

Get Involved • Make a Difference

Girl Scouts Forever Green

What matters most to girls in America? Girl Scouts of the USA recently asked that question and the overwhelming response was: the environment. It was an impassioned reply that led GSUSA to develop and launch Girl Scouts Forever Green.

Girl Scouts Forever Green is a large-scale project where girls will discover themselves, connect with others and take action by implementing a project that benefits both the environment and their community with lasting, sustainable change.

Most girls are already taking steps in the right direction; recycling at school, planting gardens, using energy more efficiently and educating others. We are thrilled that you want to get involved with this project and have created this guide to get you started.

Remember that this is just a guide and that your ideas and projects may vary. It's really up to you and those in your troop, if you are in a troop. Our best advice is to use this guide, follow your passion and instincts and see what happens.

Please contact us for more information and let us know about your individual take action projects.

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Going Forever Green

How to Get Started

Talk to your Girl Scout(s) about:

- Participating in the Girl Scouts Forever Green Community Action Project.
- Learning more about environmental issues in one or more of the five focus areas (listed in this guide) at their school and in their community and determine how to make an impact.
- Using the new leadership journey: It's Your Planet – Love it! There are a lot of great activities, ideas and information on all of the environmental focus areas.
- Brainstorming together on areas of concern that might be important at their school or in their community and write down Take Action Project ideas that impact those areas.
- Start a list of people in their school and community who could help with their project.

Reassure your girls that they don't have to be environmental experts to make a difference. There are plenty of resources available to inform and educate them while they are putting their Girl Scouts Forever Green project together. The most important thing to have is the desire to make a difference and they already do, or you wouldn't be reading this guide!





Community Action Project Guidelines

Girls should choose a project that addresses an environmental issue at their school or in their community that will result in a sustainable, positive change to the environment.

If girls do a project in their school, they need a letter of approval from their school's administration before beginning (we understand that this may be difficult, so please contact us if you need assistance).

Plan for your group or girl to meet with school officials, community leaders or others who may be affected by the potential projects and ask for their help. Contact your local Girl Scout office as staff may be able to assist you in connecting with the proper authorities.

The Community Action Project must fall within one of the five focus areas, and you must be able to collect data on the impact your project makes. You should collect data before and after your project.

Tips for a Successful Community 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 acquire.

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? Good choices for connections might be a science class or an environmental club but ask around for ideas about who else might want to help.

Ask these Questions: Will your solution fix something for the future or is it a one-time project? Are there ways to make sure the solution lasts beyond your effort? Is this a project that can inspire others in your school or community?

Put the Plan into Action

Log on to girlscouts.org/forevergreen and follow the instructions to register your Community Action Project and report your data collection

Linking Girl Scouts Forever Green to Journeys

Journeys are an excellent resource that you can integrate into the development of your Girl Scouts Forever Green Community Action Project. Project planning can also be integrated into your current Journeys activities. To find out more about Girl Scout Journeys, see page 16.



Community Action Project

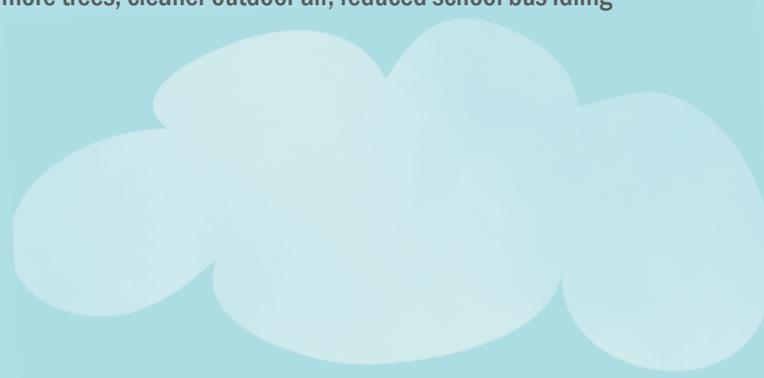
1 Area of Focus: Air Quality

Students spend six to seven hours every day breathing the air in school. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, nearly 15,000 schools have air that is unfit to breathe. Improving the air quality in and around your school improves your ability to breathe easy. Many schools have poorer air quality than office buildings due to chalk, bus idling and lack of green space.

Household cleaners, pesticides, building materials, asbestos, fragrances and radon are all common sources of indoor air pollution. Outdoor air pollution from vehicles and industries are also damaging to human health and the natural environment. Improving air quality is a good way to prevent illness and improve the overall health and productivity of students.

Possible Goals

Cleaner indoor air, reduced asthma and allergies, increased carpooling, more trees, cleaner outdoor air, reduced school bus idling



Idea 1

Reduce toxic cleaning and art supplies by using green products

Measure Impact: Weight of toxic cleaning and art supplies eliminated from schools, homes and community buildings

Idea 2

Train teachers and staff about “green cleaning”

Measure Impact: Number of teachers and staff trained each year on “green cleaning”

Idea 3

Educate people about the importance of clean air in reducing allergies and asthma

Measure Impact: Number of people educated

Idea 4

Assess transportation patterns and encourage mass transit, carpooling and cycling

Measure Impact: Decrease in number of vehicles coming to and from school or other location in the community each day

Idea 5

Campaign to turn off the engine of school buses and cars when unloading/loading in school and/or community areas; create no-idling zones in carpool and bus lanes

Measure Impact: Decrease in number of minutes spent idling

Idea 6

Start school or community garden with native trees and shrubs

Measure Impact: Number of new trees and shrubs planted

Air Quality Resources

Environmental Protection Agency:

The EPA has 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 school-based projects. Link: epa.gov/iaq/schools

Clean School Bus USA is a program aimed at reducing children’s exposure to exhaust. This website has links to the national campaign to reduce bus idling, as well as campaign outreach materials. Link: epa.gov/cleanschoolbus

Green Seal

This is a non-profit 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. Link: greenseal.org

Greenguard Environmental Institute

This 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.

Link: greenguard.org

Earth Day Network

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 website such as links to community campaigns and educational programs.

Link: earthday.net/noidling



Community Action Project

2 Area of Focus: Waste Management

Each 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. We need to make good decisions in our daily consumption patterns and teach others about reducing, reusing and recycling, which are daily actions that make a big difference in how much waste we produce and how quickly we use the space in landfills. Composting helps clean up contaminated soil, prevent pollution and creates more space in landfills. In its final stage of decomposition compost can be used in home and community gardens and landscaping. It is an easy way to naturally fertilize any plants and cuts down your weekly trash disposal. That way your banana peel will decompose in a few weeks rather than a few years! Reusing consumer goods means that fewer new products need to be produced, thus saving energy. Helping to manage waste can also serve as a money-earning activity for your project.

Possible Goals

Reduced green house gases, decreased volume of waste and less impact on local resources and landfill space

Idea 1

Reduce quantities of disposable food and drink containers consumed

Measure Impact: Weight of weekly or monthly purchases of food containers

Idea 2

Reduce weekly junk mail

Measure Impact: Weight of weekly junk mail saved from landfill

Idea 3

Reduce waste of bathroom supplies

Measure Impact: Weight of weekly bathroom supplies saved from landfill

Idea 4

Print paper double sided

Measure Impact: Weight of paper saved

Ideal 5

Educate and advocate for reduced consumption of goods

Measure Impact: Number of people educated about waste management

Idea 6

Decrease the amount of trash produced

Measure impact: Amount of bags thrown away before and after (find average weight of each bag)

Idea 7

Donate usable items

Form a waste exchange to trade unwanted consumer goods

Measure Impact: Weight of usable items donated

Idea 8

Start a compost program in your school, home or community

Measure Impact: Weight of composted material



Idea 9

Reuse paper

Place boxes for used paper near a printer so it can be reused, then recycled

Make notebook out of used paper, bind it with recycled cardboard

Measure Impact: Weight of paper used

Idea 10

Educate people about benefits of recycling

Measure Impact: Number of people educated

Idea 11

Start/promote recycling programs and install recycling bins in visible and convenient locations

Measure Impact: Weight of items recycled

Idea 12

Increase use of reusable water bottles through educational efforts

Measure Impact: Number of people educated or number of reusable bottles given away

Idea 13

Plan a “Waste Reduction,” “Conservation,” “Zero Garbage” or “Compost” day or week!

Measure Impact: Number of people who participated

Waste Management Resources

Green School Project

This is a cartridge and cell phone recycling program that partners with schools to promote recycling. There are also lesson plans on the website. Link: greenschoolproject.com

Nike

Nike’s “Reuse-A-Shoe” program reuses shoes to construct playgrounds and athletic facilities. Troops or councils can apply to host a shoe drive in their community. Link: nikegamechangers.com/earth

Stop Junk Mail

This organization gives you ways to reduce junk mail and remove your name from mailings. Their website has templates for letters that you can write to catalog and credit card companies to reduce junk mail. Link: stopjunkmail.org

National Green Week and Environmental Education Week

These two national environmental weeks are aimed at schools and communities to help them become more educated about being green. Girl Scouts projects can be featured on their websites. There are also videos, facts and resources about the environment and waste. Link: nationalgreenweek.org and eeweek.org

Farm to School

Farm to School is a non-profit organization that brings healthy local foods into schools and educates students about good food and how it travels from farm to fork. Learn about starting a Farm to School program in your own school. Link: farmtoschool.org/NE/programs.htm





Community Action Project

3 Area of Focus: Water Conservation

On average, each person uses 150 gallons of water per day. This translates into roughly 55,000 gallons used per person every year. A class of 25 students uses enough water each year to fill 2 Olympic-size swimming pools! If water consumption is reduced, that means that there is more clean water for wildlife and you in the future. Two-thirds of your body is nothing but water, which means that we don't just use water, we are water! There is a finite amount of water on Earth, so we need to conserve clean water for future generations. Water can be recycled from cooling systems and irrigation systems and used more efficiently in building by using low-flow shower heads and fixing leaky toilets. Promoting awareness of water consumption also helps decrease water usage.

Possible Goals

Improved particulate count, reduced water consumption (Particulates are tiny pieces of matter that can be solids or gases. They can be found in air and water. Some are man-made and others are natural. When talking about making the particulate count in water decrease, we are talking about filtering or distilling the water to make it less contaminated. There are actual instruments that can count particulates in water.)

Idea 1

Remove garbage and other waste from a local water body

Measure Impact: Weight of trash collected and removed from body of water

Idea 2

Implement a plan to improve water quality by focusing on education and advocacy

Measure Impact: Number of people educated

Idea 3

Plant native shrubs and trees around water body to prevent erosion

Measure Impact: Number of new plants, shrubs, and trees; number of square feet improved; increased number of different plant and animal species

Idea 4

Campaign for people to reduce their shower time

Measure Impact: Total number of minutes by which shower time was reduced x 2.5 gallons per minute = reduction in total number of gallons of water

Idea 5

Educate people about reducing water consumption and pledge to reduce consumption

Measure Impact: Number of people educated or people who pledged to reduce their water consumption practices.

Idea 6

Replace shower heads, toilets and faucets with low-flow models

Measure Impact: Reduction in number of gallons of water used



Idea 7

Irrigation controls; using native, low impact, low maintenance plants in schoolyard landscapes

Measure Impact: Reduction in number of gallons used; number of new plants, shrubs and trees; increased number of different plants and animal species.

Idea 8

Campaign and help school officials install native plants that do not need a lot of water

Measure Impact: Number of new native plants, shrubs and trees

Idea 9

Build a rain garden

Measure Impact: Number of square feet in garden; number of new plants; increase in number of different plant and animal species

Water Conservation Resources

Environmental Protection Agency

The EPA has resources about water pollution, instructions on how to build rain gardens and information about local water sources. This website includes links to publications about water conservation and ideas for promoting water efficiency. Link: epa.gov/safewater

World Water Monitoring Day

This day is an international effort to improve water quality. There are kits available to test the quality of local water sources.

Link: worldwatermonitoringday.org

This website lists hundreds of ways to conserve water, one of these tips might spark your next project.

Link: usewaterwisely.com

North Wales Water Authority

This group provides information and facts about water and ideas for kids to conserve water. Link: nwwater.com

Water Watchers

“Water Watchers: Conserving Water at Your School and Home” is a water audit and conservation handbook that helps educators mentor a student-driven audit of water use at school and in their homes. Link: wetcity.org/resources.htm

Project WET

According to this website, “the mission of Project WET is to reach children, parents, educators and communities of the world with water education.” Link: projectwet.org

Community Action Project

4 Area of Focus: Energy Efficiency

Non-renewable energy sources, such as oil and coal, pollute the environment. Because air quality is severely impacted by non-renewable energy sources, it is important to minimize the use of them. Support usage of less energy in general and the use of renewable energy when possible. Renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power are cleaner and are replenished over a shorter period of time. The limitation of renewable energy sources is that they rely on weather and may not be consistently available.

Possible Goals

Reduced energy usage, using energy in new ways, research new sources of energy

Idea 1

Create a project designed to reduce energy use at home and/or school

Measure Impact: Decrease in energy use

Idea 2

Use a “Kill-A-Watt” tool to measure the energy usage of appliances and try to use them differently or replace the inefficient appliances (make sure you recycle them!)

Measure Impact: Decrease in energy use

Idea 3

Advocate for buildings to use Energy Star Portfolio Manager to evaluate energy performance

Measure Impact: Decrease in energy use

Idea 4

Educate people about energy usage, alternative types of energy and how to reduce their usage

Measure Impact: Number of people educated

Idea 5

Advocate for long-term budgets to include solar panels or wind turbines

Measure Impact: Increase in amount of renewable energy

Idea 6

Implement plan for conserving energy by changing transportation patterns

Measure Impact: Decrease in number of vehicles each day

Idea 7

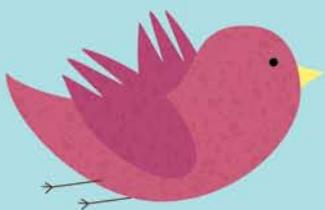
Educate about alternative fuels and campaign to reduce energy usage (have people sign a pledge to reduce their energy consumption)

Measure Impact: Number of people educated; number of pledges received

Idea 8

Plant trees and shrubs strategically to reduce heating and cooling costs

Measure Impact: Square footage “greened”



Energy Efficiency Resources



South Face

This group focuses on energy sustainability projects. Resources include designs for green buildings. Link: southface.org

Energy Star

Energy Star has a set of standards that require electronics to use less energy than federal efficiency standards. Find out about campaigns to decrease energy consumed by appliances. Link: energystar.gov/powermanagement

US Green Building Council

This organization provides information about greening buildings and LEED certification. There is a link to “Build Green Schools.” Link: usgbc.org

US Department of Energy

Schools are a great place to teach children about energy and the environment. This website includes suggestions on designing and building green schools. Link: energy.gov

Consumer Energy Center

This website includes energy tips for schools, information about renewable energy, and transportation tips to reduced energy consumption.

Link: consumerenergycenter.org

Kid Wind

A resource for teaching children about renewable energy sources.

Link: kidwind.org/lessons/teachers.html

Wind Powering America

Wind Powering America is an organization that provides information about wind power in schools.

Their website also provides links for interactive activities and other resources about wind power.

Link: windpoweringamerica.gov/schools.asp

EPEAT

This group helps consumers choose electronic products based on their environmental attributes.

Link: epeat.net

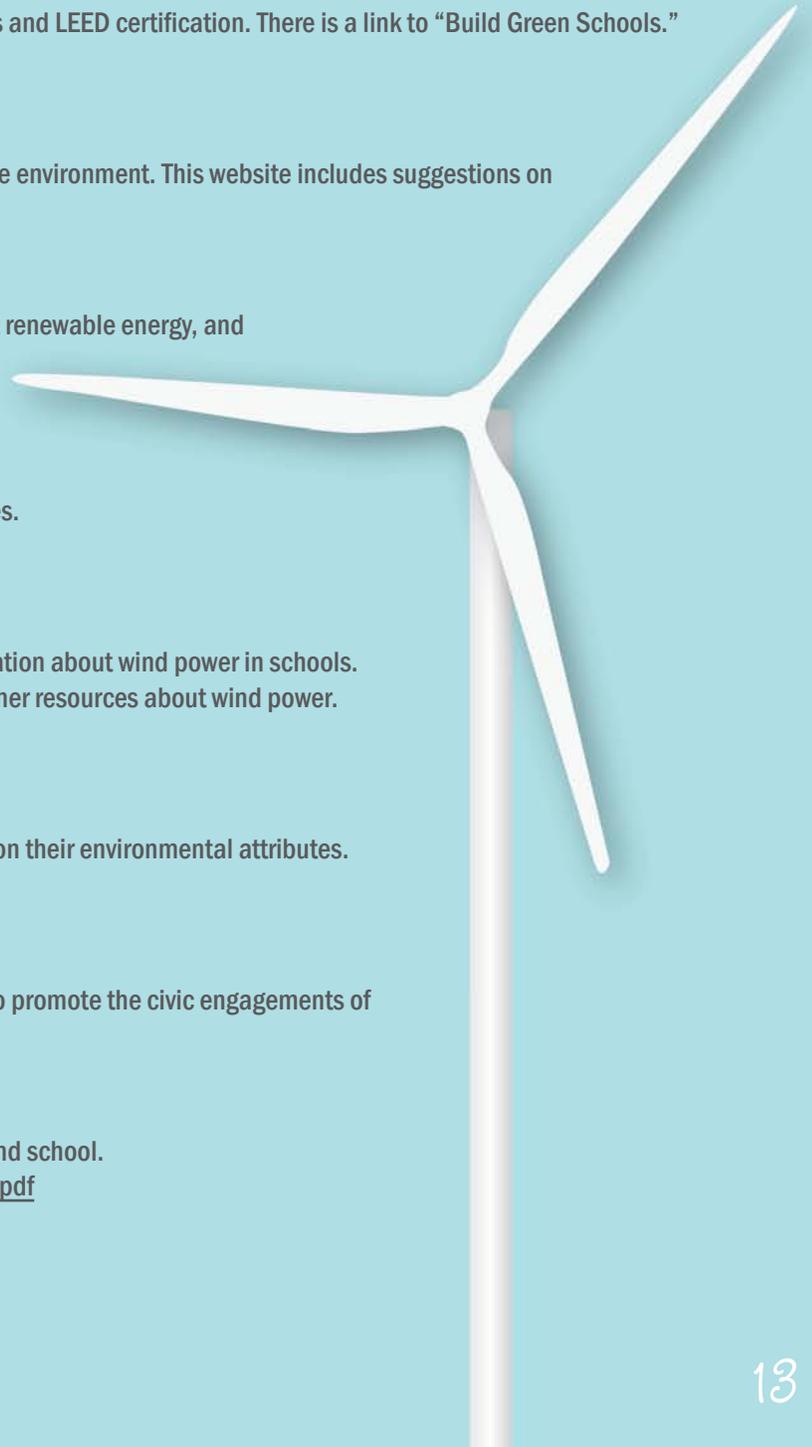
Focus the Nation

This is a national teach-in and policy agenda with a campaign to promote the civic engagements of youth. Link: focusthenation.org

Kill-a-Watt

This is a PDF file about how to “Kill a Watt” around your home and school.

Link: emoregon.org/pdfs/OIPL/OIPL_Kill_A_Watt_fact_sheet.pdf





Community Action Project

5 Area of Focus: Green Space

When environmental-based education was integrated into academic programs, test scores in reading, math, science and social studies all improved (National Environmental Education & Training Foundation, 2000). Green spaces are an important asset to communities. Trees and other plants offer a beautiful, natural place for humans to relax and a habitat for a variety of animals and other organisms. They also provide a space for gathering and preserving the environment and coming together as part of a healthy lifestyle. 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.

Possible Goals

Increased square footage of usable green space, increased number of student-hours used on green space, increased species diversity





Idea 1

Plant native trees, shrubs, and flowers

Measure Impact: Number of new plants, shrubs, and trees, number of square feet of new or improved green space

Idea 2

Educate school officials and community members about the benefits of creating and preserving green space.

Measure Impact: Number of people educated about the benefits of improving and maintaining green space

Idea 3

Educate school officials and help them develop new practices and policies

Measure Impact: Number of school officials educated; number of children/families that directly benefit



Idea 4

Start community or school vegetable gardens

Measure Impact: Number of square feet of new green space

Idea 5

Clean up trash in a local park or green space at your school

Measure Impact: Volume of trash collected

Idea 6

Clean up a trail or improve the usability of a path by spreading mulch or woodchips

Measure Impact: Number of square feet of green space improved

Idea 7

Work with schools to plan activities that integrate curriculum and green space

Measure Impact: Increase in number of student-hours of green space use

Green Space Resources

Edible School Yard

Edible School Yard is an example of an organic school garden in California. This website includes plans for gardens, recipes and links to other websites about locally grown foods. Link: edibleschoolyard.org

Slow Food USA

Slow Food USA has examples of projects that meet community needs such as cooking classes and school trips to local farms. Link: slowfoodusa.org/index.php/programs/details/in_schools

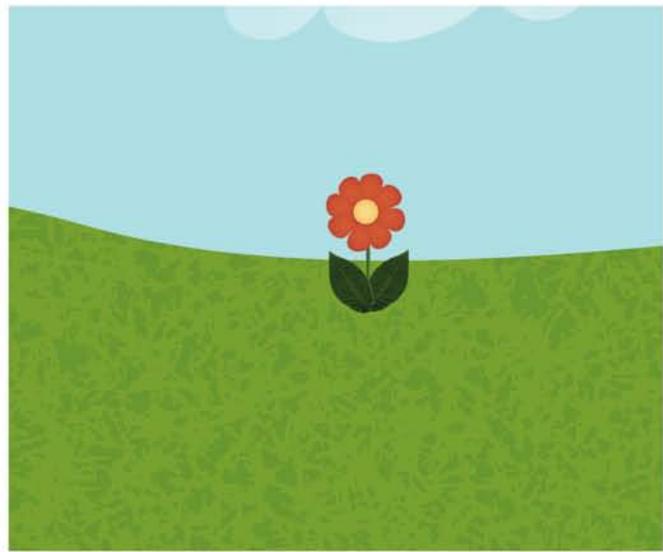
Life Lab

Life Lab gives tips for planting a school garden and has publications about school gardens. Link: lifelab.org

Kids Gardening

A classroom resource for project ideas, directories and grant opportunities for kids' gardens in the community. Link: kidsgardening.org





About Girl Scout Journeys

A Girl Scout Journey represents a new way that girls can experience Girl Scouting. At each grade level, Journey books incorporate **Discover, Connect, and Take Action** experiences and girl-led learning-by-doing, so that girls achieve the leadership outcomes defined by the new Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

A Journey is a fun and challenging experience spread over a series of sessions (usually six to eight, but with the potential to last longer). They follow a designated theme and have a clear starting point (an invitation to explore and take action) and a finite ending point (opportunities to enjoy closure through reflections, rewards and celebration). Along the way, girls are following a purposeful trail that allows them to have fun, learn and experience all the joys of being a traveler (meeting new people, exploring new tastes and cultures, gathering keepsakes, making memories) while being able to carry this all in one “suitcase”—their Journey book!

No matter how much time girls spend on a Journey, the whole is always greater than any single part. So when a Girl Scout Journey comes to a close, girls and their adult volunteers truly feel a sense of accomplishment.

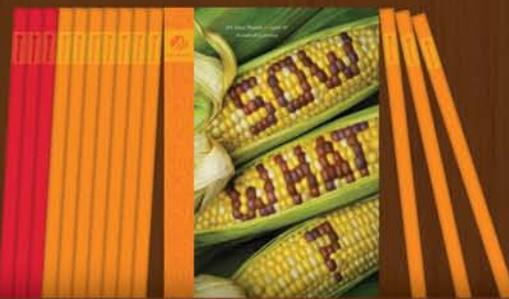
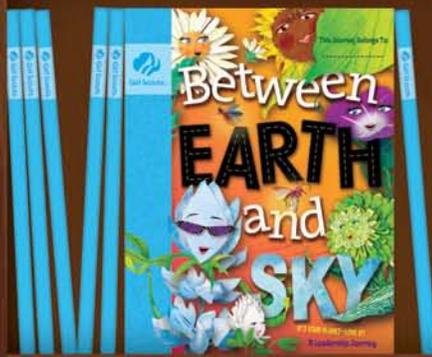
Girl books: Journey books invite girls to Take Action on issues they care about. These books also contain stories, inspirational ideas, information about Girl Scout history, traditions, values, and facts and games; they provide space for girls to collect their own ideas and memories.

Adult books: How-to guides for adult volunteers that correspond to each of the girl books offer plenty of support to help carry out the Girl Scout Leadership Experience including sample sessions to tailor to the needs of your girls.

Leadership outcomes: Each journey addresses six to eight outcomes including at least one each of the **Discover, Connect, and Take Action outcomes**. Each adult guide contains a chart displaying outcomes tied to that particular Journey so adults will always know the intended benefits to girls.

Awards: At each of the six grade-levels Girl Scouts can earn awards as they complete steps along the Journey. The awards are designed to be worn on the Girl Scout uniform.

The Journey series, *It's Your Planet—Love It!*, issues a call for action to the environment, inviting Girl Scouts to explore the natural wonders of the world and become stewards of our fragile planet, making them the perfect companion books for a Girl Scouts Forever Green Community Action Project.



Books in the second exciting series include:

Daisies - Between Earth and Sky

Sunshine, fresh air, new places to see. When flower friends travel, they enjoy all of these. So come along for the trip. Meet new friends and old. You'll taste, touch, and smell what fun travel can hold!

Brownies - WOW! Wonders of Water

Water does so much for you! Can you return the favor? On this Wonders of Water journey, you will love water, save water, and share water! That's a really big WOW!

Juniors - GET MOVING!

Energy puts the sparkle in fireworks, the giddy up in a pony, and the oomph in the everyday. So get moving! Energize, investigate and innovate. Get all the energy in your life flowing in the wisest ways.

Cadettes - Breathe

Take a deep breath. How do you feel? What do you see? Hear? Smell? Get set to focus all your senses on air. This is one airy journey and it's full of flair!

Seniors - Sow What?

So, what do you hope for from your food? Great taste? Pleasing smell? Good looks, too? As you dig into Sow What? and get down to the roots, you'll crave a whole lot more. You'll see how your food network can serve up what's best for Earth—and best for you!

Ambassadors - Justice

We all know what it is. Why is it so hard to achieve? Maybe it needs a brand-new equation—your equation. On this journey, doing the math + some very sage ways = real hope for inspiring justice—for all of Earth and her inhabitants.



Additional Online Resources



epa.gov/kids

The Environmental Protection Agency is a great resource. Certain information and Website links (such as the links to virtual experiments) are geared toward younger girls, while other information and links to scholarships and career ideas are appropriate for older girls.

sustainablesites.org

Sustainable Sites explains why sustainability is important by focusing on ecosystems. The site includes descriptions of case studies of successful sustainability projects. The Orange County Great Park case study in California summarizes community participation, performance goals and lessons learned from designing an environmentally sustainable park.

buildgreenschools.org

Build Green Schools provides information about green schools including LEED standards. There are resources including PowerPoint presentations and videos about recycling, school-wide environmental projects and energy-efficiency strategies. Other resources focus on K-12 environmental education.

loe.org/series/NCPHS

Producing radio shows about the environment is a fun project for older girls who can partner with a local radio station. Living on Earth is an independent environmental radio station, and its site offers links and examples of shows produced by students.

bioneers.org/education

Bioneers Education Community gives examples of successful environmental education projects that create positive change.

greenschoolsalliance.org/greentoolkit3.html

There is a great list of suggestions for living more sustainably that can inspire project ideas.

nrdc.org

Natural Resources Defense Council has articles about current environmental issues, information on legislative policies and resources for green living.

sierraclub.org/education

Write about nature in the Sierra Club's "Words for Wilderness around the World" project. There are links to educational organizations, environmental education resources and information about youth awards.

ase.org

The Alliance to Save Energy posts exciting news about the environment and relevant legislation. There is a link to the Green Schools Program that outlines ways to make schools more energy efficient.

gogreeninitiative.org

Go Green Schools is a network for schools to help promote stewardship in their communities. There are also resources for schools such as recommended worms for composts. This site also has an article titled, "Why Go Green?" that explains the environmental, financial and social benefits of living more sustainably.

plt.org

Project Learning Tree is a website that helps students to learn “how to think, not what to think, about the environment.” This site has many helpful resources and information about each of the focus areas. There are also surveys about resource usage (such as water usage) so that girls can assess how much is being used and how usage can be reduced.

earthsky.org

Earth Sky is a partner with Project Learning Tree. This website features downloadable podcasts that provide information about the environment and science.

nwf.org/wildlife

The National Wildlife Federation helps protect wildlife and promotes sustainability for the future. This site provides information about animals and how focus areas connect to animal welfare and survival. For example, there is an article about eagles and mercury pollution that may inform and inspire projects goals to protect wildlife.

eco-schoolsusa.org

Eco-Schools USA is part of the National Wildlife Federation. Their program helps schools become more sustainable and green.

myfootprint.org

Individuals can calculate their carbon footprint by entering information such as number of people in household, size of household, number of miles traveled annually and types of energy sources used.

eo.ucar.edu/kids/green/index.htm

“Kid’s Crossing: Living in the Greenhouse” is University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, that provides kids with general scientific information about climate change and the environment

howgreenismytown.org

How Green is my Town? provides information about climate change, sustainability, and environmental health at the local level.

greeneducationfoundation.org

The Green Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that strives to promote and enhance environmental education in schools. This foundation helps mobilize communities through National Green Week, Green Thumb Challenge, I Play Green Campaign and other programs and campaigns.

cnn.com/SPECIALS/2009/solutions

The CNN Web site has videos about solutions to environmental issues such as playgrounds made from recycled materials like milk jugs, tires and sneakers.

audubon.org

The National Audubon Center website provides environmental news and education. With more than 500 chapters around the country, this organization can create effective local connections for councils.

epa.gov/adopt/linkinggirls/contacts.html

This is a contact list of the Linking Girls to the Land federal natural resources and associated partners that may serve as potential partners for Girl Scouts Forever Green projects. These agencies collaborate with Girl Scouts at the national and local levels to connect girls to nature, wildlife and the outdoors and empower girls to take action through projects focused on environmental education, outdoor skills development, career exploration and service.



GIRL SCOUTS
forever green
girlscoutsnebraska.org

