



Illinois American Water Celebrates Earth Day By Awarding Over \$29,000 In Environmental Grants For Water Source Protection

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BELLEVILLE – Illinois American Water is awarding eight environmental grants focused on watershed initiatives across the state. The environmental grant recipients will receive a share of funds totaling \$29,860 for community projects that improve, restore or protect watersheds.

According to Justin Ladner, Illinois American Water President, including the 2021 commitment more than \$276,000 in environmental grants will have been contributed to 82 projects since 2009. He said, “At Illinois American Water Earth Day is every day. We understand how important it is to protect our water resources. Our environmental grant program helps organizations improve our waterways, raise awareness about the importance of conservation and promote community participation. We are pleased to support these worthwhile endeavors.”

Projects supported by an environmental grant must be completed by November 30, 2021. Illinois American Water’s 2021 Environmental Grant recipients and projects are described below.

The City of Belleville will receive their grant request in full for \$9,865 for the Belleville Heart Garden Phase II project. Funds will be used to purchase permeable paving stones, fruit trees, rain garden plants and groundcover seed. This project will demonstrate urban fruit production and stormwater management. The fresh fruit produced by the trees will be provided to the community. The City of Belleville and Belleville Heart Garden will partner on this project to improve stormwater management and healthy nutrition.

HeartLands Conservancy located in Southern Illinois will receive a \$3,700 grant for the Watershed Adventures and Discovery Experiences Program (WADE). Funds will be used to purchase outdoor education materials, an outdoor enviroscape model and safety supplies. The project aims to increase awareness about watershed health issues, and engage active stewardship of water resources. The project will provide a curriculum? based, outdoor experience coupled with community service and environmental science. HeartLands Conservancy is partnering with Madison County, MTN Dew, Alpine shop and local community members.

Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful will receive a \$1,500 grant to support the group's annual medication collection event in South Beloit. This event provides residents a safe opportunity to dispose of expired, unused and unwanted medication. Funds will be used to offset disposal costs. Medication disposal efforts help prevent the flushing of medications to protect the local water supply. These efforts also help decrease misuse and abuse of unused pharmaceuticals.

Live Well Streator will receive a \$4,100 grant for the Streator Parks Placemaking Project. Funds will be used to replace two water fountains in Streator. The new water fountains will be bi-level and will include a bottle filling station and pet hydration station. Educational signage explaining plastic waste will also be installed. Live Well Streator is partnering with the City of Streator Engineering Department, Streator Tourism, OSF HealthCare, and City of Streator Parks and Open Spaces Board.

Urbana Park District will receive a full grant request of \$1,920 to support the King Elementary School Butterfly Supportive Tree Planting Project. Funds will be used to procure eight trees, watering bags and place cards for tree species. The Urbana Park District is partnering with King Elementary School (Urbana School District #116) and students from King Elementary School will plant the trees.

The Peoria Park District will receive their grant request in full. A \$1,000 grant will support the Illinois River Sweep. Funds will help supply gloves, trash bags, dumpsters and tire recycling. Illinois American Water has supported these efforts for many years.

The Sun Foundation located in Central Illinois, will receive a \$4,500 grant to support the 2021 virtual Clean Water Celebration. Funds will be used to produce 15 additional documentaries. Through the documentaries, participants can explore ecosystems, see presentations by experts in their respective fields and experience local change makers. The Sun Foundation is partnering with Illinois American Water, Ameren, IVY Club,

Environmental Education Association Illinois, Central Region Groundwater Protection Committee, Regional Offices of Education, Fox Tales International and Explorepeoria.com, and Greater Peoria Development Council.

Village of Elsah will receive their grant request in full. A \$3,275 grant will be used to create a public space that incorporates wetland restoration, stream preservation and native plantings. The funds will be used to purchase small trees, shrubs and protective supplies. The plantings will help stabilize streambanks to slow erosion, trap debris and soil, and filter pollutants before reaching the stream and river. The Village of Elsah is partnering with Great Rivers Land Trust, Principia College, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and local volunteers.

Customers can make a difference every day by using water wisely. Wise water use tips, including how to detect leaks, can be found at www.illinoisamwater.com.