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National Space Science & Technology Institute in Colorado Springs receives grant for mobile environmental education lab

DENVER--- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced the award of \$91,000 to the National Space Science & Technology Institute in Colorado Springs, Colo. The award is being provided under EPA's Environmental Education (EE) Grants Program which solicits proposals from eligible applicants for projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship.

The National Space Science & Technology Institute (NSSTI) will use the EPA grant funds to implement a mobile lab program to introduce middle school students to issues associated with Colorado water supplies, including how humans affect hydrology, how hydrology systems fit into the global picture, and how to think critically about water issues on multiple scales.

"Projects like NSSTI's Mobile Earth & Space Observatory provide hands-on learning opportunities that can inspire students for a lifetime," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. "By supporting these efforts, EPA is investing in the science and technical skills that will advance environmental awareness and progress in our communities."

"We are honored to have been selected to deliver a program around water, which is essential to life," said Robert Sallee, chair of NSSTI's board of directors. "Leading students in research about water supplies and quality will improve their understanding of a resource too many of us take for granted and expose them to the discipline of scientific inquiry. Hopefully at the end of the program, some of the students will say 'I am a scientist.'"

NSSTI will implement the "Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment" (GLOBE) program at five Colorado middle schools with large ethnic student populations typically underrepresented in STEM degree programs and career fields to engage students in place-based, data-driven science investigations. The project will certify teachers on using GLOBE for instruction, engage students in hands-on research, give students exposure to real-world careers in hydrology, and promote environmental stewardship.

The program will be developed and executed during the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years at Jack Swigert Aerospace Academy in Colorado Springs, Lake County Middle School in Leadville, Lamar Middle School in Lamar, Cortez Middle School in Cortez, and Ortega Middle School in Alamosa.

Under the Environmental Education grants program, EPA has distributed between \$2 million and \$3.5 million in grant funding per year since 1992, for a total of approximately \$68 million supporting more than 3,600 grant projects. This highly competitive grants program supports projects that increase public awareness about environmental issues and provide participants with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. The program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate or disseminate environmental education practices, methods or techniques.

The National Space Science & Technology Institute creates hands-on Earth and space science education and outreach programs that provide access to scientist-educators and scientific instrumentation to promote imagination, inquiry, and creative problem-solving. NSSTI's programs are space-centered, inquiry-based, and give learners, including those from underserved populations, access to authentic scientific technology.

For more on NSSTI, visit: <http://www.nssti.org/>

To learn more about the grant winners, or to apply for future grant competitions, visit <http://www2.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>