

Twin Cities Nature Connections Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

Twin Cities, Minnesota



Wilderness Inquiry / Julia Schweitzer

Youth and Young Adults Working Together to Develop Skills in Teamwork

Wilderness Inquiry and partners will introduce 1,200 urban youth and their families to their local wildlife refuge, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, through place-based education and recreation activities and restoration of 15-acres along the Minnesota River through the Canoemobile educational experience. Urban youth from Minneapolis and Saint Paul schools will meet academic goals, develop a greater sense of stewardship, and learn technical job skills while paddling Voyageur canoes on the refuge, hiking, restoring native plants, and engaging with refuge rangers.

Wilderness Inquiry, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Minneapolis and Saint Paul public schools, Saint Paul Right Track, and other partners will elevate the profile of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge as a valuable community asset, connect youth with their urban refuge, and package a national model for urban refuges across the country.

Outcomes of the Canoemobile program will include:

- About 600 urban youth will paddle and explore on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, engaging in place-based education.
- Place-based education off the refuge site, with expertise from refuge rangers will be offered to 400 urban youth.
- More than 150 urban youth and families will visit the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge as part of a community event.
- A 15-acre site in the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Old Cedar Avenue Bridge area will be restored by 50 urban youth who will participate in habitat restoration, to improve the health of the watershed and restore native plants.
- Internships will be offered to two urban youth who will work on the refuge, applying technical skills learned through this project.

- A Youth Employment Coordinator will train and mentor urban youth, preparing them for internships and jobs in the outdoor industry.

Partners

Partners include Wilderness Inquiry, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Minneapolis and Saint Paul public schools, Saint Paul Right Track, and others.



For more information, contact:
National Wildlife Refuge System
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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