Project Year-End Summary Report

Title of Project: New Mexico Highlands University Melody Dormitory Rain Garden

Begin answering in the shaded box right beside or below each question and it will expand to accommodate as you type. Use up to a total of two and a half pages for questions 1-8. More detailed presentations, a final report, articles or posters are welcome separately (See final instructions at the end of this form.)*

1. Organization name or Individual who received the grant: NMHU Sustainability Committee

2. Amount of Grant: $ 1798.05

4. Was additional outside funding obtained? (check box that applies) Yes ☐ No ☒
Other funding source(s) if you checked "yes."

5. Briefly, how was the grant money from the Carter Conservation Fund used?
The Carter Conservation Fund was used to purchase materials, equipment, and plants for a native pollinator rain garden at NMHU. Money was used to purchase sand and compost to amend the soil, renting a cement mixer to mix the infill, and native plants from a local vendor (Plants of the Southwest).

6. Write an abstract or summary of the activities performed and the progress that was made this year on your project. (Save any conclusions, lessons learned, and benefits achieved for the final sections, 7&8.)
Together with freshmen students in FORS 1010, we constructed a native pollinator rain garden outside the Melody Dorm at New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU). The garden was designed to mitigate flooding around the dorm by capturing and filtering stormwater runoff. With grant funding, we were able to remove a 20' x 30' section of astroturf, excavate the site, amend the soil for better water absorption, and install a selection of native plants suited to the region's climate and soil. These native species, chosen for their drought tolerance and pollinator support, help retain water in the soil and reduce runoff.

7. How does your project further a Native Plant Society mission area, namely: *plant or ecological education; conservation/restoration of native plants and/or their habitats; adds to botanical research; promotes appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land and/or wildlife.*
This native pollinator rain garden project aligns closely with the Native Plant Society's mission by promoting plant and ecological education, restoring native plants to their natural habitats, and encouraging the sustainable use of native species to conserve water and support wildlife. Through the active involvement of NMHU students, the project served as a living classroom, offering hands-on education in native plant identification, ecological restoration techniques, and sustainable landscape design. By incorporating a variety of drought-tolerant, locally adapted native plants, the garden demonstrates the value of these species in natural flood management, reducing soil erosion, and enhancing water retention. Furthermore, the project fosters wildlife conservation by creating a thriving habitat for pollinators, which are essential to the local ecosystem. The garden showcases the effectiveness of using native plants for both

functional landscape design and ecological resilience, encouraging students and community members to adopt similar practices that benefit water conservation and wildlife support.

8. Any other conclusions., lessons learned, benefits to you, the community or the environment hopefully result from your work as assisted by this grant.
This project offered valuable lessons in sustainable landscaping, community collaboration, and the ecological benefits of native plants. Students learned practical skills in soil preparation, water management, and plant care while understanding the importance of native species in supporting biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. It also raises awareness of local water conservation efforts in Las Vegas, NM, as the garden's design visibly reduces runoff and erosion around Melody Dorm. By creating a habitat for native pollinators, the garden supports the local ecosystem and serves as a model for sustainable landscaping practices, inspiring similar efforts in the community to incorporate native plants into other landscaping and restoration projects.

We intend to expand the project in the next year, pending a no-cost extension. Given in-kind donations of mulch and labor, we were able to complete the proposed project below cost. With the leftover funds, we will:

1. Add diversity of plants, including additional native pollinator plants to cover a wide range of phenology and flower colors/shapes as well as add a few additional edible native plants in consultation with Dr. Eric Romero.
2. Improve the water management by adding a curving, sunken swale to the center of the planting area to allow water rushing off the roof to flow more slowly across the area (currently the water flow is displacing mulch and spreading it across the turf).
3. Add educational signage to emphasize the values of native plants and increasing water infiltration.

Final Instructions

Please send your completed form as pdf as an email attachment to cartergrantapps@gmail.com by November 1.

* *To remain in good standing for any future funding from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, we ask that you educate our membership more fully in some way. This could be an article (250 words minimum, at least 1 high resolution illustration or photo) for our newsletter,* ***or*** *a paper or electronic copy or link to a published article connected with the past year's work,* ***or*** *by making an educational and visual presentation to one of our chapters. Contact information for our 7 area chapters is found on our website at www.npsnm.org under the Chapters tab.*

What are your intentions in this regard? We are happy to write up an article for the newsletter.

This year end report is submitted by (Type your name) Tomasz Falkowski & Lauren Bansbach

My typed name is equal to my handwritten signature in testifying to the accuracy and truth of this report to the best of my knowledge today.

eMail address tbfalkowski@unm.edu, lmbansbach@nmhu.edu

Date 10/31/24

Please contact us again at cartergrantapps@gmail.com if you have any questions or alternate suggestions.