

# FY2022 Buncombe County Tipping Point Grant Report

<b>Organization Name:</b>	RiverLink
<b>Project Name:</b>	Students for the Environment and Community

Activities Accomplished	Annual Goal	Amount Completed
Percent of students exhibiting a moderate to significant increase in knowledge about stream ecology	100%	90%
Percent of students that build 3-5 professional skills that will serve them in future careers	80%	100%*
Number of students engaged in the process of making improvement to community	60	60

\*Skills include: professional communication, environmental engineering, aquatic ecology, plant biology, public speaking, narrative writing skills, planning and time management, and more.

Expenses (please list all grant related expenses)	Amount Spent
Released to cover education staff time spent on the project	\$ 2,002.33
The Yard Bro - Kudzu removal	\$ 2,484.88
Kudzu Culture - Workshop at Azalea Park	\$ 500.00
The Book of Kudzu - A cultural and Healing Guide	\$ 12.79
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>

<b>Overall project updates:</b>	<p>We launched the Alzalea Park project with students on Oct. 1st. During the launch, students were introduced to the project by BCEC, RiverLink, and Constructive Learning Design staff; they also took a tour of the property with project mentors to begin visioning what sort of improvements they could make. In Nov. mentors met with students to ask questions about the project, mentors professions, and mentors professional opinions about how to address the issues at Alzalea Park. For the rest of the school year students created narratives, budgets, and prototypes for their proposed improvements and then presented their ideas at a community event on AB Tech campus. During this time Mountain Valleys RC&amp;D became involved in the project to help create an environmental concept design that students could use as a foundation for their proposals in the future. The goal is to have this plan lay out some of the more complex environmental engineering concepts that students would not otherwise consider. To cap off this years project, students and teachers at BCEC suggested that removal of the Kudzu on the property should be the first step in restoration. We agreed and used Tipping Point funds to contract The Yard Bro to do some manual removal using some heavy machinery. With some left over funds we decided to work with Kudzu Culture to host a workshop on the property that focused on the historical and cultural uses of Kudzu. This workshop was free to the public and all participants of the project were invited.</p>
<b>Indicators of service quality:</b> <i>(How well did we do it?)</i>	<p>Students showed a marked improvement in their understanding of stream ecology, habitat restoration, and sustainable park design. This is apparent from the quality of questions they prepared to ask mentors at the roundtable event, the thoughtfulness of their final proposals, and their enthusiasm to continue to work on the project next year. Staff at BCEC also continues to be very enthusiastic about the project and the effect it has on their students. Events have already been set up to engage this upcoming group of 9th graders. As per the recommendation of BCEC students and staff, the Kudzu removal on the property has freed many trees from being strangled and allowed for a much better view of the river from the banks.</p>
<b>Result/Outcome:</b> <i>(Is anyone better off)</i>	<p>Providing the opportunity for students to have a tangible impact on the landscape of their community has been a great success. Not everyone gets to create this impact at such a young age, and it's clear that many of them feel empowered to continue this type of civic engagement. Of the 60 first years, there are about 20 who expressed interest in mentoring the next group of students, helping them build on the accomplishments of this years work. BCEC staff has also expressed their appreciation of this project-based learning opportunity and how it elevated many of the concepts already in their curriculum. We at RiverLink are also thrilled to see the progress on this riverfront property and can't wait to continue to engage students in this process of restoration!</p>