



## Press Advisory:

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*For Immediate Release*

### **Watershed Coalition Receives Further NOAA Funding to Expand Education Programs**

April 8, 2020, Flint, MI. The Flint River Green Bridges program began last year as an expansion to the Flint River GREEN water quality monitoring program for students. The first round of funding supported the design of a 10-week water quality unit connecting 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to their local communities using NOAA's Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences. The funding also enabled a partnership with UM-Flint University Outreach Discovering PLACE to deliver robust teacher training and sustained support in place-based education.

This second round of funding extends the Bridges program and increases the number of participating schools, teachers, and students. The program will include opportunities for students to engage in water quality through multiple subjects such as social studies, language arts, and math while expanding the career exploration component that connects students to local community experts.

James Hall, 8th grade science teacher at Hamady Junior High School used the curriculum during the fall with his students. According to Hall, "This was a great opportunity to meet the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) while giving students a chance to think critically about water quality issues."

More than 800 students across the Flint River Watershed were engaged in Bridges' hands-on, citizen science lessons and youth-led action projects prior to school closures in March due to the coronavirus. The FRWC is working with current teachers and NOAA to adapt the project during this unprecedented time to ensure continued and future success.

"I'm overwhelmed by the response from our science teachers who are eager to continue to engage their students in exemplary place-based water quality education despite these challenging times. They inspire our efforts to creatively adapt the program with new resources," states FRWC Program Manager Autumn Mitchell.

Bridges teachers are using tools such as Zoom Meetings, NOAA Data in the Classroom, and Terrain 360 to bring Flint River watershed education to their students while at home. The schools participating in Bridges this school year include:

- Atherton Jr. High (Burton)
- Chatfield (Lapeer)
- Hamady Jr. High (Westwood Heights)
- Marshall Greene Middle School (Birch Run)
- Kuehn-Haven Middle School (Montrose)
- Ruth Fox Middle School (North Branch)
- Grand Blanc West Middle School (Grand Blanc)

Mitchell continues, "We are very fortunate to receive this additional funding to further enhance Bridges and we look forward to full implementation of the curriculum next school year." In the meantime, families interested in learning about watersheds and water stewardship while at home can access many great resources at <http://www.flintrivergreen.org/>.

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The NOAA B-WET program is a competitive grant program that promotes Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences: activities driven by rigorous academic learning standards that aim to increase participants' understanding and stewardship of watersheds and related ecosystems. To read more about the NOAA B-WET program, please visit <http://www.noaa.gov/office-education/bwet>.

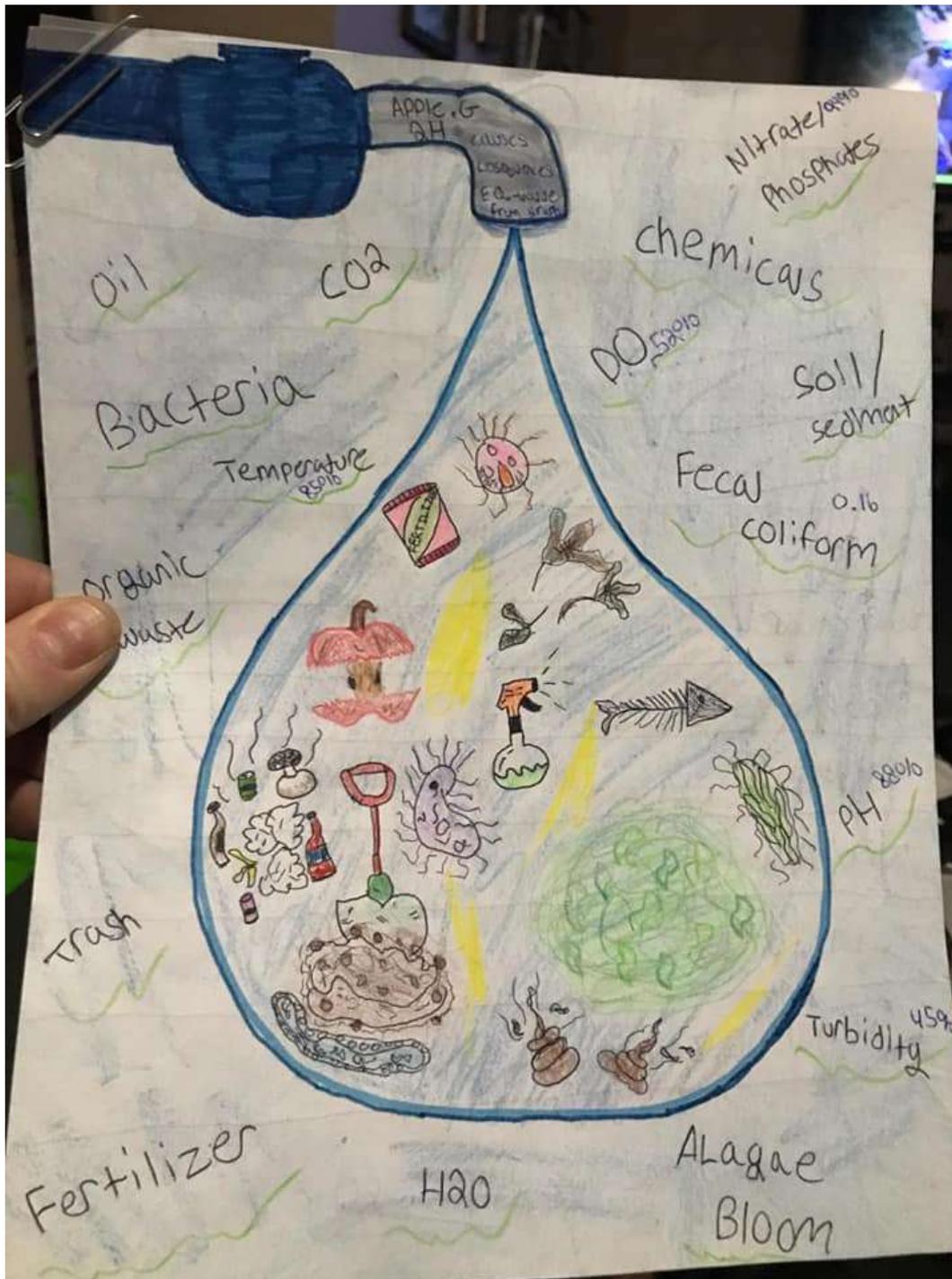
Discovering PLACE coordinated through UM-Flint's Office of University Outreach works to advance and support place-based education initiatives in this region. The hub is a collective of Flint-area K-12 schools, university faculty and staff, community organizations, and parents working to connect young people to their communities. <https://www.umflint.edu/outreach/discovering-place>.

The Flint River Watershed Coalition seeks a healthy, vibrant, active Flint River watershed for all. We work in partnership to protect, promote, and improve the Flint River and its watershed. To learn more about the FRWC and the Flint River Green Bridges program, please visit <http://flinriver.org>.

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1 Photo attached

In photo, an example of a Hamady Jr. High School student's poster communicating the importance of water quality



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