

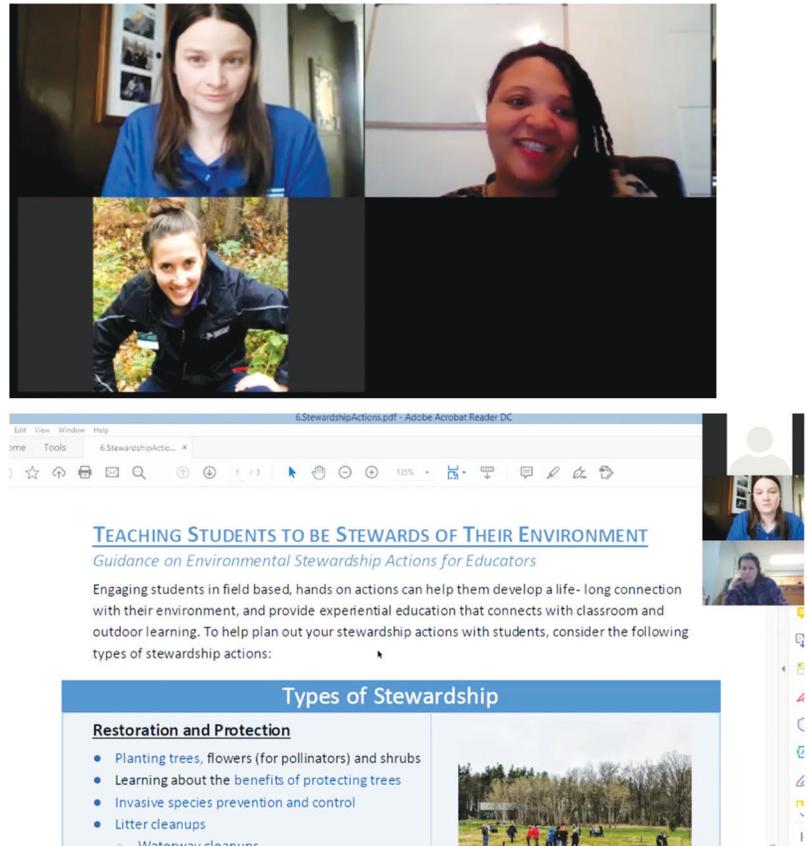
Great Lakes Educators Professional Development Virtual Workshop

The COVID-19 pandemic created both stress and opportunity for educators. New York Sea Grant (NYSG) adapted its professional development training, previously offered in-person and at field sites, for K-12 teachers in the Great Lakes region to fit virtual access.

To accommodate COVID-19 safety restrictions in 2020, NYSG partnered with local environmental organizations to design a web-based teachers' professional development workshop. A virtual training was held on the process of designing engaging stewardship projects for students, even during times of necessary remote or distance learning. Information was included on grant funding opportunities, and how to apply for funding independently and in partnership with environmental education nonprofits, higher education community programs, and/or state entities.

Twenty-one educators "logged on," representing schools serving the New York communities of Buffalo, Belleville, Jamesville, Niagara Falls, Oswego, Rochester, and Syracuse. These educators reach more than 2,745 students with classes and programs. One hundred percent of the workshop participants reported increasing their knowledge on stewardship projects; 86% reported they were likely to implement a stewardship project that would include a remote/distance-learning option. Some concerns were expressed related to the pandemic and having less in-person time with students. Eighty percent of the participants wanted another workshop to explore ways to engage students remotely as a group.

This virtual training experience met a timely need for Great Lakes educators in New York State and identified other areas of interest for future NYSG programming in support of K-12 educators.



A team of NYSG educators created a virtual professional development training opportunity for K-12 educators. Photo: NYSG

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development.

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.
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