

# Youth Environmental Programs

## Impact Statement 2018

### INVESTIGATORS

Suzanne Gray, Eugene Braig, Greg Hitzhusen, Kristi Lekies, Marne Titchenell, and Chris Tonra



### SUMMARY

SENR offers educational and experiential learning opportunities for youth and teachers across Ohio and internationally. These activities are designed to increase awareness and knowledge of natural resources and environmental issues, promote learning of science, and engage youth in sustainability behaviors. Methods include presentations, programs, camps, field trips, teacher workshops, peer teaching, community media, and consultation. **Over 1,500 youth were served in 2018.**

### SITUATION

The natural environment provides opportunities for education, recreation, physical and emotional well-being, a sense of wonder, and valuable ecosystem services. However, climate change and environmental degradation present challenges that are expected to increase in severity in the years ahead. **Engaging children and youth in environmental education and experiential activities can help to foster lifelong appreciation of the natural world and increase knowledge of natural resources and environmental concerns** in Ohio, the United States, and the world. Schools and community organizations express interest in collaboration with SENR to reach youth, share and obtain expertise, and make connections locally and globally.



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information, visit [cfaesdiversity.osu.edu](http://cfaesdiversity.osu.edu). For an accessible format of this publication, visit [cfaes.osu.edu/accessibility](http://cfaes.osu.edu/accessibility).





### RESPONSE

Media outreach and collaborations with schools and organizations enabled SENR to reach diverse groups, including:

- Presentations on bats, avian ecology, and camping to over **400 Central Ohio K-12 students**
- 23 programs on wildlife & forestry for 475 youth, including **Camp Canopy**, a summer camp for high school students
- **Field trips for 150 students at the Wilma H. Schiermeier Olentangy River Research Wetland Research Park**, and a student-led event by SENR Senior Capstone students
- **Water Across the World** project to enhance over 150 students' understanding of water quality in Ohio and Uganda, promote science learning, and provide teacher training
- **Youth Beat Radio program** aired weekly on 2 Columbus Community Radio stations and involved 70 youth
- **Consultation on outdoor programming** and evaluation to 7 schools and organizations
- **Judging** 15 aquatic science projects at the state science fair; and providing **programming** for 400 high school students interested in aquatic sciences

### IMPACT

**In 2018, over 1500 youth learned about natural resources and environmental issues**, participated in hands-on exploration, applied knowledge to real world situations, learned new skills, and engaged in sustainability efforts. SENR education activities serve youth from elementary through high school, from rural and urban areas, and those with special needs. For some youth, the activities provided **their first experiences** with wetlands, wildlife, scientific methods, hands-on nature exploration, and interacting with faculty and Extension specialists. The Water Across the World project **created an opportunity** for rural Ohio youth to engage in peer teaching, learning, and cultural exchange with youth in Uganda on water quality issues through video and online communications. Workshops and materials developed for teachers extended knowledge to additional students. We also provided learning opportunities for SENR undergraduate and graduate students who plan and lead Water Across the World and other education activities. **SENR youth education creates and strengthens collaborations with community partners** including the Urban Park Development LLC, Columbus and Hilliard City schools, and local organizations. Youth Beat Radio, which is produced by SENR alumni, SENR students, and high school students, broadcasted information on environmental issues to community audiences. **Consultation activity** benefited schools and organizations in planning programs, sharing resources, and evaluation.

---

### CONTACT

School of Environment and Natural Resources • 2021 Coffey Rd, Columbus, OH 43210  
614-292-2265 • [senr.osu.edu](http://senr.osu.edu)