

Dennis Mabasa, *Chief Operating Officer*
Friends of the Los Angeles River

Youth Community Engagement: River Fellows



FRIENDS OF THE LA RIVER



Youth Community Engagement: River Fellows

Dennis Mabasa, Chief Operating Officer
FoLAR



Friends of the Los Angeles River



MISSION: Building capacity for communities, students, and future leaders to advocate for nature, climate, and equity on the Los Angeles River.



What We Do

Advocate

Equity

Educate

Activate



Education Programs

Source to Sea

Four-part program: two in-class lessons, a school visit from the River Rover, and a field trip

Online Enrichment

Multi-week, online learning experience

Day of Discovery

Single-day field trip, in partnership with LAUSD

Community Events

Bats and Brews, Nature Walks, tabling at partner's events

River Fellowship

Year-long, workforce development program for high school students

Breadth

Depth

Pilot River Fellowship 2023



The River Fellows Program is a paid Career Technical Education and youth-development program for high-school aged youth that come from communities underrepresented in STEM and conservation. Participants are given the opportunities, skills, mentors, and community to fully immerse themselves into a green career focusing on environmental education, research, and advocacy.



Pilot River Fellowship 2023



Our current, pilot year of the River Fellowship launched in January 2023.

We received **86 applications** and accepted **30 River Fellows** from public schools adjacent to the LA River.



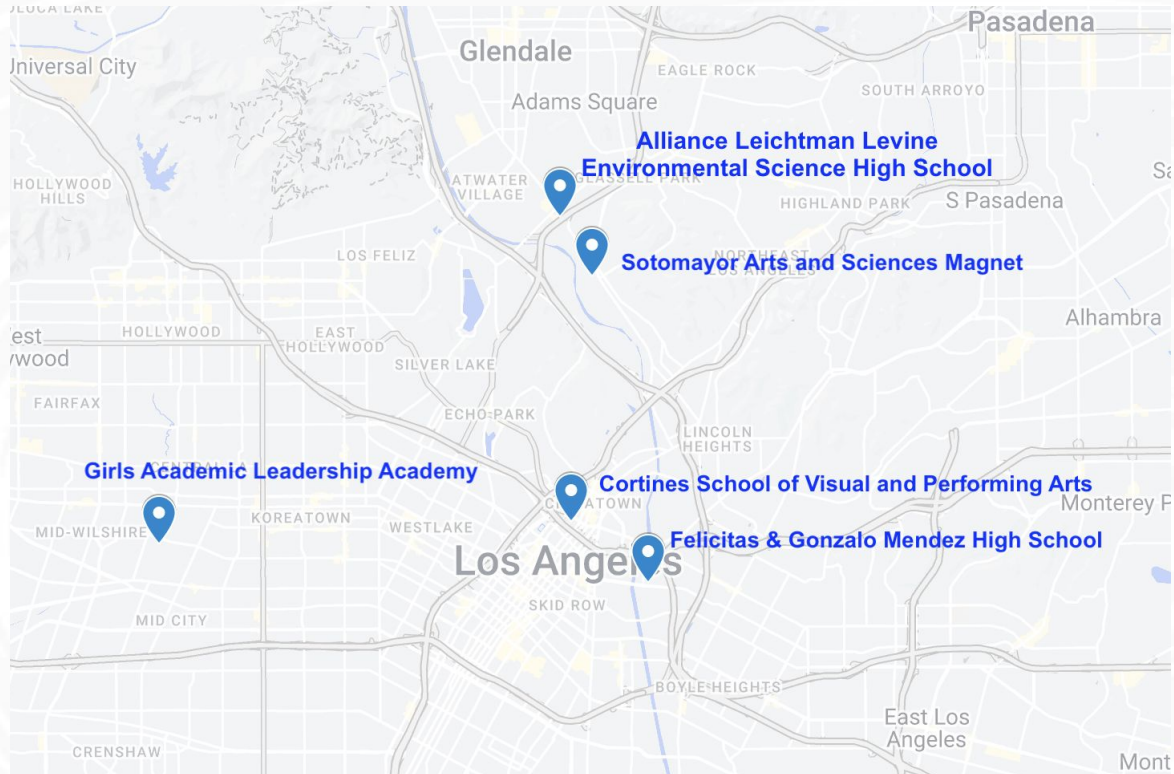
Eligibility:

- Underrepresented background in STEM and conservation
- Geographic boundaries: Metropolitan Los Angeles, with priority to schools closest to the River
- Age: 14-18 years of age; 9th-11th grade
- Must attend a public, Title 1 school

Pilot River Fellowship 2023



Our accepted students attend the following public, Title 1 high schools:



Why did you apply?



"I'm hoping to learn from this program ways for me, especially as a person of color, to find my way through the environmental science field and make a career out of it."

Marissa Aari Neal, 17 years old



Why did you apply?



I want to be able to serve my community and give back. With the LA river being close by and a source shared by many, I want to ensure it's health and make my voice heard through this fellowship.



Itzel Melendez,

Why did you apply?



Ever since I was little, I have always been worried about the climate because I would always see smoke from the factories in the Philippines, and due to the poverty over there, I always saw the worst of environments...Ever since, it has been getting worse globally, and I would like to be able to help the LA community become cleaner and also push our community towards going green

Jeorgette Urbano,



Components



Youth and Family Orientation



Components



Camping Trip



Components



River Kayaking Trip



Components



Professional guest speakers

Ed Othmer
River Fellows
Meeting

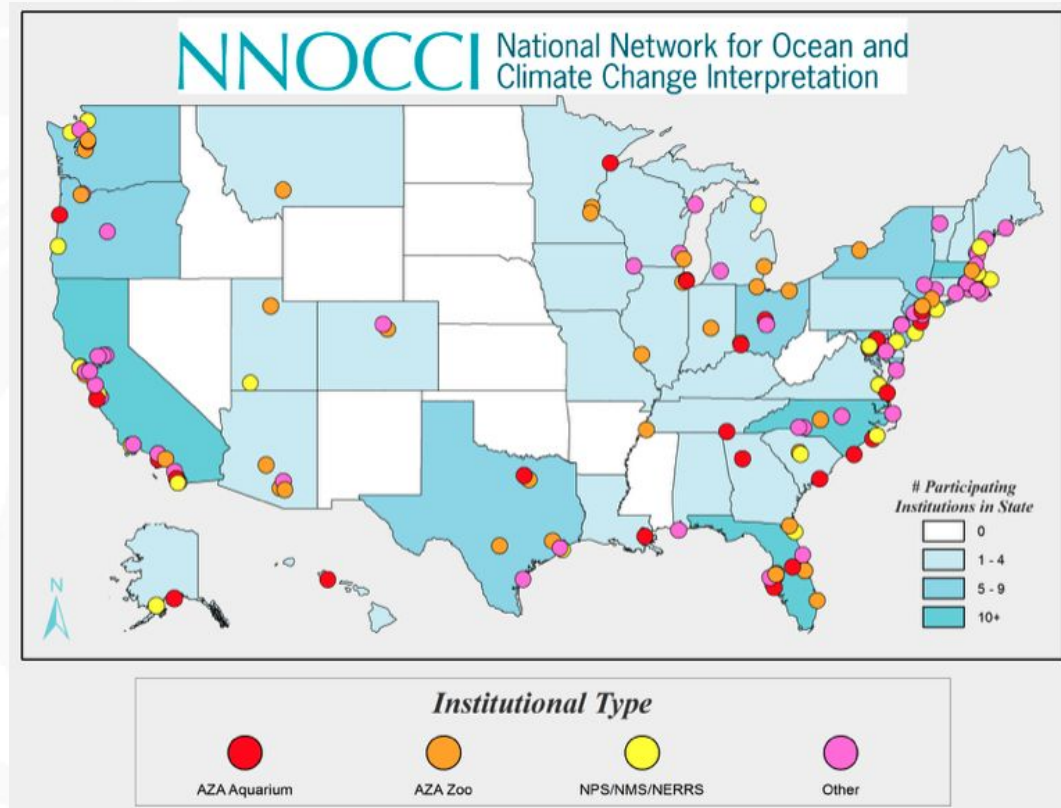
Let Others Know Where You Want to Go



Components



NNOCCI Climate Communication Certification



Components



Public Education



6. Project-Based Learning Groups

- **Phyto-Mycoremediation:** In partnership with the UC Riverside department of biogeochemistry, Fellows are trained on the science of Phyto-Mycoremediation, collect and analyze data, and present their findings to professionals in the field. Youth receive HAZWOPER Certification.



6. Project-Based Learning Groups

- **River-Lab Test Plot:** In partnership with USC faculty (LARIDL) and graduate students, youth will assist in data collection of both LA River water and adjacent vegetation.



Components



6. Project-Based Learning Groups

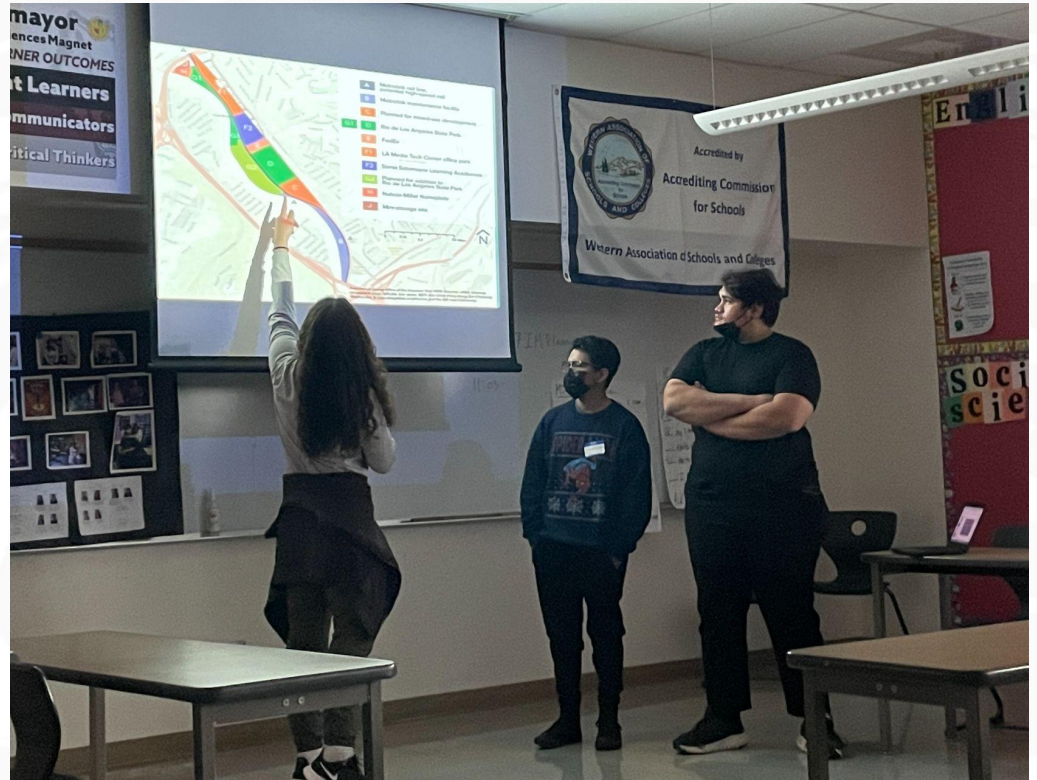
Environmental Justice Advocacy: Hosted internally, youth will learn about environmental justice issues from historical and regional perspectives, and plan and lead a community action project of their own.



Components



Project Showcase



8. No Cost & Monetary Stipend

Preliminary Survey Data: Fellows Pilot Launch



- **100 % of students reported and increase in understanding of eco literacy concepts**
- **60% Percent of Students reported an increase in confidence**
- **50% of students reported an Increase in Environmental & Climate Action**
- **40% of students reported increased interest in entering the green workforce**

Thank you!

