Urban Watershed Mentors

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Why Urban Watershed Mentors?

• A growing group of volunteers, landowners and students were asking for opportunities to learn about conservation and help out on projects

• District staff and its partners were meeting capacity issues within conservation programs
Program Purpose

• Create a growing network of educated and experienced volunteer leaders to increase capacity to carry out conservation work in our District and beyond...
Program Overview

• Mentees work in teams with an experienced professional and/or “graduated mentor” to create a priority conservation plan.
Program Logistics

- Three months of training include field and classroom components.
- “Homework” is reviewed as a group.
Implementation after “graduation”!
Mentor Commitment

- Pay $35 or scholarship
- Three months of training for a total of 21 hours
- An additional 15 hours developing the plan
- After “graduating” from training assist with implementation and encouraged to help mentor a new team (4+ hours)
Training Details

• Plan Topics Covered:
  • Native Plant Restoration
  • Invasive Species Management
  • Stormwater Management
  • Wildlife Habitat Enhancement

• Additionally Covered:
  • Conservation Plan Basics
  • Watershed & Stream Process
  • Site Assessment & Monitoring
  • Volunteer Management
  • Grant Writing

• All materials and full agenda:
  http://www.wmswcd.org/content.cfm/What-We-Do/Urban-Programs#Mentors
In the field experience & group work
Keeping the network growing & engaged

- Email List
- Progress Reports
- Job List
- Website Posts
- Facebook & Twitter
- Events: Mentor Summit
Lessons Learned

• Clear expectations for landowners, mentors & mentees
• Pair experienced with unexperienced
• Avoid acronyms and define technical language
More Lessons Learned...

• Length & time of training crucial
• Make ample time for check-ins & discussion
• Make more time for field & exercises (videos)
• Transitioning to a mentor is difficult for most
• Long term engagement challenges
Thank you!

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