

# Eco-Action



**E**co-action is the Girl Scout name given to efforts to sustain and improve the quality of the environment—air, food, water, land, people, and animals. Eco-action informs you on ways to “walk the talk” for a quality of life that includes caring for the earth.

## Skill Builders

**1** Learn what you and your family can do to be more environmentally aware. Investigate recycling, composting, reducing water consumption, energy conservation, and “pre-cycling” (purchasing products with less packaging and buying some things in bulk). Find alternatives to the use of chemicals and pesticides that harm the environment. Incorporate eco-action steps into your lifestyle for one month. At the end of that time, evaluate your actions and make adjustments as needed to continue your commitment.

**2** Choose an environmental issue that affects your community, such as water quality, land-use planning, or use of pesticides. Gather information on all sides of the issue, and evaluate it scientifically on the basis of short-term and long-term effects. Share your findings with others through a presentation, “hands-on” activity, debate, or display.

**3** Record some pleasant, relaxing sounds and some sounds that make you feel tense. Share your findings with others and exchange ideas with them on ways to minimize annoying or harmful sounds. Find out how loud sounds affect human hearing. Does your community have a noise ordinance? Does it need one?

**4** Trace the contributions of someone deeply concerned with environmental quality. Find out how this person became interested in environmental problems and how she pursued her interests. Or find out how different cultures such as the Navajos in North America, the Yanomamos in the Amazon Rainforest, or the Aborigines in Australia viewed their relationship to the earth. Ask your librarian to recommend a recent book about one or more of these groups.

**5** Monitor a stream for pollution sources. Learn to identify the plants and animals that are typically found in clean water and in polluted water, if any, in your area. What happens to the plants and animals that cannot adapt to the changes caused by pollution? Find ways you can improve conditions for wildlife and recreation. Use this information to develop a plan to improve conditions and put your plan into action.

## Technology

**1** Find out about an alternative source of energy (such as solar or wind power) that can cut down on personal consumption of nonrenewable resources and demonstrate to others how this energy source is tapped.

**2** Find out about how new technology is used in testing air, water, and soil quality.

**3** Participate in an online discussion about one worldwide environmental issue to get different perspectives on the issue. Find out if there are any networks or bulletin boards used by young people for environmental action.

**4** Visit a store or look through a catalog that advertises "environmentally friendly" products. Determine if "high-tech" items can be and are included among these products. Develop personal criteria for selecting products that are "environmentally friendly."

**5** Recycling has become a major effort in many communities. Find out about one recycled resource and how it is recycled. What products are made from the recycled materials?

## Service Projects

**1** Create and display posters on energy-saving actions at a mall or other public place and have people sign energy-saving pledges.

**2** Volunteer to work on an ongoing environmental project. Or work as a docent, or interpretive guide, at an aquarium, botanical garden, zoo, nature center, or museum that addresses environmental issues.

**3** Collect information from an organization concerned with environmental issues of particular interest to women and children (for

example, birth defects related to pesticide exposure). Create a display or make a presentation to your troop or group on the organization and the issue.

**4** Create a directory or display of local, state, or national groups concerned with environmental issues and actions. Include groups that provide materials and opportunities for young people to get involved. Distribute this information to others.

**5** Combine arts and environmental action. For example, form a theater group that addresses current environmental topics. Perform in your community.

## Career Exploration

**1** Do a computer search for careers related to the environment. Follow it up by contacting an organization, business, or individual for information on a specific career in this field.

**2** Attend a career fair that gives you the opportunity to speak with individuals working in professions related to the environment.

**3** Learn about careers related to the environment and the law. Find out the educational requirements and nature of work in those fields.

**4** Identify three past and present environmental activists in your community, nation, or the world and learn more about the work of at least one. Using photos, excerpts of speeches, media clips, etc., arrange a display or special ceremony honoring their contributions.

**5** Identify three or more degree programs in fields concerned with the environment. Compare the course requirements and list the career possibilities with each of these degrees. Try to visit or speak with someone enrolled in the program or a faculty member.

## And Beyond

CONSIDER OBTAINING A COMMUNITY Service Bar by working at a nature center, zoo, or botanical garden. Opportunities also exist with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity or the Student Conservation Association.

Commit to conserving, preserving, and enhancing your environment. Take action with these related interest projects:

- All About Birds
- From Shore to Sea
- Plant Life
- Wildlife
- Architecture and Environmental Design
- Build a Better Future
- Home Improvement
- Planet Power
- Museum Discovery