



ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

"HERE IS YOUR COUNTRY. CHERISH THESE NATURAL WONDERS, CHERISH THE NATURAL RESOURCES, CHERISH THE HISTORY AND ROMANCE AS A SACRED HERITAGE FOR YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN. DO NOT LET SELFISH MEN OR GREEDY INTERESTS SKIN YOUR COUNTRY OF ITS BEAUTY, ITS RICHES OR ITS ROMANCE." THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The 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. 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 in 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 many 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 planet.

Keep close to nature's heart. Enjoy your surroundings. A nation that destroys its soils destroys life. Enjoy the seasons of our outdoors and remember to look up and take in your surroundings.



GFWC
est. 1890
**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**

**2024-2026
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: OUR NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS ENGAGE IN NATURE



National Parks have been part of the General Federation of Women's Clubs' history for over 100 years. A state park could be one that is hoping to be around for 100 years. Our dedication to resources provided by public recreation and for enjoyment is evident in our historic landscapes. National preserve areas are under different levels of protection.

The idea of National Parks was inspired by the untouched development of the beautiful outdoors. Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an Executive Order that consolidated all National Parks, Monuments, Military Parks, Cemeteries, and Capital Parks under one single National Park System.

Maintaining healthy ecosystems, providing clean water and clean air, and enabling conservation efforts will help collectively preserve more than 84 million acres of America's Homeland. Restoring our National and State Parks is a huge need. Increased visitation and deteriorating facilities, along with budget cuts are taking a toll on our historic neighborhood parks.

Together, we can invest in refurbishing the signage of our parks. Clubs can update benches and water fountains and educate others on animals, plants, and the history of our outdoors. Volunteer to be a trail guide, ranger for a day, or clean up a park day. Sponsor a garbage can.

August 25 is National Park Day. This day recognizes the conservation and preservation of our parks. Plan a hike day with a picnic. Appreciate the park employees with a picnic basket. Place signage on a marquee of the connection and significance between the General Federation of Women's Clubs and our National and State Parks.

Provide a nature day at a local school or independent/assisted living facility, and help your local junior rangers, girl scouts, and boy scouts earn a nature badge.

Identify trees, birds, wildflowers, plants, and animals in your park. Play BINGO or trivia as you learn. In 1944 an American Campaign of the United States Forest Service introduced Smokey the Bear. It is the longest-running public service announcement campaign in the United States. Dress up as Smokey the Bear and provide Fire Safety talks, skits, stories, and pictures of taking care of our forests, parks, and environment. Educate children on wildfires that engulf our parks and forests and the dangers of fire.

There are 16 Forever stamps sold by the United States Postal Service. Purchase National Park Stamps and use them on your correspondence. Learn the history of your local park and do the research on why it is named what it is.



FEATURED PROJECTS



NEXTREX CHALLENGE

GFWC Woman's Club of Colorado Springs (CO) participated in the NexTrex Challenge Program that encourages groups to recycle polyethylene plastic films such as plastic bags, dry cleaning bags, bread bags, and more. NexTrex donates a composite bench for every 500 pounds collected. Members also partnered with the American Association of University Women to collect plastic film and received a second bench. The club kept more than 1,500 pounds of plastic from landfills and increased environmental awareness.



BEE PROJECT

GFWC California Woman's Club of Indio (CA) built and created homes for local Mason bees. Members built bee houses from recycled materials, including juice glasses, liter bottles, and other non-breakable cylinders, and filled them with paper straws, cardboard, or rolled paper tubes to provide nesting areas for the Mason bees to lay their eggs with the goal of increasing pollinator bees. The creative, recycled houses were placed in gardens ready to attract the bees during mating and pollination season.



GREETINGS IN GREETING CARDS

GFWC Wake Forest High School Juniette Woman's Club (NC) members completed a hands-on project of recycling greeting card fronts into 100 handmade bookmarks to be provided at no charge to customers of a local bookstore. Club members wrote inspirational words on the back of the bookmarks. They attached yarn fringe and embellished each bookmark with stickers and a "Juniettes Step Up, GFWC Wake Forest High School Juniette Club."



WASH UP PROJECT

GFWC Woman's Club of Tallahassee (FL) created a fun way to promote UNICEF'S Wash Initiative, which stands for Wash, Sanitation, and Hygiene! They challenged members to count the times they washed their hands for a month. Each time they washed their hands, members placed a quarter in a fund which kept them mindful of and grateful for the availability of water and soap. They collected \$153.00 for UNICEF during this project!



PROJECT IDEAS

Be inspired by this list of ideas of how GFWC clubs can use local resources and creativity to 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 rainforest 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.
- Seed saving is a way to reduce the cost of producing healthy food and will help future generations enjoy healthy varieties of food. Check the website for ideas. www.thespruce.com
- 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. www.earthday.org
- Strategize ways to reduce energy consumption and create a program to track the success of members as they put ideas into practice.
- 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.
- 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.
- Oyster bed decay and desalination hurts the natural habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife. Discover the importance of oysters and how they filter polluted water. www.NOAA.org
- 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.





PROTECT WILDLIFE AND DOMESTICATED ANIMALS

- Share information with club and community members from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) 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.
- 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, such as conversation career series webinars, master birder certification, book clubs, curriculum, adult education, and professional educator learning. Go to [Audubon.org](https://www.audubon.org) for more information.
- 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 for the 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.
- Join the fight to end trophy hunting and pledge your support 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 teaching 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 from January 15 to February 15. Join in February of each year to participate in the Backyard Bird Count.
- Think twice before throwing corks in the trash! Cork recycling can be important to assist with forest and ocean conservation. They are also a huge part of recycling in footwear, insulation, playgrounds, and so much more. Let's help our Earth together. www.corkclub.com

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.
- 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.
- Learn and help with clean water resources. www.waterstep.org. Provide tools and opportunities to improve water. Deliver solutions to improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of individuals.

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 preschool 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.
- 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, giving monthly, becoming a member of the Champions Society, or creating a fundraiser on your club's Facebook page. Volunteer at state or national parks in cleanup efforts. Find volunteer efforts at [volunteer.gov](https://www.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.
- Play the trivia game Smokey Bear and learn about the Forest Service's Legendary Mascot. "If not you, who?"



CONNECT WITH GFWC AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

- Heifer promotes agroecology, working with farmers 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 beehive. 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.
- Teach schoolchildren about Heifer's mission by using the free curriculum. Adopt classrooms and read "The Chicken and the Worm," where children discover worms, learn about eggs, and enjoy dirt cupcakes as they explore 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.
- Have a "farm" day dress-up event. Vote on the best "farm animal costume."
- Play a grocery game like Price is Right. Learn the cost of purchasing flocks, herds, sheep, and honeybees.

UNICEF USA

- 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 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 www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/urban/community-garden-fundraising.htm

Gettysburg Foundation www.gettysburgfoundation.org

Great Backyard Bird Count www.birdcount.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-shoe

Ocean Conservancy www.oceanconservancy.org

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

Soles4Souls www.soles4souls.org

Terracycle www.terracycle.com/en-U

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 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

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.

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



RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions adopted by GFWC are the foundation of our organization. They guide our call to action and are the basis of all programming and advocacy. Current 2023 Resolutions for the **Environment Community Service Program** are listed here by number and title. Refer to the complete text in the GFWC Resolutions document, filed under "Governance" in the Digital Library on the Member Portal. Resolutions are an important and integral part of GFWC Programs.

160-010	Chemicals in the Environment
160-020	Climate Change
160-030	Conservation of Natural Resources
160-040	Conservation of Wildlife
160-050	Disposal of Hazardous and Nuclear Waste
160-060	Energy Resources
160-070	Household Waste Management
160-080	Local Parks and Recreation Areas
160-090	Management of Outer Space
160-100	Protection of Oceans
160-110	Soil and Water Conservation
160-120	Water Quality and Supply

