



A PROGRAM OF THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

2008 SERVICE AWARDS REPORT

Teens for Planet Earth

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Teens for Planet Earth (TPE), developed by the Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS's) Education Division at the Bronx Zoo, provides technical support for teens and adult advisors around the world who develop and implement environmental service-learning projects.

The TPE Service Awards recognize teens around the world for projects that demonstrate their commitment to the environment. Selection is highly competitive. As part of their team's application, they must submit a report with specific project data, photo documentation, testimonials, and more. A panel of judges from WCS decides the winners.

TPE teams whose projects are deemed to be of exceptional quality are awarded at three levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Recipients of the Bronze Award receive a Certificate of Merit for their achievements. Recipients of the Silver Award receive a Certificate of Distinction for their achievements as well as a webpage devoted to showcasing their team's service-learning project on the TPE website. Recipients of the Gold Award receive a Certificate of Excellence for their achievements; a webpage on the TPE website; and US\$1,000 to further enhance their project or education.

The following pages describe the winners of the 2008 Service Awards. For more information, visit www.teensforplanetearth.org or contact Judith Unis, Teens for Planet Earth Coordinator, at junis@wcs.org or at (country code 01) 718-741-1685.

Kubiti Teak Plantation Group

Location: Jasikan, Volta Region, Ghana

Edith Adjei

Mary Adzoa Donkortabi

Asiome Amedagbe

Mark Anku

Clifford Dzidoma

Jasper Kofi Dzidonu

Samuel Kossi Agbanyo Sema

Clifford Kwaku Agbley

Nayo Lawrence

Esther Sunu Nana Yaah

This team was originally formed with 10 members to protect the environment while raising much needed funds for their families. In Jasikan, trees are indiscriminately cut down by illegal chainsaw operators. Clear cutting damages the forest ecosystem, changing it to more of a farm-like landscape. It also causes greater temperature fluctuations in the area, increases soil erosion and runoff of materials to streams and lakes, and reduces biodiversity. The team received teak seedlings and training from their district's Forestry Department and planted the seedlings on land that they secured through the land tenure system in Ghana. They then established a nursery to raise the seedlings themselves, which they planted around homes, along roads, and at the edges of rivers, or sold to private individual farmers. The team has planted a total of 15,000 trees, served as consultants on similar projects in their community, and helped encourage a forestry system based on selective felling rather than clear cutting.



Soldiers of the Environment

Location: Mbeya, East Rungwe, Tanzania

Atupele Anthon

Atuganile George

Baraka Mwakiposa

Loti Mwakiteleku

Benson Mwambuluma

Gabriel Samson

Local farming practices in Mbeya include cultivating crops along river banks, which lead to increased soil erosion and then flooding, which damages crops, homes, and roads. This team decided to restore Mwatisi River's riparian zone by planting bamboo and other species, as well as strategically positioning big logs and stones to reduce erosion. The team is also educating farmers about the effects of the local farming practices.



Southern Idaho Squirrel Squad

Location: Boise, Idaho, USA

Sarah Hirnyck

Amanda Hopper

Danielle Hopper

Mariah Woodbury

Listed as a candidate species for the Endangered Species Act, the southern Idaho ground squirrel is threatened by habitat loss and urban sprawl. Many landowners view the ground squirrel as a nuisance since their burrows create holes in the soil that are problematic for cattle. However, the squirrels also help maintain native plant species by aerating the soil, which increases water filtration, prevents soil compaction, and boosts soil fertility. In addition, they serve as a food source for birds of prey. This team's goal was to learn about these animals, improve their rural habitat, and educate the public on the important role they play in their ecosystem. In cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management and Idaho Fish and Game, the team has participated in habitat restoration and field research. They also assisted a graduate student with squirrel relocation and tracking using radio telemetry and collected data on the success rate of the relocation. The team also worked with Zoo Boise to study the ground squirrel's hibernation and breeding habits and administered internal parasite medication. Their public awareness activities included designing a brochure that is distributed to young people as they complete a hunters' education course.

Team B.E.E.S. (Bergen Environmental Effort to Save Bees)

Location: Allendale, New Jersey, USA

Colin Bassett

Bryan DiBlasi

Manny Gonzalez

Camila Robbins

Cecilia Schudel

Malith Waharaka



Deer Creek Dreamers

Location: Edmond, Oklahoma, USA

Bridget Gibbons

Pammy Mackiewicz

Alex Schallner

Many people visit Oklahoma City's Martin Park to learn about the area's unique environment. Unfortunately, the outdated gift shop inside the park's nature center was not visitor-friendly. This team put the gift shop on wheels by constructing two mobile naturalist carts, which can now be wheeled onto the park's trails and into high traffic areas such as the parking lots. One cart has educational items such as field guides for sale. The other serves as a naturalist cart with animal furs and skulls for hands-on learning. They also hold a variety of free items such as nature journals, pencils, binoculars, and magnifying glasses to enhance visitor experience.

Bees have pollinated the world for 55 million years, but today bee populations worldwide are threatened by "colony collapse disorder," what researchers describe as the mass disappearance of seemingly healthy bees. Team B.E.E.S. learned how to raise honeybees, constructed a hive box, bought the "nuc" (short for nuclear colony) of bees and bee suits, and has been caring for the hive on a friend's land in a neighboring town (since their own town prohibits beekeeping!). They sell the harvested honey and products made from the honey, such as candles and lip balm, at local festivals and fairs and use the opportunity to educate the community about the importance of honeybees in pollinating local plants and agriculture. They are also working to change the local ordinance that prohibits honeybee cultivation in their own town.





Girl Scout Troop #50

Location: Shelby, Ohio, USA

Sara Gosser

Ariella Ross

A new trail has been blazed in the Shelby Wetlands. This team established a nature trail complete with trail markers and designated viewing areas. They repeatedly walked the wetlands area, taking measurements and recording compass directions to create a trail map for visitors. In addition, they identified and researched specific plants, added educational signs describing the plants' significance to the wetlands, and created educational materials for youth leaders and teachers. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the team gave guided tours of the nature trail.

Friends of Van Cortlandt Park Interns

Location: Bronx, New York, USA

Harold Bowles

Andrew Brown

Daniel Caro

Mohammed Chestnut

Rachel Ferguson

Shervorn Mathews

Kristina Pagliaro

Jessica Pena

Paula Perez

Jesse Rabinowitz

Andrew Rivas

Samantha Rivera

Benny Vuong

Muhammad Zaem

The Environmental Interns at Van Cortlandt Park maintained the park's trails by removing invasive species, planting hundreds of native trees, and learning about various plant species. They also taught younger students about the area and participated in local environmental events. This year, the interns developed and pursued their own service projects within several small groups. They created a garden to use as an outdoor classroom by the interns as well as school groups and after-school clubs. They also started a composting program. Another project involved leading a guided hike of the John Muir Nature Trail and collecting and mapping the location of trash along the trail.



Mafanikio Group

Location: Mbeya, East Rungwe, Tanzania

Israel Boaz
Ikupa Enock
Lusajo Jackson

Sijali Kifunyo
Grace Lukomo
Shukurani Mwamahusi



Native species are more resistant to adverse environmental conditions such as droughts, pests, and diseases than non-native species in general. In Mbeya, native trees are also commonly used by the people of the area for sustenance, timber, and medicine. By collecting and preserving the seeds of local trees, this team is trying to make certain that native species will not disappear. They are also educating community members about the importance of their work.



Perspective

Location: Vorniceni Village, Straseni District, Republic of Moldova

Ion Botnaru

Macroinvertebrates live on the bottom of streams and rivers and are good indicators of water quality because they differ in their tolerance to pollution. For several years, Ion has helped organize over 500 volunteers to monitor the health of Bucovat Stream by studying its macroinvertebrates. They caught and identified different species, measured water temperature and dissolved oxygen, and found that the stream is indeed polluted. They presented their findings at the Seventh Annual European Youth Water Parliament and are hoping to continue raising awareness of the health of Bucovat Stream, problems with the construction of centralized water supply systems, and other local issues.



Rafiki Wa Mazingira

Location: Mbeya, East Rungwe, Tanzania

Cavine Abel
Tusumege Angetire
Juma Gidion

Rehema John
Anifa Mika
Jobu Osiah

Forests help conserve water, prevent soil erosion, and much more. In Mbeya, people use a significant amount of trees for firewood and other domestic purposes. This team decided to establish a tree nursery at their school to help replace those trees which are being cut down at a rapid rate. They raised and planted several tree species, and distributed the trees to community members. In addition, the team taught their fellow students about the importance of trees to other living organisms and encouraged them to plant their own trees at home. These students then educated their family members.



Team W.I.L.D. (Wilderness is Life, Duh!)

Location: Minot, North Dakota, USA

Sarah Anderson

Jesse Parks

Alyx Summers

Team W.I.L.D. chose to focus their efforts on Wildwood Park, which suffered much devastation in a 2005 winter storm. They organized several volunteer clean-up days and removed many of the mangled trees from the paths, beautifying the park and making it safer for visitors. In addition, fire trucks and other emergency vehicles now have access to the interior section of the park. The team has also been raising awareness about the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) by distributing educational materials. The EAB is an invasive insect that destroys ash trees and poses a serious threat in North Dakota, where 70 percent of trees are ash trees. This summer, the team will place bird nesting boxes throughout the park and host an information booth at the Roosevelt Park Zoo's Conservation Day.



T.R.E.E. (Teens Rebuilding Environmental Excellence)

Location: Shelton, Washington, USA

Robert Crabb

James Gamache

Katherine Gamache

Alana Langdon

Julia Lewis-Darch

Sage MacCracken

Morgan Smith

Ian Woolen

The T.R.E.E. wildlife conservation project is a two-part awareness campaign. Members of this project are working to raise awareness of the threatened amphibian populations throughout Washington State and the important role they play in the health of the local environment. They are researching local amphibian populations; promoting habitat restoration efforts; raising awareness in elementary school-age children as well as their teachers; and working with Panhandle Lake 4-H to improve local amphibian environments. In addition, they have developed and delivered educational programs and materials to youth throughout their county about the importance of downed wood (snags and nurse logs) in healthy forests and wetlands. They held an art contest for youth to help promote awareness of snags and nurse logs (cleverly entitled SNART) and will place educational signs throughout the Panhandle Lake 4-H camp to help educate the public. One of the major industries in their area is timber, and this team got their community on board!

Turtle Talks

Location: Cape Haze, Florida, USA

Alexander "Zander" Srodes

Turtle Talks is an environmental program designed to educate community members about sea turtles and motivate them to protect their habitat. Zander has developed and conducted interactive educational seminars for students and community members and distributed thousands of copies of the sea turtle activity book that he designed. The book has recently been translated into Spanish and French.



Wetlands Education Team

Location: Chesterland, Ohio, USA

Shawn Cooper

Zachary Kucera

Clay McMullen

Kelli Wright

The Wetlands Education Team (WET) was formed with the goal of teaching students and other community members about wetlands. By conducting surveys about wetlands, they found that very few people even knew what a wetland is, much less the crucial role they play in the environment and human health. They erected Osprey nest platforms and distribute educational brochures at these sites. They also lead school assemblies about wetlands and encourage students

and teachers to participate in service-learning opportunities. The outdoor classroom they created is used for hands-on science activities and includes a nature trail, birdhouses, feeders, and identification signs. In addition, they regularly collect signatures to help support the Endangered Species Act.



Wild Gals of Stone

Location: Huntsville, Alabama, USA

Dominique Carter

Allyce McClain

Miranda Ransom

Many kids spend little or no time learning about their natural environment. This team created an outdoor classroom at their inner city middle school not only to encourage an understanding of the natural world but to support the natural world directly. Birds, insects, and many other animals visit the outdoor classroom, and teachers of all academic subjects have used the space for unique hands-on activities. The classroom has improved the appearance of the school as well as the outlook students have about their school.



Be Profound and Help the Sound

Location: Middle Island, New York, USA

Olivia Surdi, Shouling Zhang

Awareness campaign to help two animals of the Long Island Sound: the Shortnose Sturgeon and the Eastern Spadefoot Toad.

Bats

Location: Middle Island, New York, USA

Anna Maria Castillo

Demystifying bats and bat house construction.

Chittukuruvi

Location: Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Prasanna Aarti B, Krishna K, Nagarajan K, Bargavi S, Madhu Sweta R

Community survey of the prevalence of *Passer domesticus*, the common house sparrow, which is mysteriously dwindling in numbers.

Environmental Conservation Club

Location: Mbeya, East Rungwe, Tanzania

Happy Anjelo, Ashura Dickson, Subira Mwakilima, Moshi Philipo, Pendo Sadock

Campaign to educate community members on ways to reduce air pollution.

Gandaemo Team

Location: Mbeya, East Rungwe, Tanzania

Memory Balele, Nestory Gohage, Ally B. Mwanja, Gasper Nsajigwa, Daniel Osiah, Emmanuel Sapaya

Tree planting and educating community members.

Kielelezo Cha Mazingira

Location: Mbeya, East Rungwe, Tanzania

Lutufyo Abel, Joseph Ambele, Ahobwile Mwailima, Albart Nyingi, Pyelesya Salwiba, Frank Samweli

Community education to reduce fertilizer use, prevent soil erosion, plant trees, and preserve natural resources.

Mount Rungwe Environmental Service

Location: Mbeya, East Rungwe, Tanzania

Innocent Josiah, Haroun Kabalika, Yona Mhanze, Ezra J. Mwang'onda, Sikiri Sangwa

Education program to raise awareness of the environmental impacts of common farming, hunting, and logging methods.

Rainy Day Brigade

Location: Middle Island, New York, USA

Elizabeth DeVico, Melissa Ordemann

Creation of brochures and Website (www.geocities.com/jeanineordemann) to increase awareness of the benefits of rain gardens.

Tuelimishane Group

Location: Mbeya, East Rungwe, Tanzania

Obeneth Akili, Zawadi Asalile, Elimu Malike, Emmanuel Mwakaje, Elish Wilfredi

Cleanup and planting project on school grounds.

Young Earth

Location: Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Leah Moses, Janet Pandian, Caroline Jessica Solomon

Anti-Litter campaign including posters, meetings, and articles.



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