

Sierra Nevada Journeys provides watershed education

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Sierra Nevada Journeys educates students, teachers, and volunteers on local issues associated with the Truckee River Watershed through a grant provided by the Truckee River Fund at the Community Foundation of Western Nevada. The [goal](#) is to provide high-impact science programming covering topics such as invasive species and watershed health while empowering youth to protect and enhance the quality of the Truckee River.



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“Teachers are eager to incorporate relevant, local science education into their classrooms, but often lack funding or experience to accomplish this. Because of the generous grant from the Truckee River Fund, 400 of our area’s students participated in our hands-on watershed education programming,” Eaton Dunkelberger, CEO of Sierra Nevada Journeys said. “These students are building their comprehension of how a watershed works to explore ways to protect one of our most precious [resources](#).”

400 students ranging from 3rd to 5th grade participated in watershed education that included three in-class lessons and a field study experience. 85% of participating students were able to correctly identify, label and diagram the Truckee River Watershed. Another result from the program is a deeper understanding and knowledge of potential invasive species including the New Zealand Mud Snail. Additionally, over 90% of the students participating demonstrated [improved](#) comprehension of related state science standards through the watershed education.

“The Truckee River Fund is dedicated to protecting and enhancing water quality and water resources of the Truckee River and its watershed. This program with Sierra Nevada Journeys is a great fit and we are excited to have so many young people [learning](#) such deep lessons about protecting our precious resources,” Ron Penrose, Project Manger at Truckee Meadows Water Authority said.

Thirty nine educators also participated in the initiative through professional development workshops. These workshops included water science, the water cycle, water [quality](#), use of the Truckee River, an introduction to the Truckee River Watershed map as a teaching resource and finally, the use of local events as service learning opportunities. One hundred percent of the educators reported they plan to use the lessons provided through the workshops, according to post program surveys.

“This fit in nicely with what we were already doing in [class](#). I loved the hands-on science learning; the students really enjoyed the lessons – especially the field trip to the Truckee River,” said one fifth grade teacher from Kate Smith Elementary.

To provide program sustainability and to continue sharing knowledge about our watershed, Sierra Nevada Journeys piloted their Field Educator Volunteer program. The volunteer program both involves and further educates local community on the importance of watersheds while helping provide Watershed Education to a larger number of local schools