Executive Summary

Access to WNY's unparalleled waterways without context tells only half the story. And students who only know nature through classroom and/or digital experiences can't be blamed for apathy or neglect. Sadly, our children (and many adults) have become increasingly distant from their natural world - and that reality has long- and short-term implications that don't bode well for a sustainable future. Buffalo State is seeking funding to operate a "floating classroom" capable of carrying classroom-sized groups onto Lake Erie, the Buffalo and Niagara River, the Outer Harbor, and the Black Rock Channel to deliver distinctive place-based, experiential learning programs that reintroduce passengers to the amazing freshwater ecosystem that exists just past and along our shorelines. The capacity to provide our community unique opportunities to come to know, experience, and appreciate our freshwater resources and all that they entail is an unfulfilled need in WNY. The Floating Classroom Project will engage students of all ages in hands-on experiences heretofore unavailable in the region. Our students of today are the leaders and decision-makers of tomorrow. This project will be a become a community asset and a cornerstone in building the environmental stewards we need for our future.

Waterfront access for the Western New York community is more than simply a quality of life issue; it can, and should be, part of an ever-expanding, immersive experience that unveils our region's history, its geology, its economy, and of course, its freshwater ecology. Buffalo's waterfront revival has been a major catalyst in reigniting the community's energy, civic pride and sense of place. But the story is still unfolding.

Buffalo State seeks funding for the development of a floating classroom: an appropriately outfitted pontoon boat tentatively called the "*Water Strider*" that will navigate the waters of Lake Erie, the Niagara and Buffalo Rivers, the Outer Harbor and the Black Rock Channel delivering age-appropriate place-based experiential learning programs that both inform and engage. Capitalizing on the academic resources of Buffalo State and its Great Lakes Research and Education Center, its Center for Urban Ecology Research, its Science Education Department, its Earth Science Department, its Geography and Planning Department, and other affiliated programs and departments, as well as stakeholder partners including Buffalo Public Schools, the WNY Maritime Center, the WNY STEM Hub, et al. *The Water Strider* will accommodate classroom-sized groups and deliver a diverse array of active learning experiences for its passengers that will stimulate curiosity and open new horizons of knowledge and understanding. Due to its nature, this project is seeking a two-year funding commitment from the Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Fund. The first year of the project will be for planning, program design, materials development, vessel acquisition and outfitting, equipment acquisition, safety and quality assurance, and beta testing of all project elements and proposed activities. In year two, the *Water Strider's* first full season of operation, 125 outings will be scheduled.

Project Components:

- A diverse team of talented and committed educators, researchers, specialists, and interested stakeholders committed to creating experiential learning experiences to students in the Buffalo Niagara region
- A fully staffed 42’ x 12’ pontoon boat appropriately outfitted to provide robust experiential learning programs focused on Lake Erie and its associated riverine watersheds will be in place, prepared to deliver educational programming to students of all abilities
- An appropriate accessible mooring site along the Lake Erie waterfront
- A full inventory of sampling, collection, measurement, and observational equipment needed to achieve project outcomes
- A hierarchy for use along with a defined boating season/schedule for project deliverables
- A first and second year set of tested and evaluated curricula, activities, and related programming for target age groups and the general public
- An ongoing Floating Classroom Committee consisting of key partners and stakeholders in place to oversee operations and programming to evaluate the project as it evolves

Initially, an executive planning committee will engage in the bulk of project planning with anticipated input and consultation from other partners and stakeholders as the process progresses. The executive team will consist of Buffalo State Great Lakes Center, Biology, and Science Education faculty, leadership from the WNY Maritime Center, the Buffalo Public Schools Riverside Blue Economy School Education Coordinator, WNY STEM Hub as well as other appropriate contributors. The Planning group will be overseen by Buffalo State’s Office for Research and Economic Development.

For the purposes of this proposal, there are three primary arenas:

A.) Design and Logistics

B.) Program and Curriculum Development

C.) Operations and Administration

Design and Logistics

The "Floating Classroom" idea is not a novel concept and in fact, there are several such programs currently operating within New York State as well as others elsewhere within the United States. While each operation is distinct, they do tend to share certain commonalities such as a clear focus on our fragile ecosystem and environmental education – and generally, they tend to rely on large pontoon-style watercraft to take their passengers out on their respective waters. The pontoon type of craft is notable for being stable, seaworthy, and appropriate for experiential educational applications. Buffalo State has connected with other floating classroom operations and has gained invaluable information on the logistics and operation of these types of water-based programs.

This project will draw upon the knowledge and expertise of the WNY Maritime Center as partners to assist in planning and day-to-day operations of the Lake Erie *Water Strider*. Leadership from the Maritime Center will drive the design and outfitting stages of development and will provide related marine-related assistance and oversight as the project advances.

Programming and Curriculum Development

Buffalo State is fortunate to have a cadre of faculty including those from the Great Lakes Research and Education Center, the college's Center for Urban Ecology, the school's

Ichthyology professor, Buffalo State's Science Education faculty, as well as other staff and faculty who will be working with other stakeholders including Buffalo Public Schools (particularly the Riverside Blue Economy Institute – Buffalo State is a partner - and McKinley High School) and other schools and institutions of higher education in the area.

Buffalo State's Great Lakes Research and Education Center conducts wide ranging scientific investigations into the Great Lakes ecosystem and is internationally recognized in that regard. However, the Center lacks the logistical and operational capacity to take class-sized groups onto our local waters. The Center is well-equipped to carry out its work locally using smaller, specialized watercraft and often conducts its work on other larger federal vessels for research throughout the Great Lakes system but has limited capacity to deliver actual experiential programming on local waterways to the degree desired. One of this project's aims is to capitalize on the Center's scientific enterprise and expertise to develop educational content easily accessible for younger students and laypeople. Buffalo State's Science Education faculty are partners with Cradle Beach's recent development of their science programming and the project intends to include this initiative into the design and delivery of its programming. Buffalo State's newly formed Center for Urban Ecology Research has expressed eagerness to participate both from a planning standpoint as well as in the development of curricula and related materials and programming as they relate to our regional ecosystem. Buffalo State, as well as many other institutions of higher education in the region have academic programs that will significantly benefit from expanded opportunities to develop experiential on-water educational programming for their students.

Buffalo State is an active partner with Buffalo Public Schools in the transition and development of the Riverside Blue Economy Institute. This formerly failing school has been transformed into

a unique scholastic program focused on freshwater ecology, aquaponics, blue economy entrepreneurship, and hospitality and tourism. As part of Buffalo State's partnering relationship, the college received a grant to hire an Educational Coordinator who is now working interrelatedly with Riverside and it administration and faculty as well as the Buffalo State faculty and staff to create interactive, cross institutional programs and activities for the school's students. The Coordinator will be actively involved in the development and implementation of the Floating Classroom's programs. She will also assist in the day-to-day scheduling and administrative activities as they relate to the project.

Operations and Administration

Buffalo State is fortunate to have as an active partner, the Buffalo Maritime Center. While historically, the Center's focus has been on the time-honored traditional crafts relating to wooden boat construction and the educational benefits derived from skill-building in this arena, its leadership and its many volunteer members represent a cornucopia of maritime and boating experience. The project will draw upon this pool of skills, knowledge and experience for design, logistics, and operational consultation and support. The Maritime Center is also a partner with Buffalo Public School's Riverside Blue Economy Institute and works with Buffalo State in that capacity. The Center will provide recommendations, oversight, and quality control in both the initial acquisition and outfitting of the project's vessel, as well as ongoing consultation and input relating to day-to-day operations and routine maintenance. They will assist and provide input into the selection of the *Water Strider's* captain and any operating crew members as required. The project's intention is to purchase a custom built floating classroom such as the one currently being used on West Point Lake in Georgia operated by the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. Buffalo

State has been fortunate to have developed a relationship with this group and they have provided invaluable information and support for this project.

Upon purchase and receipt of the vessel, the Maritime Center will assist in conducting quality control and safety checks and will participate in the beta testing during the pilot stage of the *Water Strider's* operation.

The boat will be owned by Buffalo State and funds for its operation will be administered by the SUNY Research Foundation which has an extended history of successfully managing Greenway contracts. Payroll and project operating expenses will be processed accordingly through Buffalo State's RF Sponsored Programs Office on campus.

An operations team led by Buffalo State's Office for Research and Economic Development will meet regularly to evaluate and review proposed programming, scheduling, and day-to-day operations. The team will include the Riverside Blue Economy Education Coordinator, a group of Buffalo State faculty and other educators, a representative from the Maritime Center and involved community stakeholders. Overall, the aim will be to ensure safety, program quality and consistency, educational impact, and community access to our freshwater environment in the most meaningful ways possible. At the conclusion of each outing, *Water Strider* passengers will be asked to complete a short evaluation card. This qualitative assessment measure will provide helpful constructive feedback and provide ongoing direction for the project.

Methods

The proposed Buffalo State Floating Classroom Project will proceed in three distinct stages: **Preliminary**; **Pilot**; and **Implementation**.

Each stage will be conducted and evaluated independently. The Preliminary stage will, as the name implies, involve initial planning, preparation, and early stage activities incumbent in this type of initiative:

Preliminary Stage

ACTIVITY	WHO WILL BE INVOLVED	OUTCOME/TIME
Convene Executive Committee	Office for Economic Development and Riverside Educational Coordinator	The Executive team will review next steps and begin implementation – immediately upon receipt of funding
Identify and engage with other prospective partners and stakeholders	Executive Committee	Group of appropriate members will be in place to conduct Preliminary Phase activities – within two weeks of funding
Negotiate and complete purchase of vessel – arrange for delivery	Project Committee with Maritime Center taking the lead; RF Sponsored Programs – Contract Mgt.	Purchase completed; Delivery scheduled – within 30 days of funding. Actual delivery will be scheduled to conform to finalization of mooring site
Secure mooring site	Project Committee with Maritime Center taking the lead	Easily accessible site secured via lease – ready for vessel placement
Secure necessary permits and equipment	Project committee – will work with agencies, and others as necessary	Any required permits and all safety and operational equipment is in place – within 1 month of delivery
Conduct safety and quality inspections	Executive Committee, Maritime Center, U.S Coast Guard	The vessel is determined to be safe and fully operational – within 1 month of delivery
Conduct and complete search for qualified boat captain	Executive Committee – including Maritime Center	A qualified boat captain has committed to a part time position with the project – within 2 months of funding
Develop a hierarchy for programming development and deliverables	Executive Committee and Project development team	A schedule for deliverables accompanied by a clear plan for educational program delivery priorities for year one – first quarter of project
Finalize year one activities; Determine “standard” navigation route(s) to support programming deliverables	Executive Committee and Project development team as well as other stakeholders	Primary and secondary routes are identified; desired programming objectives and hands-on activities are in place based on identified locations – first and second quarters
Secure all necessary equipment, tools, and materials needed to support experiential educational objectives	Executive Committee and Project development team including BPS, Buffalo State faculty and other stakeholders	The Water Strider is fully equipped; necessary tools and technology in place; Preliminary curricula and associated activities prepared- second and third quarter
Complete a series of shakedown tests	Executive Committee and Project development team including BPS,	Programming has been piloted to small groups and evaluated –

	Buffalo State faculty and other stakeholders	second and thirds quarters of Preliminary period

The Pilot stage will involve a limited number of on-the-water trips with small groups (including student evaluators) intended to actively test and assess the educational programs for whom the activities are targeted. This stage will also take out community groups and others interested in the program and who may seek to be further involved in the mission as it goes forward.

Pilot Stage

ACTIVITY	WHO WILL BE INVOLVED	OUTCOME/TIME
Beta testing – the team will practice and test various programming activities in various locations in the Outer Harbor, the Buffalo River, Niagara River, Black Rock Channel and Lake Erie	The Executive Committee and the project development team (including boat crew) along with other staff and faculty from Buffalo State, BPS, and other stakeholders. Student focus groups will also participate at times.	A basic Floating Classroom curriculum and associated activities will be tested and ready for designated levels of students - throughout the first year of boating season
Groups of Buffalo State students and Riverside students (as well as other student groups) will take part in modified water tours	Project development team and participating educators	An increased number of students in the community will be given guided tours of the area's freshwater environment and become increasing engaged in ecological stewardship as a result - first year of boating season
Beta testing outcomes reviewed and measures taken as needed	Executive Committee, Project Team and other educators and stakeholders	Project deliverables - curricula and hands-on activities – are refined and ready for full delivery to initial target levels of students and other prospective groups – ongoing first year
Select individuals and community groups from the region are offered opportunities to board the Water Strider and tour the project's targeted locations	Executive Committee, Project Team and stakeholders as appropriate	Influential and interested parties become engaged with the project and its mission - ongoing
Routine maintenance and safety checks deployed and documented throughout Pilot Stage	Executive Committee, boat captain, crew, Maritime Center	The Water Strider is safe for passengers and maintained for long-term use – practices in place. Any shortcoming identified are immediately resolved - ongoing
Active investigation into prospective sustainable funding for ongoing Project support and operations. This would include pursuit of various forms of external funding including grants, philanthropic donations,	Executive Committee, Buffalo State's Institutional Advancement Office, the Office for Research and Economic Development and other Project stakeholders and community supporters	Prospects are informed about the project and are engaged. Desired outcome – operational costs year-to-year are supported - ongoing

endowments, and corporate sponsorships		

Implementation Stage

Following a robust period of testing and evaluating programming and associated hands-on activities; equipment testing; vessel preparedness; and locations assessment performed during the pilot stage, the Buffalo Niagara Floating Classroom project will enter full operation in its second year.

ACTIVITY	WHO WILL BE INVOLVED	OUTCOME/TIMELINE
The Floating Classroom begins its full schedule (approximately 125 outings per year)	Executive Committee, Project Team, participating educators and all Project stakeholders	The Buffalo/Niagara Floating classroom delivers a menu of experiential learning experiences to various levels of students of all abilities as well as to community members. Water Strider passengers will be offered unique opportunities to observe and engage with the region's dynamic (and fragile) freshwater ecosystem in ways that had previously been unavailable to them – mid- May to late September (weather permitting)
Continual assessment and evaluation of programming, operations, and safety	All members of the Executive and Project Teams – as well as the operating captain and crew of the Water Strider	The programs will be appropriate, consistent, and engaging. They will be revised and updated as necessary over time. The boat will be operated safely and maintained on schedule - all throughout the operating season
The boating season ends – steps are taken to secure the vessel and equipment	Executive Committee, captain and crew	At the conclusion of the season the boat will be pulled from the water, winterized and stored in a secure environment. Equipment will be removed and stored appropriately
Project Season Debrief	Executive Committee, Project team, stakeholders, captain and crew, educators and affiliated partners	Input, observations and feedback gathered. An Action Plan for year 2 developed as a result – within 1 month of program closure for the year

Summary and Conclusion

According to the *State of the Great Lakes 2017* report, commissioned by the U.S. and Canadian governments, "*Lake Erie's ecosystem is in poor condition, and the trend is deteriorating*". Beach closures, habitat loss and degradation, invasive species infestations, legacy pollutants, and the ongoing pervasive influences of human activity combine to negatively impact the ways in which we can enjoy and benefit from our unique and invaluable freshwater resources.

For a variety of reasons, Lake Erie is the most vulnerable and threatened of the five Great Lakes.

Many children living in the City of Buffalo know virtually nothing about the Great Lakes - including some who have never even seen Lake Erie. Generally, it's fair to say that for a variety of reasons, fewer and fewer kids throughout WNY appreciate the intricate ecological relationships that determine the relative health and well-being of our local, regional and global environment – particularly in relation to the nearby lake and its watersheds. Parents and teachers know from experience that in this digitized age in which children's attention is a hotly contested objective, distractive influences compete with educational intentions. As children become more dependent on the immediacy of hand-held and other forms of immersive technology they have become increasingly disengaged with living nature. And that has severe implications.

The children of today will be the decision-makers of tomorrow. They will drive fiscal, social, political, and scientific policies and practices in the not-so-distant future. The sustainability of the Great Lakes ecosystem and the associated social and economic well-being of their communities depend on environmental fluency – now and going forward. Our children need engaging opportunities for hands-on, nature-based experiential education if they are to become effective environmental stewards and informed regional (and global) citizens.

Place-based education gives students' a proprietary sense of belonging and ownership. Examining our community's complex relationships with Lake Erie and its tributaries provides intriguing lessons in the sciences, history, economics, and human behavior. But as any teacher knows, the first step is to get the students' attention. Creating experiences in which students can actually engage with the biologic world and participate in hands-on scientific investigations stimulates interest and excites curiosity. *Our great lake and its tributaries comprise a dynamic living classroom - but we need to give more children meaningful access to these irreplaceable resources…and the lessons they contain.*

Buffalo State has effectively implemented Greenway projects in the past and continues those efforts in investigations regarding the lake sturgeon, the emerald shiner, map and spiny softshell turtles as well as many other threatened (as well as invasive) species which are part of the Great Lakes ecosystem. Through those initiatives and other funded (and unfunded) projects, Buffalo State and the Great Lakes Center work with many partners and collaborators, many of whom are prospective partners for the Floating Classroom Project as it emerges. We anticipate working with the NYS DEC, US Fish & Wildlife, Sea Grant, BN Waterkeeper, Nichols High School, Greenwatch, Solarliberty, and others to expand programming and deliver meaningful experiences for the citizen scientists of today and tomorrow.

Once operational, we anticipate development of external funding proposals for federal agencies including NOAA, EPA, NSF, and the Department of Education among others to further sustain the project's goals.

With the help and collaboration from participating partners and stakeholders, this project creates increased access to our waterways and will be a catalyst for growing a culture of heightened water consciousness within the region – and beyond. The *Water Strider,* when launched, will be

a floating laboratory and classroom designed for learning and studying about the region's freshwater ecosystem and its relationships to our past, our present, and our future. The project's place-based experiential programs will stimulate curiosity and advance understanding of the complex and ever-changing dynamics of our freshwater ecosystem and the ways in which humans interact with it. The Floating Classroom Project is entirely congruent with the Greenway Principles and its efforts to promote sustainability, access and environmental stewardship and is intended to serve those principles for many years to come.

Budget Narrative

Year One Budget: $328,825.35

A custom-built pontoon craft: $94,000. This craft will be designed as a classroom built to accommodate educational programs and activities in a marine environment. It will be US Coast Guard approved and appropriate for its designated use.

Instructional Equipment: $18,000. Initial equipment will include 35 self-focusing binoculars; 6 field microscopes; 1 projection microscope; two laptops for projection and displays; water testing sampling and testing equipment; 2 plankton nets; 2 secchi disks; geo-spatial mapping equipment, and ancillary tools needed for program deliverables.

Initial Gear: $12,000. Will include 40 Personal floatation devices in various sizes; rain ponchos; display set-ups; first aid kits; back-up battery; ancillary vessel related needs such as lines, anchor(s) etc.

Solar Array: $5000: Installation of a small scale solar array capable of providing power to vessel electronics

Boat Motors: $15,200: Two 50 HP motors to power the boat and capable of navigating the designated waterways

Transport to mooring site: $4500: Cost of delivery from the manufacturing location to launch area

Boat Captains: $4800: Two certified captains responsible for 30 Trips during pilot year @ $40.00 Hr./4 Hrs. per day

Students: $6750: Three undergrad/grad students @ $15.00 Hr. needed to assist in crewing the boat and related physical labor related to vessel safety and maintenance.

Administrative Coordinator: $41,600: The Coordinator will maintain and manage scheduling, oversee safety and operations documentation, facilitate marketing efforts and prepare materials, equipment, supplies and other details relating to each outing. The Coordinator will work with the Riverside Educational Coordinator to ensure the quality and consistency of programming and delivery.

Instructors: $15,000: Primarily teachers and/or other qualified instructors prepared and qualified to deliver Project programming during the boating season. Will work in pilot year to develop and test educational programs and activities and provide evaluation and assessments of same

Consultants: $15,000: Fees paid to specialists, such as the Maritime Center and/or others who will provide direct consultation and oversight to the Project during year one.

Fuel & Maintenance: $ 5000: Based on 30 outings in pilot year.

Docking Fee: $3000.

Instructional Materials & Supplies: $2000: Printing of materials needed; assembled training kits; educational supplies

Year Two Budget: $212,021.78

Instructional Equipment; $13,500. Anticipated replacement costs as well as upgrades and/or additions as a product of year one program assessments

Boat Captains: $20,000: Anticipated 125 outings @ $40.00/Hr./4 Hrs. per day

Students (3): $25,875: Anticipated 125 outings @ $15.00/Hr.

Administrative Coordinator: $41,600.

Instructors: $15,000.

Consultants: $5000. Educational and maritime oversight input and expertise provided by content or operational specialists

Fuel & Maintenance: $15,000: Based on 125 outings and anticipated required maintenance and fuel usage

Dock Fee: $3000.

Instructional Materials and Supplies: $2500.

Total Project Cost (Years One and Two): $540,847.13

Floating Classroom Budget		
Year 1 Expenses		
Equipment Purchasing		**AMOUNT**
Boat Purchase		$94,000.00
Instructional Equipment		$18,000.00
Initial Gear		$12,000.00
Solar Array		$5,000.00
Boat Motors		$15,200.00
Boat Transport to Site		$4,500.00
Total		**$148,700.00**
Personnel		**AMOUNT**
Boat Captains (2)		$4,800.00
Fringe Benefits (40%)		$1,920.00
Student (Undergraduate)		$4,500.00
Fringe Benefits (5%)		$225.00
Student (Graduate)		$2,250.00
Fringe Benefits (15%)		$337.50
Administrative Coordinator		$41,600.00
Fringe Benefits (40%)		$16,640.00
Instructors		$15,000.00
Consultants		$15,000.00
Total		**$102,272.50**
Boat Expenses		**AMOUNT**
Fuel & Maintenance		$5,000.00
Dock Fee		$3,000.00
Instructional Materials & Supplies		$2,000.00
Other		$0.00
Total		**$10,000.00**

	Research Foundation Charges		AMOUNT
	Indirect Fees (26%)		$67,852.85
	Total		**$67,852.85**
	Total Year 1 Budget		**$328,825.35**

Floating Classroom Budget		
Year 2 Expenses		
Equipment Purchasing		**AMOUNT**
Instructional Equipment		$13,500.00
Total		**$13,500.00**
Personnel		**AMOUNT**
Boat Captains (2)		$20,000.00
Fringe Benefits (40%)		$8,000.00
Student (Undergraduate)		$17,250.00
Fringe Benefits (5%)		$862.50
Student (Graduate)		$8,625.00
Fringe Benefits (15%)		$1,293.75
Administrative Coordinator		$41,600.00
Fringe Benefits (40%)		$16,640.00
Instructors		$15,000.00
Consultants		$5,000.00
Total		**$134,271.25**
Boat Expenses		**AMOUNT**
Fuel & Maintenance		$15,000.00
Dock Fee		$3,000.00
Instructional Materials & Supplies		$2,500.00
Other		$0.00
Total		**$20,500.00**
Research Foundation Charges		**AMOUNT**
Indirect Fees (26%)		$43,750.53
Total		**$43,750.53**
Total Year 2 Budget		**$212,021.78**

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November 20, 2017

Niagara River Greenway Commission
DeVeaux Woods State Park
3160 DeVeaux Woods Drive
Niagara Falls, New York 14305

Dear Niagara River Greenway Commission:

I am writing to express our support for the **SUNY Buffalo State Floating Classroom** proposal.

SUNY Buffalo State is our primary community partner for the Blue Economy High School- located in the former Riverside High School. As a career and technical high school a primary teaching strategy is hands-on experience. The floating classroom provides exactly the learning experience we are seeking for our students.

Not only will it energize our students with the thrilling experience of actually being on the water, the floating classroom's resources will provide tools that will greatly enhance learning, including a projection microscope, autofocus binoculars, field microscopes, underwater cameras, plankton nets, and water sampling kits – to name just a few of the tools planned.

Further, the Floating Classroom will provide an exceptional opportunity for students to gain an understanding and appreciation of the Western New York water ecosystem. With this knowledge we expect that many of our students will take up the role as protectors of this invaluable resource, while they consider ways in which they might utilize this resource for themselves and their families.

Please accept our enthusiastic support for this outstanding initiative.

Sincerely,

Katherine M. Heinle
Director of Career & Technical Education
Buffalo Public Schools

BUFFALO MARITIME CENTER

November 20, 2017

Niagara River Greenway Commission
DeVeaux Woods State Park
3160 DeVeaux Woods Drive
Niagara Falls, New York 14305

Dear Niagara River Greenway Commission:

I am writing to express the Buffalo Maritime Center's support of the **SUNY Buffalo State Floating Classroom** proposal.

The Floating Classroom will provide an exceptional opportunity for students to gain an understanding and appreciation of the Western New York water ecosystem as well as the maritime history so vital to our area.

The Floating Classroom will provide hands–on, authentic water-based experiences for young individuals, some of whom have had no such prior experience but who would greatly benefit from it.

Further, it is our goal to be involved in this initiative. It shares our mission of promoting hands-on skills, advancing knowledge and appreciation of maritime history, and expanding maritime-based learning including commerce, recreation, as well as nautical design and function.

Like Buffalo State, we are a community partner with the new Blue Economy High School, the former Riverside High School. We are very excited how valuable the floating classroom will be in advancing the dreams and hopes of that initiative.

Please accept our enthusiastic support of the Floating Classroom. We hope that the Greenway Commission will act very favorably on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Brian Trzeciak
Executive Director
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