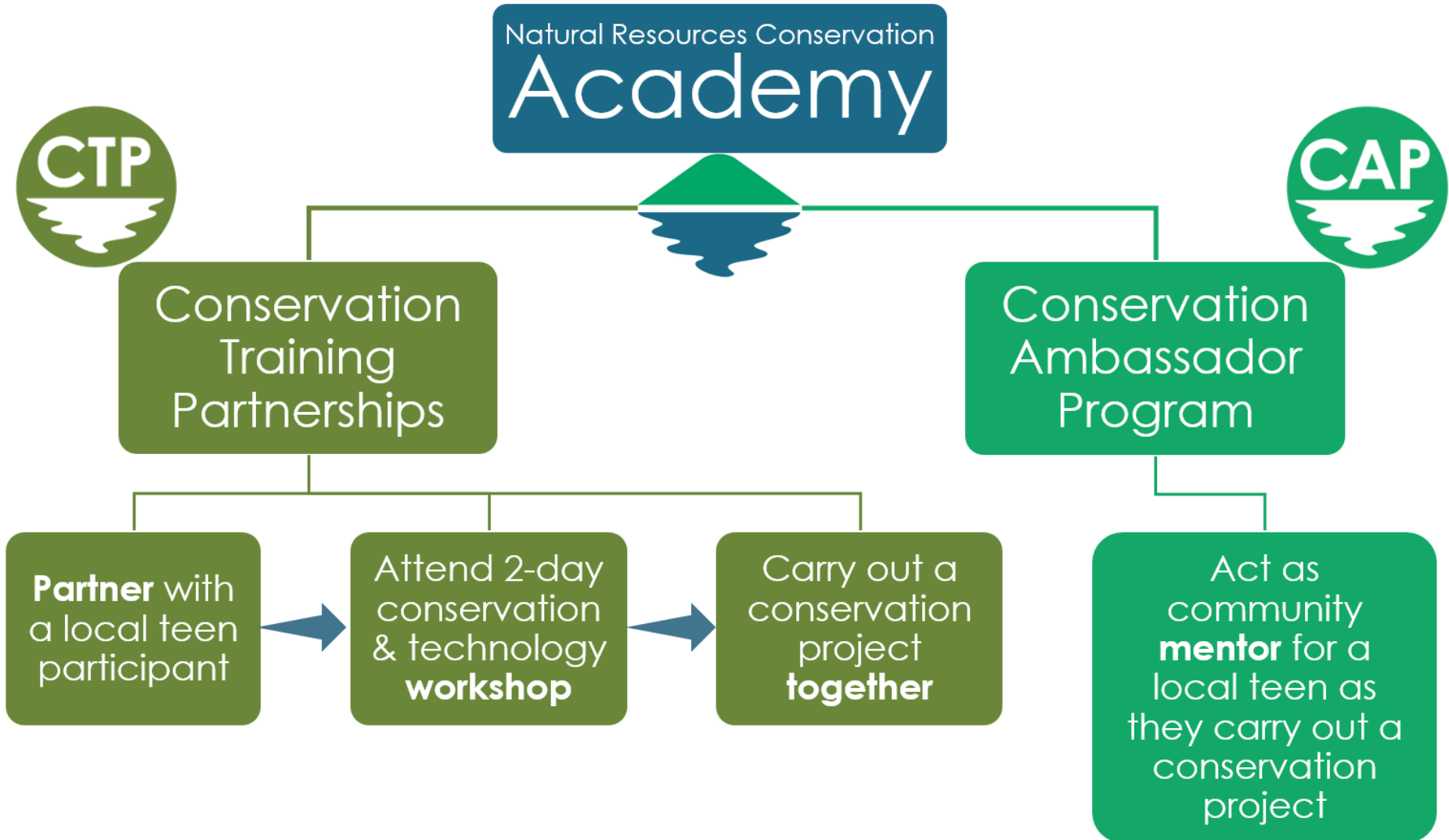
**Partners contribute equally** on their conservation project

## 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

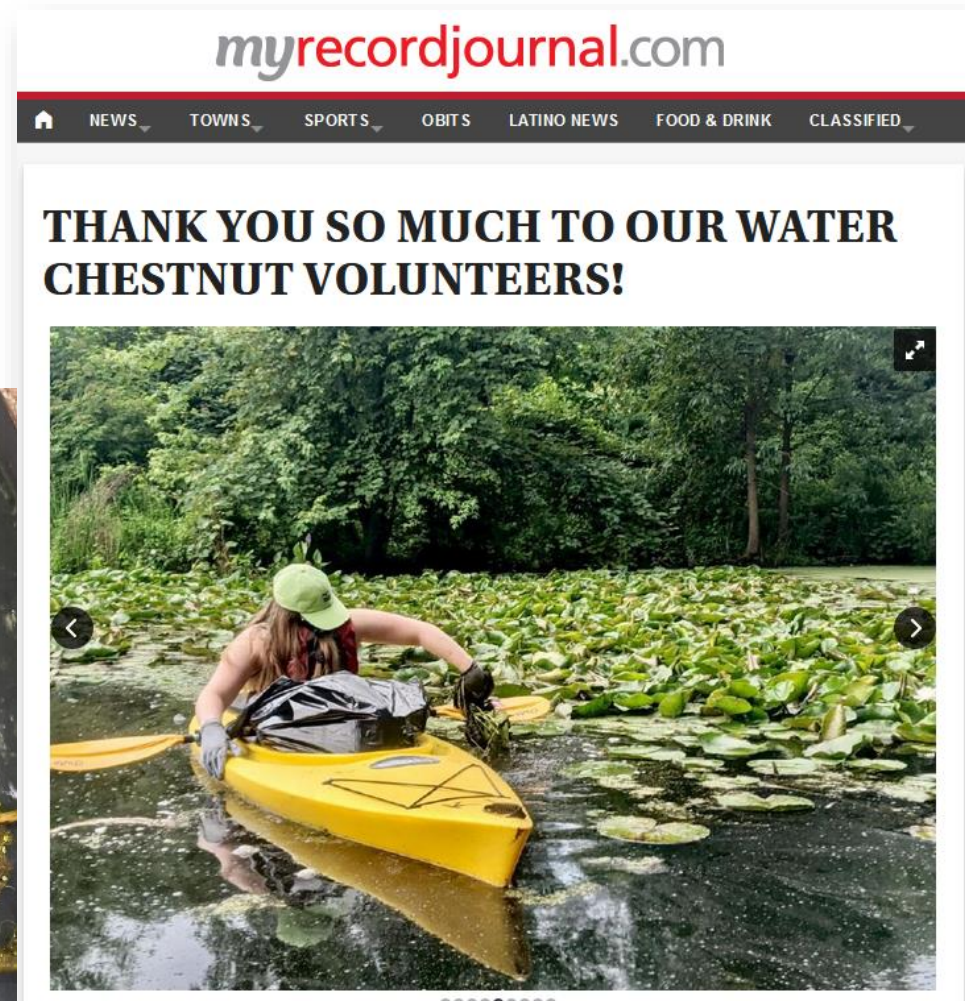
- Inventory & Research
- Habitat Restoration & Stewardship
- Organization & Planning
- Education & Outreach
- Mapping & Geospatial Technology
- And more!





## Invasive Plant Species





- Survey property
- Remove invasives
- Educate public



## Wildlife Monitoring

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



A Story Map     THE BETHANY LAND TRUST  
Home | About | Land | Programs | Conservation | Resources | Contact

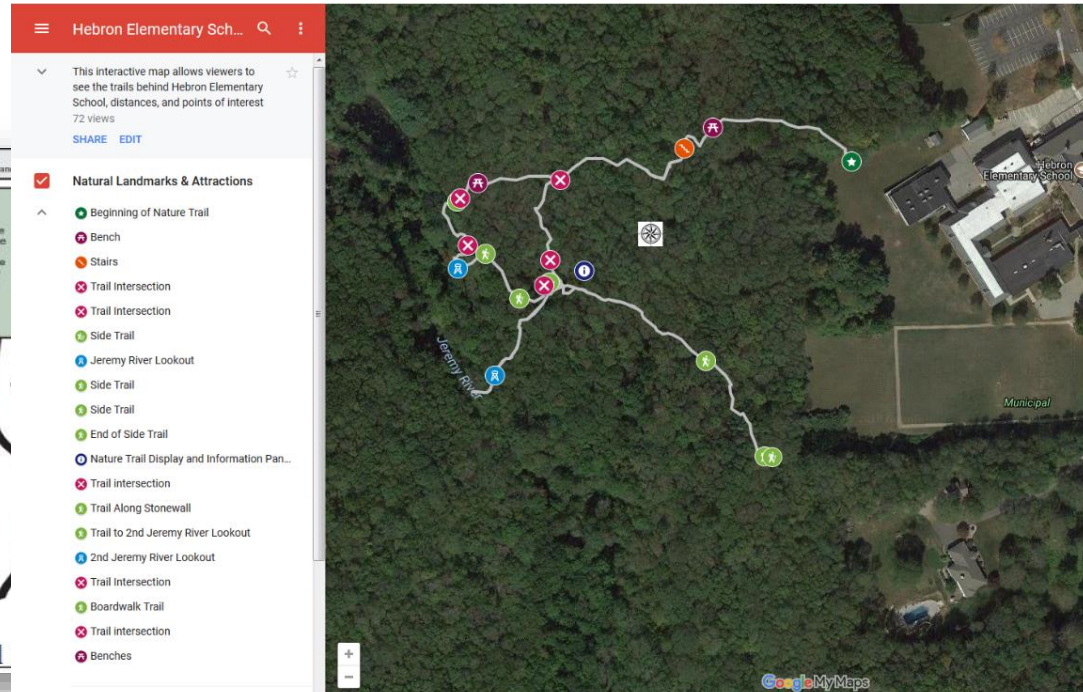
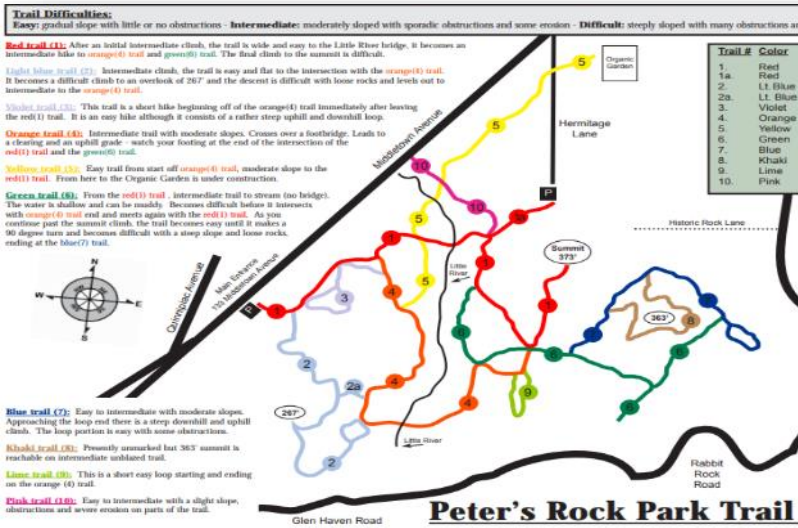
### The Beavers of Mendell's Folly

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

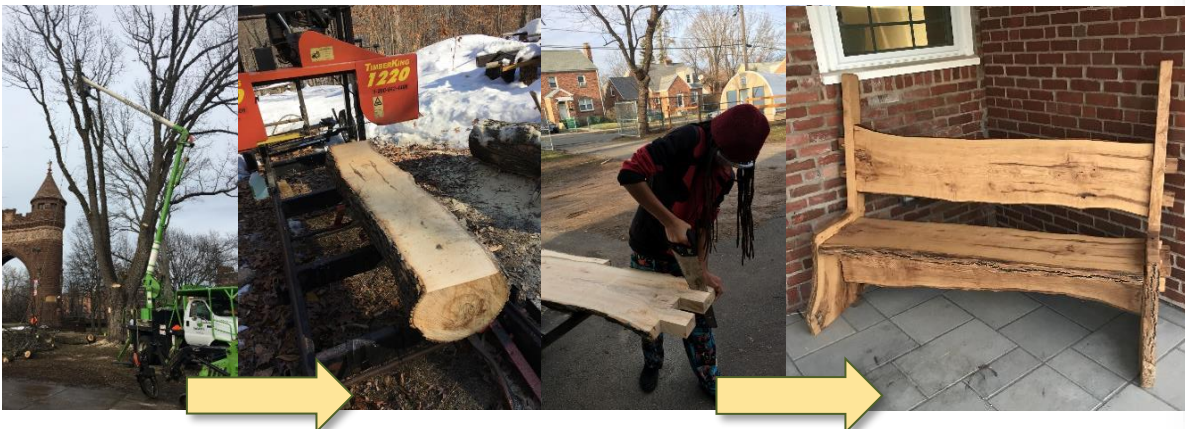


## Providing Solutions

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



Seminar on Water Conservation



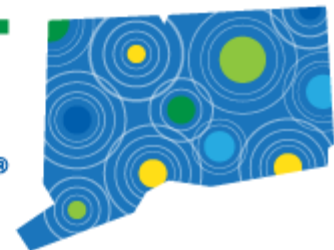
# NRCA & Sustainable CT

## \$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](http://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





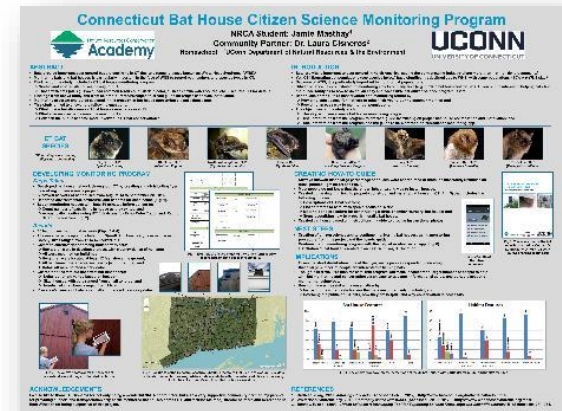
# Five Tips for a Successful Team Project

## 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

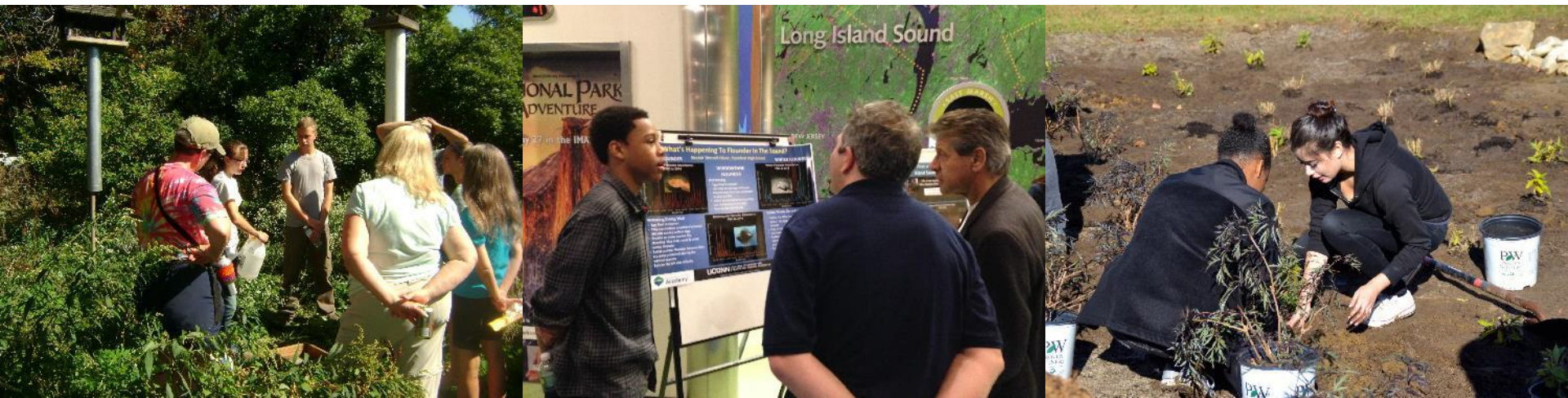
4. Determine how you will document & showcase project
  - **Set goals** to work toward at beginning of project
  - **Document:** data spreadsheet, report, legacy binder, poster, video, storymap, citizen science databases (iNaturalist, eBird)
  - Good documentation → build on in future



## 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

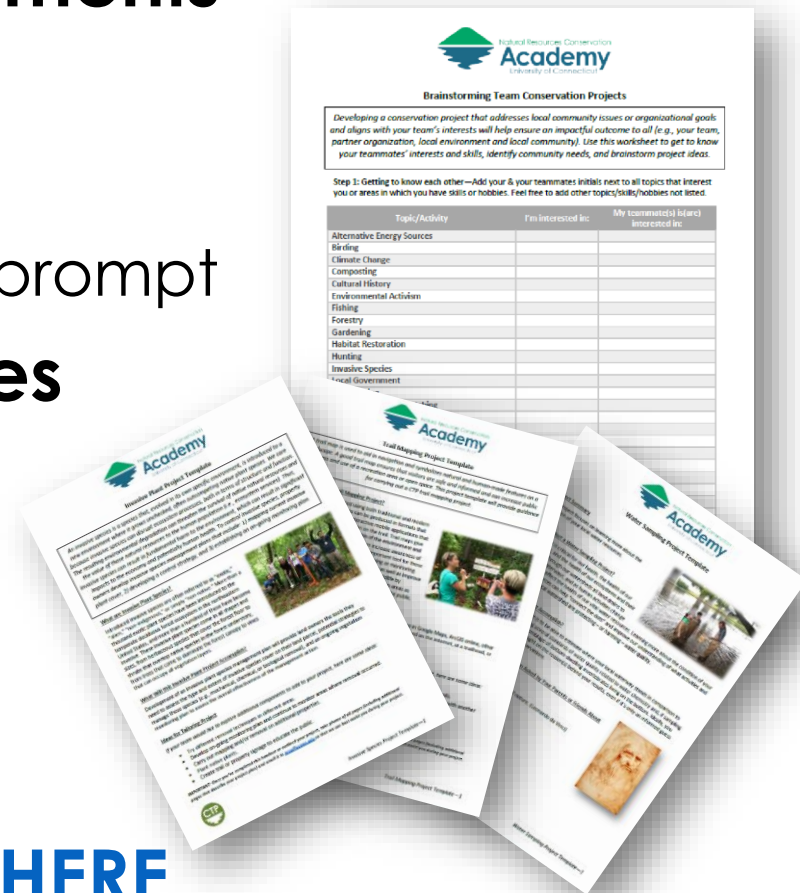
- **Tutorials & Reference Guides**

- **Webinars**

- Data Management
- Intro to StoryMaps
- Poster Development

- **And more!**

[CLICK HERE](#)



**UConn**



**Thank You!**

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NATURAL RESOURCES AND  
THE ENVIRONMENT



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