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Empowering New Orleans Schools with Renewable Energy

Winrock International

Improving Lives and Livelihoods Worldwide



When Hurricane Katrina made landfall as a Category 3 storm on August 29, 2005, it devastated much of the Gulf Coast, including New Orleans, where 80 percent of the city was under water, and many of its buildings and infrastructure took a direct hit. Several schools were among the destruction, as was the system that delivered electricity. Warren Easton Senior High School was one of those schools, and remained closed for a full year due to the damage it sustained.

In 2006, Entergy purchased carbon offsets—registered with Winrock International's American Carbon Registry (ACR)—from Nike, as part of a plan to stabilize carbon emissions by 2010. Entergy and Nike also wanted to co-fund a project that would help rebuild the community, benefit the environment and provide education on sustainability, and with that initial transaction, the New Orleans Solar

Schools Initiative (NOSSI) was launched. As seed funding, Nike reinvested the proceeds from the carbon offset sale to Entergy, who committed up to \$1.5 million to equip four New Orleans schools with advanced solar power technology.

Three years after reopening its doors as a charter school, Warren Easton also became the first of the New Orleans schools to be equipped with solar technology. As the 2009-2010 school year began, Warren Easton was newly outfitted with a hurricane-resistant, 28-kilowatt solar array that will produce approximately 37 megawatt-hours of electricity each year—enough to power three typical residential homes.

In addition to supporting the benefits of clean, alternative energy, NOSSI also includes an educational component through which each school will teach students about energy conservation and renewable energy. The solar equipment will provide a hands-on learning experience for students and teachers alike. "In this project, Nike and Entergy found a way to use the market to reduce emissions and help students and teachers learn the skills future energy managers will need," said John Kadyszewski, director of ACR.

Winrock is managing the project. Other project partners include the Louisiana Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council, the Greater New Orleans Foundation, the city of New Orleans Energy Unit and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.



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