



ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

“THE ENVIRONMENT IS WHERE WE ALL MEET; WHERE ALL HAVE A MUTUAL INTEREST; IT IS THE ONE THING ALL OF US SHARE.” — LADY BIRD JOHNSON



Our environment is the sum of all living and non-living elements and their effects that influence human life. It functions to provide a supply of resources, both renewable and non-renewable. It sustains and enhances the quality of life, as well as assimilates waste. Humans enjoy the beauty of nature from flowing rivers, towering mountains, waves of grassy life, and vast spaces of desert.

Humans are the caregivers of the earth and influence the continual changes of the natural ecological process with our actions. Deforestation, pollution, habitat destruction, extinction of species, and fossil fuel emissions have all placed the habitat of humans, animals, and plants in jeopardy.

As caretakers of our most precious of resources, our environment, there is much we can do as stewards of the earth by working to preserve the world’s resources, protect wildlife and domesticated animals, live sustainably, beautify our communities, and enjoy nature. With much of the world’s scientists forecasting a climate emergency, we are called to act now. It is vitally important we do our responsive part within our power to care for our world.

2022-2024 ENVIRONMENT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

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Direct any questions regarding projects that do not involve GFWC Affiliate Organizations to the Environment Community Service Program Chairman or GFWC Programs Department at Programs@GFWC.org.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION INITIATIVE: SPARKLING SEEDS, BRILLIANT BUTTERFLIES, GLAMOROUS GARDEN GLOVES!



Community gardens provide green spaces in urban areas, give growers without land of their own a place to work, and promote a real sense of community. Enrich your community by partnering with local businesses, other community groups, and/or schools to plan, develop, and grow a community garden. Look toward local gardening companies to help sponsor or donate. Enlist the help of master gardeners, landscape architects, or garden clubs to assist with designing the best garden for your community using native plants, including the needs of pollinators, and providing water and shelter. Use your community garden as an outdoor garden learning center and teach students about the benefits of gardening.

Work with local nursing homes and assisted living facilities to bring some sunshine into the lives of our more experienced generations. Gardens can be as large or as small as your space allows. Don those gloves to help your seeds sprout into a community garden that brings benefits to many. Check out the Community Garden Fundraising link in Resources.





KEEPING WATERWAYS CLEAN

GFWC North Pinellas Woman's Club (FL) partnered with "Keep Pinellas Beautiful," which has initiated a new program in conjunction with the University of Florida to collect, filter, and microscopically identify the presence of microplastics in their local waters. Nine of their members trained to test waters and identify microplastics. Microplastics are plastic particles that are less than .2 inches long and pose a danger to oceanic wildlife and the food chain.



MASON BEE REVOLUTION

GFWC Hartwell Woman's Club (GA) watched a PBS show called *Growing a Greener World*, which included a segment on the "mason bee revolution." According to the segment, mason bees are 30 to 60 times more effective at pollinating than honeybees – one female mason bee is similar to having 100 honeybees – and they are non-aggressive and safe for children to observe. They ordered mason bees, built a stand, and set up their hut in the "Sun Perennial Garden" in the Hart County Botanical Garden.



REPURPOSING PLASTIC BAGS

GFWC Hastings Women's Club (MI) made sleeping mats from plastic bags. They collected more than 600 bags, cut them into strips known as plarlyn, rolled them into a ball, and crocheted them into mats. They presented remotely on how to make the mats from beginning to end. The presentation was nearly two hours long with step-by-step instructions from three club members. Eighteen members across the state attended this Zoom presentation.



COLLECTING CORKS

GFWC Greensboro Woman's Club (NC) held a program to recycle corks through the Cork Club, a sustainability initiative funded by Widget Co., Inc. This organization donates up to two cents for each natural wine cork received toward forest and ocean conservation. Shipments are a minimum of 500 corks and the club collected corks from area restaurants, bars, and local families to ship 33,864 corks or 338 pounds of cork.



PROJECT IDEAS

Be inspired by this list of ideas of how GFWC clubs can support the Environment Community Service Program. Find further information about organizations named here under Resources.

PRESERVE RESOURCES

- Join the Arbor Day Foundation and receive ten free trees to plant or donate ten trees to be planted in a threatened rain forest or one of our National Forests. Visit the Foundation's website for information on its many programs, including Celebrate Arbor Day (last Friday of April), Tree City USA, or Rain Forest Rescue.
- Donate to the Plant a Billion Trees campaign of the Nature Conservancy, which aims to reach the goal of major reforestation around the globe by 2025. Visit the website to access this and various other program resources, including nearby volunteer and event opportunities, information on urgent conservation issues, and a carbon footprint calculator.
- Save trees by initiating a "Go Paperless" campaign, encouraging club and community members to opt out of junk mail lists, sign up for e-statements, pay bills online, digitize documents, reconsider printed newspapers, and purge and recycle.
- Coordinate with local leaders to celebrate Earth Day (April 22) with a project designed from one of the many Earth Day Science and Education toolkits, such as the Plastic Pollution Primer and Action Toolkit or the Protect Our Species Toolkit.
- Strategize ways to reduce energy consumption and create a program to track the success of members as they put ideas into practice.
- Educate members on the dangers of poor air quality, which is the number one cause of premature death around the world. Encourage club and community members to improve air quality by planting trees, driving electric or hybrid cars, and supporting legislation that limits tailpipe and industrial emissions.
- Learn about the dangers associated with fracking, such as air and water pollution, and human health issues. Consider a program on the pros and cons of this issue or another questionable environmental practice. Consider all viewpoints and then take a blind poll (pro, con, or unsure) to hear what members think.
- Promote water conservation indoors and outdoors by sharing ways to be mindful of personal water-use practices, such as installing low-flow showerheads, using water-efficient dishwashers and washing machines, adopting xeriscape principles, adding mulch on planting beds, and planting drought-resistant grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees.
- Support wetland conservation and learn how wetlands are a deterrent to both flooding and drought, and how they filter and purify water that enters streams, rivers, and larger bodies of water.
- Hold a beach sweep on September 20 for International Coastal Cleanup Day or participate in one of the many Ocean Conservancy programs, such as Trash Free Seas or Clean Swell.
- Challenge members to learn about ocean acidification from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the effects it is having on marine life, people, and local, regional, and national economies. Promote ways to fight climate change in your community.
- Look for ways to minimize the harmful effects of stormwater runoff in your community and advocate for change, such as the establishment of bioswales, vegetated canals, or rain gardens.
- Organize a household hazardous waste collection with your local services, to ensure these dangerous materials are disposed of properly.
- Support legislation that protects our National Parks and other protected areas.
- Schedule outings to remove invasive plants from community parks and other public areas to preserve native species of plants and animals.
- Participate in the National Public Lands Day (4th Saturday in September), the nation's largest, single-day volunteer event for public lands.
- Support community gardening. Work with city officials to establish or maintain a garden in your community.

PROTECT WILDLIFE AND DOMESTICATED ANIMALS

- Share information with club and community members from the National Wildlife Federation about the impact of wildlife gardens, encourage the formation of personal and public wildlife gardens, and spread the news about signing up for the free electronic NWF newsletter. Consider sponsoring a subscription to National Wildlife or one of the many children's publications, such as Ranger Rick, for a shelter, family center, or classroom.



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- Educate club and community members about the importance of pollinators and how to create healthy habitats where they can thrive.
- Establish a butterfly garden in the community and offer on-site programs that identify butterflies and provide information about the lifecycle of these beautiful and useful insects.
- Offer a workshop on building birdhouses and provide information on bird species, their characteristics and behaviors, and their varying habitat requirements.
- Invite a speaker from the Audubon Society to give a program on birds and birding. Or, use Audubon Society resources to learn about backyard birding, identifying birds, creating bird-friendly communities, and conservation policies.
- Become an Audubon member. Sponsor an Audubon scholarship for those who are unable to pay to become a Master Birder. Investigate the various offerings of Audubon Society's, such as conversation career series webinars, master birder certification, book clubs, curriculum, adult education, and professional educator learning.
- Provide a program for club and community members that highlights the best native plants for food and cover. Organize a planting of native flowers, shrubs, and trees on public and private lands that will nourish and sustain wildlife.
- Invite a speaker from the Department of Natural Resources to provide information about nearby Heritage Preserves and/or Wildlife Management Areas, or consider a program on hunting regulations and concerns, such as the dangers of lead shot.
- Engage with the World Wildlife Fund to learn about the world's most endangered wildlife species and programs that help their cause, such as Sign On to Stop Wildlife Crime and Adopt a Tiger.
- Advocate for and support regulations that limit light pollution, which is dangerous to nocturnal wildlife and disruptive to ecosystems.
- Build recycling bins for monofilament fishing line, which is hazardous to marine life, scuba divers, and watercraft. Install and maintain the bins in high traffic fishing areas such as boat ramps and marinas. Reel In & Recycle, a program sponsored by BoatUS, provides a how-to video and offers a source for recycling monofilament.
- Learn about ocean wildlife in peril, such as sea turtles and manatees, and organize volunteer or fundraising opportunities to help protect these species.
- Donate funds or needed items to local wildlife shelters that rehabilitate and care for injured animals. Or, hold a drive to collect needed items. Share information with club and community members on what to do if they find an injured or sick wild animal and which agency or organization to call for help.
- Establish a club relationship with a local shelter for domestic animals. Club members can volunteer at the shelter, help with fundraising events and activities, spread the word about animals that are offered for adoption, and collect needed supplies.
- Partner with local rescue shelters and veterinarians to provide the cost of neutering and spaying to help reduce the number of unwanted and euthanized animals. Provide information to the community on the benefits of neutering and spaying animals.
- Inform club and community members about the signs of animal abuse and the proper channels for reporting cases of misuse and/or cruelty.
- Work with your local humane society to help stop puppy mills. Learn more about puppy mills and educate your club and community. Be an advocate to work with passage of laws to improve the lives of dogs in puppy mills.
- Teach students about caring for their pets using the Humane Society's developed curriculum "Nose to Tail" for grades K-5.
- Start a beauty revolution by supporting the Stop Cosmetic Testing on Animals campaign. Inform club members, the community, and legislators about prohibiting animal testing by supporting the Humane Cosmetics Act (H.R. 6207/S. 3357).
- Join the fight to end trophy hunting and pledge your sport to end cruel and unsportsmanlike hunting. Forty-three states currently allow cruel and unsporting wildlife killing contests and 1,200 species are killed as trophies worldwide. Research your state's laws and support the Humane Society's goal in banning trophy hunting.
- Make your backyard a safe place for wildlife. Create a haven for local wildlife, instead of viewing as a nuisance as more and more wildlife habitats are lost to the spread of development. By providing basic needs like water, food, and shelter, each club member can make a difference in her backyard. Sign up to receive a Backyard Sign, gardening gloves, and *All Animals* magazine from the Humane Society.
- Volunteer with your local humane society. Sponsor drives to provide necessary supplies. Become a foster parent to rescued animals.



- Explore National Wildlife Refuges near you using the Fish and Wildlife Services interactive map. Volunteer by leading tours, restoring habitats, rescuing turtles, conducting plant and animal surveys, removing invasive plants, or teach students about the importance of healthy ecosystems. Assist at refuge events such as bird festivals, kid's fishing days, or staff a refuge nature store.
- Join the Christmas Bird Count with the Audubon Society annually December 14 to January 5. Join in February of each year to participate in the Backyard Bird Count.
- Celebrate World Penguin Day (April 25) by creating social awareness of these creatures and the 11 of the 17, which are endangered or at risk. Work to help protect the waters from pollution. Sponsor an art contest of penguin drawings with children.

LIVE SUSTAINABLY

- Chart a path towards zero waste in your community by using tools suggested by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- Find a solution for hard-to-recycle waste streams, such as fluorescent bulbs, at Terracycle, which supplies many free recycling programs, plus a variety of resources and ideas for do-it-yourself upcycling.
- Commemorate America Recycles Day (November 15), a program of Keep America Beautiful, by organizing a special event. Visit the website for toolkits, event activities, promotion ideas, and more.
- Participate in Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe Program, which accepts worn out sneakers and makes Nike Grind, a material used in sports surfaces and playgrounds.
- Donate gently-used shoes to Soles4Souls for distribution to individuals in need.
- Coordinate a children's poster contest on recycling.
- Collect used materials from club and community members and hold a sewing party that produces cloth shopping bags that can be distributed with club information at a community event.
- Hold a community workshop on sustainable gardening, offering information on how to build and conserve the soil with cover crops and other methods, make a rain barrel and/or a compost bin, and garden organically.
- Create a community garden that promotes self-sufficiency and teaches principles of good gardening.
- Advocate for locally grown food and farmers' markets to serve the community.
- Learn and share information about the issues of GMO seeds (GMO=genetically modified organism) and the dwindling biodiversity in our food system.
- Explore renewable energy sources that can be utilized in your community, such as solar and wind power, and see how your club can support their use.
- Encourage club and community members to take one day a week, or one day a month, to reduce energy consumption by adjusting thermostats and shutting off lights, televisions, computers, optional appliances, and other electronics.
- Start a campaign to say "no" to disposable items and purpose reusable alternatives. Consider the life expectancy of every item purchased and resell or donate what is no longer needed.
- Hold a club yard sale to repurpose gently-used items and donate the proceeds to various charities.
- Host an "upcycling" event in your club or community. Use as a fundraiser, presentation from artists who upcycle items, or gallery for members and the community.

BEAUTIFY COMMUNITIES AND ENJOY NATURE

- Ensure clean drinking water while hiking or during emergencies by visiting the American Hiking Society's website to research water filters and other purifying products, and/or donate safe water to communities around the world through Water.org or other charitable organizations.
- Adopt-A-Highway through your state Department of Transportation to keep a stretch of roadside clean and build community pride.
- Plan a clean-up day in the community by coordinating groups of volunteers to clean eyesore areas and properly discard the waste.
- Organize a trash pick-up after a sporting event or community fair or festival.
- Work with pre-school classes, or other groups of young children, to teach them to enjoy and understand nature through simple projects such as creating a bird treat, collecting colorful leaves, or going on a nature walk to spot birds, squirrels, turtles, frogs, butterflies, and bugs.
- Collect or purchase children's books about nature and other environmental issues and donate them to schools, libraries, shelters, and family centers. Or, host a story time at the local library, featuring a book about



nature and then allow each child to choose a nature book to have for his or her own. Host a scout meeting and work on certain badges related to the environment.

- Sponsor a “Yard of the Month” or other monthly beautification contest that recognizes community enhancement. Rotate judges to involve various groups: Girl Scouts, 4-H members, and assisted living residents.
- Organize a local garden tour and donate the proceeds to a community garden or conservation project. Consider providing an earth-friendly gardening or wildlife tip at each location.
- Invite a Master Gardener or another local expert to give a program on ornamental plants that grow best in your climate or on another topic of interest to members.
- Host a tree identification workshop for the community, providing information about various tree species and how they contribute (or not) to the local ecosystem.
- Plan an outing for club members to visit a botanical garden or important conservation site.
- Establish a hiking or biking trail in the community, encouraging people to learn more about nature and enjoy the outdoors. Or, help maintain or provide maintenance funding for an existing trail.
- Plan a series of 5-minute features on U.S. National Parks, providing one highlight at each club meeting throughout the year. Encourage members to join the National Parks Conservation Association and to stay at National Parks when they travel.
- Support National Parks by donating in honor or memory of a loved one, give monthly, become a member of the Champions Society, or create a fundraiser on your club’s Facebook page. Volunteer at state or national parks in cleanup efforts. Find volunteer efforts at volunteer.gov.
- Join more than 200 other non-profit philanthropic park partners or friends groups to carry out national park projects and programs through the Strong Parks, Strong Communities initiative.
- Visit a national or state park. Share your park experience by posting photos on the National Parks website to encourage others to visit national parks. Not sure where to travel? Take the “Find Your Park Quiz” on the National Parks website.
- Celebrate National Parks Week, typically held in April of each year.
- Follow the National Parks theme to #RecreateResponsibly.
- Educate children about the National Park’s Junior Ranger Program. Donate to their program to provide an opportunity for a child to get outdoors with their OutDoor program.
- Plan a club event to take a virtual tour of National Parks. Host a glamping event, bring your canteen, and roast some s’mores together as you learn about various parks across the nation. Test your club members national park knowledge with a trivia game or play park bingo (game and cards found on the National Park Service website).
- Enjoy fee free entrance days to the more than 400 National Parks on MLK Day (3rd Monday of January), first day of National Park Week (held in April), Anniversary of the Great American Outdoors Act on August 4, National Public Lands Day on September 24, and Veterans Day on November 11.
- Purchase annual passes to National Parks as a gift. Promote to current and military veterans and disabled citizens their free annual pass to parks. Members 62 and over can purchase a lifetime senior pass. Purchase as a gift or door prize for eligible members in your club.

CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

- Heifer promotes agroecology, working with famers to integrate climate-smart agricultural practices to increase resilience and crop production. www.heifer.org/gift-catalog/caring-for-the-earth/index.html
- At your next meeting or community event, set up a table to promote the goal of donating a bee-hive. Wear bee antennae headbands to draw attention to the project. For any donation, offer a packet of wildflower seeds to promote local bee activity. Have information about Heifer and your own club available.
- Host a “Pig out for Heifer” event by collaborating with a local BBQ restaurant. Place a piggy bank by the register to collect donations, ask for a night to earn a percentage of sales, serve and donate tips received, or host your own BBQ to sponsor a pig to help a farmer.
- Teach schoolchildren about Heifer’s mission by using the free curriculum. Adopt classrooms, read “The Chicken and the Worm” where children discover worms, learn about eggs, and enjoy dirt cupcakes as they explore about farming and helping others. Provide a copy of a nature/farm type book to each child.
- Host a duck pond game to raise money to sponsor ducks. The matching duck game is easy to set up using a



duck set, toddler pool or container, water, and some prizes. This can be done with adults, teens, or children. Have participants buy a turn for \$1.

- Make clean water possible for families by hosting a party with a purpose either on social media or in person.

UNICEF

- Is your community a child friendly city? UNICEF USA Child Friendly City Initiative brings a flexible, dynamic, child-rights focused framework, and communities are improved as neighborhoods become safer, schools and health systems function better, and infrastructure is strengthened for all citizens. www.unicefusa.org/mission/usa/childfriendlycities
- Present information and videos from UNICEF USA initiative about the need for accessible clean water and the significant difference it makes in the lives of women and children. www.unicefusa.org/mission/survival/water
- Host a water walk to promote how children around the world walk several hours each day to find potable water.
- Support UNICEF's WASH Project to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene. Ideas to raise awareness and funds include hosting a souper party, clean-a-thon, car wash, dance off, game night, or raffle.

GFWC RESOURCES

American Battlefield Trust www.battlefield.org

American Hiking Society www.americanhiking.org

For information on water purifications go to www.americanhiking.org/resources/water-purification

America Recycles Day www.americarecyclesday.org

American Whitewater www.americanwhitewater.org

Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition www.asoc.org

Animal League <https://www.animalleague.org/>

Appalachian Trail Conservancy www.appalachiantrail.org

Arbor Day Foundation www.arborday.org

Audubon Society www.audubon.org

For information on birding go to www.audubon.org/birding

BoatUS Foundation www.boatus.org

For information on Reel In & Recycle go to www.boatus.org/monofilament

Bureau of Land Management www.blm.gov

Bureau of Reclamation www.usbr.gov

Center for Biological Diversity www.biologicaldiversity.org

Center for Clean Air Policy www.ccap.org

Chesapeake Bay Foundation www.cbf.org

Climate Reality Project www.climaterealityproject.org

Conservation & Preservation Charities of America www.conservenow.org



Department of Natural Resources: Google your state's name + DNR

Earth Day www.earthday.org

For information on Earth Day Science and Education Toolkits go to www.earthday.org/our-toolkits

Gardening Know How: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/urban/community-garden-fundraising.htm>

Gettysburg Foundation www.gettysburgfoundation.org

Great Backyard Bird Count www.bircount.org

Greater Yellowstone Coalition www.greateryellowstone.org

Green Empowerment www.greenempowerment.org

Greenpeace Fund www.greenpeacefund.org

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association www.hawkmountain.org

Heifer International www.heifer.org

Humane Society www.humanesociety.org

Keep America Beautiful www.kab.org

National Parks Conservation Association www.npca.org

National Park Foundation www.nationalparks.org

National Park Service www.nps.gov

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration www.noaa.gov

For information on ocean acidification go to www.oceanacidification.noaa.gov

National Wildlife Federation www.nwf.org

For the free NWF newsletter go to www.support.nwf.org/page/17932/subscribe/2

Nature Conservancy www.nature.org/en-us

For information on Plant a Billion Trees go to www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/plant-a-billion

Nike Reuse-A-Shoe www.nike.com/help/a/recycle-shoes

Ocean Conservancy www.oceanconservancy.org

For information on Trash Free Seas go to www.oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas

Soles4Souls www.soles4souls.org

Terracycle www.terracycle.com/en-US

The Archaeological Conservancy www.archaeologicalconservancy.org

UNICEF www.unicef.org

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.gov

For information on zero waste go to www.epa.gov/transforming-waste-tool



U.S. Forest Service www.fs.usda.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service www.fws.gov

USAGrant Applications: <https://usagrantsapplications.org/>

Volunteer.gov www.volunteer.gov

Water.org www.water.org

Wells of Hope International www.wellssofhopeinternational.org

World Wildlife Fund www.worldwildlife.org



Refer to the Awards section of the *Club Manual* for more information, including the Award Entry Cover Sheet guidelines.

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Environment Community Service Program projects and Affiliate Organization projects as follows:

- Certificate to one State Federation in each membership category
- \$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Award Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Environment Community Service Program projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.

RESOLUTIONS

To be added after 2022 Annual Convention

