

CAP Environmental Action Project

Goals of the Environmental Action Projects

After an action-packed Conservation Ambassador Program summer field experience at UConn, students have gained new skills and knowledge used by environmental professionals. **Now it's time for each CAP student to apply those skills and become a changemaker in their community!**

The goal of the CAP environmental action project is to address a local environmental issue that is important to each student and their community. We aim to tailor each project to the CAP student's schedule and interests, as well as co-create these projects with community partners so that the project is both manageable for the CAP student and meaningful to the student and their community. **To help students, NRCA Difference Maker Mentors, and community partners brainstorm projects, students will receive a step-by-step guide during the summer field experience and begin generating project ideas!**

Support During the Environmental Action Projects

Throughout the CAP project, students will not be alone! Each student receives support from one NRCA Difference Maker Mentor and a community partner. All support personnel have already received, or will receive, [UConn's Minor Protection](#) training.

The **Difference Maker Mentor** will **check-in with their 4-6 CAP students every two weeks (bi-weekly)** from July to April, either virtually through web call or in person, depending on the mentoring group's preference. This is a great way to learn what other CAP students are doing for their projects as well! The Difference Maker Mentors will also **assist students via email communication to share resources, one-on-one meetings, or site visits to help students with project brainstorming, connecting with community partners, project implementation, and developing a conference poster** to showcase the student's CAP project.



See NRCA Difference Maker Mentor contact info in table at the end of this document

The primary role of the **Community Partner** is to **facilitate the student's project through expert guidance and access to resources** that the student may not be able to obtain on their own, such as access to public or private land, previously collected data or equipment. Generally, community partners **assist with the development of the project idea, provide some guidance on methods or approaches used for the project, and review the student's conference poster** to ensure the content is accurate. The exact role varies based on their expertise and amount of time they can commit to the project.

What Types of Projects Can CAP Students Undertake?

CAP projects should address local environmental issues or topics. We encourage creativity and projects that benefit community partner organizations. Visit nrca.uconn.edu/projects to see past projects.



Who Manages the Project?

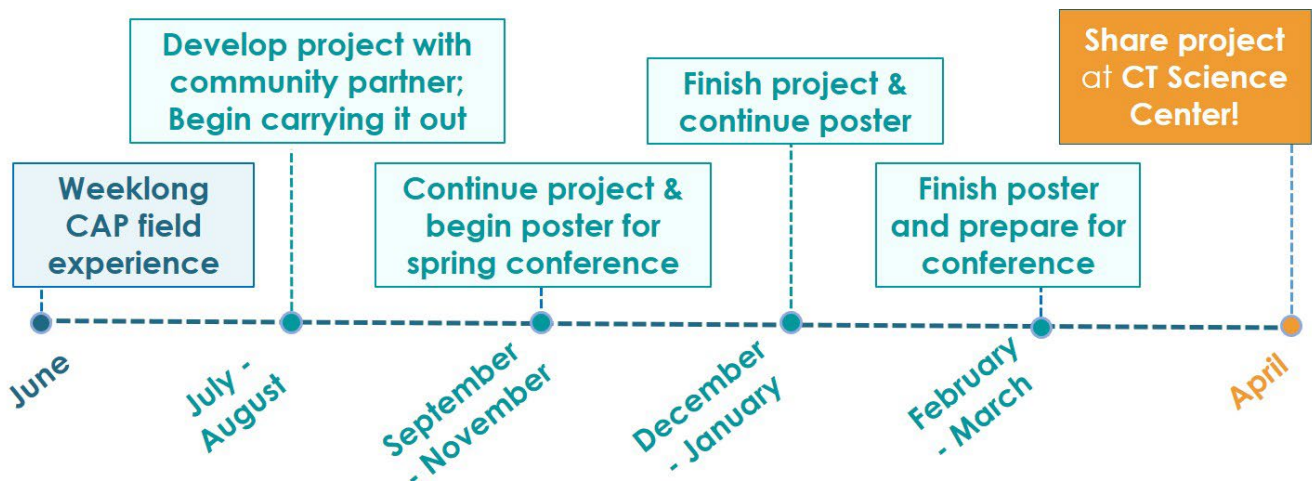
Overall, this is the student’s project and they should be excited to take ownership of it. At the beginning, the NRCA Difference Maker Mentors will help the student and community partner develop a project that complements the goals of the community partner organization and is manageable for the student to complete under minimal guidance. The Difference Maker Mentors will assist significantly with the development of the conference poster; however, community partners will be asked to review content for accuracy.

How Much Time are Students Expected to Work on Their Projects?

There is no requirement for time students must spend on their community project. Students should work with their Difference Maker Mentor and community partner to determine the time needed to successfully complete the project. The project should never feel overwhelming. We understand that schedules can be busy and kindly ask students to communicate with their mentors as soon as possible if they need to scale back or temporarily pause their project.

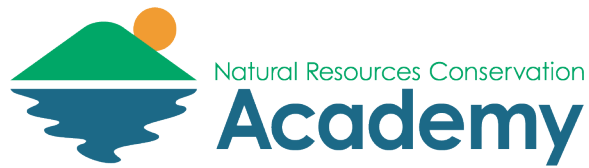
Timeline of CAP Environmental Action Projects

Under the guidance of the community partner and NRCA Difference Maker Mentors, students will design, develop, and implement their environmental action project between ***July and April of the following year***. Summer and fall months are primarily spent planning, conducting fieldwork or collecting data, whereas winter months are mostly used to complete analyses and prepare the conference poster. The program culminates when students present their work at a state-wide conference in the spring.



Do CAP Students Need Community Partner Supervision During Their Work?

After students have learned the skills needed and can work independently, community partner supervision of the students in the field is not always necessary (although always welcomed). Nevertheless, students should be accompanied by an adult (e.g., parent or NRCA Difference Maker Mentors) for safety. NRCA Difference Maker Mentors will attempt to join students when needed; however, this may not always be possible.



Have Additional Questions?

Given that community projects are tailored to individual student interests and community partner needs, there is no exact answer to all the questions above. The NRCA Director would be happy to discuss how a community project may be tailored to each student’s schedule, interests, and community needs. Please contact Dr. Laura Cisneros at laura.cisneros@uconn.edu or 860-486-4917.

NRCA Mentor Contact Info & NRCA Mentor-CAP Student Teams

Violet’s Team (Central CT)			
NRCA Mentor:	Violet Andrews	Difference Maker Mentor	violet.andrews@uconn.edu
CAP Students:	Aury, Aishlinn, Livia, Wes, Elena L.		
Anna’s Team (Capitol Region)			
NRCA Mentor:	Anna Hilary	Difference Maker Mentor	anna.hilary@uconn.edu
CAP Students:	Lucas, Aakash, Kruthika, Aaron, Anna-Maria		
Sammy’s Team (Eastern CT)			
NRCA Mentor:	Sammy Parnin	Difference Maker Mentor	samantha.parnin@uconn.edu
CAP Students:	Ali, Alainy, Owen, Elena C., Anna		
Juan’s Team (South-Central CT)			
NRCA Mentor:	Juan Pineda	Difference Maker Mentor	juan.pineda@uconn.edu
CAP Students:	Dariana, Angelina, Sydney, Judah, Alex		
Shanelle’s Team (Southwest CT)			
NRCA Mentor:	Shanelle Thevarajah	Grad Mentor	shanelle.thevarajah@uconn.edu
CAP Students:	Saisha, Sofia, Nicole, Ahilyn, Sam, Veronika		

