



CERTIFIED COMMUNITY ECOLEADER APPLICATION

To earn certification, EcoLeaders must earn a total of 30 points (1 point per action completed) which includes all 5 core requirements and at least 2 points from each of the four main project categories (Plan, Do, Communicate, Sustain).

CORE REQUIREMENTS (all are required)

- Developed an EcoLeader profile, including a personal [EcoMission](#).
- Contributed to a project in one or more of the following ways: created or added to the EcoLeader project profile, project updates pages, and/or the application for certified project status.
- Informed myself in one or more of the following ways: Read articles on leadership, participated in an NWF EcoLeaders webinar series and/or equivalent program offered by NWF partner organizations.
- Encouraged the wider EcoLeaders community by contributing an idea, question, comment, article, video or photo in the community related to my or others' projects, or to relevant leadership topics.
- Sought a basic understanding of sustainability and biodiversity by reading one of the following articles and providing your top three reflections in the box below and in the [EcoLeaders Sustainability and Environment Discussion Forum](#).
 - Earth Charter
 - Smithsonian Primer on Biodiversity
 - Introduction to teaching environmental literacy

Category: PLAN

You've identified what you're passionate about and declared your EcoMission, and you're ready to take action to bring about positive change on your campus or in your community, good for you! Now it's time to map out a plan that will help you stay on track and be prepared to succeed. Taking the time to create a well thought-out plan will help your project run as smoothly as possible.

Sub-Category: Visioning, Planning, or Research

One of the most important things to do before jumping into a project is to be sure you are adequately educated on the issue - read up on the topic, research similar projects and talk to folks who have done relevant work. Now is also the time to set short and long-term goals for what you would like to achieve through your efforts and think about what the indicators of success will be and what milestones will get you to your end goal.

- Identified a need and invented a project to address it.
- Clarified project outcomes and measures of success.
- Designed or tested strategies and tactics (including various technologies, vendors or costs).
- Developed short and long-term goals and specific activities to achieve them.
- Investigated similar projects.
- Coordinated a “request for proposal” (RFP) or similar process.
- Facilitated a team of people to define a vision for the project (or coordinated a planning charrette).
- Surveyed people to help define project vision, needs, priorities and/or strategies.
- Identified potential risks and strategies to address them.

Sub-category: Recruiting Others

Remember, many hands make light work. It's important to be able to solicit help where you need it and to draw on the varying strengths of your community. Consider what type of people power you may need - volunteers, co-leaders, folks to help you plan, implement, etc. and create plans for recruiting those people to your team.

- Recruited one or more other individuals for the core project team.
- Recruited volunteers to help with the project (beyond the core project team).
- Met with organizational superiors or staff and received support for the project.
- Organized or facilitated one or more project committees, or served as liaison for multiple committees.

- Recruited representatives from one or more external organizations as advisors, board members, or in other leadership capacities.

Sub-category: Budgeting and Fundraising

There are many ways to find funding for your project. It's important to research the options available and set realistic goals and plans for raising the funds needed to achieve your desired outcomes and sustain your effort.

- Developed a budget for the project (expenses regarding materials, promotions, etc.)
- Initiated or secured funding through an organization or community revolving loan fund.
- Applied for a grant for the project.
- Organized a fundraising campaign such as online crowd-sourcing
- Secured in-kind or monetary donations from businesses.
- Met with prospective donors to discuss the project and fundraising needs.
- Managed donations that came in for the project.
- Other (insert text field to enter answer)

CATEGORY 2: DO

Now that you've got a solid plan in place, have recruited a team of folks to help and have figured out the financials, it's time to start taking action! As you move into the "action" phase of your project, it will be important to continue to manage project logistics, to provide education and training for volunteers and to advocate and promote your efforts.

Sub-Category: Project Management and Logistics

Because projects bring together many different people to achieve a common goal, the successful management of the project and project team is essential. Delegating tasks, coordinating with team members on logistics, and maintaining a shared calendar all help managing a project run smoothly.

- Developed a project management plan with timeline and assigned tasks to team members.
- Secured use of or procured building space, land, goods or services.
- Organized materials, goods or services needed for volunteer service.
- Kept a team up-to-date regularly over the course of the project.
- Documented and maintained a calendar for the project or managed scheduling for key meetings.
- Worked with the team to prioritize ideas for the project.
- Lead effective meetings with a pre-stated agenda and notes after.
- Developed committee chairs or other structures that distribute the workload.

Sub-category: [Education, Training or other Support](#)

It is important to make sure you and the project participants are properly educated and trained to succeed in the project. Education, training and support can take many forms depending on the project - from a community education session on the project topic to conflict management training for team members.

- Educated myself through reading, participating in a leadership or skills training and/or earning a related credential.
- Coordinated leadership or skills training for team members and/or project participants.
- Secured funding for leadership or skills training.
- Facilitated a situation that required conflict management skills.
- Offered or attended a diversity training or spoke up to encourage a diversity of views and perspectives.
- Helped arrange for employee release time or related incentives to allow professional development or other work to advance the project.
- Integrated questions about participation and support of the project in relevant performance review questionnaires.

Sub-category: [Project Advocacy and Networking](#)

For an effort to be successful you need to strategically advocate for it and share your passion with others to gain support from key players. It will be important to brainstorm the methods that you think will be most successful in gaining the support you need - maybe it means holding a rally or sending a letter to an elected official or attending an event where you could meet with key advocates for your project.

- Organized or attended a rally to support the project.
- Wrote or passed an organizational or governmental policy in support of the project.
- Developed an advocacy campaign in support of the project (email blasts, postering, educational gatherings, etc.)
- Wrote a letter to or met with political representatives related to the project.
- Prepared an online action alert for others related to the project.
- Hosted in-person gatherings in support of the project to foster relationships among project participants and other interested individuals.
- Attended events to meet new people who could help with the project or to build reciprocal support around similar aims or researched events for our team to attend to advance the project.
- Prepared promotional print or web materials.
- Organized a table about the project at an event.
- Helped organize or set up a networking event.

Sub-category: [Technology and Science](#)

Planning, education and people power are all important pieces to a project but science and technology can also be invaluable tools for your work. Perhaps you can design an app to assist in your efforts or employ scientific data collection. The possibilities are endless! If science and technology aren't your forte this is a great opportunity to gain knowledge or solicit help from the experts.

- Learned a new technology to help with the project.

- Developed an app or software to help with the project.
- Maintained hardware for the project.
- Set up or maintained technology or software such as a network, web cam or real-time monitoring of energy or water use for the project.
- Gathered scientific data on a regular basis for the project.

CATEGORY 3: COMMUNICATE

Doesn't the saying go: communication is key? As you plan your project and begin implementation, it's important to incorporate a communication strategy into your project timeline. Communication helps keep people informed of your project activities and impact and can also help gain support for your project from administration or community groups. Communication is also important for keeping your team updated on progress and next steps.

Sub-category: Marketing, Communications, and Telling the Story

Marketing your project can help you gain support through volunteers, financial resources, donations, and more. And the more people that know about your project, the more people will care and want to get involved. Telling the story of your project, its goals and its impacts, helps people understand why your project is important, and why it needs support.

- Prepared a document (e.g. press release, flyer, etc.) that explained the project vision and accomplishments.
- Hosted an in-person gathering to share the project with others.
- Created posters, banners, illustrations or other visuals for the project.
- Secured an interview with news agency or radio station about the project
- Developed a marketing/communications campaign for the project (including social media, email, postering, coffee breaks, etc.)
- Wrote and placed an article on the project in an online or print publication
- Started and maintained a website for the project.
- Started and maintained a social media account or blog for the project.
- Contributed to one or more EcoLeader forums to share lessons learned.

- Lined up influential people to speak about the project (i.e., community leaders, celebrities, or other influentials)
- Provided media training to project members.
- Reached out to diverse groups in the community that had not been previously engaged in the project.

Sub-category: [Measurement, Evaluation and Reporting](#)

Why set goals if you aren't going to track progress and evaluate your results? Tracking your goals and measuring your impact will help you determine if you did what you set out to do. And if your results aren't what you expected, then you can evaluate your goals, your results, and your implementation strategies and develop a plan to move forward. Reporting helps you document your project activities and keep your project team and interested parties updated.

- Designed or conducted a formative and/or summative evaluation of the project.
- Coordinated with a monitoring and evaluation professional to help design and implement evaluation.
- Took photos or videos before, during and after project, securing any necessary release for use.
- Coordinated with media to support wider distribution of the project's impacts.
- Interview community members, participants or others.
- Developed a project report including goals, progress, challenges, lessons learned or next steps.

CATEGORY 4: SUSTAIN

You have launched a successful project, now what do you do? Take time to celebrate your successes and recognize the people who helped in the process. Reflect on the lessons you learned and how you might improve moving forward. Develop a plan for the future and incorporate strategies to ensure it's sustainable and has the necessary resources and support to keep it active. Your project may have been a one-time action or event, but could it be more? Meet with your project team and any people or groups that might be interested to explore options to maintain the project.

Sub-category: [Celebrating and Recognizing](#)

After all the hard work of planning and implementing, it's now time to celebrate your success and recognize your project team and the positive impacts you have made. Celebrating and recognizing not only forces you to stop and really think about what you have accomplished, but it's also a way to share your accomplishments with the broader community and gain support as the project moves forward. Also, it's important to celebrate and recognize your project team and other supporters - your project would not have been successful without them.

- Hosted a party with the leaders involved to acknowledge and appreciate effort, success and/or lessons learned.
- Awarded certificates, trophies, web banners or other form of recognition to individuals or partner groups.
- Arranged for incentives such as monetary prizes, promotions, or other.
- Helped integrate new elements into performance goal setting or review processes that are tied to raises or promotions.
- Applied for an award or other recognition for the project awarded by a third-party (e.g., this can include the NWF application for EcoLeader Project Certification or other local or international awards).

Sub-category: [Fostering Reflection and Continuous Improvement](#)

As your project is coming to a close and you are developing future plans, it's important to reflect on what worked well and identify the challenges you faced. Develop a lessons-learned document to share with the project team and discuss what could have been done differently, and how. Use this document as a reference to ensure continuous improvement as you move forward.

- Facilitated reflection on lessons learned with one or more teams.
- Reviewed and revised plans, goals, or policies.
- Helped develop a plan to broaden and sustain engagement.
- Integrated language or goals related to EcoLeadership into the organization's mission statement, master or strategic plan, or formal policies.

Sub-category: [Cultivating Energy and Renewal](#)

Cultivating energy for your project team is essential. Your team members are likely participating in your project above and beyond their other job or school duties so it's very important to keep them energized, and reassert why they are so important to the team and success of the project. It's also important to ensure that your project meetings and activities have continuous energy. Change up the meeting location. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Reach out and recruit new team members to add a different voice.

- Cultivated a mentor or sought advice from others to help manage my personal and professional growth.
- Participated in a professional association or other support group of individuals who have similar goals, opportunities and challenges.
- Arranged for team support, wellness, and renewal, such as coaching, relaxation sessions, outdoor time.
- Secured professional support for meeting design and facilitation.
- Engaged the support of external professionals with team building, leadership, communications or structure.