

FY2023 Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Grant Report

Organization Name:	RiverLink	
Project Name:	Emerging Scientists, Vulnerable Communities: Growing Next Generation River Stewards	
Reporting Quarter: (Check one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 1 (July 1, 2022 - September 30, 2022)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 2 (October 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 3 (January 1, 2023 - March 31, 2023)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 4 (April 1, 2023 - June 30, 2023)

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide a brief summary (no more than **1500 characters**). You may attach supplemental documents if needed.

Quarter 1	<p>Things have moved fast with this project! We have already set up lessons with teachers from Emma, Johnston, and Sand-Hill Venable elementaries. We will be doing programs with entire grade levels at each school, mostly 3rd and 4th grade. Each teacher has arranged for two different activities from our menu of lessons. Each school has requested that we bring our stream table into the classroom, and two of them are working on securing transportation to a local stream to look for macroinvertebrates. We have also submitted a species list of 120 flora and fauna--specific to the French Broad River watershed--to Waterford Press to create the pocket naturalist guide that will be given to teachers after lessons with us.</p>
Quarter 2	<p>All the lessons that were set up in Q1 have been hosted at the schools. Emma, Johnston, and Sand-Hill Elementaries had us bring in our stream table to investigate erosion and flooding impacts with their 3rd graders. In total we worked with 350 students. Emma Elementary also had us come back to teach their students about the water cycle. Nothing has been definitively setup yet, but teachers have expressed interest in doing more lessons with us in the spring. The pocket naturalist guide for Species of the French Broad River moved into its final phase and as of Jan. 12th is ready to go to print. We will share this guide with all teachers who participate in the RiverRATS program moving forward.</p>
Quarter 3	<p>In Feb. we worked with 100 7th graders at Erwin Middle where we ran our stream table since it was the cold winter months. We have also scheduled lessons with Emma Elementary for this spring to investigate macro invertebrates. Since they do not have a creek on campus or access to transportation we will be bringing in preserved species and looking at them under microscopes in the classroom. This quarter we also received 1000 copies of our "Species of the French Broad River" field guides! We are thrilled with how they turned out and we have been giving them out to all teachers we work with as well as many community members that support our work throughout the watershed. We have also reached out to a photographer to join us at lessons this spring to capture candid shots of the program.</p>

Quarter 4

During this quarter, we collaborated with Emma Elementary and Erwin High. At Emma Elementary, we conducted an activity where we introduced preserved macroinvertebrate species to the students. This allowed them to examine these organisms under microscopes and explore their diverse adaptations. We successfully implemented this engaging lesson with all four 3rd grade classes at Emma Elementary. At Erwin High, we utilized a stream table to simulate natural water flow and conducted macroinvertebrate sampling in the campus stream. These hands-on experiences were carried out with 9th grade classes, involving approximately 90 students. The positive outcomes from these activities have reinforced our confidence in maintaining these valuable relationships with both schools for the upcoming 2023-24 school year. We also provided a \$200 stipend to our primary contacts at each school, as an acknowledgment of their participation in the program. Teachers expressed their gratitude, noting that this financial support would enable them to incorporate more hands-on activities for their students in the coming year. We are very pleased with the success of our expansion efforts this quarter. We have now established strong connections with five schools in the Leicester area, fostering long-term relationships to support future programming. We've also developed an excellent post-lesson resource that we can share with teachers, enhancing their environmental science activities in the future.

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Progress toward annual goals

Measure	Annual Goal	Actual Results (Enter Data) Please only include new data for the specific quarter				Progress toward Annual Goal
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Number of schools engaged	6	3	-	1	1	5
Number of school staff members attending planning and feedback sessions	12	3	-	2	2	7
Number of lessons hosted at the schools	6	0	4	1	6	11
Percent of teachers who report an increase in their students' knowledge of water quality topics	80%	0%	75%	100%	100%	100%

Comments:

Q3: We will definitely reach our annual goal of number of schools and number of lessons after Q4. It is looking like we will not engage the targeted number of teachers though, this is because one teacher at each school is taking on the coordination and feedback with us for all of their grade level. We were hoping that two teachers from each school would engage in these processes but it seems like teacher schedules are just too busy to accommodate that. All the teachers we hosted lessons with this quarter reported an increase in students knowledge which means we have achieved the annual goal!

Q4: The only new school we engaged with this quarter was Erwin High. We did connect with Emma Elementary again but since they were included in the Q1 report we're not including them in Q4. We worked with a new teacher at Erwin to set up programming and another teacher at Emma did join the planning efforts for the spring. We hosted 4 lessons with Emma this quarter and 2 with Erwin Middle. Teachers at both schools reported an increase in student knowledge. While we didn't reach the targeted number of schools and teachers, we were able to engage more frequently than expected with the 5 schools we did partner with.

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Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Starting Budget	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount Remaining
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel	\$ 6,700	\$ -	\$ 1,934	\$ 1,772	\$ 1,738	\$ 1,256
Training						\$ -
Supplies/Materials	\$ 4,000	\$ -		\$ 5,221		\$ (1,221)
Meetings (Feedback and Planning Sessions)	\$ 1,000	\$ -			\$ 1,035	\$ (35)
Equipment/Furniture						\$ -
Printing/Marketing						\$ -
Licensing/Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions						\$ -
Client Support						\$ -
Contracts						\$ -
Professional Services	\$ 800	\$ -			\$ 800	\$ -
Insurance and Bonds						\$ -
Building Maintenance						\$ -
List other cost						\$ -
List other cost						\$ -
List other cost						\$ -
Total	\$ 12,500	\$ -	\$ 1,934	\$ 6,993	\$ 3,573	\$ -

Comments:

Q3: Since the final cost of the pocket guides was \$5,221 (new illustrations of some of the species had to be created which costs extra) we'd like to take that amount from the personnel line item, this would leave \$5,477 for staff costs. We would like to discuss an alternative use for the \$1,000 for meeting with teachers. We're finding that they are willing to plan and provide feedback for free through virtual meetings and surveys so there's not really a cost for this aspect of the project. What we are seeing is that teachers could use funds to purchase supplies to continue teaching their students about stream ecology after our lessons. It may be a long shot but we'd like to explore the idea of small stipends to help teachers buy these supplies.

Q4: We hired Show and Tale Collective as our photographer this quarter and had them join us at three separate events, we're still waiting on edited shots from the first two and the third one will be in July since their schedule was already booked for most of May and June. We purchased five \$200 visa gift cards for the main coordinating teacher at each school, these were provided as stipends for program participation and will hopefully provide some useful resources for their classrooms in the 2023-24 school year. We did have to pay an extra \$35 in fees for these cards so we simply reallocated that from the personnel costs for this quarter.