



Annual Report 2023

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) is the nation's leading organization in lifelong environmental learning, creating opportunities for people to experience and learn about the environment in ways that improve their lives and the health of the planet.



Our Mission

To make the environment more accessible, relatable, relevant, and connected to the daily lives of all Americans



Our Vision

That people's everyday actions are guided by an understanding and concern for the well-being of people and the planet



Our Purpose

To cultivate an environmentally conscious and responsible public

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Letter from Leadership

For more than three decades, the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) has dedicated itself to fostering an environmentally aware and responsible public through K-12 education, health, and conservation-centered programs, grants, and initiatives.

In 2023*, NEEF underwent a period of expansion and collaboration. Our Health program expanded the scope of their work, providing students, educators, and health care professionals alike with the tools needed to manage their (and their patients') physical and mental health in the face of climate change. NEEF's Greening STEM K-12 initiative worked with a diverse group of federal and private partners to award nearly \$300,000 in grants for impactful projects ranging from engaging under resourced youth in community science at national parks to enhancing environmental education in schools.

This year we also celebrated the 30th annual National Public Lands Day, where over 43,000 participants contributed an estimated \$11.6 million in volunteer service to public lands still recovering from COVID-19 maintenance backlogs.

Additionally, NEEF laid the groundwork for future growth by establishing a new five-year strategic plan, developed in collaboration with staff, board members, and key stakeholders. This plan underscores our commitment to providing resources, forging connections, and enhancing accessibility to public lands for historically marginalized communities across the US.

This report provides a brief glimpse into the ways NEEF is connecting people of all ages and walks of life to their communities and the outdoors. We extend our deepest gratitude to our funding partners whose support made our 2023 accomplishments possible. As ever, NEEF's staff, board, and ex-officio members remain united in our efforts to set, maintain, and exceed our high standards for impact, actively positioning the organization to grow these successes in 2024 and beyond.

Onward,
Sara Espinoza, NEEF CEO & President
Kevin Butt, NEEF Board Chair



Sara Espinoza
CEO & President



Kevin Butt
Board Chair

*2023 refers to Fiscal Year 2023 (October 2022 to September 2023).

K-12 Education

Greening STEM, NEEF's K-12 initiative that uses the environment as a context for STEM learning, continued its upward trajectory. Across the country, 20 grants totaling \$258,266 were awarded, facilitating impactful projects. These initiatives ranged from engaging under resourced youth in community science at national parks to enhancing environmental education in schools and afterschool programs.

NEEF grants funded seven **National Park Service**-21st Century Community Learning Centers Greening STEM programs nationwide. These initiatives engaged youth from under-resourced and underrepresented communities in community science and environmental monitoring at national parks during afterschool and out-of-school hours. Additionally, NEEF collaborated with Conservation Legacy to recruit and deploy six AmeriCorps VISTA members to enhance project support.

“Coming on this trip felt like confirmation for me to continue down the path of making it a career.”

Greening STEM student participant

NEEF provided funding for three **Bureau of Land Management** Greening STEM projects that engaged youth in environmental monitoring across Montana, California, and Oregon. These initiatives not only offer valuable data to BLM staff and land managers but also introduce students to STEM career pathways and enrich environmental education inside and outside the classroom.



The student experience and project impact were captured in four inspirational videos shot at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Colorado National Monument, Homestead National Historical Park, and Gateway National Recreation Area. These visual narratives spotlight the meaningful work unfolding in these projects.



NEEF provided funding to support **USDA Forest Service** Greening STEM projects in Illinois, Missouri, California, and Nevada. These programs used STEM-focused content and strategies to enhance learning both inside and outside the classroom. The primary focus is on Forest Service-related subject matter, aiming to assist educators in implementing and improving their teaching methods.

In addition to its federal partners, NEEF joined forces with notable foundations, including the Danaher Foundation and Arconic Foundation, to support diverse educational endeavors from afterschool programs to hands-on learning activities.

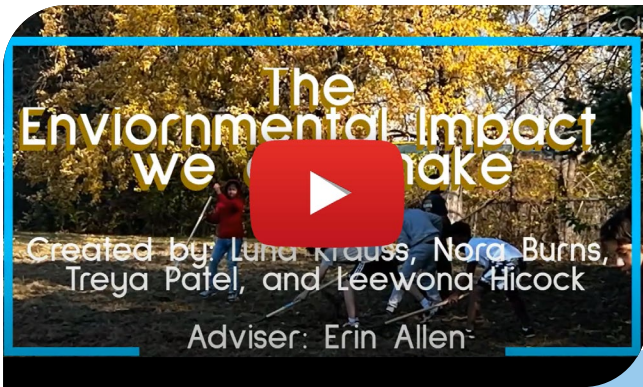
With support from the Arconic Foundation, NEEF funded three Greening STEM projects in Iowa's Quad Cities region. Students engaged in hands-on learning experiences on topics such as prairie restoration.

They also accessed NEEF's newly developed video journalism lab to share environmental stories related to their Greening STEM projects (see video above). Additionally, NEEF created the [Native Schoolyards Toolkit: Prairie Habitat](#) to aid educators.



With support from the Danaher Foundation, NEEF secured four Title I middle schools in Washington, D.C., that will receive educational grants for a series of Greening STEM activities throughout the 2024-2025 school year.

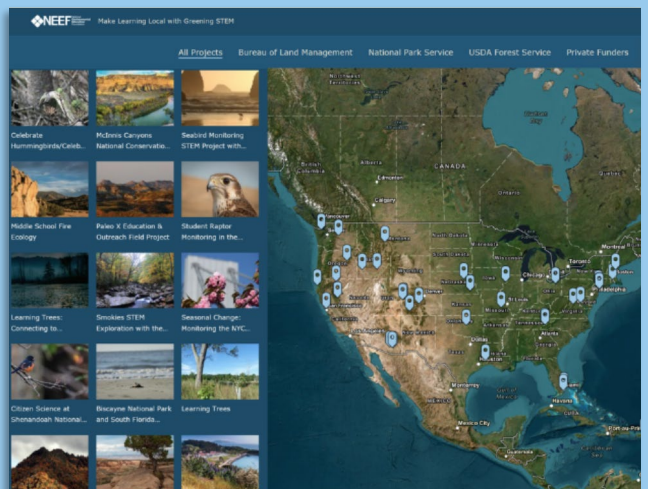
Students will participate in hands-on learning experiences, both on and off-campus, such as green career exploration, native species propagation for habitat restoration, indoor hydroponic system launches, investigation into the health impacts of local waste transfer stations, and conservation efforts for bees.



Greening STEM Across the Country

NEEF helps guide collaboration between community partners to develop and implement educational experiences that promote environmental stewardship for students from diverse backgrounds.

To learn more about NEEF's Greening STEM projects throughout the country, [visit our interactive StoryMap](#).



Health

NEEF and the USDA Forest Service continued their ongoing collaboration to develop a collection of webinar series to raise awareness of environmental health and justice issues among health and outdoor professionals.

The final webinar in the [Health & Nature Series](#), *Nature-Based Trauma-Informed Care in BIPOC Communities* offered strategies for healthcare professionals, outdoor interpretive and volunteer staff, and community organizations looking to use nature as a tool for promoting wellness, resilience, and recovery to their patients and community.

In the [Cultivating Health Equity in a Changing Climate](#) webinar series, professionals discussed the complex dynamics of climate justice, systemic racism, and their profound implications for health. Speakers included Deputy U.S. Surgeon General, Rear Admiral (RADM) Denise Hinton and Dr. Lisa Patel, Executive Director of the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health and was supported by the USDA Forest Service.

1,900+

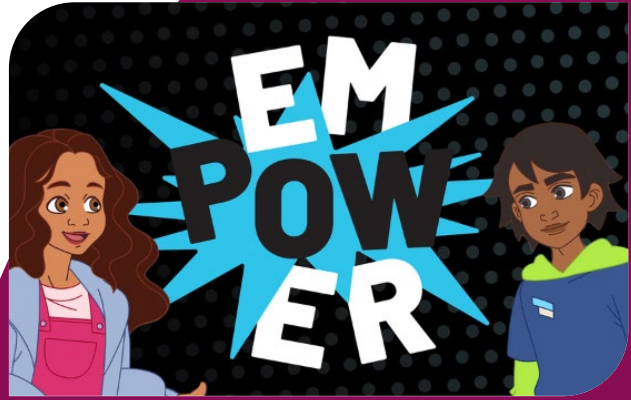
Event Registrations and
Recording Views

Supporting Pediatric Health: NEEF's Training on Environmental Management of Asthma

NEEF's free, accredited online course on Environmental Management of Pediatric Asthma, designed to aid pediatric healthcare providers and clinicians in addressing environmental asthma triggers and intervention strategies, continued to attract interest.

627

New Course Registrations



NEEF Teams Up with Hip Hop Public Health to Empower Youth with Asthma

Using the power of music to educate and motivate healthy behaviors, NEEF collaborated with Hip Hop Public Health (HHPH), the globally acclaimed nonprofit co-founded by esteemed neurologist Dr. Olajide Williams and Hip Hop icon Doug E. Fresh, to create a dynamic educational multimedia collection called [EMPOWER](#). Comprised of eight original songs and animated videos, EMPOWER aims to reach and inspire young people with asthma in an entertaining, culturally relevant way. EMPOWER offers artistic patient education products for youth and health care providers to encourage adolescent asthma health literacy and self care.



Conservation

This year, NEEF's conservation program area celebrated the 30th annual National Public Lands Day (NPLD). Alongside this milestone, we allocated \$730,104 in grant funding. This funding was used to enhance pollinator habitat, expand opportunities for engaging with federal and public lands, support universal accessibility projects, and involve the employees and family members of NEEF's funding partners.



NPLD 30th Impacts

43,460

Volunteers

329,261

Volunteer Hours

600

Events

\$11.7 Million

Value of Volunteer Service



National Public Lands Day events took place in nearly all 50 states for the 30th Annual celebration.



NEEF's conservation grants provided **\$730,104 to 44 groups** in support of public lands stewardship events, service projects on DoD lands with active-duty military and their families, improvement of over 2,000 acres of pollinator habitat, and 15 projects that improved access for people with disabilities on public lands.

NEEF launched a second three-year **\$150,000 grant** in partnership with Toyota. Two grantees joined NEEF and Toyota to improve Fish Trap Lake Park in West Dallas, Texas, and provide environmental education opportunities for youth in the community.

The first grantee in Huntsville, Alabama, continues into its second grant year with a nearly **10% growth in park attendees thanks to the accessibility improvements and additional youth education opportunities** funded in grant year one.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

NEEF has taken significant strides in its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) efforts both externally in employment practices and internally within organizational policies and culture.

In addition to the programmatic efforts, including engaging students at high-need schools and addressing environmental health disparities, NEEF has prioritized DE&I by revising and creating internal policies to ensure fairness and inclusivity across all operational aspects. These include personnel policy manual revisions, implementing salary analysis for pay equity, conducting management training on performance management, and creating an Inclusive Language Guide.

Additionally, NEEF conducts quarterly culture surveys, engages employees in dialogue to address concerns, and implements changes based on feedback.



NEEF also shares diverse content, offers DE&I training opportunities, and celebrates individuals who embody organizational values, fostering a culture of inclusivity and appreciation.

Furthermore, NEEF ensures a comprehensive and sustainable approach to DE&I by integrating DE&I activities into annual objectives, incorporating DE&I into the budget, and facilitating monthly DE&I conversations at the leadership team level.

Strengthening Diversity in NEEF's Hiring Process

NEEF has made employment opportunities more accessible by broadening recruitment strategies, streamlining the application process, and ensuring diverse hiring panels.

Engagement Campaigns

NEEF partners with companies for employee engagement campaigns promoting CSR and ESG priorities, fostering sustainability actions at work and in communities. On public facing campaigns, NEEF collaborates with trusted organizations like iHeartRadio, HipHop Public Health, NHL, and the NBA, to develop impactful messaging to educate and empower people for sustainable living.



This year, NEEF partnered with organizations including Booz Allen Hamilton and Leidos, to create customized day of service events across the nation. Employees and their families, spanning all ages, came together for service projects aimed at rejuvenating public parks, trails, and beaches.

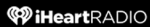
“Activities like the Day of Service events definitely help strengthen our employees’ connection to, and understanding of, our sustainability goals.”

Daniel Pellegrom,
Leidos Director of ESG & Corporate Responsibility



Together, we have the power to change the world.

Small Changes = One Big Healthier World



Empowering Environmental Action Since 2020

The iHeartRadio Earth campaign, launched in 2020, represents a commitment to environmental stewardship, combining compelling audio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) with a wealth of practical tips, resources, and actionable steps on its website. This ongoing initiative empowers individuals to make positive contributions to the environment, locally and globally.

305,204,000

Impressions in 2023

\$2.4 Million

Estimated Media Value

Donors

Corporate

AECOM
AltieriSeborWieber, LLC
Arconic Foundation
Ayes Associates
Booz Allen Hamilton
Canon U.S.A., Inc.
Danaher Foundation
F5 Networks
Faith Technologies, Inc.
Farmers Insurance Group
Groundswell
Hilco Redevelopment Partners
International Paper
Leidos
Outdoor Wise Living, LLC
PPG Foundation
SCS Engineers
Selective Insurance Group Foundation
Subaru of America Foundation, Inc.
Toyota Motor North America
Victoria's Secret
Walksy Investment Management
Walmart Spark Fund

In-Kind

Beveridge & Diamond, P.C.
iHeartMedia, Inc.

Other

Waste and Resources Action
Programme

Foundations

AmazonSmile Foundation
Anonymous
Alpin J. and Alpin W. Cameron Memorial
Fund
Alisann and Terry Collins Foundation
Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Global
Jeremy Heritage Fund
Ledyard-Harlow Foundation
HLM Pushke Fund
Silton Family Foundation
The Vidda Foundation

Government

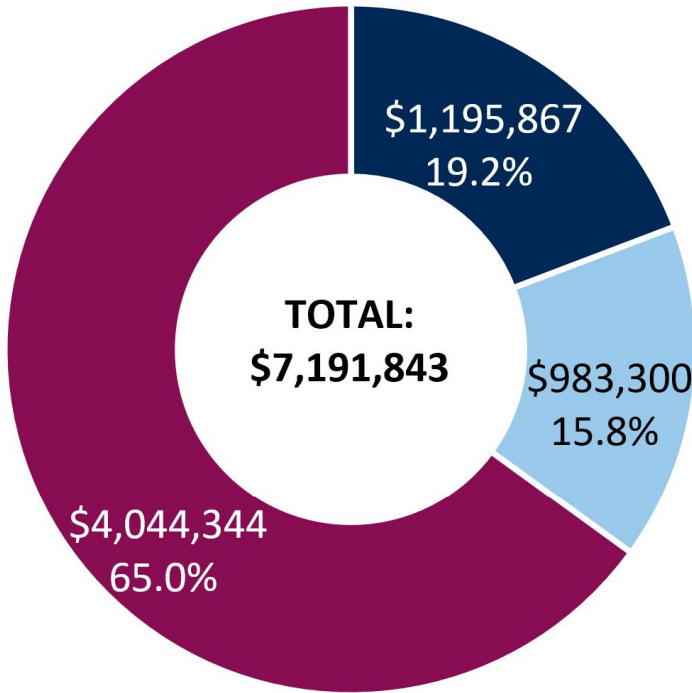
Department of Defense Legacy Resource
Management Program
US Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Forest Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service



Individuals

- Alexandra Andeen
- Anonymous (6)
- Decker Anstrom and Sherry Heimstra
- Aurli Bokovza
- Robert D. Bullard
- Mary Burditt
- Kevin Butt
- Margaret Chang
- Amberlee Chaussee
- Shan Chen
- Sally Cole
- Nancy Cynamon
- Katherine Daniel
- Karen DeMay
- Martin Dillingham
- Lucas Dunn
- Lucinda Dykes
- William Elmore
- Sara Espinoza
- Phyllis Ferrera
- Jodie Fink
- Ellen Foster
- Alexandra Funk
- Arturo Garcia-Costas
- Joseph Godsey
- Susan Grad
- Todd Greenwood
- Chris Hack
- Jeniffer Harper-Taylor
- Lindsay Harris
- Kiley Hertel
- Valerie Hill
- Katie Hogge
- Lindsay Hui
- Gayle Janzen
- Ronak Kanwar
- Michael Klass
- Eileen Kline
- Brandon Kremer
- Deena Kuhn
- Nagesh Kumar
- Aimee Lavery
- Ariel Lavery
- Chris Lavery
- Scott Lindberg
- Eric Linner
- Jennifer Love
- Debbie Lucci
- Dante Mazza
- Lori McFarling
- Omar Mitchell
- Carolyn Palm *in honor of Janice Labroo*
- Hope Quinn
- Lyla Rancer
- William K. Reilly
- Joseph Ryder
- Ilana Saltzbart *in honor of TMNA Environmental, Health & Safety Team*
- Barbara C. Santoro
- Mark Schenkman
- Vincent Schueren Jr.
- James Sellinger
- Marja D. Selna
- Paul Shanahan
- Karli Sherwinter *in honor of Ghita Carroll*
- Stephen Sikra
- Rayze Simonson
- Victoria Simpson
- Alexis A. Sondergaard
- Jennifer Stash
- Michael Stone
- Bentley Utgaard
- Jeremy Van Hecke
- Cindy Van Hecke
- Anubhuti Varma
- Bob M. Weinstein *in memory of Henry Gass*
- Grace Wellwerts
- Colin White
- Bonnie Whitler
- S and R Wolen-Gilbert
- Diane W. Wood
- Philip Yip
- Tony Youngblood

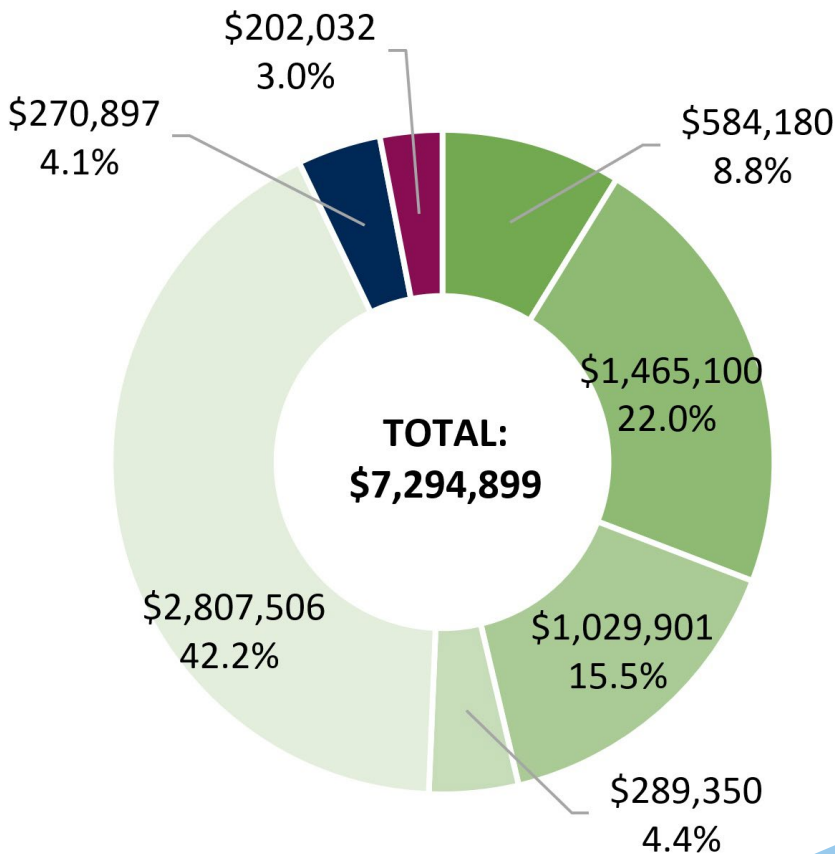
Financials



Income

- Government grants
- Federal appropriation
- All other contributions

Total End of Year Net Assets:
\$1,578,380



Expenses

- Health and Wellness
- Conservation
- K-12 Education
- Campaigns
- Public Outreach
- Total Fundraising
- Total Administrative

Total Program Expenses:
\$6,176,037

Leadership

Governing Board

- **Kevin Butt** (Chair), Senior Director, Environmental Sustainability, Sustainability & Regulatory Affairs, Toyota Motor North America, Inc.
- **Jennifer Love** (Vice Chair), Former Chief Security Officer and Senior Vice President, Safety, Health and Environment, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.
- **Todd Greenwood** (through August 2023; Treasurer), Vice President of Business Development, Farm Journal Foundation
- **Robert D. Bullard, PhD**, Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Policy at Texas Southern University
- **Sally Cole**, Community Leader, Former Tech Executive at Apple and Google
- **Katharine Emerson** (through August 2023), Chief of Staff, World Food Program USA
- **Arturo Garcia-Costas**, Program Officer, Local, National, and International Environment, The New York Community Trust
- **Jeniffer Harper-Taylor**, Head of STEM Education, Siemens Foundation
- **Katie Hogge**, Digital Outreach Manager, Ocean Conservancy
- **Lori McFarling**, Non-Profit Advisor, Former President Social Impact, Discovery Education
- **Omar Mitchell**, Vice President of Sustainable Infrastructure and Growth Initiatives, National Hockey League
- **Stephen Sikra**, Former Vice President and Head of the Americas, Alliance to End Plastic Waste

Staff Leadership

- **Sara Espinoza**, President and CEO (from May 2023); Interim President (Oct 2022-August 2023); Vice President, Programs (through May 2023)
- **Meri-Margaret Deoudes**, President and CEO (through October 2022)
- **Victoria Collins-Hughes**, Vice President, Human Resources & Culture (from December 2022)
- **Patrick Deavy**, Vice President, Organizational Development
- **Jada Lewis**, Vice President Programs (from August 2023)
- **Debbie Lucci**, Vice President, Development
- **Amy Skalmusky**, Vice President, Marketing and Communications
- **Nancy L. Smith**, Vice President, Finance & Administration (through March 2023)
- **Morgan Vacanti**, Vice President, Finance & Administration (from April 2023)

Ex-Officio Board

- **Heidi McAllister** (from May 2023), Assistant Director of Conservation Education, USDA Forest Service
- **Tinelle Bustam**, PhD (through May 2023), National Director, Conservation Education, USDA Forest Service
- **Rosemary Enobakhare**, Associate Administrator, Office of Public Engagement and Environmental Education, US Environmental Protection Agency
- **Kenneth W. Harding**, Chief Operating Officer, National Weather Service
- **Louisa Koch**, Director of Education, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- **Sara B. Newman**, DrPH, MCP, Captain - United States Public Health Service; Director, Office of Public Health, National Park Service
- **Ryan Orndorff**, Director, DoD Natural Resource Program, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, US Department of Defense
- **Ericka L. Reid**, PhD, Director, Office of Science Education & Diversity, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health
- **Nora Savage**, PhD, Nano Program Director, Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems (CBET), Engineering Directorate, National Science Foundation
- **Nicole Steele**, Senior Advisor on Energy Justice and Workforce, SETO, US Department of Energy; Head of National Community Solar Partnership
- **Shannon Steinbauer**, Special Assistant to the Director, Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Sharunda D. Buchanan**, MS, PhD (Liaison), Director, Office of Priority Projects and Innovation, Office of the Director, National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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