

## CamelBak 2010 Challenge Grant Grantee Updates

In fall 2010, CamelBak, through a program administered by The Outdoor Foundation, awarded grants to ten outdoor-focused, youth-led projects across the country. Thanks to the CamelBak Challenge Grant program, thousands of youth across the country have become involved in outdoor projects –from leading and organizing recreational activities such as hiking and canoeing to spearheading community environmental awareness events to teaching young people ways to reduce their carbon footprint and help address climate change.

Below is an update on some of the projects that have been implemented and completed:

### Appalachian Mountain Club

A CamelBak Challenge grant was given to the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) to support the Youth Mountain Adventure Program (YMAP). Highlights from the 2010 Youth Mountain Adventure Program include:

- YOP served 208 youth, doubling the number of young people expected to be served.
- 100 youth who participated in YMAP were awarded CamelBak water bottles.
- AMC conducted extensive outreach to more than 150 youth organizations that serve urban and at-risk youth that normally do not have the opportunity to participate in outdoor adventures. This grant enabled AMC to involve over 20 new and underserved youth groups in the initiative.
- The YMAP participants were all urban, at-risk youth who benefited significantly from their adventures.
- YMAP piloted an “exchange” model where participating groups were given a free trip in exchange for independently leading a second trip of their choosing.

YMAP youth represented a very diverse population: 48% African American; 3% Caucasian; 45% Latino; 2% Asian; and 2% Other Ethnicities, including Native American, Cape Verdean, and Multi-racial. Participating youth were 57% female and 43% male. The average age of 2010 YMAP youth participants was 14.



### Grand Aspirations

A CamelBak Challenge grant was awarded to Grand Aspirations to support a campaign to help reduce the carbon footprint in neighborhoods and community in Corvallis, OR. Through canvassing, 300 households were encouraged to take the Community Carbon Challenge. The challenge was a 4-week period during which households pledged to take 3 actions (out of a list of 70) to reduce their carbon footprint. Actions could have been mechanical (e.g., replacing or installing insulation) or behavioral (e.g., taking shorter showers) and included outreach options such as, talking to your neighbor and or addressing local politicians.



The 100 water bottles were given to those households that offset the most CO<sub>2</sub>. More than 50 youth were impacted by the project as well as a new partnership was developed with students at Oregon State University who will collaborate with Grand Aspirations to run a Campus Carbon Challenge in 2011.

The project also helped develop partnerships with eleven community organizations including the City of Corvallis, Community Services Consortium, the Student Sustainability Center at Oregon State University, and the Associated Students of Oregon State University. In addition, 290 community members of the Job's Addition Neighborhood Association participated in the program.

### **St. Cloud State University**

St. Cloud State University received a CamelBack Challenge Grant to create an opportunity on campus to reduce the use of bottled water and waste while providing meaningful education and outreach to the university student body. In January 2011, the St. Cloud State University RecFest took place, attracting approximately 1000 students to the Atwood Memorial Student Center. The intent of the program was to showcase winter recreation & wellness activities available to the campus community. Outdoor Endeavors, the campus Outdoor Club, used this event to capture an active, target audience and themed the CamelBak promotion as "100 students, 100 water bottles, 100 opportunities to change the world".

Students interested in getting a Camelbak water bottle had to answer trivia questions related to disposable plastic water and its impact on the environment. A plinko board was used to determine what type of question it would be (true false, short answer, etc.). If a student could not answer the question, they had the opportunity to come back and try again. Each person that was given a bottle had their picture taken in proximity to the event banner and was posted to the SCSU Outdoor Endeavors Facebook page.



Approximately 500 students were impacted by this program and due to success of educating students about reducing their reliance on disposable drinking water, a number of water bottle refilling stations throughout the campus have seen an increase in use.

### **Urban Blazers**

The \$500 grant and 100 CamelBak reusable water bottles allowed Urban Blazers to work with their partners to engage 95 young people from under resourced communities. Every young person was introduced to at least 2 hikes within walking distance of their school or after school program and at least one hike in a nearby state park. Urban Blazer's participants who received a CamelBak reusable water bottle averaged more than 9 hikes with Urban Blazers between September 2010 and December 2010. The grant was utilized to purchase bus tokens for transportation to local trails and healthy snacks to enjoy on trail.



One of the most telling signs of success in this program is in the ownership participants begin to take in "their" hiking trails through the course of several months. Almost all of the kids relaxed on the trail and found interesting plants and animals that they actively explored and asked questions about. Games were played on trail that made cleaning up the trash left behind by less conscientious hikers fun but transitioned into the kids taking pride in "leaving no trace" and keeping "our" trail beautiful.

Studies show that young people who are introduced to the natural world by positive adult role models are much more likely to grow into adults concerned

with conservation. Our program engages young people with mentors who share their love of the natural world. Our belief is that kids who love to climb trees will grow into adults who save trees. This funding allowed Urban Blazers to engage three new partner organizations and the reusable water bottles will allow Urban Blazers to continue to work with all three of these partners at a very low cost.

### **Additional CamelBak Challenge Grantees**

Projects are still being implemented as of February 28, 2011. Once those projects come to completion, final reports will be collected and that information will be reported to CamelBak.

Here is a list of the projects still underway:

#### **Roots Ranch Eco-Camp**

**The Challenge:** Increase community involvement, environmental stewardship, youth leadership, environmental education and fundraising to connect urban youth with the great outdoors within their communities.

#### **Teens 2 Trails**

**The Challenge:** Assist in helping youth to be active in the outdoors and give them the opportunity to have a personal stake in protecting our country's natural resources.

#### **Tevah Jones, Outdoor Nation Youth Summit Delegate**

**The Challenge:** Create an opportunity for socio-economically challenged youth in finding alternatives to drugs and violence through a path to community service, conservation, and the outdoors.

#### **Emma Jornlin, Environmental Studies Major, Seattle University**

**The Challenge:** Reduce excessive water consumption which places a strain upon our population, wildlife, and natural environment.

#### **Anne Miller, Outdoor Nation Youth Summit Delegate, Vanguard University of Southern California**

**The Challenge:** Increase hydration to address greater physical and mental health, and athletic and academic performance; as well as increase awareness of the environmental issue of plastic, thereby creating a bottled-water free campus.

#### **Sam Obstfeld, Outdoor Nation Youth Summit Delegate, Emory University**

**The Challenge:** Provide summer camp youth with an alternative to plastic water bottles – encouraging young people to see water bottles not as "trash" and instead as a reusable pieces of equipment.