



Sutro Stewards Summer Internship Program Summary Report 2024

Prepared by Sophie Klimcak, Sutro Stewards Health in Nature Program Manager and Melani Ramirez, Sutro Stewards Health in Nature Intern

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Overview

It is always powerful to see how youth engage in the magic of the mountain from their own eyes.

In its fifth year of the Enterprise for Youth Summer Internship Program, Sutro Stewards welcomed 10 high school students to Mount Sutro for a five-week outdoor educational internship from June 26, 2024 to July 26, 2024. Bay Area youth participants explored Mount Sutro Open Space in San Francisco, gaining hands-on experience in habitat restoration, California native plant identification and horticulture, nature-based mindfulness and wellness techniques, urban trail stewardship, and leadership development.

For the third year, Sutro Stewards partnered with a local workforce development nonprofit, Enterprise for Youth (EFY), to provide equitable wages and off-site job readiness training to all participants in this year's Summer Internship Program. This collaborative partnership is designed to give youth an overview of the growing field of California native plant habitat restoration and horticulture, supported by lessons in Mount Sutro ecology to cultivate connection with local open spaces, inspiring the next generation of climate conscious stewards.

EFY also assisted Sutro Stewards with outreach and recruitment for the summer internship program. EFY's eligibility requirement for participants interested in paid summer internships through EFY's partners is the completion of their month-long Job Readiness Training program. This training program is offered to Bay Area youth who are enrolled in high school and are between the ages of 14 to 21 years old, with no minimum GPA requirement, and students with any immigration status are encouraged to apply.

Our Cohort and Team

The program was co-led by Health in Nature Program Manager, Sophie Haruna Klimcak and Conservation Manager, Sam Nelson, with daily support and lessons provided by Health in Nature Intern, Melani Ramirez. Additional support and lessons provided by Nursery Program Manager, Abigail Alfonso, Programs and Outreach Coordinator, Anat Leonard-Wokey, and facilitation support by Sutro Stewards' Urban Ecology interns.



This year's cohort consisted of 10 youth participants ages 15 - 18 currently enrolled in local and private schools across the Bay Area such as Balboa, Lowell, Galileo, Hayward high school, and St. Ignatius. Participants either walked, took public transportation, or got a ride from a parent or guardian to Sutro Stewards Nursery.

Schedule and Activities

Interns were required to attend approximately 75 hours of total work and maintain an attendance level of 90% or more during the five week program. In addition to this, interns were required to attend weekly online workforce development workshops provided by Enterprise for Youth. Online workforce development workshops helped youth develop resumes, cover letters, and professional emails while honing interview skills with HR professionals. Interns were also required to participate in one Saturday Conservation and Trails program volunteer day.

Each week, interns participated in a nursery volunteer day on Wednesday and habitat stewardship volunteer day on Thursday followed by 3 hours of hands-on educational activities led by Sutro Stewards staff and environmental professionals. Hands-on educational activities included but were not limited to: creating a new trail spur from the Nursery to Clarendon Trail, removing over 3000 sq ft of invasive species from stewardship sites, the habitats and history of Mount Sutro hike, basics of plant identification and common Mt. Sutro plant species, sustainable seed collection hikes, nature based wellness techniques such as nature journaling, and learning how to work with both invasive and native medicinal plants alike to make salves, inks, and sage bundles. The interns also spent a day at Angel Island, where they familiarized themselves with the ecology of a local island landscape and the historical importance of the immigration center, which operated on the island from 1910 to 1940. They also came in on a Saturday to help restore Woodland Canyon Creek on Mount Sutro.

By the second half of the summer program, interns were able to gain adequate experience and ecological knowledge to assist in co-leading nursery and habitat stewardship volunteer days. All interns successfully completed a capstone project working individually to lead a small part of a student-guided tour around Mt.Sutro, focusing on one of the four areas they studied including conservation, medicine-making, nursery, and/or trails as the culmination of the summer internship.

For their capstone project, interns chose a site on the mountain to present what they learned during the program. Youth then led each other and Sutro Stewards staff to their chosen trail, tree, or stewardship site to identify plants, demonstrate tool use, discuss Mt Sutro history, and share a relationship they developed with a plant – whether it was the wild petunia, the plum trees, or the towering eucalyptus. Their total route spanned three miles, taking us all over the mountain; from the Clarendon Trailhead, past the Rose Corner on the Historic Trail, over to Woodland Canyon Creek, and finally finishing at the Summit. The route they co-created through their capstone project was highlighted in the Sutro Stewards newsletter in our regular column, Sutro Strolls, which offers a new walk each month to discover unique and seasonal features of Mount Sutro. Through their capstone project, their work stewarding our habitat sites, the spur trail they built to our nursery, and the plants they helped to propagate that will be planted this season, the students work will live on beyond their tenure with Sutro Stewards.



Photo on the left: Interns make yarrow infused oil in preparation for medicine-making, Photo on the right: Interns weed plant demonstration garden to remove invasive plant species.



Photo on the left: Interns add their essential oils to their yarrow salve for wound healing. Photo on the right: Interns decorate and label their salve.



Photo on the left: Interns collect nasturtium for jelly. Photo on the right: Sutro Stewards staff and summer interns hike on Angel Island.

Summer Internship Program Activity Schedule 2024		
	AM Shift	PM Shift
Wednesday, June 26, 2024	Opening circle, review program agreement forms, community agreement activity, nursery tour, intro to program	Document plants observed in the nursery, potting up plants to bigger pots, Phytophthora best management practices, learn how to write plant tags, and reflection
Thursday, June 27, 2024	Presentation on basics of restoration, why it's important, restoration process, restoring ecosystem services. Intro to restoration tools (how to use safely, the purpose of tools). Restoration site walk	Health in Nature (HiN) Afternoons: Intro to HiN, Mindfulness activity, and Stewardship as tending to ourselves
Friday, June 28, 2024	Trails Program	Trails Program
Wednesday, July 3, 2024	Nursery Day	HiN Afternoons: Nature Journaling + Debrief, Gather/Harvest with Mindfulness - Earth Body Meditation, and Coastal Sage Bundles
Wednesday, July 10, 2024	Conservation: RM-LM-Coastal Prairie Habitat, Rain Garden Weeding Project	HiN Afternoons: Nature Journaling, Medicine-making of Yarrow infused oil and Mt. Sutro Mountain tea
Thursday, July 11, 2024	Conservation: NR-UP- Woodland Understory, Rain Garden Weeding Project	HiN Afternoons: Nature Journaling with Native Blackberry, Harvesting Blackberry, Making Blackberry jam and vinegar.
Friday, July 12, 2024	Trails Program	Trails Program
Wednesday, July 17, 2024	Nursery Volunteer Program	HiN Afternoons: Mt.Sutro history, Ink making with Eucalyptus, painting session, and Capstone preparation.
Thursday, July 18th, 2024	Conservation: CL-TH- Coastal scrub, Rain Garden Weeding Project	HiN Afternoons: Capstone preparation, 1:1 Coaching, and Reflection

Friday, July 19, 2024	Angel Island Field Trip 9:00am - 3:30pm	
Saturday, July 20, 2024	Woodland Canyon Creek Restoration	
Wednesday, July 24, 2024	Nursery Volunteer Program	Conservation: RM-UA
Thursday, July 25, 2024	Seed Collection	Wound Healer salve and Nasturtium Jelly making
Friday, July 26, 2024	Capstone presentations: Mt.Sutro student-guided tour	Appreciation lunch and celebrations

Weed/debris removed:

Date	Habitat Restoration Activity	Weeds Removed
Wednesday, June 26th, 2024	Weeding invasive <i>Ehrharta erecta</i> in Nursery Rain Garden	50 sq ft
Wednesday, July 10, 2024	Weeding invasive <i>Fumaria</i> , Himalayan Blackberry, Wild Radish, English Ivy, Thistle on Rotary Meadow	1406 sq ft
Thursday, July 11, 2024	Weeding of <i>Fumaria</i> , Himalayan Blackberry, <i>Ehrharta erecta</i> on North Ridge	280 sq ft
Thursday, July 18th, 2024	Weeding of Himalayan Blackberry, <i>Ehrharta erecta</i> on Clarendon Trail	463 sq ft
Saturday, July 20th, 2024	Weeding of Nightshade, <i>Ehrharta erecta</i> , Himalayan Blackberry on Woodland Canyon Creek	1120 sq ft
Wednesday, July 24th, 2024	Weeding of Nightshade, <i>Ehrharta erecta</i> , Himalayan Blackberry, Wild Radish on Rotary Meadow	140 sq ft

Nursery tasks completed:

Date	Propagation Completed	Nursery Tasks Completed
Wednesday, June 26th, 2024	122 Plants Transplanted	Nursery orientation and integrated pest management
Wednesday, July 3rd, 2024	113 Plants Transplanted	Nursery Volunteer Day: Pot Washing
Wednesday, July 17th, 2024	64 Plants Transplanted	Seed cleaning sweet cicely and woodland sanicle and divisions of Hummingbird Sage

Student Evaluation and Experience:

All program participants were asked to fill out entrance and exit program evaluation surveys to determine baseline knowledge and how the youths knowledge changed after participating in the summer internship program. The questions revolved around their overall experience, what they learned about themselves, what job skills they found most valuable, and what they would change. The surveys are each a page long and ask qualitative and quantitative questions. The program evaluation surveys and responses can be found here: [Summer Internship 2024 Post Program Skills Assessment](#)

For ease of reference, summarized below are highlights from the Summer Internship 2023 Post Program Skills Assessment:

1) 80% of participants said this internship made the participants feel more job ready. Below are their comments on their job ready skills:

“Being able to **collaborate** with others.”

“I learned more about **working in a group** to work towards a certain goal. For example during trail making, different groups would work on different tasks, but we were all working towards the same goal of **creating a better trail while also communicating.**”

“This program was my third internship, after this I think I’m ready for an actual job as I go into my senior year in high school. It’s prepared me to **jump into what the agenda for the work** is for the work day as long as I can get it done.”

“This program has taught me valuable interpersonal skills such as **collaboration and communication** in addition to **problem solving and compromise.**”

“I gained **real life work experience/responsibilities** of what a job is actually like.”

“This program helped me be more job ready by **working with a schedule, learning new things, and being more independent.**”

“It showed me the experience of working on any job and **how to be accepted** in it.”

2) *What have you learned about yourself in this program?*

“I have learned that I really love the outdoors and care deeply about protecting and cultivating the environment.”

“Building a better relationship with nature. Learning how to **express myself** through it.”

“I learned more about **focusing** on specific projects and goals especially during plant removal days when I learned to focus better on manual work.”

“I learned that I get **more joy** out of turning my brain off and just ravaging through blackberry bushes.”

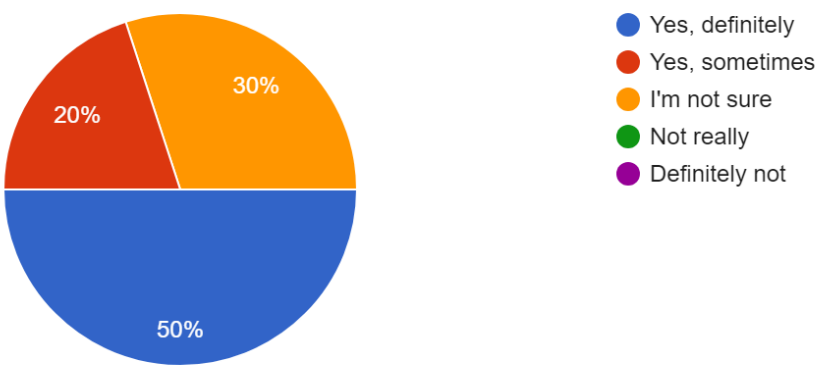
“I love to be outside and working with the dirt **keeps me grounded.** The internship was such a unique opportunity to further develop my relationship with the natural world in a fast paced capitalistic society that places little emphasis on a thoughtful, long term, and environmental world view.”

“My overall connection to nature.”

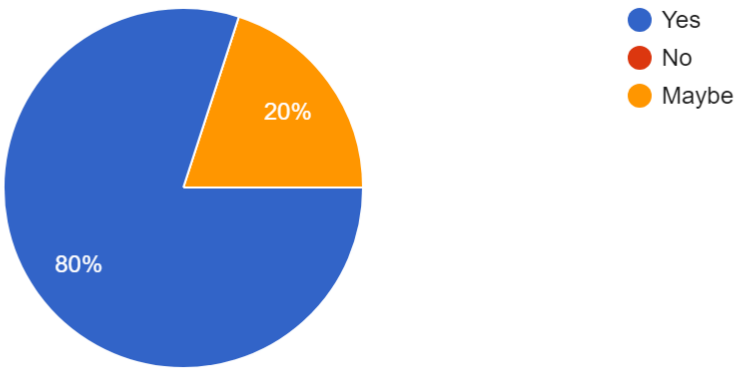
“I learned that I need to get more in nature and learn more about plants because **it’s a way to view the world in new ways.**”

“I learned that I pretty enjoy doing trails. **I don’t know why but I loved it.**”

3) *Has the coming to our program at Mt. Sutro improved your sense of well-being? (Do you feel better after coming here?)*

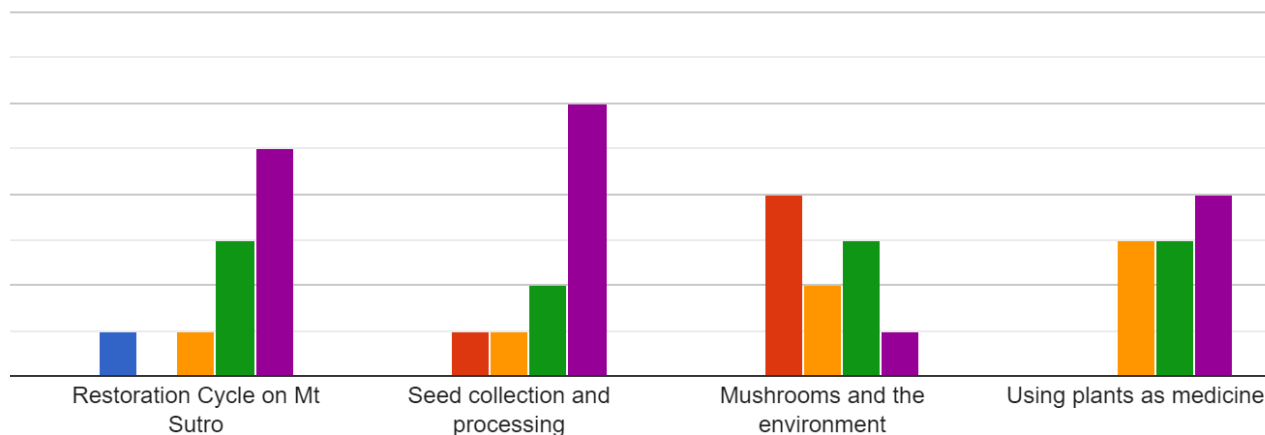


4) *80% of participants have learned mindfulness skills/techniques that they will use after the program.*



5) *On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your knowledge of the following:*

■ 1 (Not at all familiar) ■ 2 (Slightly familiar) ■ 3 (Moderately familiar) ■ 4 (Very familiar) ■ 5 (Extremely familiar)



6) *What was your favorite part of this program?*

“Working in **different work sites.**”

“The learning of edible plants”

“Having an outlet to talk about nature. Like **nature journaling** and also **trail days.**”

“I really enjoyed **making medicine with the plants** because it is very unique and interesting.”

“Rooting and taking time in the afternoon to **appreciate what’s around us in the mountains.**”

“I love to **work on the trails.**”

“**Restoration** work.”

“Building trails”

“My favorite part of this program was **trail work.**”

Participant Testimonial:

“Thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn about native people in these Sutro Mountains and giving us the honor to continue their legacy to this day along with others.” — *Sutro Stewards Summer Program Intern 2024*

Incorporated Lessons

Sutro Stewards Summer Internship Program had a successful 5-week summer program in 2024 supported by Abigail Alfonso and in partnership with Enterprise for Youth (EFY). Sutro Stewards staff incorporated lessons gained in 2023 into this year’s program to continue to develop and improve best practices for successful implementation of the Summer Internship Program for years to come. Listed below are improvements we have incorporated into this year’s program:

- Offered free lunch options
- Increased opportunities for personal reflection and group discussion
- Continued to offer 1 field trip to local green spaces
- Increased number of hands-on activities
- Incorporated a variety of facilitation styles ensuring that participants benefit from broad range of perspectives and teaching methods

Lessons Learned

In this section, we list lessons learned by Sutro Stewards staff during this year’s program. We will incorporate the lessons learned into future programming.

- Continue to offer diverse opportunities to engage (i.e. non-verbally)
- Designate one staff member to manage the schedule while a team co-facilitates to allow the schedule manager to handle operations and support facilitators while the team focus solely on facilitation
- Continue to implement structure and transparency through communicating daily agendas
- Continue to offer more opportunities for collaboration and peer interaction to create a more supportive and connected environment
- Adapt the curriculum to align with the students desires for programming including more habitat restoration, nursery propagation, and trail building.

We have maintained a productive partnership with Enterprise for Youth and plan to continue working with them for the Summer Internship Program 2025 high school cohort. It has been invaluable to pair our on-the-ground habitat restoration and horticulture expertise, with their youth workforce development and mentorship support. We look forward to incorporating the lessons learned and building off of a very successful fifth year of summer programming.