

***GIRL SCOUTS  
FOREVER GREEN***  
**Community Action Project**



**Girl Scouts®**

**How to Guide &  
Project Registration Form**

# *Girl Scouts Forever Green:* **Community Action Project**

Girls have told us: they care about the environment and want to do something about it! **According to surveys conducted by GSUSA and GSRI, the environment is an incredibly important issue to Girl Scouts.** Your girls can become advocates for greener schools and community areas- how they choose to do it is up to them!

## **Here is how to get girls into action on environmental issues!**

The perfect way for girls to make a difference is through a Girl Scouts Forever Green community action project. Girl-led Forever Green projects are designed and implemented by troops or individual girls with the help of their school and/or community to bring about lasting and sustainable change for the better!

The community action projects are based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. At each grade level the Girl Scouts Forever Green community action project gives girls opportunities to **Discover** more about themselves and the world around them by learning more about environmental issues. Girls **Connect** by reaching out to members of their school and community to find out what can be done to improve the environment of their school/community. Finally girls **Take Action** by planning an implementing a girl-led action project that results in a long lasting change within their school and community.

Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas is excited to be one of the first Girl Scout councils throughout the country to have the opportunity to participate in this exciting and important program. According to surveys conducted by GSUSA and GSRI, the environment is an incredibly important issue to Girl Scouts. We are thrilled about this opportunity because we know that the Girl Scouts Forever Green Community Action Project will bring about lasting, sustainable, girl-led change.

All the great projects we do this year will be compiled with others across the country to show everyone what Girl Scouts can do when we put our minds to it!

We hope that your troop or individual girl decides to be a part of this program. Use this booklet as a reference guide to determine if your troop/girl wants to participate and what type of project to work on. We are asking you to advocate for environmental responsibility in schools and community areas – the rest is up to you and your girl or troop’s passions and interests! There are a variety of environmental focus areas to choose from, including water use, energy efficiency, waste management, green spaces and air quality. See pages 5-15 for more exploration of the focus areas, as well as specific project ideas. That list is only the beginning – you are free to create your own project to suit the needs of your school or community.

## How do we start?

### 1. Discover

Discovering is all about girls learning why issues are important to them. Start by learning more about environmental issues in one or more of these five Focus Areas: Air Quality, Energy Conservation, Green Space, Waste Management and Water, in your school and community and how determine how your group can make an impact.

Not an expert on environmental concerns? That's ok! There are plenty of resources available to help you show girls how to become the experts!

One great way for your girl or troop to discover why environmental issues are important to them is to go on the new leadership journey: It's Your Planet – Love it! There are a lot of great activities, ideas and information on many areas of environmental concern that framed for girls in a grade level appropriate way.

Here are the titles for each age level:

- Daisy- Between Earth and Sky (Environmental Awareness)
- Brownie – WOW! Wonders of Water (Water Quality and Conservation)
- Junior – Get Moving (Energy Use)
- Cadette – Breathe – (Air Quality)
- Senior – Sow What? (Land & Food)
- Ambassador – Justice (Environmental Justice)

You can find basic information on each Focus Area as well as Girl Scout Forever Green Community Action Project ideas on pages 5-15 of this packet.

### 2. Connect

Connecting means that girls have an opportunity to reach out with issues important to them. Have girls brainstorm areas of concern that might be important at their school or other community location. Then, come up with ideas of what girls could do to help their community location and affect a positive change on the environment at the same time. Girls write down take action project ideas around those areas of concern. Encourage girls to make a list of people in their school and community who could help with each project idea.

#### Action Project Guidelines:

- Girls must choose a project that addresses an environmental issue at their school or community that will result in a positive change to the environment.
- Girls must have a letter of approval from their school's administration before beginning their project (we understand that this may be difficult, so please contact you area Girl Scouts Forever Green program manager if you need assistance).
- ***The proposed project must be completed by June 10, 2010.***

Pick one or two ideas. Plan for your group or girl to meet with school officials, community leaders, or others who may be affected by the potential projects to see if it is acceptable and to

ask for their help with the project. Contact your local program manager who may be able to help you connect with community members or your school officials.

Once you have approval from school officials to move forward with a project, fill out the registration on pages 17 and 18 of this packet. **Submit the registration along with your project timeline and letter of consent from school or community organization** to your local program manager, who will be in touch with you throughout the timeline of your action project to help your girl or group along the way (see the Project Registration to identify your local project manager).

### **Tips for a successful take action project:**

**Keep it Simple:** Don't select a project that will take time or resources your girl or group does not have, or cannot get. Look over the Focus Areas charts, and choose a topic that the girl or group feels passionate about **and** that can be achieved by June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. (Take Action projects that become on-going will not be subject to this deadline.)

**Make Connections:** The more people participating in this project, the greater chance for the project to be a success. Who are good people to include in the project? Obvious choices for connections might be a science class or an environmental club, but ask around for ideas on who else might want to help.

**For the Future:** Will your solution fix something for the future or is it only a one time project this spring? Are there ways to make sure the solution lasts beyond your effort? Is this a project that can inspire all students and all ages at your school?

## **3. Take Action**

Once your registration has been turned into your program manager at the GSGST office, it's time to put the plan into action!

You will receive information in your welcome packet (upon receipt of your Project Registration by your program manager at GSGST) about how to register your project at the national level, and what information will be asked upon completion of your project. You will be asked to enter your project's outcomes (weight of material recycled, amount of electricity saved, number of people involved), so keep track of all of your data as you go!

Find more information on how to measure the impact of your project on Pages 5-15.

# AIR QUALITY

## DISCOVER

According to the EPA, the average adult breathes over **3,000 gallons of air every day!** Children breathe even more air per pound of body weight daily. Air is an essential part of life, and it is important to make sure that the air you and others around you are breathing is clean and healthy.



Air pollution is a serious problem. The air we breathe every day is polluted in a variety of ways: from cars and buses to factories to dry cleaners and house paints. When the gases and particles accumulate in high concentrations, they become harmful to us and our surrounding environment. Air pollution is a **leading cause** of asthma in both youth and adults. Long-term exposure to air pollution can put people at risk for cancer and long-term damage to the immune, neurological, reproductive, and respiratory systems. In extreme cases, it can even cause death. Some air pollutants, like urban smog and toxic compounds, can remain in the air for long periods of time and are carried hundreds of miles from where they originated. Pollution from a Michigan auto factory can affect a child in California!

Air pollution doesn't just exist outdoors. According to the EPA, indoor air levels of many pollutants may be two to five times, and occasionally, more than 100 times higher than outdoor levels. Most people spend a significant portion of their time indoors – some even as much as 90%! Household cleaners, pesticides, building materials and radon are all common sources of indoor air pollution.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

As a student, you spend 6-7 hours every day breathing the air in your school. And according to the US General Accounting Office, there are close to 15,000 schools that have air that is unfit to breathe. Improving the air quality in and around your school improves your ability to breathe easy.

It is not likely that people are going to stop participating in activities like driving, building, painting and using air conditioners, so it is important to be a better steward of the air.

## CONNECT

Assess the items and conditions that contribute to poor air quality in the school (toxic art and cleaning supplies, poor ventilation, mold and mildew, interior paint, etc). Explore the state of the outdoor air quality around your schools. You could look into the types of transportation that students, faculty and others use to get to your school, your campus smoking policies, how many trees producing oxygen exist on your school grounds or something else that affects your air.

## TAKE ACTION

PROJECT IDEAS	MEASURE YOUR IMPACT
○ Make changes in supply purchasing	○ Weight of toxic supplies eliminated from schools, homes, and community buildings
○ Reduce transportation emissions like bus and car idling, etc. by introducing no-idling zones	○ Decrease in amount of time vehicles spend idling
○ Plant native shrubs and trees which absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen	○ Number of plants added to the outdoor and indoor spaces
○ Decrease the number of vehicles coming to and from school by implementing carpooling and biking projects	○ Decrease in number of vehicles transporting students and teachers to and from school

## RESOURCES

[www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools): Tools and suggestions for improving air qualities within school buildings. There are resources about mold, caulk, and asthma. Within the Improve Air Quality “action kit” there are documents that give specific steps to improve air quality in projects that are based in schools.

[www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus](http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus): Clean School Bus USA is a program aimed at reducing children’s exposure to exhaust. This Web site has links to the national campaign to reduce bus idling, as well as outreach materials for the campaign.

[www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org): The Green Seal is a nonprofit organization that sets environmental standards for products. This organization evaluates products’ compliance with standards and also enables consumers to see what products are Green Seal certified.

[www.greenguard.org](http://www.greenguard.org): The Greenguard Environmental Institute certifies satisfactory indoor air quality in buildings, schools, and construction sites. The resources include information about why indoor air quality is so important and links to articles that stress the importance of good indoor air quality in schools.

[www.airwatchnorthwest.org](http://www.airwatchnorthwest.org): Resources for outdoor burning programs and anti-idling programs, including tips on how to reach out to schools and bus drivers. There are templates for letters that parents, students, and school officials can sign to make a pledge.

[www.earthday.net/noidling](http://www.earthday.net/noidling): The No Idling Campaign through the Earth Day Network is a great resource for Girl Scouts when conducting projects. There are also other helpful resources on the Earth Day Network Web site such as links to community campaigns and educational programs.

[www.earthforce.org/content/article/detail/1556](http://www.earthforce.org/content/article/detail/1556): Earth Force has a long article about air quality including lists of air quality pollutants, an air pollution history timeline, and details about federal laws pertaining to air quality.

## ENERGY USE

### DISCOVER

Every time you flip a light switch, plug something in, heat something in the microwave and get on a school bus, you are experiencing the effects of energy. Energy comes in a variety of forms, including light, heat, electricity, sound and motion. Energy makes things happen. In other words, energy is a part of everything we do in life, and we need a lot of it!



There are two primary categories of energy that we talk about - non-renewable and renewable. **Non-renewable energy sources** include fossil fuels, like coal, natural gas and petroleum, nuclear energy, like uranium, and propane. These sources are called non-renewable is because they have a limited supply and do not reproduce in a short period of time. For example, petroleum – which fuels cars and buses, heats homes and schools, and makes products like medicines and plastics – was formed millions of years ago from the remains of sea plants and animals. We are using these sources at a much faster rate than they can replenish. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, we consume 27 billion barrels of oil a year, but the oil industry only discovers 3 billion barrels a year. That means only 1 barrel was replaced for every 9 that were used

There are **also renewable energy sources**, which include solar power (sun), wind turbines, hydro power (water), geothermal (from the earth) and biomass (wood and municipal solid

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

Schools spend more money on energy than they spend collectively on textbooks and computers! Keeping the building lit, with comfortable temperatures using A/C & heat, and running water takes 60% of most schools' budget. Imagine what resources your school could provide if you reduced the energy costs!

waste, ethanol, and biodiesel) energy. These energy sources are renewable because they are easily and constantly reproduced. The more we use these types of energy sources, the more we are conserving and protecting our environment and our future. However, we are still using non-renewable sources at a far larger rate. In 2007, only 7 percent of

all energy used in the United States was from renewable sources, according to the Energy Information Administration. Because we use energy so much, there is so much we can do to make big changes. It is up to you to use your energy to become energy efficient.

### CONNECT

Explore how much energy is used on a regular basis (daily, monthly, annually) in your school. (You can do this by accessing utility bills or performing an energy audit – see the online resources). Explore the transportation patterns of those at your school (what percent ride bus, drive themselves, carpool, bike, walk, metro, etc).

## TAKE ACTION

PROJECT IDEAS	MEASURE YOUR IMPACT
○ Hold a “turning off” campaign where people pledge to turn off appliances/lights/etc when not in use.	○ Decrease in energy use
○ Advocate for and install energy-saving appliances, HVAC systems, and light bulbs	○ Decrease in energy use
○ Advocate for and install alternative energy sources such as solar panels or wind turbines	○ Increase in amount of renewable energy used
○ Decrease the number of vehicles coming to and from school by implementing carpooling and biking projects	○ Decrease in number of vehicles transporting students and teachers to and from school
○ Reduce fuel consumption from bus and car idling, etc. by introducing no-idling zones	○ Decrease in amount of time vehicles spend idling
○ Educate people about how to reduce their energy usage, about green vehicles, or about alternative fuels	○ Number of people educated

## RESOURCES

[www.southface.org](http://www.southface.org): South Face focuses on energy sustainability projects. Resources include designs for green buildings.

[www.energystar.gov/powermanagement](http://www.energystar.gov/powermanagement): Energy Star standards require that electronics use less energy than federal efficiency standards. Troops can join campaigns to reduce energy consumed by refrigerators, telephones, and computers.

[www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org): U.S. Green Building Council provides information about greening buildings and LEED certification. There is a link to Build Green Schools.

[www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/energysmartschools](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/energysmartschools): Schools are a great place to teach about energy and environment. This site includes suggestions on designing and building green schools.

[www.consumerenergycenter.org](http://www.consumerenergycenter.org): Includes energy tips for schools, information about renewable energy, and transportation tips to reduce energy consumption.

[www.kidwind.org/lessons/teachers.html](http://www.kidwind.org/lessons/teachers.html): Resources for teaching about renewable energy sources.

[www.windpoweringamerica.gov/schools.asp](http://www.windpoweringamerica.gov/schools.asp): Information about wind power in schools. This Web site also provides links for interactive activities and other resources about wind power.

[www.epeat.net](http://www.epeat.net): EPEAT helps consumers choose electronic products (computers) based on their environmental characteristics.

[www.focus.thenation.org](http://www.focus.thenation.org): Focus the Nation is a national teach-in and policy agenda with a campaign to promote the civic engagement of youth.

[www.greenroofs.com](http://www.greenroofs.com): A resource portal for green roofs.

[www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov): The United States Department of Energy gives tips on vehicle energy usage and how to drive more efficiently.

[www.epa.gov/greenvehicles](http://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles): The EPA’s guide to Green Vehicles help people chose fuel-efficient vehicles. This information can serve as the basis of an educational session in the community.

[www.emoregon.org/pdfs/OIPL/OIPL\\_Kill\\_A\\_Watt\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.emoregon.org/pdfs/OIPL/OIPL_Kill_A_Watt_fact_sheet.pdf): This is a PDF file about how to use a Kill A Watt to save energy.

## GREEN SPACE

### DISCOVER

Trees and other plants – often described as green spaces – don't just offer a beautiful natural place for humans to relax and a habitat for a variety of animals and other organisms. Trees also have the power to offset air pollution and basically act as giant filters to clean the air we breathe. Trees can remove carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere. A single mature tree can absorb as much as 48 lbs of carbon dioxide each year. As few as 20 trees can offset the pollution from a car driven 60 miles per day. Trees also produce oxygen. The amount of oxygen produced by an acre of trees per year equals the amount consumed by 18 people annually.



Trees also provide shade and help regulate temperatures throughout the year. In fact, shade trees can make buildings up to 20 degrees cooler in the summer. This is particularly important in urban/city areas, where buildings, asphalt and concrete absorb radiation from the sun and create a heat blanket, causing air temperatures to rise. All in all, trees can save money. The shade and wind buffering provided by trees reduces annual heating and cooling costs by \$2.1 billion.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

When environment-based education was integrated into academic programs, reading, math, science and social studies test scores were all improved, according to a study conducted in 2000 by the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation. Think about it. What provides a more supportive and relaxing, and therefore, productive environment: concrete or green spaces?

When there is a dense screen of bushes, shrubs and trees, green spaces can also help to reduce noise pollution. Trees can also help provide flood damage control by catching, storing, absorbing and slowly releasing excess water.

Green spaces also create a space for experiential-based education around environmental and natural issues – you have a tangible opportunity to connect to plants and organisms and the ecosystem that can often seem hidden, especially in an urban setting.

### CONNECT

Explore existing green spaces at and around your school. For example, you could determine the number of square feet/acres of green space or other open (non-building and non-parking lot) areas. Determine the quality and usability of the existing green spaces. Explore opportunities to incorporate green space usage into the school curriculum and after-school activities.

## TAKE ACTION

PROJECT IDEAS	MEASURE YOUR IMPACT
○ Plant native trees, shrubs, and flowers	○ Number of new plants added, Number of square feet of green spaces added or improved
○ Educate school officials and community members about benefits of green spaces	○ Number of people educated
○ Clean up trash in a local park or green space at the school or set up a schedule for students to clean areas	○ Weight of trash collected
○ Clean up a trail or green space by spreading mulch or wood chips	○ Number of square feet of green space improved
○ Work with schools to create and implement curricula that incorporate green spaces	○ Increase in number of student-hours of green space use
○ Create green spaces where school activities can be integrated such as an outdoor classroom or outdoor lunchroom	○ Increase in number of student-hours of green space use

## RESOURCES

[www.epa.gov/greenscapes](http://www.epa.gov/greenscapes): Suggestions for cost-efficient and environmentally friendly landscaping solutions. This Web site addresses composting, plants, green buildings and landscapes, and recycling.

[www.earthnext.org/programs/trees21.html](http://www.earthnext.org/programs/trees21.html): This is an educational and tree-planting toolkit. This Web site suggests science-based activities for children ages 6–18 that reinforce the value of stewardship.

[www.edibleschoolyard.org](http://www.edibleschoolyard.org): Edible School Yard is an example of an organic school garden in California. This Web site includes plans for gardens, recipes, and links to other Web sites about locally grown foods.

[www.slowfoodusa.org/index.php/programs/details/in\\_schools](http://www.slowfoodusa.org/index.php/programs/details/in_schools): Slow Food USA has examples of projects that meet community needs, such as cooking classes and school trips to local farms.

[www.lifelab.org](http://www.lifelab.org): Life Lab gives tips for planting a school garden and has publications about school gardens.

[www.kidsgardening.org](http://www.kidsgardening.org): Classroom project ideas, resource directory, and grant opportunities for kids' gardens in the community.

[www.happeninhabitats.pwnet.org](http://www.happeninhabitats.pwnet.org): This Web site is a great resource for learning about habitats and plants and includes suggested activities that are appropriate for elementary school–aged Girl Scouts.

[www.eeweek.org/resources/garden\\_curricula](http://www.eeweek.org/resources/garden_curricula): The National Environmental Education Week Web site offers lesson plans about gardening and green space for each grade level of Girl Scouting.

# WASTE MANAGEMENT

## DISCOVER

Each year, we generate millions of tons of waste in our homes, schools and communities. Every year we fill enough garbage trucks to form a line that would stretch from the earth halfway to the moon. Everything you throw away into a trash can has to go somewhere. Yet spaces for landfills and other containment areas are starting to fill up and flow over.



Sometimes trash materials can also be hazardous. According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, hazardous wastes are discarded materials that are potentially harmful to human health or the environment. Hazardous wastes include things such as chemicals and heavy metals, and discarded household products like paint thinners, cleaning fluids, and old batteries.

The best way to ensure that we have enough space for our waste is learning how to manage our waste. This is where the 3 R's become important. We first need to **reduce** the amount of materials and trash we produce. This means being selective in what we use and in what we throw away. Maybe you don't need a separate sheet of paper every time you write your friend a note. Or maybe you should use a reusable container to bring your sandwich to school every day, instead of a new plastic bag. We also need to **reuse** the materials we already have, such as writing on the back of an old homework assignment, or using an empty jelly jar as a vase or water glass. Lastly, we must **recycle** as much as possible. Recycling means that materials are sorted, collected and processed, and then re-manufactured, sold and bought as new products.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

Each one of us throws away approximately **4.6 pounds** of waste per day! That means each week you throw away enough trash to equal more than 60 boxes of Thin Mints! Multiply that by how many kids and teachers you have in your school and that's a lot of Girl Scout cookies gone to waste! Can you think of ways to reduce, reuse and recycle your school's waste?

You can also **compost**. Composting is where you take waste that is biodegradable, or that can decompose, such as leftover food and yard trimmings, and add a microorganism that allows it to turn into soil or dirt. Instead of adding the waste to a landfill, it becomes a substance we can use to grow more resources!

## CONNECT

Explore the quantities and types of products and materials your school purchases and uses (this can include food containers, bathroom supplies, art supplies, office supplies and mail). Investigate what types of materials and products are being thrown away in your schools (paper, food, books, art supplies, electronics, etc). What can be re-used? What can be recycled? Explore what your cafeteria/kitchen/janitorial staff does with leftover/excess food from lunch and snacks.

## TAKE ACTION

PROJECT IDEAS	MEASURE YOUR IMPACT
○ Stop delivery of junk or unwanted mail	○ Weight of junk mail reduced
○ Replace disposable containers in classrooms and lunchrooms with reusable containers	○ Decrease in weight of trash sent to landfill per week
○ Create and implement a plan to re-use items such as books, electronics, paper, etc.	○ Weight of items re-used
○ Start/promote recycling programs and install recycling bins in convenient locations	○ Weight of items recycled
○ Create and implement a plan to compost waste from lunchrooms and classrooms	○ Weight of items composted
○ Educate people about the benefits of recycling	○ Number of people educated
○ Donate usable items, or form a waste exchange to trade unwanted consumer goods	○ Weight of usable items donated / exchanged

## RESOURCES

[www.greenschoolproject.com](http://www.greenschoolproject.com): This is a cartridge- and cell-phone recycling program that partners with schools to promote recycling. There are lesson plans and printable worksheets on the Web site.

<http://www.therecyclingguy.com>: Program for recycling cell phones and other electronics in a safe way that benefits schools and charities financially.

[www.nikegamechangers.com/earth](http://www.nikegamechangers.com/earth): Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe program reuses shoes to construct playgrounds and athletic facilities. Troops can apply to host a shoe drive in their community.

[www.stopjunkmail.org](http://www.stopjunkmail.org): Ways to reduce junk mail and remove your name from mailings. This Web site has templates for letters that you can write to catalogs and credit card offers to reduce junk mail.

[www.crirecyclingink.com](http://www.crirecyclingink.com): CRI Recycling buys e-waste including ink cartridges, cell phones, and ink jets that it then recycles.

[www.nationalgreenweek.org](http://www.nationalgreenweek.org) and [www.eeweek.org](http://www.eeweek.org): Information about two national environmental weeks aimed at schools and communities and how to make them greener. Girl Scout projects can be featured on the Web sites. There are also videos, facts, and resources about environment and waste.

[www.terracycle.net](http://www.terracycle.net): Resource for upcycling Capri Sun and other drink pouches and energy bar wrappers into purses and pencil cases. Candy wrappers and snack wrappers can also be upcycled!

[www.thinkgreen.com](http://www.thinkgreen.com): Waste Management's site educates people about recycling in a simplified and interesting way. Learn how waste is transformed to energy and how aluminum cans are recycled.

[www.howtocompost.org](http://www.howtocompost.org): A complete source of composting information and articles for beginners to experts, including educational resources for composting in schools, at home and in communities.

[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org): A grassroots nonprofit movement of people who are giving (and getting) items for free in their own towns, in an effort to reuse and keep items out of landfills.

[www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org): Resources to help Americans consume responsibly to protect the environment, enhance quality of life, and promote social justice, and highlights reusable water bottle efforts.

[www.catalogcancelingchallenge.com](http://www.catalogcancelingchallenge.com): The Catalog Canceling Challenge is a youth effort to cancel unwanted sales catalogs.

[www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org): Keep America Beautiful combines environmental education with hands-on stewardship. This Web site provides a network for action projects and gives project suggestions.

[www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org): Farm to Schools is a non-profit organization that brings healthy local foods into schools and educates students about food, and how it travels from farm to fork. Learn about starting a farm to school program in your own school.

# WATER

## DISCOVER

**Two-thirds** of your body is nothing but water! We are also surrounded by water - three quarters of the earth is covered by it. Water is everywhere – in the sky, in our lakes, in our homes, and in our schools. Plants and animals all around us also depend on water for survival – for food, water and shelter. Water is an important resource that needs to be protected.



Experts say that each person uses 150 gallons of water a day on average. This translates into roughly 55,000 gallons used per person every year. You use water when you flush the toilet, get a glass of water, rinse off your dishes, wash your hands, brush your teeth, and take a shower. You trust that each time you turn on that faucet, all the clean, healthy water that you need will come out.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO ME?

Multiply the number of students in your class by the average yearly water use. For example, if you had 25 kids in your class,  $55,000 \times 25 = 1,375,000$  gallons. That means that each year, you and your classmates use enough water to fill more than two Olympic-sized pools! Are there ways you can cut down your water use? Or make sure the water you and those around you use is safe and clean?

The reality is that water is not endless. Water shortages have become a reality for many areas in the United States, and the rest of the world. Despite this knowledge, we do not always use water wisely. We overuse it to carry away our waste. We put hazardous materials directly in the water or on the ground that it comes in contact with.

We also need to protect the watershed that we live on. The Environmental Protection Agency defines a watershed as the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same river, lake or other body of water. In other words, all of the chemicals, pesticides and trash that we leave or dump on the ground eventually wash into these major water sources, where we get our drinking and tap water, and that nourish animals and plants.

## CONNECT

Explore how much indoor water is used on a regular basis (monthly, daily, annually) in your school. (Can do this by accessing building utility bills or performing a water fixture audit). Explore how much outdoor water is used on a regular basis (monthly, daily, annually) in your school. (Can do this by accessing utility bills or performing an outdoor water audit). Explore the water quality of a selected local water body - lake, stream, river, bay, etc. (Testing kits are available through World Water Monitoring Day). Determine what, if any, factors are negatively affecting the water quality (for example, silt from construction run-off, manufacturer's dumping into water body, waste water overflow, litter/trash, etc.). Or explore the quality of your indoor water in your schools, from sinks, drinking fountains, etc.

## TAKE ACTION

PROJECT IDEAS	MEASURE YOUR IMPACT
○ Replace toilets, faucet heads, and shower heads with low-flow models	○ Decrease in amount of water used
○ Improve water efficiency of irrigation systems by adding timing devices or installing water efficient systems	○ Decrease in amount of water used
○ Plant native trees and plants that require less water usage and prevent erosion	○ Number of trees and plants added
○ Remove garbage and waste from a local body of water	○ Decrease in weight of trash sent to landfill per week
○ Educate and advocate for water quality and conservation	○ Number of people educated
○ Implement a sand dune restoration project	○ Number of square feet of green space improved

## RESOURCES

[www.girlscouts.org/program/gs\\_central/insignia/online/participation\\_patches/water\\_drop/](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/insignia/online/participation_patches/water_drop/) - **Water Drop Patch Project:** A program resource, co-produced by GSUSA and the EPA, that teaches Girl Scouts about water quality and how to take action in their communities to protect and restore local water resources. Guidance on constructing rain gardens on school properties is included.

[www.epa.gov/safewater](http://www.epa.gov/safewater): **The EPA has resources about water pollution, instructions on how to build rain gardens, and information about local water sources.** This Web site includes links to publications about water conservation and ideas for promoting water efficiency.

[www.epa.gov/watersense/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/index.htm): Water Sense is an EPA partnership voluntary labeling program that offers consumers a simple way to make product choices that use less water with no sacrifice to quality or product performance.

[www.worldwatermonitoringday.org](http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org): World Water Monitoring Day is an international effort to improve water quality. There are test kits available to test the quality of local water sources.

[www.wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/index.php](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/index.php): This Web site lists 100 ways to conserve water. One of these tips may spark a project idea.

[www.nwwater.com](http://www.nwwater.com): The North Wales Water Authority provides information and facts about water and ideas for kids on how to conserve water. This Web site includes interactive games for kids about saving water and resources to teach children about water conservation.

[www.wetcity.org/resources.htm](http://www.wetcity.org/resources.htm): *Water Watchers: Conserving Water at Your School and Home*, a school water audit and conservation handbook, helps educators mentor a student-driven audit of water use at school and in their homes. Lessons in the guide are arranged to lead students from awareness of basic water conservation issues to responsible action and stewardship of their water environment.

[www.projectwet.org](http://www.projectwet.org): According to this Web site, “the mission of Project WET is to reach children, parents, educators, and communities of the world with water education.” There are numerous resources about water and water sources.

# *Girl Scouts Forever Green.*

## **Girl Scout Community Action Project**

### **REVIEW: INFORMATION TO TAKE FROM THIS HOW-TO GUIDE**

**The Girl Scouts Forever Green: Girl Scout Community Action Project aims to accomplish the following:**

- Bring Girl Scouts to the forefront of environmental sustainability.
- Engage Girl Scouts in the new Leadership Experience of Discover, Connect, Take Action.
- Give girls opportunities to practice the keys of leadership: girl-led, learn-by-doing, and cooperative learning.
- Introduce the new Girl Scout Journeys series to girls in a way that creates meaning and value
- Engage Girl Scout alumnae in a nationwide Girl Scout program that provides them with an opportunity to make meaningful change.
- Positively change the way our schools and communities think and act in relation to our environment.
- Produce measurable results that can be calculated on a nationwide level to demonstrate the impact that Girl Scouts have on their communities and country.

### **STEPS TO COMPLETION OF YOUR COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT**

1. Use this guide to determine if your girl or group is interested in taking part in the Girl Scouts Forever Green Community Action Project.
2. Meet as a group to discuss project ideas, and choose a Community Action Project.
3. Get permission your school officials if you choose a project to benefit your school.
4. Submit a Project Registration to your local program manager (listed on Project Registration) and receive approval and welcome packet.
5. Implement your Community Action Project at your school or within your community.
6. Submit your project outcomes to a nationwide database.
7. Submit your Project Report to your program manager.
8. Join in the nation-wide celebration of the Girl Scouts Forever Green Community Action Project.

**Girl Scouts Forever Green: Community Action Project  
Action Project Registration Form**

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT NEATLY – BE SURE TO COMPLETE FULL FORM**

**ACTION PROJECT INFORMATION**

*The project coordinator can be a troop leader, assistant leader,  
parent or teacher who is managing the project.*

*Troop # (s)	Troop Level(s)	# of girls	# of adults	
Troop/Group Leader Name		Telephone (day)	Telephone (evening)	
Address		City	State	Zip
E-Mail				

*\* More than one troop can participate in a single project at a school*

**PROJECT COORDINATOR (if someone other than troop leader)**

Name	Telephone (day)	Telephone (evening)		
Address		City	State	Zip
E-Mail				

**COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT REGISTRATION – PROJECT OUTLINE**

**Title of Project:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Location:**

If working with a school your group will need to receive permission for any project held on school grounds or that will require the help of other students besides Girl Scouts. Ask your program manager for a copy of a letter to present to your school officials.

School Name	Telephone Number	Fax Number		
Address		City	State	Zip
Principal/Headmaster Name				

**If the project is taking place in a community location other than a school please describe:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Project Description:** Tell us about your idea. What do you want to change in your school or community? Why? How did you come to this conclusion? How will this effort promote a solution to an environmental issue in your school or community?

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**Challenges:** Are there any difficulties you think your group may face in executing this project? Please describe the challenges and your plans to overcome them.

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List all groups and individuals you will involve in the project and describe how they will participate:

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**Please attach a short timeline** describing what you are going to do each month of the project. **Please note:** *You have until June 10<sup>th</sup> to complete your Action Project.*

As the responsible adult for this action project I agree to ensure all participation in this project will abide by rules listed in *Safety Wise*

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Project Coordinator Signature

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Date

**Required Documents Checklist:**

- Completed and Signed Action Project Registration Form**
- Project Timeline**

**SUBMIT ALL DOCUMENTS TOGETHER TO YOUR LOCAL PROGRAM MANAGER:**

**Penny Crispin, Corpus Christi Service Ctr    OR    Rachel Rendon, Harlingen Service Ctr**