USU Student Group Wins 3rd Place in National Stormwater Challenge | Utah Water Research Laboratory

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April 24, 2019 — The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that a group of students from USU have won 3rd place in their annual Campus RainWorks Challenge. The group competed against 39 other teams from across the nation with their submission in the Demonstration Project category.

The Campus RainWorks Challenge is a green infrastructure design competition designed to engage the next generation of environmental professionals. It challenges students at American universities and colleges to propose an innovative and visionary green infrastructure project for their campus that manages stormwater pollution and provides additional benefits to their community and college.

USU's student group was composed of an interdisciplinary collection of Environmental Engineering, Landscape Architecture, and Bio-Regional Planning students: Dallen Webster, Briana Kistler, Avery Holyoak, Dani Delahoz, Sarah Tooley, Josh Quigley, Nicholas LeSchofs, Kali Clarke, and Chris Brown. The group's faculty advisor, Jake Powell, is an Assistant Professor in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at Utah State and worked closely with Ryan Dupont from the Civil Engineering Department and Nancy Mesner from the Watershed Science Department in advising the team.

"A New Heart" Aggie Boulevard Design

Their project, "A New Heart", proposed a concept plan to make Aggie Boulevard the new heart of campus by converting the road corridor into a permeable plaza featuring storm water treatment cells running the length of the project. The project focused on reducing current stormwater flows and addressing the inherent division 700 North creates on campus. The project balanced pedestrian and bicycle transportation routes, open space needs, and existing transportation routes. The end result of their design aims to recharge groundwater with treated runoff, reduce impermeable surfaces, retain design storms as required by local municipalities, eliminate the need for supplemental irrigation in climate where water is in short supply through emphasizing native landscaping, and ultimately creating a new cultural center of campus with green infrastructure at its heart.

Powell commented on the team's success, saying "I think this recognition only highlights the top tier, nationally competitive talent and skills of our students at Utah State University. This student team showcases the best of what an interdisciplinary group can accomplish when they bring big ideas, hard work, and a tremendous skill set to bear on a complex project. This team's competition entry was completed entirely by a team of volunteer students, faculty, and staff – in their free time, after hours, and during weekends. I can't say enough about the students, our university partners, and other faculty member that assisted this team. Everyone really went the extra mile to make the project stand out."

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Contact: Jake Powell | 435-797-4293 | jake.powell@usu.edu