EcoClub Guide
for Middle & High School Environmental Clubs

My TreePeople contact is:

Phone:

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Who We Are

TreePeople

TreePeople is an environmental nonprofit that unites the power of trees, people and technology to grow a sustainable future for Los Angeles. Simply put, our work is about helping nature heal our cities. TreePeople’s mission is to inspire, engage and support people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable and to share the process as a model for the world.

Shifting Los Angeles From Grey to Green

TreePeople is helping to shift Los Angeles from using gray and polluting ways of handling our energy and water to using green nature-based solutions. We provide tools, programs, and education to empower Angelinos of all ages to participate in planting and caring for trees to cool hot urban neighborhoods and creating landscapes that harvest rain and conserve and clean precious water. The result? A more secure local water supply, cleaner air, reduced carbon emissions, more habitat for birds, bees and animals, and a greener, healthier and more sustainable future for us all.

Founded by a Teenager!

TreePeople’s founder, Andy Lipkis, was a teenager when he started the organization in the early 1970’s. Since then, nearly two million trees have been planted in wilderness areas, neighborhoods and school campuses in Southern California by volunteers. We’ve continued to place young people at the center of our work by developing one of the largest environmental education programs in the United States. Our programs for youth create opportunities for leadership, community service and fun.
TreePeople EcoClub

Students have an important role to play in preserving and protecting the environment. Your club will not only directly impact the students involved, but the entire student body, the environmental health of your campus, and your community as a whole. You can also teach the adults in your lives about environmental issues and responsibility. Many teenagers are the ones who pioneer the environmental practices like recycling and energy conservation in their homes.

You have a lot of power and we’re here to help you start, manage and engage your campus environmental club.

TreePeople offers you the opportunity to become an official TreePeople affiliated club.

Club Benefits
Simply register your club with TreePeople and receive member benefits:

• An official TreePeople Club (Digital) badge to place on your publications and website.
• Project Toolkits to help guide you to complete environmental projects.
• A TreePeople Youth Leadership Manager who can answer questions and help guide your club.
• A variety of free resources, including connections to community partners, mini grants, use of tools, and more.
Starting a TreePeople EcoClub

How it Works

1. **Register**
   Go to [www.treepeople.org/ecoclubs](http://www.treepeople.org/ecoclubs) to register and receive your club membership package.

2. **Enlist Members**
   Don’t worry about how many members you have at first. Whether you have 3 people, 30 people, or 300 people, you can start an environmental club. If you do have a small number in your club, that’s ok. Little by little, more people will join in as they see the variety of activities in which your club is involved, and the positive impact you are making on the environment. For ideas go to page 4. For helpful hints on creating club structure, conducting elections and recruiting members go to page 8.

3. **Get an Advisor**
   The next step is to find a faculty member on campus who will agree to at least allow you to meet in his or her classroom at lunch or after school. Approach this person and simply ask them. Chances are he or she will be happy to support you. Also, consider asking a parent or community leader to be an advisor. Supportive adults in your community can share the responsibilities of advising your club. TreePeople’s Youth Leadership Manager is another source of advice and support.

4. **Establish a Charter**
   Rules about chartering or establishing a club vary from school to school. Check with student government and find out what you need to do to make it official.

5. **Conduct Meetings**
   Set a recurring meeting day and time and stick to it no matter how many or few people are there at first. Don’t waste time trying to reach an ideal number. Go ahead and get started with who you have now. See page 5 for more information on conducting meetings and a sample agenda.

6. **Choose a Project Toolkit**
   TreePeople has a variety of Project Toolkits that give you the guidelines and support you need to complete an environmental project. For a list of project toolkits, go to page 6.

7. **Get to work!**
   Using a Project Toolkit, it is time to get to work! Contact your TreePeople Youth Leadership Manager to help, if needed.

8. **Share Your Accomplishments and Celebrate!**
   There are multiple ways to share what your club has done and be an inspiration for others. It is also important to celebrate your accomplishments. Go to page 7, for ideas.
Enlist Members

Grow Membership

If your club wants to grow its membership. Here are some ideas to attract students to your group.

• Advertise your club with posters, signs, articles in the school paper and announcements.

• Find ways for students to earn community service hours or service learning credit by engaging in club activities.

• Host a “Bring a friend meeting” with light refreshments. Include a brief orientation/ice breaker.

• Offer a prize to the member that recruits the most new members.

• Invite successful professionals in your community to guest speak and invite students to attend. Make a pitch for membership.

HELPFUL HINTS

Remember, the best way to attract new members is to have a fun and active club!

For information on club structure and hosting an election, go to the Resource Section on page 8.
It is important to follow a consistent agenda for each meeting. This lets your members know what to expect and helps to ensure that you reach your goals.

### Sample Meeting Agenda

1. **Post Agenda**
   - Secretary posts agenda on the board
   - Using a chalk board, white board, or slideshow saves paper

2. **Call Meeting to Order**
   - President calls meeting to order
   - Secretary passes around the club roster so that members can sign in to ensure that their contact information is correct and make changes as needed
   - President acknowledges any new members and makes them feel welcome
   - Guests are introduced and welcomed

3. **Ice-breaker or other group activity**

4. **Treasurer Report**
   - Give financial report as needed

5. **Public Relations Coordinator Report**
   - Announce any upcoming events
   - Pass around signup sheets

6. **Club Business**
   - Discuss current projects and action items
   - Committee reports
   - Secretary records the names of those who have volunteered to take on tasks and includes these in the notes

7. **Adjournment**
   - President adjourns the meeting
Choose A Project

This is the fun part! As a group, choose a project to complete by answering the questions below. TreePeople has a variety of Toolkit options that provide you with the guidelines you need to make a difference in your community.

TreePeople Project Toolkits

TreePeople provides the guidance, tools, and support in four key areas:

• **Plant and/or Care for Trees**
  Is your goal to cool your campus, reduce energy costs, or care for young trees? Choose from the following:
  – Planting Trees Project Toolkit
  – Caring for Trees Project Toolkit

• **Capture Rainwater**
  Is your goal to reduce flooding on campus or capture water for a garden? Choose from the following:
  – Rain Garden Project Toolkit
  – Rain Barrel Project Toolkit

• **Install Native Plants**
  Is your goal to help restore the watershed, heal the soil or conserve water? Choose from the following:
  – Native Plant Garden Project Toolkit
  – Propagating Natives Project Toolkit

• **Tree Inventory and Mapping**
  Is your goal to help TreePeople by mapping the trees at school and in your community? This project helps get trees onto TreeMapLA to show the existing urban forest in your community and identify areas that need trees, and trees that need care.
  – Mapping Trees With Your Group

• **Manage Waste**
  Is your goal to help reduce waste at school or in the community? Choose from the following:
  – E-Waste Collection Event Project Toolkit
  – Recycling Project Toolkit
  – Community Swap Event Project Toolkit

WHICH TO CHOOSE?

Ideally, you will complete a project in all areas, ensuring the greatest sustainability for your campus and community.

For best results, do one Toolkit at a time. For example, use the Planting Trees Project Toolkit to plant trees on your campus. Once complete, use the Caring for Trees Project Toolkit as a guide to care for your newly planted trees.

TreePeople EcoClubs can request any of these free Project Toolkits to complete a project.
Stay Connected

Social Media

Instagram
Along the way share your photos on Instagram. Be sure to tag #thatecoclublife

TreePeople Blog
Visit our TreePeople blog to stay connected with the TreePeople community and if you’d like, share your club’s story for publication. blog.treepeople.org

TreePeople YouTube
Check out our How to Videos and more at youtube.com/user/TreePeople1

Reporting

So we can acknowledge your work, send an email to youthleadership@treepeople.org and tell us:
1. What is the name of your school/Eco club?
2. What project did you complete?
3. Share your photos with us!

Celebrate Your Accomplishments

Don’t forget to celebrate your accomplishments. Consider the following ideas:
1. Ice cream or smoothie party
2. Pizza party
3. Field trip to TreePeople
EcoClub Resources

Creating Club Structure

Having good club structure is important for your EcoClub. Electing several members to take on specific roles will help meetings run smoothly, ensure notes are taken, and more. There are a variety of structures for establishing officers and leaders for your club. The following are some suggestions:

**President**
- Can be a senior or eighth grader.
- Facilitates all club meetings and works with club advisor to create the agenda.
- Acts as a spokesperson for the club and a liaison between the club and student government.
- Holds additional officer and committee meetings as needed.
- Supervises all other officers.

**Co-President or Vice President**
- Must be an underclassman since he or she will become president the following year.
- Assists the president in the above duties.
- Oversees elections.

**Secretary**
- Takes notes at all meetings.
- Keeps notes organized and accessible.
- Posts agenda on the board for each meeting.
- Reports notes from the previous meeting.
- Maintains a record of events attended or sponsored by the club.
- Maintains a club roster with names and contact information for each member.
- Keeps a visual calendar so that members can see the upcoming meetings and events.
Catch Can Test

To make sure your sprinklers are as efficient as possible do a catch can test.

- Place cans on your lawn area.
- Place a number of straight-sided cans (canned vegetables, tuna, etc.) randomly on the lawn area. The greater the number of cans, the greater the test accuracy.
- About 5 or 6 cans per 500 square feet of lawn area is fine.
- Run your sprinklers for their normal time period.
- Take a ruler and measure the depth of water in each can.
- Add the inches or fraction of inches in each can and divide by the number of cans. If this average is more than the recommended rate of application, reduce your watering time.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Any of the offices can be split between two or more members for Co-Coordinator duties if necessary.
- Officers can communicate with the school administration on the club’s various activities and events.
- Invite your Principal or Vice Principal to drop by for a few minutes during a club meeting.

Treasurer

- Maintains records of all funds raised, donated and spent.
- Gives a financial report as needed.
- Assembles a team to help develop a fundraising strategy and presents ideas to the group.

Public Relations

- Acts as the club’s publicity organizer.
- Assembles a team to create all signs, posters and fliers for club events.
- Acts as the top recruiter for new members. See page 11 for recruitment ideas.
- Circulates sign-up sheets and schedules for upcoming events at club meetings.
- Creates the club’s publicity board to be taken to events. Maintains relationship with school Plant Manager.

Project Coordinator

- Attends TreePeople’s workshops for specific projects.
- Leads club efforts to implement sustainable solution projects on campus using TreePeople’s Project Toolkits.

Historian

- Documents events with photos and video.
- Maintains the club website.
- Works with Public Relations to maintain club website and Facebook page.
Elections

Use the democratic process to elect students who will best represent your club and will be dedicated to furthering your goals.

1. Each spring the club should vote for officers for the upcoming school year.
   - The current Co-President who will become President the following year, should organize the election.
   - If this is the club’s first election, anyone can perform this task.
   - Begin by announcing the date and time of the election and the deadline for nominations. It is okay for members to nominate themselves.
   - Provide a job description for each office.

2. Members who are interested in holding an office should read the job description carefully and submit their names to the Co-President for nomination.
   - Hold the election on the day and time publicized.
   - The Co-President should list the names of each candidate and the office for which he/she is running on the board and on pre-made ballot slips.
   - Handwritten ballot slips on index cards are fine.

3. If more than one member is running for a given office the two candidates should be given the opportunity to address the club for a minute or two to talk about why they think they are the best candidate for the position.
   - If you have a large number of people running, you may need to hold a special meeting so that everyone has a chance to speak if your regular meeting is not long enough.

4. Voting should take place by secret ballot after everyone has had a chance to speak.
   - All ballots should be collected and given to the Co-President to tally.
   - New officers should be announced at the next meeting.

5. Newly elected officers should work with outgoing officers for the last meeting of the year for training and to ensure a smooth transition.

HELPFUL HINT

You may also hold elections twice a year and have one set of officers for the fall semester and new officers for the spring semester. If an elected officer must leave his or her post before the end of the term, emergency elections can be held. Simply follow the format given anytime an election is necessary.
School Assessment Map

Map Key

- Hardscape (concrete)
- Grass
- Tree (Mark with a Y if it is a young tree)
- Buildings
- Areas with a lot of sun exposure