Cultivating an environmentally conscious and responsible public
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A Message from the Chair & CEO

For more than 30 years, the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) has worked to cultivate an environmentally conscious and responsible public through K-12 education, health, and conservation-focused programs, grants, and initiatives.

As leaders in lifelong environmental learning, we believe in the importance of environmental education and stewardship as a driving force for connecting Americans of all ages and walks of life to their communities and the outdoors.

While 2021 was, in many ways, just as challenging as the year before, NEEF continued to provide useful and necessary resources to the American public.

Whether it was developing new COVID-19 protocols for National Public Lands Day site managers using up-to-date CDC guidelines, addressing health equity via our virtual Children’s Environmental Health Series, or providing a platform for more voices to advance DE&I in the outdoors, NEEF remained at the forefront of promoting sustainability and environmental literacy in the US.

With support from our partners, NEEF was also able to award approximately $781,000 in grants in 2021 towards conservation and education efforts across the country.

In addition, 2021 saw the expansion of our popular Greening STEM approach to engage more middle school students and the continuation of our partnership with iHeart Radio—a nationwide public engagement campaign generating sustainable action in households, businesses, and communities across the country.

In this report, we provide a snapshot of the ways NEEF has helped make the environment more accessible, relatable, relevant, and connected to the daily lives of all Americans in 2021. Despite these uncertain times, NEEF’s staff, board and ex-officio members have collaborated to maximize our impact, and we are actively positioning our organization to continue this success into 2022 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Kevin Butt, Board Chair and Meri-Margaret Deoudes, President & CEO
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
Governing Board

Megan Reilly Cayten
(Chair through May 2021)
Principal
Solas Global

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US Environmental Protection Agency

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Director, Conservation Education Program  
USDA Forest Service

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Regional Director of the Central Region  
National Weather Service

Louisa Koch  
Director of Education  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration

Matthew Lyttle (through October 2020)  
Branch Chief, Partnership and Engagement, Individual and Community Preparedness Division  
FEMA—Department of Homeland Security

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United States Public Health Service;  
Director, Office of Public Health  
National Park Service

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

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 (NCEH/ATSDR)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Nicole Steele (from July 2021)
Senior Advisor, Energy Justice and Workforce,
Solar Energy Technologies Office
US Department of Energy

Maureen Sullivan (through October 2020)
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Environment, Safety, & Occupational Health),
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense,
Energy, Installations, and Environment
US Department of Defense

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President and CEO

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Vice President, Organizational Development

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Vice President, Development

Sara Espinoza
Vice President, Programs

Amy Skalmusky
Vice President, Marketing & Communications

Nancy L. Smith
Vice President, Finance & Administration
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

In 2021, NEEF furthered its commitment to DE&I by increasing opportunities for learning and understanding. On the heels of a challenging year of racial and social unrest, we paused to remember the one-year anniversary of George Floyd’s murder and to set plans in motion for how NEEF could become a stronger ally for underrepresented communities.

We publicly shared our DE&I goals, created a book club around DE&I topics, and established metrics to gauge the impact of our work through a DE&I lens. We continue to listen to and learn from underrepresented communities by amplifying their voices through engaging and informative webinars centered around public health and conservation.

We recognize we have a responsibility to make the environment more accessible, relatable, relevant, and connected to the daily lives of all Americans, and that it takes all of us to make a difference.

Learn more about our organizational goals by visiting the DE&I page of our website.

LISTENING & UNDERSTANDING

INCLUDING & SUPPORTING

Our External Goals
Create opportunities for people with varied perspectives and identities to experience and learn about the environment in ways that improve their lives and the health of the planet.

Our Internal Goals
Maintain a diverse work culture based on inclusion, equity, and respect.

Opportunities
Human Resources
Accountability
Culture
Health

During a time of increased demand for environmental health information, NEEF developed new models for delivering important health resources to our core audiences of families, school nurses, and health care professionals, improving overall engagement.

Healthcare Professional Engagement and Education
837 school nurses completed NEEF’s Creating Asthma-Friendly Environments online e-learning course module, potentially impacting 627,750 students.*

Power of Parks for Health
In partnership with National Park Service, NEEF hosted its first Power of Parks for Health roundtable series to facilitate open dialogues around equity, health, healing, and wellness in the outdoors for individuals representing communities that have been historically marginalized from green spaces.

Children’s Environmental Health Series
More than 1,100 healthcare professionals participated in NEEF’s virtual Children’s Environmental Health Series. Featured speakers included former US Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin and two-time NBA champion with the Los Angeles Lakers, Josh Powell, who addressed advancing health equity for all and the importance of nature exposure for health and wellness.

* Based on the National Association of School Nurses’ recommended 750 students per school nurse.
Conservation

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, National Public Lands Day (NPLD) 2021 was successful as a hybrid event with both in-person and virtual activities. The nation’s largest single-day celebration of public lands hosted more than 500 events and engaged nearly 50,000 volunteers in hands-on conservation. NEEF estimates that volunteers logged more than 180,000 hours and provided volunteer service valued at $5.3 million.

Additionally, NEEF provided $571,000 in grants to organizations supporting NPLD, improving regional biodiversity, and helping America’s public lands recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Honor Native Lands” Guide
NEEF collaborated with US Department of Arts and Culture (USADC) to promote their comprehensive guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgements.

Photo courtesy of Native Arts and Cultures Foundation and USDAC.

Biodiversity Conservation Grants
With a focus on the California Floristic Province—a biologically rich and deeply threatened region—these grants supported projects preserving endangered species, reducing fire risk, and increasing plant diversity.

Right, top: Students identifying plants on their first field trip to Moro Canyon. Right, bottom: Palos Verdes blue butterfly.
Nature for All Webinar Series
NEEF partnered with four grassroots organizations focused on connecting underrepresented communities to nature.

Restoration & Resilience Fund
The R&R Fund continued to help America’s public lands recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See the stories of all Restoration & Resilience Fund Grantees on NEEF’s Story Map

Engagement Campaigns
NEEF worked with 3M and Republic National Distributing Company (RNDC) on employee engagement campaigns in 2021, motivating thousands of team members to take sustainability actions at home, work, and in their community.

The iHeartEarth public engagement campaign, now in its second year, garnered more than 450 million impressions in 2021, with an estimated media value of $4.6 million.
K–12 Education

NEEF’s K-12 environmental education team expanded on-the-ground Greening STEM efforts with the support of our federal partners. Our second Climate Superstars Challenge and final National Environmental Education Week (EE Week) events complemented that work by engaging middle school students virtually.

Despite changing COVID regulations, NEEF provided approximately $210,000 in funding to support in-school and after-school programs.

GREENING STEM PROJECT

Overnight River Trip in McInnis Canyons in Colorado

In partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Canyons Association, and Mesa County Valley School District 51, AP Environmental Science students participated in an overnight river trip to study invasive Russian Knapweed and release Gall Wasps as a biological control agent.

Watch the Greening STEM in Action video series to learn more about the Colorado Canyon project.
Other highlights

NEEF, Samsung, and EPA's ENERGY STAR® program presented Climate Superstars, a month-long online environmental challenge designed to engage middle school classrooms in environmental education.

Over 200 educators were registered and survey results showed that 100% of the responding teachers felt confident using the environment as a context for STEM learning after participating, compared to 70% before.

NEEF held its final EE Week in April 2021 and featured educational webinars and downloadable resources.

NEEF also awarded seven grants through the National Park Service-21st Century Community Learning Centers funding opportunity, and successfully placed three AmeriCorps VISTA members at sites to support out-of-school time educational program development and delivery.

Samantha Barry and her winning Climate Superstars class at Canarelli Middle School, Las Vegas, Nevada
Donor Roll

NEEF extends heartfelt appreciation to our family of supporters.

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Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program
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US Environmental Protection Agency
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Financials

**TOTAL INCOME**

$8,364,339

- 14% $1,148,270 Government grants
- 10% $858,000 Federal appropriation
- 76% $6,358,069 All other contributions

Total end of year net assets $1,731,751
TOTAL EXPENSES
$8,841,129

- 3% $229,096 Total fundraising
- 2% $159,096 Total administrative
- 6% $520,397 Health and wellness
- 15% $1,358,833 Conservation
- 11% $943,312 K–12 education
- 3% $306,883 Campaigns
- 60% $5,323,512 Public outreach

Total program expenses
$8,452,937