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ACTIVITIES REPORT NARRATIVE

I. Introduction

Save The River's Riverkeeper Monitoring Program is a thriving volunteer monitoring program that teaches volunteers the basics of using qualitative data to assess the health of the St. Lawrence River (referred to as the River throughout) while they are out paddling, walking, swimming or boating. By training individual volunteers about how to notice subtle changes in the River ecosystem they are taught how to identify problems that impact water quality, track down sources of pollution and effectively report these problems to the proper authorities. As a result of the volunteer's work, Save The River is better able to assess and advocate for the health of the River.

The goal of this grant is to increase the knowledge and awareness of volunteers on both sides of the river about the natural environment of the River and how they can protect it. Over the course of the year staff updated training materials with Canadian appropriate content, trained 8 Master Trainers in the new Riverkeeper curriculum specific to the Canadian side to the River, trained 248 volunteers from Ontario and the US, many of whom were teachers and students from local schools, and successfully reported observations to the proper agencies and municipalities. Save The River is pleased to report this year we met our goal of expanding the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program to reach interested community members on both sides of the St. Lawrence River.

II. Methods

Save The River identified several objectives to complete the goals for this grant. This summer training materials were updated to include relevant Canadian content. The training's power point presentation was modified to speak to both Canadian and US audiences and the Riverkeeper ID Guide Book was redesigned, printed and distributed at trainings on both sides of the river and volunteer tee shirts were distributed to volunteers in order to help identify them while out on the River. Teachers who participated in the training were given enough Riverkeeper ID Guidebooks to keep in their classroom to use as reference materials and to lend to students interested in borrowing them.

This summer Save The River was pleased to recruit 4 new Master Trainers thus increasing our cadre of Master Trainer to eight. Master Trainers were trained to deliver the Riverkeeper presentation to audiences on both shores and given new Master Trainer Manuals that included Canadian information including reporting instructions and species identification.

Save The River staff and Master Trainers held 12 trainings sessions in 2012. Save The River had the fortunate opportunity to collaborate with and hold trainings at the Minna Anthony Nature Center on Wellesley Island, NY, the Thousand Islands Arts Center in Clayton, NY and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network in Lansdowne, ONT. Four sessions were held each at Save the River and at the Minna Anthony Nature Center where students participating in the *Save The River In the Schools* Education Program were trained as Riverkeepers. Two sessions were held at the Thousand Islands Arts Center and, with the support from the the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve Network, Riverkeeper Trainings were held for the first time in Canada at their office in Lansdowne, ONT.

Communication between Save The River and Riverkeeper volunteers plays an important role in the Program. From notifications about trainings to following up with answers to questions, it is critical to the success of the program to maintain communication with all volunteers. Save The River continued to collect volunteer reports on wildlife die-off and pollution issues throughout the 2012 boating season and assessed the accuracy of reports received.

III. Results

Through the hard work of staff and Master Trainer volunteers our final results indicate that Save The River has met the objectives for the 2012 grant year. This year staff updated presentation materials including the power point presentation and Riverkeeper ID Guidebooks. With funds provided from the grant 435 guidebooks were printed. Even with the inclusion of Canadian content and additional pages, the price per book originally estimated at $7.46 each went down to $4.28 due to creative printing and assembling. This cost cutting measure enabled us to purchase an additional 185 copies.

This summer eight Master Trainer volunteers were trained, increasing Save The River's staff capacity for how many trainings would be provided in 2012 beyond the initial expectation. This increase in the number of trainers allowed us to exceed our number of participants trained for the season. During the twelve training sessions 248 volunteers were trained. This enabled us to reach our goal of 120 volunteers and to exceed it by 128 volunteers. Save The River's Riverkeeper Monitoring Program now has 513 trained and active volunteers in the program!

And as a result of offering the Riverkeeper Training to teachers who participated in the *Save The River In the Schools* Education Program, Save The River able to hold trainings to students in grades 5-High School. This unexpected yet welcomed outcome has been a positive enhancement for students whose teachers work with Save The River in developing meaningful River related curriculum. As a result these students are more aware of their environment and are more engaged in its protection.

Reporting and Evaluation are important to the success of the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program. At the end of the season, feedback from Master Trainers was received and evaluation forms were reviewed. Master Trainers offered their feedback about their experiences with the program. All Master Trainer volunteers felt that they were prepared because of the curriculum presented and the time staff spent preparing them for the trainings. Evaluations returned from volunteers attending the trainings gave unanimously positive

evaluations of the Master Trainers abilities to teach and share knowledge. Also this fall volunteer evaluations were assessed to determine the effectiveness of the trainings. Through these evaluations Save The River learned training participants' expectations were met, they were provided with sufficient information, and the materials were helpful. This feedback will enable further expansion of the Riverkeeper Program to meet needs of both volunteers as well as Save The River.

Over 90% of reports turned into Save The River by Riverkeeper volunteers provided important information about the River's health. Reports included information on wildlife die-offs, local pollution and run-off issues and new aquatic invasive species observations. For example this summer due to warm water temperature and low water levels northern pike mortality increased. With the help from Riverkeeper volunteers who knew what to look for, information was passed on to our partners at SUNY ESF's Biological Station on Governor's Island where critical fish surveys were being conducted. This information is critical to their investigation into the decline in their populations.

IV. Budget

$4,600 was granted for the completion of this project. To date the complete amount granted has been spent. A break down of expenditures can be seen below in Table 1. Included in this budget are the additional matching dollars that were outlined in the original grant application. Therefore, Save The River has completed the major projects for this grant within the original budget outlined for the project.

Table 1. Save The River SLRREF 2012 Final Expenditures

	Date	Name	Memo	Amount	Match	Total
Funds Awarded	3/12	Riverkeeper Monitoring Program				4600
Revenue Received	6/13	New York Power Authority	Riverkeeper/1 of 3			1534
	10/31	New York Power Authority	Riverkeeper/2 of 3			1534
EXPENSES						
Salaries & Benefits			Program Manager Program Implimentation & Executive Director Program Oversight		12442	12442
Equipment & Materials	6/1	Victory Promotions	Volunteer T-shirts	1845		1845
	7/1	Graphic Designer	RK ID book redesign	450		450
	7/1	Master Trainer Manuals	materials and printing	140		140
	8/1	Coughlin Printing Inc.	RK volunteer guides	1596		1596
	10/31	Coughlin Printing Inc.	RK Volunteer guides	320		320
		Consumable office supplies	nametags, markers, note paper	249		249
Other	8/9	Volunteer Recognition	Annual Volunteer Recognition Event		800	800
		Overhead	office space, phone		900	900
Subtotal				$4,600	$14,142	$18,742
Final Project Budget						$18,742
Matching Funds					$14,142	
SLRREF Contributions				$4,600		

V. Conclusions

Save The River has met the goals of this grant prior to the end of the granting year. Through the support of the St. Lawrence River Research and Education Fund, Save The River has greatly increased our Riverkeeper Monitoring Program. The Riverkeeper training content has been updated to meet the needs of Canadian and US volunteers as well as updating and training Master Trainers. Save The River has provided previously trained volunteers with meaningful workshops to extend their River knowledge and keep them engaged in the program. In addition, Save The River added 248 volunteers to the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program, substantially growing its network of "eyes and ears" on the River.

Save The River's Riverkeeper Monitoring Program strives to educate the River community about River issues as well as empower them volunteers to watch out for the overall health of the St. Lawrence River. Support from the St. Lawrence River Research and Education Fund has made it possible for Save The River to train volunteers on both sides of the river and increase the knowledge and importance of the St. Lawrence River and its protection in our River communities. By expanding the Riverkeeper Monitoring Program Save The River has been able to grow its capacity to educate interested individuals and families on the Canadian side of the River who share a mutual love and interest in the St. Lawrence River thus making it a bi-national program.