



GFWC Conservation Community Service Program

2010-2012 Club Manual

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PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

The Conservation Community Service Program is designed to enable members to gain an understanding and appreciation of all aspects of our environment and the world's resources, natural and man-made.

Our nation is faced with a continuing crisis in natural resource conservation. Water and air quality is severely impaired by the effects of pollution and general misuse. Wildlife is threatened by loss of habitat, invasive species, and pollution of the environment with waste materials. Every 20 minutes, the world loses one or more entire species of animal or plant life—at least 27,000 species per year. It is imperative that we learn and pass on to the youth the ideals of living in a healthy environment and the importance of conservation practices for the future of the world as they will be the future stewards of the environment. We have a responsibility to ensure the preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife along with the prevention of excessive or wasteful use of our resources.

GFWC has historically spearheaded unique programs that have enhanced and benefited youth and adults in communities around the world. We will continue this work by increasing the awareness of conservation

issues among our members and our communities as we work together in a collaborative effort with other community organizations or use GFWC Partners or Resources designated for this program.

With our shared knowledge, continued dedication to this program, and the new collaboration and partnership emphasis, GFWC will continue to be a viable resource in conservation for enhancing the environment for healthier living and preserving our resources worldwide.

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals for the Conservation Community Service Program are listed below in order to assist you in measuring project success and positive change in your communities. The listed objectives further outline how we can build projects that support these goals.

Goal: 1. Enhance our environment for healthier living.	Objective: 1. Increase GFWC members' awareness of conservation issues.
	Objective: 2. Increase community awareness of conservation issues and encourage community members to partner with GFWC to act on local conservation issues.
Goal: 2. Bring GFWC to the forefront by way of conservation programs.	Objective: 1. Increase GFWC visibility by partnering with national conservation groups.
	Objective: 2. Increase GFWC visibility by creating unique GFWC-led and -managed community focused projects.

CALL TO ACTION

We have outlined ideas to help you in attaining the goals and objectives that have been set forth in the GFWC Conservation Community Service Program, including ways to educate yourself, inform others, and create change.

Educate Yourself

- Assess your community's conservation needs in regard to natural resource preservation, beautification, litter and waste handling, and invasive species. Use the information to educate community officials and coordinate an action plan.
- Investigate and support local ordinances and policies on conservation issues.

Inform Others

- Work with school officials, scouts, and other youth groups to encourage young people to beautify their surroundings, including school grounds, home yards, and community parks.
- Work with local agencies and other community groups to conduct workshops on pertinent topics.
- Invite experts, such as forest or park rangers, environmental scientists, educators, and naturalists, to speak at meetings on the importance of water and soil conservation; encourage attendance of community members.
- Urge all community members to learn about and support local ordinances and policies.
- Educate members and your community about participating in a recycling loop, which is the relationship between manufacturing, purchasing, and disposing of recycled products.
- Encourage public officials and public employees to provide facilities and further processing for recycled materials.
- Use media outlets to educate participants and promote activism.
- Write feature articles or columns on conservation topics for newspapers, magazines, and/or newsletters.
- Label donated items with “Courtesy of GFWC and {GFWC Club}.”

Create Change

- Initiate a wildflower planting project along community streets and highways. Work with city, town, county, and state governments.
- Develop a Yard of the Month event in the community. Develop a sign indicating the monthly winner and the club sponsoring it.
- Plan and implement beautification projects at parks, downtown streets, malls, cemeteries, stores, hospitals, shelters, and other community institutions.
- Work with your state forestry service to plan a GFWC Federation Grove. If your state has a grove, care for diseased trees or replace those that have died.
- Participate with other groups in shoreline, stream, and waterway clean-ups.
- Organize viable and visible disposal and recycling options for the community if none exist.
- Implement energy conservation practices in your clubhouse, home, office, community, and during travel.

IMPORTANT DATES

Plan projects and events around days, weeks, and months of celebration and commemoration in the GFWC Conservation Community Service Program:

March 22	World Day for Water
April 22	Earth Day
April 29, 2011	Arbor Day
April 27, 2012	Arbor Day
June	Keep America Beautiful Month
June 5	World Environment Day
July	Recreation and Parks Month
November 15	America Recycles Day

COLLABORATIONS

As we look around and see our community as it is, and survey the needs of those living there, we usually find a conservation issue that needs our help to enhance the lives of the community members. Over the years our members have cleaned up many areas of concern and continue to make our world a better place to live. Clubs have adopted parcels of the highway in conjunction with the state Departments of Transportation to pick up trash. Now we have seen success in other projects of that nature. Clubs are taking responsibility for parcels of lakefront, beach areas, river banks and levees, town parks, state parks, entrances to parks and community areas, and downtown areas, where their own communities are located. They are not only picking up trash; members are replacing plants, shrubs, and trees; addressing the issue of invasive species; recycling numerous items; floating the river to clean our water and waterways; and cleaning and refurbishing historic cemeteries, monuments, buildings, and playgrounds.

In the GFWC Conservation Community Service Program-Collaboration, GFWC clubs will:

- Research, plan, and implement projects, programs, and advocacy based on its interests and the needs that the club members believe are important. This is the club members' opportunity to think out of the box and do it their way.
- Report. It is imperative that clubs report the projects that they have developed so that as an organization, we can better see where our members' interests lie and those statistics can be used in working with and recruiting new GFWC Partners, grants, and advocacy opportunities.
- Reporting is also important so that we can highlight and share your club's creativity and interests with our membership so that they can also be inspired to either implement a similar project or use it for inspiration for their own.

Explore examples of what your fellow GFWC clubs have done around the country to implement projects related to conservation issues in their own communities. For more information about any of the following GFWC club projects, please contact GFWC Conservation Community Service Program Collaboration Chairman or the GFWC Programs Director.

If you have a successful project that you would like to share with GFWC and your fellow members, please contact GFWC Conservation Community Service Program Collaboration Chairman or the GFWC Programs Director at GFWC@GFWC.org.

GFWC Abington Heights Civic League, Inc. (Pennsylvania) had a vision to create a space where people can come together to learn how to garden organically; watch this labor blossom and grow; provide a healthy economic source of nutrition; and enjoy the beauty of the community. Its goal was to establish a community garden to grow produce. Club members secured partners and raised funds. The community library held seminars presented by Penn State Master Gardeners, who educated attendees on organic gardening without the use of pesticides and herbicides, practicing water conservation, starting seeds, and making compost. News of the project spread fast by local newspaper and television stations. The library's children's group planted a butterfly and pollination garden. A church group maintained a plot and donated the harvested produce to local food banks. Others joined the effort and over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce reached over 200 qualified area families.

GFWC Livermore Falls Women's Club (Maine) worked with the local Betterment Group to transform a vacant dirty lot into a vibrant and alive color spot that made individuals take notice. With the impression it made, townspeople started sprucing up their own areas. The Paper & Heritage Museum needed help. The club got involved and made a garden designed to attract eyes to the museum signs. The members learned their living history museum had suffered a devastating fire and had a garden that needed attention. The club members sprang into action, along with middle school students, who called looking for a project in which they could participate. The students received printed instructions to help them remember what they learned from the activity as well as day lilies to plant at their own homes. From this club's First Impressions Project the community benefitted and the club gained recognition and community acknowledgment.

GFWC Chamber's Bay (Washington) adopts an apple tree every year at a local orchard that is maintained by the city and where concerts and other community events are held. Members learn to prune the tree by attending classes, and use the apples for some wonderful desserts. Any leftover apples are used at a community event called "The Apple Squeeze." **GFWC Nome (Alaska)** maintains the garden at Potter Station, which is considered a wonderful photo opportunity for tourists as it is a stop for tour buses. **GFWC Walhalla (South Carolina)** dubbed their downtown cleanup "Company's Comin'". Just before the town's

annual Oktoberfest week, club members swept main street sidewalks, picked up litter and debris, and trimmed shrubbery. They redesigned the landscaping and in the spring, added plants and flowers to the town's welcome signs, where they also watered and maintained them—now it's time for company. **GFWC Peterson Tuesday Club (Iowa)** floated a section of a river to pick up trash. The participants reported back to the club on the items and quantity of trash retrieved to educate and make others aware of the extent of the river trash.

GFWC Pennsylvania worked with its state agencies to educate its members on invasive plant species as the President's Project was "Dangerous Invasions," and the first step was to educate the members about the plant species invading our environment and the effects on our ecosystem. **GFWC Boulder Valley (Colorado)** adopted a section of Coal Creek Trail in Louisville, learned about the invasive plants, cleaned brush, cut down weeds, dug up, and bagged non-native noxious weeds growing in that area. A sign with the club name was placed on the trail.

GFWC Amity Study Club of Atlanta (Texas) collected over 10,000 pounds of e-waste (old computers, printers, televisions, mobile phones, PDAs) in one day. The club used the local newspaper, radio station, and fliers to get the word out and drafted their family members help with the collecting. UNICOR of Texarkana, a recycling plant that works in conjunction with the Department of Justice, which allows prisoners in federal installations to receive pay and to learn vocational skills through recycling of disposed electronics, came with its truck, and a fork lift was donated to help with the loading.

Working together to improve their home communities has brought many GFWC clubs and other community groups together for the improvement of our environment thus enhancing lives around the world.

PARTNERSHIPS

GFWC Partners are organizations that operate at the national or international level and offer unique and customized services such as project materials, speakers, kits, and/or additional information specifically designed for GFWC clubs to enhance the effectiveness of the GFWC Conservation Community Service Program and special projects within your communities. These Partners are aware of GFWC clubs' specific needs and our club and organizational structure.

These GFWC Partners will assist in monitoring the donations generated by GFWC members. To ensure that your donation, whether at the individual, club, district, or state level is included in the GFWC total, please make sure to:

1. Write on your check that you are a GFWC member or club.
2. Submit your check to the GFWC Partner Contact listed in the *GFWC Club Manual*, even if it has a local or state representative.
3. Notify GFWC of your donation by calling or e-mailing GFWC Programs Director at 202-347-3168 or GFWC@GFWC.org.

If you have any questions regarding donations to GFWC Partners, please contact the GFWC Conservation Community Service Program Partnership Chairman or GFWC Programs Director at GFWC@GFWC.org.

The Humane Society of the United States | www.HumaneSociety.org

2100 L Street NW | Washington, DC 20037

P: 860-434-8666 | F: 860-434-9579

The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest and most effective animal protection organization—backed by 11 million Americans, or one in every 28 individuals. Established in 1954, the HSUS seeks a humane and sustainable world for all animals—a world that will also benefit people. We are America's mainstream force against cruelty, exploitation, and neglect, as well as the most trusted voice extolling the human-animal bond.

- *KIND News* is an award-winning classroom newspaper for children in grades K through 6, and is read by more than a million children in thousands of classrooms nationwide. It encourages good character in children with an emphasis on kindness to animals, respect for natural habitats, good citizenship, and peaceful conflict resolution. *KIND News* is published at three reading levels: Primary Edition (grades K-2); Junior Edition (grades 3-4); and Senior Edition (grades 5-6). It is delivered to classrooms five times a year, September through May, in bundles of 28 copies with a teacher's guide. A subscription also includes access to reproducible worksheets and tips on helping animals, people, and the environment. GFWC clubs can provide this publication to schools in their communities through the "Adopt-a-Classroom" program and more information can be found at www.HumaneSocietyYouth.org.
- Clubs that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to community-wide humane and environmental education are eligible for the GFWC Kids and Kindness Achievement Award. For more information, contact Stephanie Clark at SClark@HumaneSocietyYouth.org or visit www.HumaneSociety.org/Youth and click on Kids and Kindness Awards. Each GFWC club that participates in the Kids and Kindness program will receive a certificate from The Humane Society of the United States.

Keep America Beautiful, Inc. | www.KAB.org

Washington Square | 1010 Washington Boulevard | Stamford, CT 06901

E: Info@KAB.org | P: 203-659-3000 | F: 203-325-9199

KAB has been engaging individuals to take greater responsibility for their community environments since 1953. Through its Network of Affiliates and Participating Organizations, KAB's Portfolio of Programs serves over 15,000 communities each year by preventing litter, reducing waste through recycling, and greening communities.

- Celebrate Keep America Beautiful Month in April! For program information and user friendly resources visit www.KAB.org.
- Take local action. KAB initiatives range from litter cleanups, litter prevention education, recycling drives, graffiti removal, beautification and community improvement projects, to park renewals, tire recycling, clothes collection programs, river, lake and seashore cleanups, and e-cycling initiatives. Visit their website, www.KAB.org, to find your local affiliate.
- Observe Keep America Beautiful "Great American Clean-Up" in April. Visit www.KAB.org.

RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional resources, including a listing of governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations are provided to assist you in researching and creating your projects.

Governmental Resources

U.S. Department of Agriculture | www.USDA.gov

Created in 1862 by President Abraham Lincoln, the USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management. Research plants native to your state. For fact sheets and plant guides, visit <http://Plants.USDA.gov/Java/Factsheet>. Request the USDA Backyard Conservation booklet and encourage community members to begin a resource conservation program in their own yards. Learn about invasive species and the escalating damage to world ecosystems, visit the National Invasive Species Information Center at www.InvasiveSpeciesInfo.gov.

U.S. Department of Energy | www.Energy.gov

The Department of Energy's overarching mission is to advance the national, economic, and energy security of the United States; to promote scientific and technological innovation in support of that mission; and to ensure the environmental cleanup of the national nuclear weapons complex. Visit www.Standby.LBL.gov/Data.html for information on power used by appliances that cannot be switched off completely without being unplugged.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | www.EPA.gov

The mission of EPA is to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment – air, water and land—upon which life depends. Visit the HUD/EPA/DOE Energy Star website www.EnergyStar.gov for energy saving information. Call 800-Star-Yes to order two free Energy Star brochures: A Guide to Energy-Efficient Cooling and Heating and Home Sealing.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | www.FWS.gov

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. Its mission is to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

U.S. Forest Service | www.FS.Fed.us

Established in 1905, the U.S. Forest Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Forest Service manages public lands in national forests and grasslands.

U.S. The Natural Resource Conservation Service | www.NRCS.USDA.gov

Originally established by Congress in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service, NRCS has become a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges, like climate change.

- Visit www.NRCS.USDA.gov/Feature/Volunteers for information regarding volunteering for the USDA Earth Team in your state.

Non Governmental Resources

America in Bloom | www.AmericaInBloom.org

America in Bloom is a grassroots program that connects people to plants through education and participation via a friendly community competition. Explore America in Bloom, a contest dedicated to planting pride in our communities.

American Forest Foundation | www.AFFoundation.org

Chartered in 1981, the American Forest Foundation promotes the long-term sustainability of America's forests by restoring wildlife habitat, and developing quality environmental education programs, training and curricula. Get project ideas from GreenWorks!, the service-learning, community action portion of Project Learning Tree[®], an environmental education program. Visit www.PLT.org for more information.

American Forests | www.AmericanForests.org

American Forests is a national citizen membership organization that works to maintain and improve the environment through action-oriented programs, information, and communication focused on the health and value of trees. Conduct a community forum concerning urban sprawl and its causes. Explore the National Registry of Historic Trees and nominate a historic tree and learn how to properly plant trees at www.AmericanForests.org.

American Horticultural Society-Master Gardener Volunteer Program | www.AHS.org/Master_Gardeners

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a program of state Cooperative Extension Services that educates and certifies individuals in horticulture and related areas in exchange for community service. Investigate the Master Gardener Program. Invite a Master Gardener to present a club program or have your club sponsor a Master Gardener program for the community. Work with Master Gardener volunteers to plan and implement beautification projects.

American Rivers | www.AmRivers.org

American Rivers is the leading conservation organization standing up for healthy rivers so communities can thrive. American Rivers protects and restores America's rivers for the benefit of people, wildlife, and nature.

America the Beautiful Fund | www.America-The-Beautiful.org

The mission of the America the Beautiful Fund is to assist volunteer efforts to protect and preserve the natural and historic beauty of America, including community parks and gardens and landmark trees. The Fund provides grants of free flower, vegetable, and herb seeds as well as educational materials and national recognition awards for outstanding results. Order free vegetable and flower seeds from the America the Beautiful Fund and use them in the beautification process. Visit www.America-The-Beautiful.org/Free_Seeds for more information.

Earth Day Network | www.EarthDay.net

Earth Day is an alliance of several thousand groups working to promote a healthy environment and a peaceful, just, and sustainable world. Learn about how to celebrate Earth Day.

National Audubon Society | www.Audubon.org

Audubon's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Learn how to create

a bird-friendly backyard or contact the National Audubon Society for the Audubon at Home brochure.

National Arbor Day Foundation | www.ArborDay.com

Learn how you can help the environment by planting a tree in your community. Learn about the many Arbor Day programs for supplying trees to communities and educating the population about the importance of trees. Find a complete list of Arbor Day celebrations for each state. Develop urban projects designed to increase the number of trees. Work with the National Arbor Day Foundation to have your city or town designated as a Tree City USA in recognition of effective management of tree resources. Celebrate your state's Arbor Day and plant a tree. Visit www.ArborDay.org/States.

National Gardening Association | www.Garden.org

The National Gardening Association, founded in 1973, is a nonprofit leader in plant-based education. They provide timely materials designed to foster an appreciation for the benefits of gardening.

National Garden Bureau | www.NGB.org

The National Garden Bureau is a nonprofit organization that works to improve the quality of life through increased use of plants. They educate, inspire, and motivate consumers to increase their use of plants in homes, gardens and workplaces. Each year they announce and promote the All-American Selection, new garden seed varieties (flowers and vegetables) that have been deemed the best in terms of garden performance, as judged in impartial trials throughout North America.

National Wildlife Federation | www.NWF.org

The National Wildlife Federation works to inspire Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future. As the nation's largest conservation organization, NWF and its four million supporters are committed to sustaining the nature of America for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Save Our Streams | www.IWLA.org

Save Our Streams is a national watershed education and outreach program. Since 1969, they have cleaned-up stream corridors, monitored stream health, and restored degraded stream banks.

The Wilderness Society | www.Wilderness.org

The Wilderness Society works to ensure the best management of America's lands—national forests, parks and refuges, as well as public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. They provide scientific, economic, legal, and policy guidance to land managers, communities, local conservation groups, and state and federal decision-makers.

AWARDS

Club

A \$50 award will be given annually to one club in the nation to recognize creativity in implementing an effective **Conservation Community Service Collaboration Program**. The award is based on narrative reports. State chairmen should forward their state's winning entry to the national GFWC Conservation Community Service Collaboration Program Chairman by March 15 of each year.

A \$50 award will be given annually to one club in the nation to recognize creativity in implementing an effective **Conservation Community Service Partnership Program**. The award is based on narrative reports. State chairmen should forward their state's winning entry to the national GFWC Conservation Community Service Partnership Program Chairman by March 15 of each year.

State

GFWC awards will be presented annually to one state federation in each GFWC membership category to recognize outstanding achievement in both the **Conservation Community Service Collaboration Program** and the **Conservation Community Service Partnership Program**.

Contests

Please see the Contests section of the *GFWC Club Manual*.

Grants

There are no grants currently offered through GFWC at this time. Please subscribe to GFWC's *News & Notes* at www.GFWC.org to receive updated information regarding grants and other member benefits in the GFWC Conservation Community Service Program.