

Organization Name: West Atlanta Watershed Alliance

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Organization Mission: The West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA) is a community-based non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life within the West Atlanta Watershed by protecting, preserving and restoring our community's natural resources. WAWA represents African American neighborhoods in Northwest and Southwest Atlanta (Proctor, Utoy, and Sandy Creek Watersheds) that are inundated with environmental stressors, but are least represented at environmental decision-making tables. WAWA believes that a healthy environment equals a healthy community, and our overall efforts are focused on growing a cleaner, greener, healthier, and more sustainable West Atlanta. We accomplish our work through community organizing and engagement, environmental education, community science initiatives, participatory research, and advocacy. In 2013, WAWA joined together with two other community-based organizations to form the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council (PCSC), a grassroots organization that works to restore, revitalize, and protect the ecological health of the Proctor Creek Watershed and the quality of life of all its people. WAWA continues to serve as convener of the PCSC.

Internship Semester: Summer 2020

Project Title #1: Proctor Creek Watershed Stories

Keywords: Communication, Oral History, Participatory Research

SLS Priority Issue Areas: Equitable Development, Green Infrastructure, Water, Citizen Science

Project Background: Proctor Creek Watershed Stories is an oral history project meant to gather, elevate, and archive, for posterity, voices of residents of the Proctor Creek Watershed. These oral histories will explore residents' past and current relationship with Proctor Creek, community-led activism to improve environmental quality and quality of life in the Proctor Creek Watershed, and perspectives on gentrification and displacement as a result of new investments in revitalizing the watershed and neighborhoods located therein. This project is critical to setting the record straight with respect to community leadership and voices that are often marginalized in the face of the rising popularity and interest in investing in Atlanta's Westside. As West Atlanta neighborhoods undergo social, economic, and environmental changes that individuals alone cannot address, there is a need for communities to bring together their combined knowledge and strengths.

This project will help to document and preserve communities' memories, struggles, and successes, and offers a platform where diverse voices will be heard. Through this project we will uplift the following ideals:

- Sharing authority with and respecting the expertise of our community collaborators
- Amplifying peoples' voices and using a local lens to tell stories that resonate locally, nationally, and globally
- Fostering a sense of belonging, connection, and rootedness among Proctor Creek neighborhoods
- Providing a platform for inclusive idea-sharing and community action

- Inspiring sustained civic engagement The intern will work with a small group (5-10) community residents to develop a set of interview questions. These questions could include the following, but the expectation is that these will only provide a starting point:
- Can you share your experience with Proctor Creek in the past, describe what it looks like at present, and discuss your hope for its future?
- How has racism shaped (either positively or negatively) your community's relationship to water?
- Do recent efforts to help restore Proctor Creek by government agencies, for-profit businesses, and non-profit organizations cause excitement or concern for you? Why?

Project Timeline: During the course of the project the intern will establish an online StoryCorps community and conduct interviews that will be archived as a part of this community. The intern will also develop and deliver a training protocol to a group of Proctor Creek Watershed residents (watershed researchers) who will work alongside the intern to gather watershed stories/oral histories during the internship period. A reasonable goal will be established with respect to the number of stories to be collected during the internship period, however the work will continue beyond the internship period through the efforts of the watershed researchers.

Desired skills and qualifications: Writing, Experience working with diverse populations/communities, Social media experience, website design (Wordpress a plus)

Deliverables: Creation of StoryCorps Online Community to Archive Proctor Creek Watershed Stories/Oral Histories with a baseline collection of Watershed stories (exact number TBD), Development and delivery of training protocol (and accompanying written documents) to train a small set of Proctor Creek Watershed residents (5-10) to interview other watershed residents for the baseline collection of Watershed stories/oral histories.