



DENVER
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Sustainability



PARTNER WITH A LOCAL ORGANIZATION FOR YOUR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECT!

(Check back often; this list is always growing!)




[Opportunities for Students](#)

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Opportunities for Students:

	<p>Interested in taking on a leadership role in DPS sustainability initiatives? Join DPS Students for Climate Action!</p> <p>S4CA is an award-winning, nationally-recognized, and student-led organization with a mission to involve students in DPS's Climate Action Plan. Active participation in S4CA counts as your experiential learning project requirement for the Seal of Climate Literacy.</p> <p>Link: https://linktr.ee/dpsclimateaction Contact: dpsclimateaction@gmail.com</p>
	<p>Get your school EcoSchool certified! EcoSchools certification represents environmental excellence for elementary through secondary schools in the U.S. Team up with some friends and take action to reduce your school's carbon footprint!</p> <p>Each year, schools apply for certification by undertaking environment and nature-based actions, campaigns, and projects, and then recording them in the online EcoSchools Certification Application to earn points. At the end of the year, school applications are assessed and awarded a final certification level.</p> <p>Link: https://www.nwf.org/Eco-Schools-US Contact: dept_sustainability@dpsk12.net</p>
 <p>CYL COLORADO YOUNG LEADERS</p>	<p>Colorado Young Leaders (CYL) empowers high school students to engage meaningfully in their communities while growing as leaders. Through CYL, students reflect on how they show up, use their personal strengths, and partner with local organizations to tackle real challenges.</p> <p>Youth will also learn and develop the skills needed to design their own community-based service actions with mentorship and peer support. For students looking to complete their Seal of Climate Literacy Action Project or Capstone project, CYL provides guidance and opportunities to connect their passions with impactful community work.</p> <p>By registering on our Get Connected Portal, youth gain access to unique leadership programs and opportunities to get involved in cause areas they are passionate about, hands-on service adventures, and a custom volunteer résumé that showcases their impact and growth.</p>

	<p>For more information check out our site or reach out to Riley Ruff (he/they), CYL's Volunteer Coordinator riley@coloradoyoungleaders.org</p>
	<p>WorldDenver's World Affairs Challenge (WAC) provides a practical pathway for middle and high school students throughout Colorado to make an impact both locally and globally. WAC teams use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to design and implement their own community-based sustainability projects. Take a look at the 2025 winning presentations to get a sense of the projects that students create! The 2026 World Affairs Challenge theme is PROSPERITY and will focus on SDGs 8, 9, and 11. To learn more about WAC, read this flyer or email WAC@worlddenver.org</p>
	<p>Groundwork Denver Green Teams are crews of young environmentalists who are paid members of our staff. While with us, they take on projects that improve metro Denver's urban environment. Green Teams aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support youth through educational and career success • Create space for youth to grow their relationships with community and land • Drive positive, local environmental impact for the well-being of all • Develop pathways for youth who are impacted by environmental injustices to become leaders in environmental industries and movements • Offer advancement opportunities for returning youth to grow their leadership and management skills <p>Year-round, Green Teams work on a variety of projects like tending to community gardens, installing rain barrels for neighbors, caring for federally protected lands, and engaging their communities in local environmental justice issues.</p> <p>More information and applications can be found here: Job Openings - Groundwork Denver Volunteer - Groundwork Denver</p> <p>Students with any questions can reach out to Rachel Fishman, Youth Programs Manager, at rachel@groundworkcolorado.org</p>
	<p>Denver Urban Gardens hopes to build a sustainable urban future where people are deeply and directly connected to the earth, each other, and the food they eat. Through DUG, students can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect directly with a DUG Garden to complete a service project • Propose a project to DUG for support and mentorship <p>For any special project ideas please contact programs@dug.org</p>



[Denver Water's Youth Education](#) department is willing and able to support students who want to get feedback on water-based projects. We can help with any projects that might conserve water, indoor fixtures (toilets, sinks, etc.), outdoor watering, landscape transformations, water law, water treatment, etc. Helping people appreciate water's importance often starts with the youngest members of society, and that's what Denver Water's youth education program sets out to do – increase students' knowledge of water in Colorado; educate young learners about who Denver Water is and what we do; and help inspire wise water-use behaviors. Denver Water's youth education program can help DPS students work towards the seal of climate literacy through one-on-one coaching and support for students in projects about water. Please reach out to: YouthEd@denverwater.org or 303-219-0567 or melissa.botteicher@denverwater.org or 303-628-6747



[Girls* on Rock](#) is a unique, FREE wilderness science education program for high school girls* ages 16-17. Each summer a team of 9 participants and 3 instructors spends 12 days exploring and learning about the alpine landscapes of the Rocky Mountains through art, rock climbing, and conducting scientific field studies with our team of professional female glaciologists, ecologists, mountain guides, and artists.

Contact: gor@colorado.edu

**We welcome cisgender girls, transgender, agender, Two Spirit, nonbinary, intersex, genderqueer youth and those who demonstrate allyship with these communities to apply.*



The [Greenway Leadership Corps](#) provides Denver high school students a chance to learn more about the environment and become active, informed community members. Greenway Leadership Corps will show you how your actions can improve our environment. Roll up your sleeves and travel around our community and the state with hands-on volunteer and stewardship projects that make a difference. Greenway Leadership Corps opportunities include trail building, trash pick-ups, tree planting, community science, and much more!



Do you want to work to restore the South Platte River in Denver, Colorado?

Lincoln Hills Cares has paid watershed restoration work that will involve civic and community engagement, natural resource management, planning and riparian area improvements. Please follow up with Vivian Cervantes if you are interested in restoring the South Platte River in partnership with the [South Platte River Advisory Youth](#) (SPRAY).

Vivian Cervantes: vivian@lhcares.org



[We Don't Waste](#) is a Denver based food recovery nonprofit with the vision that food goes to people, not landfills, and is accessible to all. We Don't Waste recovers surplus food that would otherwise not have been sold and provides that food for no cost to nonprofit partners and to individuals in the community. In addition, We Don't Waste provides education through presentations, food waste audits, and activities to teach students of all ages about food waste, the environmental impact of wasting food, nutrition, environmental justice, and what we can all do to make a difference! Please contact Lauren Pollitt, Lauren@wedontwaste.org to get involved.

DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS

The Denver Botanic Gardens has a variety of ways students can get involved:

- There are many different [field trips](#) that can inspire an action project; talk to your teacher about scheduling a field trip soon.
- You can engage in [citizen science](#) projects to gather data for your project (get a [volunteer badge](#) to get into the gardens for free to engage in these).
- The Gardens also has [volunteer opportunities](#) for middle and high school students, both during the summer and throughout the school year.



[Grow Local Colorado](#) promotes sustainability, equity, and community by growing food in 20 garden sites that is donated to food relief organizations, ensuring that everyone in our community has equal access to healthy food. We offer the following seasonal opportunities to students:

1. From May through October, we offer 15-hour farming volunteer opportunities in our gardens. Students may choose which of our gardens to help in. We'll demonstrate how to grow food in difficult conditions, how local agriculture is essential to an equitable future, and how community enables us to feed our neighbors in need.
2. From May through September, we offer paid internships. Students will learn how growing food locally reduces in our carbon footprint, ensures sustainability and creates community. We'll also share how to run a successful nonprofit.
3. From August through October, we offer 15-hour food gleaning volunteer opportunities. Students will assist with picking fruit that would otherwise go to the landfill, creating greenhouse gases.

For more information, contact us at:

GrowLocalColorado@gmail.com 303 777-3376



TeamWorks

TeamWorks connects young people to nature and community through paid, hands-on conservation and trail projects across Colorado. A partnership between Lincoln Hills Cares and TEENS, Inc., TeamWorks brings together youth ages 16-20 from urban and rural communities to collaborate on meaningful outdoor work while developing leadership, professionalism, and environmental stewardship skills.

This full-time summer work opportunity runs from early June through early August. Crew members work Monday-Thursday, 40 hours per week, earning \$19.50+ per hour while gaining real-world experience, exploring green career paths, and forming lasting connections through a summer of teamwork, growth, and adventure in Colorado's natural spaces.

Participants are also eligible for up to \$13,000 in scholarships through their work with TeamWorks.

Learn more: teamworkscolorado.org

Contact: teamworkscolorado@gmail.com



Career and College Success

Denver Public Schools' Work Based Learning department has two PAID summer opportunities for students to learn about renewable energy and electric vehicles. Both of these Academies count as complete projects for the Seal of Climate Literacy.

- If you're interested in learning about renewable energy and getting training from industry professionals, learn more [here](#) about the **Renewable Energy Academy** in June-July.
- If you're interested in learning about electric vehicles and how to get involved in working in the industry, learn more [here](#) about the **Electric Vehicle Academy** in June.

Additionally, all DPS non-charter schools offer Launch internships year round (fall, spring and summer). Positions vary and may include opportunities that align with sustainability. Past partners include a

	<p>variety of departments at CSU Spur, the African American Trade Association, Consumption Literacy Project, the DPS Sustainability Department, Namaste Solar, GRID Alternatives, and more. Please contact your school's Navigator or your school counselor for more information.</p>
	<p>Denver Parks and Recreation has several options to engage with climate and sustainability related projects.</p> <p>Join a Youth Stewardship team to remove trash from waterways, plant native plants for pollinators, or collect seeds! Participate in a parks tree planting or stewardship event to learn about the proper way to plant and care for trees and grow the urban forest.</p> <p>View events on our website and email Emily.Zeller@denvergov.org to get involved in these and many more opportunities!</p>
	<p>The Park People works with communities to plant trees and improve parks for a healthy, resilient future. We believe that our community parks not only make our neighborhoods beautiful places to live, but provide critical functions to the health, well-being, and sustainability of urban life. We work towards our mission through several ongoing programs: Denver Digs Trees, Community Forester, Mile High Tree Champions, TreeForce, and Park Legacy. We are Denver's oldest and primary city-wide park advocacy group and longest-standing tree organization. We have infused tens of millions of dollars into the city's public spaces, and we have planted more than 65,000 trees in Denver.</p> <p>The Park People offers Student Internships during the months of January - May and August - November. Internships can be tailored to individual student interests and time availability, and can run 3- 8 weeks. Internships with The Park People are unpaid, but are a great opportunity to learn about Urban Forestry, Event Planning, Volunteer & Community Engagement and to meet and work with our many partner organizations. The ideal intern will be passionate about Denver's parks and trees, comfortable working with diverse people and communities, and able to work both in a professional office setting as well as outdoors/in the field in a variety of roles. In addition to learning about the everyday operations of our organization, a Student Intern will be expected to complete a capstone project, to be identified and developed together with The Park People's leadership team. To apply for an internship please send a letter of interest, along with requested internship dates to:</p> <p>Morgan Wolfe, Program Manager morgan@theparkpeople.org</p>
	<p>Do you like birds? Thousands of people asked how they could help make the world a better place for birds, and Audubon's Climate Watch was born in 2016.</p> <p>Join Audubon of the Rockies for the annual Climate Watch, a community science program exploring how North American birds are responding to climate change.</p> <p>During winter (January 15 to February 15) and summer (May 15 to June 15) each year, participants conduct a series of 12 five-minute point counts within a designated 10km x 10km square in their area, with the goal of documenting the presence or absence of target species.</p>



CSU Spur is a new educational campus in Denver where students of all ages can see scientists and researchers in action and explore career opportunities in STEM. CSU Spur has unique ways to connect directly with scientists, researchers, and experts tackling real world problems every day.

- CSU Spur is always free and open from Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and every 2nd Saturday from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Explore our campus to see what's available to you. No reservations are required for individual visitors.
- Join a field trip opportunity on site to observe veterinarians, researchers, and scientists in action. Learn from education team members as you explore career opportunities. [Schedule a field trip opportunity!](#)
- Visit CSU Spur on a 2nd Saturday to learn from leaders and experts as we explore new topics each month. [Learn more here!](#)
- CSU Spur offers PAID high school internship opportunities in partnership with Denver Public Schools' Career and College Success department. Contact your school's Navigator or your school counselor for more information.



Slow Food Denver envisions a world where everyone can eat food that is good for them, clean for the planet, and fair for the people who grow it. SCL-seeking students can participate with SFD's Seed to Plate program, which provides cooking and gardening classes for elementary school students throughout DPS. Through SFD, high school students can volunteer as a class assistant for half of a term (4-6 weeks) in one of our elementary school cooking classes. Students will help the SFD cooking instructor during class to ensure all elementary students are using kitchen tools safely, being respectful, and having fun! All participating students must get [this waiver](#) signed by a parent/guardian. Email youth@slowfooddenver.org with any questions. To be matched with an elementary school near you, email your completed waiver and the name of your neighborhood to youth@slowfooddenver.org.







[SustainEd Farms](#) offers a paid summer internship opportunity to students from the following high schools:

Bruce Randolph, George Washington, Manual, and West

Interns will plant, maintain, harvest, and beautify their school garden while learning about plants, the food system, and green career pathways. High school interns have the opportunity to feed their community, because the food grown at SustainEd Farms gardens is donated to food pantry partners and a free farmers market.

Find out more about the internship here:
<https://www.sustainedfarms.org/hsintern>

Or reach out to maya@sustainedfarms for future opportunities to earn your Seal of Climate Literacy with SustainEd Farms

	<p>The Denver Museum of Nature & Science invites high school students to explore the connections between science, nature and climate through hands-on volunteer opportunities. Whether engaging with guests on the Museum floor or supporting behind-the-scenes work, students can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle real education collection items and activity carts • Learn how scientific collections contribute to environmental and climate research • Get involved in the Museum's gardens to support urban ecology and sustainability <p>Ready to get involved? Email volunteer.engagement@dmns.org to learn more.</p>
	<p>Lotus Engineering and Sustainability is excited to support DPS students in an informal advising capacity, offering support for projects focused on building a more sustainable future. We are a mission-driven consulting firm that partners with communities, governments, and organizations to design practical, equitable solutions to today's environmental challenges.</p> <p>We're passionate about mentoring the next generation of climate leaders and are happy to provide high-level guidance to students. This may include suggesting project ideas, serving as a sounding board, offering high-level quality checks, offering general best practices, highlighting available resources, or guiding students as they navigate their work. Our expertise includes climate action planning, greenhouse gas emissions data, energy efficiency, waste reduction, environmental justice, community engagement strategies, and sustainable land use. We are happy to offer up to 3 monthly check-ins with students to review their project and offer guidance around general best practices, partners to involve, available resources to utilize, and more.</p> <p>Lotus is here to support DPS students as they work toward the Seal of Climate Literacy!</p> <p>https://www.lotussustainability.com/ Contact: hello@lotussustainability.com</p>
	<p>Generation Wild Northeast Metro Coalition's Youth Council is a youth-driven group that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in outdoor activities such as hiking and visiting wildlife refuges • Learns about and helps Generation Wild Northeast Metro Coalition's partner organizations onsite • Provides feedback to help improve partner organizations' programs • Allows youth to connect with their peers • We will choose various community service project that support local organizations and help us reach our goals <p>Grades: 9-12 Stipend: \$120/ month Time commitment: 3 Saturday mornings a month, October through April Meeting Locations: The Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge and other community organizations</p>
	<p>Project Green Schools has resources for how to green your school according to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.</p>



Cal-Wood offers two programs to complete your SCL project during a fun summer camp experience in the Rockies!

Register for Cal-Wood's [Climate Champions summer camp](#) (June 21-26) or [Outdoor Inquiry Camp](#) (July 12-17). Through hands-on experience, participants will gain the tools and confidence to be bold advocates for climate justice. Empowered, informed, and inspired—this is summer with a purpose.



Jane Goodall's [Roots and Shoots](#) is a great resource for young people to take local action on a variety of environmental issues. Resources, projects ideas, and community are available to support your action.



Wildlife Refuge ~ Outdoor Classroom

Do you want to make a direct impact? Join us at Bluff Lake Nature Center in Denver, Colorado to volunteer for trash pickups and weed removals!

The 3rd Saturday of each month, Bluff Lake Nature Center hosts Weed Warriors. All volunteers who attend help to remove invasive species on our site, allowing for local species to better survive and thrive. This is a great opportunity to learn plant identification and contribute to positive change in our wildlife refuge. We also have occasional community-wide trash pick-up events. These are scheduled throughout the year. For more information on either, please contact our natural Resource Director Tess.

<https://www.blufflake.org/volunteer>

Tess: tess@blufflake.org



NOAA

[National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)

The Outreach team with NOAA in Boulder represents four research laboratories and two National Weather Service offices. Our scientists study droughts, floods, changing precipitation, wildfires, air quality and greenhouse gasses. We can connect students to climate scientists, meteorologists and other experts. We can also advise students with their experimental learning project.

Contact us at boulderoutreach@noaa.gov

Classroom Opportunities for Teachers and Students

 <p>WALKING SOFTER</p>	<p>Walking Softer Education is a free program designed for high school-aged students in high school classes, clubs, or after-school programs to learn about sustainability and become empowered to participate in community-based environmental solutions. Participating groups learn about specific environmental issues and solutions, and then take action by planning, designing, and implementing a community sustainability project with up to \$2,000 in project funding. Educators who take their students through the program are eligible for a \$1,000 teacher stipend.</p> <p>We are now accepting sign-ups for the 2025-2026 school year. The deadline to sign up is February 20th, 2026.</p>
	<p>EcoRise works at the intersection of sustainability education and climate resilience to elevate youth voices and advance student-led solutions to real-world challenges. We offer a range of curricula and programs designed to advance environmental literacy, sustainable schools, and equitable access to green career pathways.</p>
	<p>Colorado Envirothon is sponsored by the National Conservation Foundation and is North America's largest and most academically challenging high school environmental competition.</p> <p>Teams of 5 students prepare to engage in real-life problem solving at CSU SPUR on March 2 & 3, 2026. The winning team advances to the national Envirothon in July 2026.</p>
	<p>Take Action Global supports teachers and students in taking action in their communities for a more sustainable future. There are a variety of free programs to engage with, as well as a network of participating schools across the world for students to communicate with and share support for each others' good works. They even have an app for students to track their daily impact on climate change.</p>
	<p>Centered on sustainability concepts, this project-based learning unit, Rethink your Rubbish, helps students explore human impacts on wildlife around the globe, and how their actions can make a difference. The free program includes a trip to the zoo, a school visit with zoo educators, and a showcase of student projects at the zoo in early 2026.</p>



[Birds & Conservation](#) is a 4-part series program that teaches why healthy watersheds are critical to birds and all living organisms, and how our actions can protect this vital Colorado resource. At the conclusion of the classroom sessions, students put their knowledge to work as they visit the Nature Center to complete a service project to improve the health of our watersheds and birds.



[The Colorado Agrivoltaic Learning Center](#) is a resource for Colorado educators to learn more about agrivoltaics and to teach their students about clean energy, local food, and responsible land use. We help students to imagine a sustainable future and the many career opportunities agrivoltaics presents.



The [Lens on Climate Change](#) project engages students in film production documenting the effects of climatic and environmental changes on their lives and in their communities.



[HEART Force](#): The Hazard Education, Awareness, and Resilience Task Force is an award-winning collaborative project implemented by the NOAA Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) and Climate Adaptation Partnership (CAP) partner Western Water Assessment. Recognized for its commitment to excellence and innovation in environmental education, HEART Force was awarded the [Innovative EE Program Award](#) from the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education in 2022.

Interested? Talk to your teacher about implementing this program with you at your school! Please contact our team at: ceee@colorado.edu

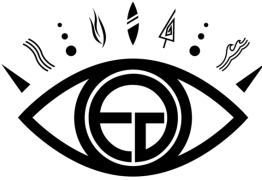




[Pathways to Resilience Action Projects](#)

Co-sponsored by [CEEE](#) and HEART Force (see above), Pathways to Resilience Action Project is a guided action project for students to build community resilience to climate-related hazards such as wildfire and floods. [Lesson plan](#).



[Improving Wildlife Habitat on School Grounds](#) resources for teachers and students to take action at your school, from the North American Association of Environmental Education ([NAAEE](#)).

 EARTH GUARDIANS	<p>Earth Guardians is a youth-lead, global network spanning six continents empowering youth worldwide to lead change in their communities, fostering a collaborative network to support their endeavors.. Check out their "Choose Action Now" Project Guides.</p>
 BLUFF LAKE NATURE CENTER <i>Wildlife Refuge ~ Outdoor Classroom</i>	<p>Stewardship field trips: With a focus on bridging classroom learning with community action, our stewardship field trips help students learn the "why" that fuels stewardship work. This program is free with transportation reimbursements for qualifying schools. This 2.5 hour field trip at Bluff Lake Nature Center starts with conversation and an education-based activity, followed by a stewardship project, allowing students to make direct impacts in the community.</p> <p>PBL field trips: With guidance from our staff, students will make their own observations on the impacts humans have on the environment at Bluff Lake Nature Center, and have the opportunity to work on their own community centered solution. This program is free with transportation reimbursements for qualifying schools, and includes a 2.5 hour site audit at Bluff Lake Nature Center with optional post site audit check-ins with a Bluff Lake team member to help guide realistic solutions.</p> <p>https://www.blufflake.org/events/field-trips Bluff Lake Education Team: education@blufflake.org</p>
 <p><i>A program of Population Connection</i></p>	<p>Population Education: Teaching Population Means Global Learning & Sustainability. It's all about people - how many of us there are, how we shape the world, and how we interact with each other.</p> <p>Free K-12 interdisciplinary lessons to teach how human population impacts the natural world and how we can live more sustainably together on the planet.</p>

Funding Opportunities

Climate Champions Grant Program

Do you have an idea for a climate action project but need some funds to make it happen?

The DPS Sustainability Team partnered with Denver's Office of Climate Action, Sustainability & Resiliency (CASR) to fund projects that help DPS students implement climate action in their schools.

This program intends to engage students in real-world problem solving, leadership development, and Project Based Learning for innovative and creative solutions to climate change.

The maximum amount of funds a school can apply for is \$20,000, and the minimum amount that can be applied for is \$1,000. We invite DPS students to apply for funding by the deadline of **Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025.**

Link:

https://sustainability.dpsk12.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/59/Climate-Champions_Application-Packet_2025-26.pdf

Contact: dept_sustainability@dpsk12.net

EcoRise Student Innovation Fund

Student-led solutions come to life through EcoRise's [Student Innovation Fund](#)

As a part of our [Sustainable Intelligence Program](#), K-12 educators receive curricula and professional development to implement design thinking in their classrooms and guide students through Eco-Audits.

Students who collect data and design environmental solutions based on what they learn are eligible to apply for up to \$700 to bring solutions that tackle sustainability challenges to life in their community.

If you're interested in connecting your students to Eco-Audit Grant opportunities, email us at support@ecorise.org!