

Green Fund Project Final Report

This report may be published on the SIU sustainability website.

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Project Title: SIU In Touch with Sustainability
Project ID #: 16SP127
Award Date: 4/22/2016
Completion Award:
Total Funds Used: \$2050.00 + funds rolled over from 15SP109

1. Please provide a write up of your project/project experience.

SIU In Touch with Sustainability Programming offered SIU student organizations the opportunity to take part in canoeing, hiking, camping, and trail-building programs at Touch of Nature at no cost. The center hosted Students Today Leaders Forever, the SIU Jumpstart Program, several fraternities and sororities, and Honors Society students, to name a few. The initial goal of the programming was to teach students about the ecology and landscape in the area, but what we ended up finding was that even just coming out to Touch of Nature was such a stretch for many people's comfort zones that there was not a whole lot of room left to delve into the facts. However, the mission was accomplished each time a student got to experience canoeing on a pristine lake for the first time or built a section of trail that they will be able to return to for years to come.

Many of these groups meet regularly on campus but rarely get the opportunity to have new experiences with each other, so most times, space was left for group bonding. Most of the students involved with these programs had not been to Touch of Nature and many did not know it existed, and likely would not have had they not come with a Green Fund program. Post-program survey response rate was low, but based on staff debriefs and some returning customers, students seemed to really appreciate the unique experiences they had at Touch of Nature. Our most successful group was the Jumpstart program through the Housing Department. They have visited each semester for the past two years, and their leader, Todd Bryson, has said that each time the students have requested the trip themselves.

2. Please provide a summary of your results (environmental, social, and/or economic) including quantifiable data as appropriate (ex. # of individuals reached, lbs. diverted from landfill, energy saved, etc.).

SIU In Touch with Sustainability Programs served about 300 students. The programs also served the Touch of Nature staff who facilitated them, by providing more work opportunities, and thus, experience. The environmental effect is impossible to quantify, but our program runs behind the belief that people are more likely to want to protect the environment when they are exposed to nature, and SIU students do not otherwise have many opportunities for this exposure.

3. Summarize how your project promoted the Green Fee/Sustainability on campus including, but not limited to, flyers created, screenshots of website, signage, etc. Please include website links, if applicable.

A flyer that described what programs were offered and how to set one up was distributed at every RSO Fair and other on-campus promotional events. The website no longer promotes Green Fund programming, but when it did, it did so with this blurb:

“We serve Greek organizations, student alumni organizations, University Housing, cultural groups, outdoor adventure groups, and orientation programs just to name a few. Thanks to the [Green Fund](#), Touch of Nature is able to offer a FREE trial program, including transportation, to SIU organizations! Contact Molly Maxwell at molly.maxwell@siu.edu to customize your group's program today!”

4. Is there anything you would do differently if you were to do a similar project in the future? If so, please describe.

Yes. This program served many SIU students in the two years of its existence, but had the potential to spread a lot further. There is enough to do for the management of this grant to fulfill a part-time undergraduate or graduate assistant position. As it was, I was the manager for the last half of the first year and the entire second year of the grant but with the other responsibilities I had with my position, I did not feel I was able to dedicate the time or energy that could have made this program really shine. Booking programs with the students that were leaders in their organizations was quite challenging in many cases, because they were also busy and often hard to get a final answer from. Something that would have benefitted the process would have been a form or questionnaire they filled out that they could review with their faculty advisor and then return with all the necessary information in a timely manner. The program could also have used a way to hold groups accountable to the programs they had scheduled. Since they did not have to pay anything, we saw several last-minute cancellations.

5. Please attach a minimum of 5 digital images –these will be images used to promote interest in sustainability projects on campus. These can be photos of the progress of the project or the completed project.
6. Optional: Do you have any suggestions for the SIU Sustainability Council to improve the Green Fund Award Process?

No, I would just like to thank the council for the opportunity to provide access to Touch of Nature for so many SIU students. Touch of Nature still has a long way to go in the process of reaching all students at SIU, but that is the goal and this grant award helped us greatly to get closer to that goal.

