ENVIRONMENT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM PROJECT IDEAS 2026-2028

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GFWC Community Connection initiative: United States National Parks System

PRESERVE RESOURCES

- Join the Arbor Day Foundation and receive ten free trees to plant or donate the trees to be planted in threatened rainforests or one of our National Forests. (www.arborday.org)
- Coordinate with local leaders in your community to celebrate Earth Day (April 22) with a project designed from one of the many Earth Day Science and Education toolkits. Kits can be found at www.earthday.org
- Interest schools, communities, and scouts to conduct a "clean your town" program/day. •

Sponsor a poster contest, with a theme, such as Trees are Beautiful or How We Recycle. • Visit local parks and preserves or take a day/weekend trip. Consider the Pine Barrens or Great Swamp

Watershed for a day/weekend trip. (www.state.nj.us/pinelands/, www.greatswamp.org). • Participate in the cleaning of local beaches. Contact your local Municipality for Beach cleanup Days. • Raise funds to support our parks through your local Municipality or County Parks, Land trust

Organization, or the National Parks Conservation Association (www.npca.org), the Nature Conservancy (www.nature.org) or the National Wildlife Federation (www.nwf.org).

- Become a "Citizen Scientist" by using apps on your phone with Inaturalist.org.
- Volunteer with Chrysler Herbarium at Rutgers University and help create the Mid-Atlantic Herbaria Consortium database. You can contribute to the project by collecting data in the field or specimen transcription. Visit www.midatlanticherbaria.org.

PROTECT WILDLIFE AND DOMESTICATED ANIMALS

- Share information with your club and community members from the National Wildlife Federation concerning the impact of wildlife gardens. Encourage the formation of personal and public wildlife gardens.
- Consider sponsoring a subscription to National Wildlife or other children's publications, such as Ranger Rick, for a shelter, a family center or classrooms.
- Establish a butterfly garden in your community and offer on-site programs that identify butterflies and provide information about the butterfly life cycle.
- Provide butterfly kits to an elementary class
- Work with your local schools to plant a bird or pollinator friendly garden. Teach children about the importance of using native plants and pesticide free gardens. Build beneficial bug houses using recycled and natural materials. Provide vegetables or native plant seeds for them to grow.
- Invite a speaker from the Department of Natural Resources or a local program to provide

information about nearby Heritage Preserves and/or Wildlife Management areas.

- Partner with local rescue shelters and ask how your club can help with events, collection of items or fundraising.
- Inform club members about the signs of animal abuse and the proper channels for reporting such abuse.
- Teach students about caring for their pets using the Humane Society's curriculum 'Nose to Tail' for K-5. (www.humanesociety.org)

ECO-FRIENDLY LIVING

- Grow a vegetable garden and donate produce to your local foodbank. If you do not have a private garden to use, a local park may have garden plots that your club can "rent" for the season. • Commiserate America Recycles Day, a program of Keep America Beautiful (November 15th) by organizing a community event. Toolkits and other materials are available at Keep America Beautiful (www.kab.org)
- Participate in Nike's Reuse-A-Shoe Program, which accepts workout sneakers to make Nike Grind, a material used in sports surfaces and playgrounds.
- Donate gently used shoes to Soles4Souls for distribution to individuals in need.

(www.soles4souls.org) • Hold a club yard sale to repurpose gently used items and donate the proceeds to various charities. • Hold a "create your own lunch box/canvas bag" design contest for younger students and an environmental themed, create your own T-Shirt design contest for older students.

BEAUTIFY COMMUNITIES AND ENJOY NATURE

- Plant a tree in your local community. Trees can be planted in memory or honor of club members, service men and women, etc. Contact your local municipality or Environmental Organization for projects or create your own.
- Volunteer at a local community tree planting event. Alliance for Community Trees (www.arborday.org). Participate in National Neighbor Woods® month by volunteering, hosting a local event, or donating to help plant trees during October.
- Learn about invasive species concerns in your area and what you can do to help eradicate them. Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space www.fohvos.org. You can download their app on your phone and help record your observations.
- Reduce your lawn by planting a native plant garden to increase wildlife habitat. For inspiration and ideas, visit the Native Plant Society of New Jersey website www.npsnj.org. Jersey-Friendly Yards website www.jerseyyards.org. National Wildlife Federation www.nwf.org.
- Plant a rain garden to control and slow down storm water runoff. Many municipalities have an incentive program or grants available. Information can be found at www.water.rutgers.edu.
- Learn about the benefits of indoor air quality by cultivating houseplants in your home or create an indoor herb/vegetable garden. Invite a speaker or hold a workshop at a club meeting on the proper care of houseplants and/or creating an edible container garden. Contact a local Master Gardener https://njaes.rutgers.edu/master-gardeners.

- Organize a garden/pond tour in your community.
- Recognize special events such as; Keep America Beautiful Month (April), Earth Day (April 22), Arbor Day (the last Friday in April). For more information visit www.America-the-Beautiful.org, www.earthday.org and www.arborday.com
- Survey your community to determine the need for litter prevention. Organize and participate in a litter prevention project in your town. Watershed Associations have stream cleanup days every year. Visit, http://njwrri.rutgers.edu/watershed_orgs.htm to find a local Watershed Association near you.
- Participate in a survey for North American Butterfly Association butterfly count visit: www.naba.org or the Audubon Society bird count visit: https://njaudubon.org/ for details.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 www.nps.gov).
- 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.

Other Resources

- Audubon Society www.audubon.org For information on birding go to www.audubon.org/birding
- Earth Day www.earthday.org For information on Earth Day Science and Education Toolkits go to www.earthday.org/our-toolkits
- National Park Service www.nps.gov
- Nature Conservancy For information on Plant a Billion Trees go to www.nature.org
- Wells of Hope International www.wellsofhopeinternational.org

Review the 2026-2027 NJSFWC and GFWC Manual - Environment Section for additional project ideas and resources.

Spring Achievement Day Contest Rules
ENVIRONMENT

The Achievement Day Contests are held in each District in the Spring. The Environmental contests are divided into divisions: Artistic Design, Horticulture and Upcycle.

Each participant is allowed one entry per class. Each participant is allowed to compete in their highest level of achievement. i.e., an advanced painter may not enter an advanced painting and a beginner painting in the same year. The contests are for non-professionals therefore the professional category has been eliminated. That means if you are a paid photographer, you may not have an entry in that category. The prizes will be awarded:

1ST Prize, 2nd Prize, 3rd Prize AND Honorable Mention. Only 1st Prize winner's entries will go to the Convention.

- All entries must be pre-registered with the District Environment Chairman by the pre-registration deadline for your district. NO ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED UNLESS PRE-REGISTERED
- Entry forms must include all the required information. Forms will be available from the District Chairman, Club President or the State Chairman.
- All entries must be the work of the clubwoman whose name is on the entry form.
- Entries must be the work done after the last convention and not entered in previous Federation contests.
- Entries will be handled with care but they will be handled and are entered at the owner's risk.
- Items may not be removed from the exhibit area prior to check out without permission from the State Chairman.
- Height is defined from the table top to the top of the arrangement.
- All categories may be sub-divided by the committee or the judges.
- DECISION OF THE JUDGES IS FINAL

Each item is judged on its own merit,
Scoring will not be provided
Comments should be provided by the judges for each entry
No more than one 1st Prize will be awarded per class/category or sub-category

ARTISTIC DESIGN DIVISION

Entry form in the Artistic Design Division must also include one of the following levels: Beginner – Up to three years in category
Advanced-Three or more years in category or prior First Place Award in the Category **CATEGORIES**

1. Dollhouse Floral Arrangement-Up to 3 inches in any direction including stand. If using fresh flowers, take picture at the District Contest and remake it for Convention.
2. Pressed Fresh Flowers under glass – Maximum Frame Size is 12" in any direction
3. Hat decorated with flowers not to exceed 18 inches in any direction
4. Seasonal Flower arrangements – not to exceed 18 inches in any direction. The flowers may be artificial or fresh, if fresh take a picture at District and remake for Convention.
   A. Spring
   B. Summer
   C. Fall
   D. Winter
5. Flower arrangement in a teacup seated upright on a saucer – may not exceed 7 inches in any direction. If fresh flowers take a picture at District and remake for Convention, The Flowers may be: A. Fresh
   B. Dried
   C. Silk
6. Flower arrangement in a teapot.
   A. Single serving teapot may not exceed 5 inches in height (includes top finial), width up to 6" length 10" (spout to handle).
      1.Fresh flowers

2. Dried
3, Silk

B. Multi-serving teapot – Height not to exceed 10” (includes top finial), width up to 6” length 10” spout to handle
1. Fresh flowers
2. Dried
3. Silk

7. Door Decoration-Dried, Silk or Fresh Plant material (as with other categories if you use fresh material take a picture at the District and remake it for Convention if you win
A. Small 6-12 Inches in any direction
B. Large- 12-22 inches in any direction.
8. Potpourri – A list of the ingredients must be listed on each entry or it will be disqualified. Item may not exceed 6” in any direction. The container does not have to be homemade but must be able to stay open and then closed for transit.
9. A fresh flower design using some evergreens, suitable for placement in a foyer table. Not to exceed 16” in any direction. Take a picture at District and remake for Convention.
10. Flower Arrangements in recycled container same as above.

HOUSEPLANT DIVISION

In this division there are no levels. It is not necessary to grow the plant from seed or propagate it yourself. Plants must have been in your possession a minimum of 6 months before the district contest. The container area must not exceed 12” across. The outside of the pot must be clean. You may put a saucer under the pot. No plant dressing or decorative accessories (figurines, fish, etc.) may be used. **ALL PLANTS MUST BE INSECT FREE. Note: if your houseplant is in full bloom at district level and the blooming period has ended by convention, take a photograph of the entire plant in bloom and attach it to the pot for convention.**

CATEGORIES

11. Terrarium – have more than one plant in the terrarium which may not exceed 18” in any direction, accessories to scale allowed.
12. African Violets A. Single Flower B. Double Flower
13. Cacti and Succulents
A. Any single cactus
B. Christmas cactus
C. Small Cactus and/or Succulent Garden
D. Succulents
14. Fern – may not exceed 24” in any direction
15. Orchids –
A. Small 6” or less
B. Large over 6”
16. Pothos
17. Other Houseplants
A. Blooming plants- Follow the note on blooming plants above.
B. Foliage (other than Fern).
C. Dish Garden – may be combination of blooming and foliage
D. Air Plant

18. UPCYCLE

This category is new to Environment. It is the process of taking a used item and converting it into an art object or a useful item. It is giving new life to something that might have gone to the landfill and finding a use for it. This person has seen tee shirts turned into backpacks, wine corks into trivets, old broken jewelry into works of art. You must attach a list of items used and what they were in their previous life and what they have become. We invite you to save the environment and do something completely original.