



Urban/Rural Education Initiative Programs

GREEN CONNECTIONS APPLICATION

Watershed Agricultural Council
Forestry Program
www.nycwatershed.org



Check nycwatershed.org/greenconnections for current application deadline & maximum funding amount.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Green Connections program fosters mutual understanding and friendship between students from New York City and the upstate NYC watershed, while inspiring and enabling them to become excellent life-long stewards of forests and water quality.

Students from upstate NYC Watershed and downstate NYC classrooms become pen pals for a school year. Pen pals exchange letters, learn from a common watershed curricula, do a local stewardship activity, and share hands-on watershed experiences on two joint field trips—one to NYC, and one to the upstate NYC Watershed.

Field trip experiences are designed to bring students' watershed learning to life. They offer an opportunity to meaningfully connect students with NYC's urban environment; the forested watershed environment that supplies NYC's drinking water; and each other. Students may visit each other's schools, get a first-hand view of a drinking water reservoir, learn about water quality from a boat, study a nearby stream, tour a maple farm, volunteer to help protect forests and water quality, and more.

In short, GREEN CONNECTIONS...

1. Connects upstate and downstate students to one another
2. Connects NYC students to the forested source of their drinking water
3. Connects watershed students to the people who depend on them and their forests for clean water
4. Connects students to their local environments and ways to care for forests and water quality

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Any 4th-8th grade classroom teacher in New York City or the upstate NYC Watershed regions (Catskill/Delaware and Croton) who has attended the Watershed Forestry Institute for Teachers is eligible to apply. Teacher Partners submit separate applications. Maximum total combined grant awards for a partnership (2 classrooms of 20-40 students each) is adjusted annually and can be found on the website: nycwatershed.org/greenconnections. One round of Green Connections grant funding is awarded each year with application deadline in early September.

HOW IT WORKS

Partnership

Green Connections Partner Classrooms—including both students and teachers—maintain regular contact with each other and with the Program Coordinator throughout the year. Teacher Partners coordinate to pair-up student pen pals, schedule communications and trip dates, and confirm basic trip logistics (preferred activities and locations, transportation options, available chaperones, etc.). At the required Green Connections Kick-off meeting, participating teachers meet with one another and the Program Coordinator to plan the year's activities and address any questions.

Participating teachers may apply in conjunction with the partner school of their choice.

If you are an interested applicant in need of a partner school, please contact Tyler Van Fleet, East of Hudson Forestry Program Coordinator, at: education@nycwatershed.org.

Learning Outcomes

Participating students gain rich experiences in another culture and natural environment and learn:

- essential information about watersheds, and specifically, the NYC Watershed;
- the components of the NYC water supply system and how these components interact to provide clean, drinkable water;
- ways that forests impact water quality;
- ways that people impact forests;
- actions that people can take to protect forests and water quality.

Pen Pals

Teacher Partners facilitate a year-long student pen pal friendship. Pen pals exchange at least 3 communications with each other, beginning with hand-written letters. Students interact with their pen pals on field trips, sharing these experiences and showing their local environments to each other.

Watershed Curricula

Throughout the school year, each teacher will complete a selection of engaging lessons (provided and self-curated) designed to teach students about the NYC Watershed and water supply system, including how people and forests impact water quality.

Field Trips

Partner Classrooms go on one field trip in the fall and one in the spring. Teacher Partners collaborate with the Program Coordinator to identify trip options, create schedules, and reserve programming.

Stewardship Activity

Sometime during the school year, each classroom will do a stewardship activity related to forests and water quality. The purpose of this experience is to help students connect with and care for their local environment. The Program Coordinator will assist with planning these activities, which may include tree planting, stream or park clean-ups, Trout in the Classroom participation, etc.

Role of the Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator is responsible for facilitating successful classroom partnerships and field trips. The Program Coordinator supports Teacher Partners through all aspects of the program, from creating field trip schedules to conducting 1-2 classroom visits to deliver lessons from the curriculum.

Funding

Together, partnerships receive funding (current maximum funding amounts are provided at nycwatershed.org/greenconnections), which may be used for transportation, programming, and field trip food and safety-related materials. The Program Coordinator typically reserves and pays directly for field trip bus transportation and programming. Teachers typically pay directly for field trip food, safety-related items, and supplemental transportation, for which they are reimbursed by WAC at the conclusion of the program.

To receive funding, participants must complete the following requirements:

1. attend a program kick-off meeting;
2. ensure students complete pre- and post-program student learning assessments in the classroom;
3. communicate with the Program Coordinator and Teacher Partner at least monthly;
4. schedule 1-2 classroom visits with the Program Coordinator;
5. engage students in lessons from the Green Connections curriculum;
6. complete at least 3 rounds of correspondence between student pen pals;
7. conduct 2 joint field trips (one to an upstate watershed location and one to NYC);
8. involve students in a tree-, forest-, or water-focused local stewardship activity; and
9. provide requested documentation for program activities in a timely manner.

At the discretion of WAC, funding reimbursement may be forfeit by participants who do not complete these minimum requirements. Teachers failing to meet these requirements will also be unlikely to receive funding in the future.

If at any time a Teacher Partner thinks they may have difficulty meeting program requirements, they should contact the Program Coordinator to discuss options and opportunities as soon as possible!

HOW TO APPLY

All Submitted Applications Must:

- **Be complete!** All questions answered and the Administrative Support Form submitted.
- **Be typed!** Handwritten applications will not be considered.
- **Be received on time!** Via e-mail or fax and received no later than the deadline posted on the program website.

For more information and to submit an application, contact:

Tyler Van Fleet, East of Hudson Forestry Program Coordinator, or
Brittany Schenck, Forestry Program Executive Assistant and West of Hudson Educator
Watershed Agricultural Council
33195 State Highway 10, Walton, NY 13856
Phone: (607) 865-7790 Fax: (607) 865-4932
Email: education@nycwatershed.org

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

I am a: New participant (You have never participated in Green Connections before.)
 Repeat participant (You have participated in Green Connections before.)

Your Name: _____

School/Organization Name: _____

Grade(s) you currently teach: _____

Subject(s) you currently teach: _____

School/Org Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Describe the student group participating in the program (i.e. grade level, type of class or club, group size, languages spoken, learning needs, etc.)

List and describe the other teachers who will be involved in the program (i.e. Co-teachers, classroom lead teachers, teaching assistants, etc.)

2. PARTNER SCHOOL INFORMATION

If you have a Partner School, please complete the following information:

Partner School: _____

Teacher Partner(s): _____

Number of years this
partnership has existed: _____

3. PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

What year(s) did you attended the Watershed Forestry Institute for Teachers? _____

Please share any environmental professional development and/or teaching resources you have engaged with recently that you would recommend, especially those related to watershed or forestry themes. This helps us stay informed and allows us to share your recommendations with other educators. (200 words max.)

4. PROGRAM INFORMATION

PURPOSE

Why do you want to participate in Green Connections? Please explain how Green Connections integrates into your existing curriculum and enriches student learning. *For repeat participants, why do you want to continue to participate, in terms of academic learning and student enrichment?*

STUDENT PEN PALS

A unique aspect of Green Connections is the relationship between upstate/downstate student pen pals. In your opinion, what is the value of these peer-to-peer student relationships? How will you help your students develop meaningful relationships with their pen pals?

CURRICULUM

The Green Connections Curriculum is housed in a Google Classroom and leads students through a sequence of learning topics including: Creating and exchanging information about their local school/community/environment, watershed form and function, the history and operation of the NYC Watershed and water supply system, the role of forest ecosystems in protecting water quality, sustainable forest management, and environmental careers. How do some of these topics connect to your broader curriculum and educational goals?

STEWARDSHIP

Sometime during the school year, each classroom will do a stewardship activity related to forests and water quality. The purpose of this experience is to help students connect with and care for their local watershed environment. The Program Coordinator will assist with planning these activities. At this time, what ideas do you have for a local stewardship project? Are there any resources, sites, or groups at your school or in your community that you may want to incorporate?

FIELD TRIPS

The program involves two joint field trips, one to New York City and the other to the upstate NYC Watershed. What do you want students to experience and get out of these trips, especially related to the NYC watersheds, forests, and water quality?

For repeat participants, what new ideas or modifications do you propose for your field trips?

- For your local trip, what do you want to showcase and share about your local environment and community?
- For your long-distance trip, what new and different things do you want your students to experience?

***Please note: You do NOT need to have exact plans for your trips! We just want to get a sense of your priorities.*

Local Field Trip

Long-distance Field Trip

COMMUNICATION

This program requires frequent communication with your Teacher Partner and Program Coordinator. Please describe your preferred times/modes of communication.

5. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Together, partnerships receive funding (current maximum funding amounts are provided at nycwatershed.org/greenconnections), which may be used for transportation, programming, and field trip food and safety-related materials. The Program Coordinator typically reserves and pays directly for field trip bus transportation and programming. Teachers typically pay directly for field trip food, safety-related items, and supplemental transportation, for which they receive reimbursement at the conclusion of the program.

To receive funding, participants must complete the following Requirements:

1. attend a program kick-off meeting;
2. ensure students complete pre- and post-program student learning assessment activities in the classroom;
3. communicate with the Program Coordinator and Teacher Partner at least monthly;
4. schedule 1-2 classroom visits with the Program Coordinator;
5. engage students in lessons from the Green Connections curriculum;
6. complete at least 3 rounds of correspondence between student pen pals;
7. conduct 2 joint field trips (one to an upstate watershed location and one to NYC);
8. involve students in a tree-, forest-, or water-focused local stewardship activity; and
9. provide requested documentation for program activities in a timely manner.

At the discretion of WAC, funding reimbursement may be forfeit by participants who do not complete these minimum requirements. Teachers failing to meet these requirements will also be unlikely to receive funding in the future.

If at any time a Teacher Partner thinks they may have difficulty meeting program requirements, they should contact the Program Coordinator to discuss options and opportunities as soon as possible!

6. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Please print the attached Administrative Support Form. Discuss the program with your Administrator, and obtain their signature on the form. Submit the completed form as part of this application. If you have difficulty contacting your Administrator over the summer, please contact Tyler Van Fleet at education@nycwatershed.org to discuss alternatives.

7. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Please check the boxes next to each statement below to indicate that you understand and agree to the program requirements.

I UNDERSTAND THAT, IF SELECTED, I WILL BE REQUIRED TO:

COMPLETE A W-9 TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER FORM AND MAY NEED TO OBTAIN PROOF OF ADEQUATE INSURANCE FOR THE FIELD TRIP. (Note: The proof of insurance and W-9 form DO NOT need to be submitted with this application and public school participants are not required to submit proof of insurance.)

ATTEND A KICK-OFF MEETING WITH THE GREEN CONNECTIONS PROGRAM COORDINATOR AND TEACHER PARTNER.

MEET REQUIREMENTS 1-9 LISTED IN SECTION 5 “FUNDING REQUIREMENTS” ABOVE.

**Green Connections is a program of the Watershed Agricultural Council
with support from the USDA Forest Service and New York City Department of Environmental Protection.**

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

WAC Staff Approval

YES

NO

Approval Date:

Green Connection Application Rev. 7/20/26

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Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Initiatives

33195 State Highway 10, Walton, New York 13856

phone: 607-865-7790

fax: 607-865-4932

www.nycwatershed.org



Administrative Support Form

Green Connections Program

Dear Administrator,

We are excited that a teacher in your school is applying to the Green Connections Program from the Watershed Agricultural Council! Green Connections fosters mutual understanding and friendship between students from New York City and the upstate NYC watershed, while inspiring and enabling them to become excellent life-long stewards of forests and water quality. Participating students gain rich experiences in another culture and natural environment and learn:

- essential information about watersheds, and specifically, the NYC watershed;
- the components of the NYC water supply system and how these components interact to provide clean, drinkable water;
- ways that forests impact water quality;
- ways that people impact forests; and
- actions that people can take to protect forests and water quality.

If your classroom teacher is accepted into the program, they and their Teacher Partner will receive approximately \$5,150 in funding and be expected to:

1. attend a program kick-off meeting;
2. ensure students complete pre- and post-program student learning assessment activities in the classroom;
3. communicate with the Program Coordinator and Teacher Partner at least monthly;
4. schedule 1-2 classroom visits with the Program Coordinator;
5. engage students in 8 lessons from the Green Connections curriculum;
6. complete at least 3 rounds of correspondence between student pen pals;
7. conduct 2 joint field trips (one to an upstate watershed location and one to NYC);
8. involve students in a tree-, forest-, or water-focused stewardship activity;
9. provide requested documentation for program activities in a timely manner.

We encourage you to read through the application your teacher has submitted. Signing this form serves as a statement of your support of the application, which is required for it to be considered for acceptance. Questions may be directed to Tyler Van Fleet, East of Hudson Forestry Program Coordinator at education@nycwatershed.org. Thank you!

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____