## Wellborn Ecology Fund

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL-BASED PROJECT GRANT APPLICATIONS**

**Wellborn School-based Project Grants** will help your K-12 school or early childhood education center launch (or continue) place-based ecology education programs/projects during the upcoming school year.

1. Grants are open to K-12 schools, early childhood education centers and local environmental organizations providing school-based programming. See the [NHCF website](https://www.nhcf.org/how-can-we-help-you/apply-for-a-grant/wellborn/) for further eligibility criteria.
2. Grants are available for, but not limited to:
* Starting or enhancing hands-on, place-based ecology-education programs in schools by supporting teachers, schools and the nonprofit organizations that work with them.
* Supporting teachers to participate in professional-development opportunities that will enhance their skills in place-based ecology education and/or nature-based early learning.
* Enhancing hands-on, nature-based, outdoor learning approaches that are tied to Common Core and Next Generation Science standards.
* Improving, enhancing or creating access to natural areas (including gardens and outdoor classrooms) within walking distance of schools and early childhood centers, and helping to integrate learning opportunities in those natural areas with school curriculum.
* Providing opportunities for youth to have nature-immersion experiences in school programs.

**The Power of Place-Based Ecology Education:** Place-based ecology education immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, using these as a foundation to meaningfully connect learners to the world around us and promote a deeper understanding of environmental issues.

Place-based learning addresses the integrated goals of:

* **Student Engagement**

Place-based learning boosts students' engagement, academic achievement, and sense of personal efficacy as stewards of their local environment and community.

* **Community, Social and Economic Vitality**

Place-based learning fosters connections between local social and environmental organizations and their constituencies in the schools and community, which helps to improve quality of life and economic vitality.

* **Ecological Integrity**

Place-based learning helps students make tangible contributions to resolving local environmental issues and conserving local environmental quality.

**And don’t forget about the well-being of our littlest ones!**

Research demonstrates that nature-based early learning and child-directed nature play in preschool settings not only has a profound influence on children’s values toward nature and pro-environmental behaviors, but also increases protective factors, including enhanced physical, mental and emotional health.

The **online application** includes the following sections, along with a project budget (template provided):

1. **Executive Summary** – Please describe the proposed place-based ecology education project or program, the ages of the youth involved in the program and the results you expect.
2. **Community Need or Opportunity** – Describe the need or opportunity for this project or program. If possible, include the free & reduced lunch rate(s) for the school(s) you will be working with. If other organizations address a similar need, describe your organization's plans for partnership.
3. **Project Description** – Describe the proposed project/program in greater detail, including major activities, key people involved and timetable for the work.
4. **Building Best Practice** – [The Upper Valley Teaching Place Collaborative](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fuvtpc.org%2F&data=04%7C01%7C%7C382895d76406437dd5a408da17d07942%7Ce846da2ae6b84b15bf2bb0e46b61d952%7C0%7C0%7C637848481408877908%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=zM%2BMWhwN6GTRbRiqDI2dDojDlfCGnLR01sRyX3C696U%3D&reserved=0) (UVTPC) is an initiative of the Wellborn Ecology Fund and is a resource specifically created for all UV educators and place-based ecology champions. The UVTPC is network of professional development providers (including Shelburne Farms, Four Winds Nature Institute, VINS, Sullivan County Conservation District, UV Educator’s Institute) and preK-12 educators working together to share resources and best practices to advance place-based ecology education. Applicants to the Foundation’s school grant program are highly encouraged to form a connection with the UVTPC.
	* Are you already connected to the UVTPC? Yes/No. If yes, please describe your connection. If no, please describe how a connection may be beneficial.
5. **Results** – If the project/program is successful, what will be different as a result of your work? List three measurable outcomes you expect to occur.
6. **Sustainability** – If this work is on-going, how will you sustain it—both financially and programmatically—beyond this grant? If this project is not on-going, please describe how this year of funding may create lasting benefit for the school or community?

### Further Context and Background:

**The Wellborn Ecology Fund** (WEF) is dedicated to using the “power of place” to increase environmental and ecological knowledge in the Upper Valley. WEF was established through a bequest by the late [Marguerite Wellborn,](https://www.nhcf.org/what-were-up-to/focus-on/wellborn-ecology-fund/) a former Hanover resident and avid naturalist with an enduring passion for studying and protecting the natural world. She believed that teaching people to appreciate and understand our natural systems was a crucial first step toward developing the attitudes and skills necessary to protect and conserve those systems.

**Wellborn Vision -** *We imagine a region in which****:***

* People of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can learn about the natural systems of the Upper Valley and the impact of human activity on those systems.
* All residents have ready access to nature—to learn about and enjoy our incredible landscape and natural systems.
* There is a growing network of individuals, organizations and communities working to promote and implement access to nature and ecology education.
* Upper Valley residents gain the ecological knowledge and skills they need to enable them to protect, restore and steward our natural systems.
* Ecological sustainability and environmental stewardship are core values.

**Wellborn Region-wide Goals**

* Reach underserved communities and constituencies in the Upper Valley.
* Promote partnerships and collaborations\* between and among schools, colleges, environmental learning centers, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, community groups, and other institutions.
* Support existing environmental-education organizations in the region.
* Enhance leadership and expertise among individuals to better serve their organizations, communities and the region.
* Leverage resources to encourage more community and/or financial support for environmental and ecology education programs.