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American Water Charitable Foundation and NRPA Awards \$450,000 to Support Local Nature-Based Play Areas

VOORHEES, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The [American Water Charitable Foundation](#), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization created by American Water, the nation's largest publicly traded water and wastewater utility company, today announced it is awarding three grants to support local nature-based play areas in Pennsylvania, Illinois, and California.

"We are proud to help these communities create public projects that provide environmental education opportunities in a fun and engaging way," said Laura Martin, president, American Water Charitable Foundation. "The projects will not only benefit the children and families in these communities, but they will also encourage greater interaction with and appreciation for our nation's water resources."

The projects were chosen based on several criteria including water components, play value, education value, proximity to American Water's service areas, relevance of the project to the RFP project parameters, use of natural play materials, and opportunities for American Water employee volunteer involvement.

The grant recipients include:

- Palmer Park in Coatesville, Pennsylvania is receiving a \$150,000 grant award to revitalize the well-loved neighborhood park, transforming it into a source of community pride and a healthy, thriving place for children, families, and adults to recreate. The space will include a small splash park, a nature play area constructed of natural materials, a constructed stream with a small bridge, native plantings, and green stormwater features. The project will be a collaboration between the Foundation, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Pennsylvania American Water, and the City of Coatesville.
- The City of Peoria, Illinois is receiving a \$150,000 grant to build a new public park near Harrison Primary School, called Peoria GreenSplash. The new water play feature will drain into a bioswale, providing children an opportunity to play in the water, while learning about the benefits of native plants and the natural water cycle. The project will be a collaboration between the Foundation, NRPA, Illinois American Water, and the City of Peoria.
- Robert's Lake in Seaside, California is receiving a \$150,000 grant to establish greater use and awareness of Robert's Lake for water-based ecology education for children, as well as offer nature-based recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. The new "Robert's Lake Eco-Recreation Station" will be designed with the purpose of creating community, including an outdoor classroom structure and nature inspired play equipment. The project will be a collaboration between the Foundation, NRPA, California American Water, and the City of Seaside.

The grants are administered as part of the Foundation's [Building Better Communities](#) signature grant program, administered by the National Recreation and Park Association. The program is designed to enhance the quality of life in the communities the company serves. The program is focused on parks, as they are critical to preserving natural resources that have real economic benefits for communities. Specifically, this initiative concentrates on building or enhancing nature-based playgrounds and play spaces for children, and will connect and educate people on environmental stewardship practices related to water and other natural resources.

"NRPA is proud to partner with the American Water Charitable Foundation to increase opportunities for children and families to experience nature and the outdoors," said Lori Robertson, NRPA director of conservation. "Ensuring people everywhere have the opportunity to engage in physical activity and explore nature is essential to building healthier, stronger communities and creating the next generation of environmental stewards."

During the last three years, the Foundation has awarded nine NRPA grants to American Water communities in California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and looks forward to adding these three new projects to its Building Better Communities initiative.

For more information about the *Building Better Communities* program, visit www.nrpa.org/BuildingBetterCommunities.

About the American Water Charitable Foundation

Established in 2010 with a founding contribution from American Water, the American Water Charitable Foundation is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization that provides a formal way to demonstrate the company's ongoing commitment to being a good neighbor, citizen, and contributor to the communities where American Water and its employees live, work and operate. The Foundation helps support American Water employee-identified nonprofit endeavors. More information about the Foundation can be found at amwater.com or on [Facebook](#).

About American Water

With a history dating back to 1886, American Water is the largest and most geographically diverse U.S. publicly-traded water and wastewater utility company. The company employs more than 6,800 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and market-based drinking water, wastewater and other related services to an estimated 15 million people in 47 states and Ontario, Canada. More information can be found by visiting www.amwater.com.

About The National Recreation and Park Association

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all Americans have access to parks and recreation for health, conservation and social equity. Through its network of 60,000 recreation and park professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit www.nrpa.org. For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit www.parksandrecreation.org.

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