

Planning a project



GETTING STARTED

You've learned about wetlands, but how do you take action? It's easy. Here are a few ideas to get you started...

1) You don't need to reinvent the wheel

There are plenty of things that need to be done everywhere to conserve wetlands and wildlife. **Visit our website** (wce-education.ducks.ca/index.php/en/projects) to get ideas of projects and discover what our **Wetland Heroes** did that made a difference.

Speak to conservation groups in your community. They can tell you about local issues and you may be able to help with one of their projects. Many are happy to provide advice or help you to start your own project. Some even welcome youth volunteers.

2) Do your research and know your facts

Whether you work alone or in a group, and no matter what project you choose, you will need to do research. It is important to know your facts and to be prepared to answer questions about the importance of wetlands and why you have chosen to take action.

3) Get permission

If you are doing a project at home, check with your parents first to make sure they agree and understand what it will involve. If you are planning a project at your school make sure your teacher and principal are on board, and if it's an outdoor project such as a clean-up or tree planting, make sure you have permission from the landowner.

4) Choosing your issue

Here are list of concerns that your wetland might be experiencing. Remember to make sure to choose an issue that you care about.

- ⊕ Are there plans for draining or filling in a local wetland?
- ⊕ Is the wetland damaged – littered, overgrown with weeds or invasive plants like loosestrife?
- ⊕ Have people dumped larger items such as tires, shopping carts and other things there?
- ⊕ Are chemicals or other pollutants being allowed to seep into it?
- ⊕ Is there a plan to mine peat moss from a local site?

Check with your family, friends and teachers for other issues that you might be able to address.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

– MARGARET MEAD

PLAN YOUR PROJECT

1) Organizing and developing a plan

Projects work better and are more fun when you're organized. Think about what steps to take, what support you need, whether you need expert advice, how long it will take, and so on. The **planning sheets** on the next pages will help you to get started.

2) Offer ideas and solutions

It's always easy to say what you're against but this doesn't solve the problem. Learn the issue and think about the solutions. Look for ways to work together; it's likely you can come up with even better ways to address the challenge!

3) Follow the "Golden Rule"

Think of how you want to be treated, and treat others the same way. How do you feel when someone is rude to you or critical of something you have done? Even if you're telling someone they have done something wrong, be polite and listen to their point of view. Look for solutions that will work for everyone.

4) How do you eat an elephant?

One bite at a time! Sometimes when we have very big problems we think we need to fix them all at once. But most problems happen over time with many little steps. The solution may take some time, too. Be patient. Plan and look for the small steps you can take to solve the problem. Be proud of each success. If other problems crop up, be patient; step back and look for a way around them. Make a note of them — you may not be able to solve them now, but they may be a project you want to tackle in the future!

5) Track your efforts

It's always good to be able to share your experiences with others, and to learn from what you've done. Make sure to track the progress of your project.

- ✦ **Take photographs or video clips.** Before and after photos are great — they can show the problem, then the benefits of your efforts.
- ✦ **Keep copies** of letters, newspaper articles, blogs, web pages or other things relating to your project.
- ✦ **Create a scrapbook.** Include your plan, notes about why you chose this project, outline the things that were challenging and how you tackled them. Include photos, drawings and other visual records. Don't forget to include any notes of praise, congratulations or appreciation that you receive.
- ✦ **Keep a journal.** Create a personal journal or one for your whole group or class to use. Write in it regularly. What happened as your project progressed? How did you feel at different times during the project? How did you handle problems? How did you celebrate success?

What is a Wetland Hero?

Wetland Heroes are young people (under 25 years of age) who make a difference by taking action to conserve and protect Canada's wetlands. They can be individuals, classes, schools or community youth clubs or groups. No project or action is too big or too small. Every little bit a hero does helps. **Apply online today at ducks.ca/wetland-heroes**



YOUR PROJECT PLAN SUMMARY

Group Name _____

State the Problem _____

Goal *(briefly, what do you want to achieve with your project)* _____

Strategy

Take time to generate ideas about the ways you might accomplish this. Think about the tasks you need to do, resources you have (people, money, etc.), how much time you can spend, and the pros and cons of your ideas. Write your top ideas below so you can discuss them with your friends, guide or teacher and decide which to choose for your action project.

IDEA	PROS	CONS

Our Chosen Strategy *(Describe how you will measure your success—in steps or altogether: (e.g. the wetland will be clean and six months later people will still be using the garbage bin we installed; or the mayor will have answered our letter and agreed to meet about our concern to protect the wetland, etc.))*

⊕ *Use extra pages to develop and detail your plans. Keep all your planning pieces together in a binder or folder so nothing is lost and you can keep your planning on track.*

PLAN YOUR STEPS

Strategy

Break down your project into steps and use a calendar to plan your time. Think about the time each task will take and remember that holidays, school events and other things may affect your plan.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCES	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET DATE

Funding

Do you need money to carry out any parts of your plan? If so, you will need to draw up a budget and list ideas for how you might raise funds. Are there things that people might donate or share to help you out? If you do need to raise funds, you should draw up a plan for this as part of your project.

Sharing Your Story

How will you publicize your efforts (in a newspaper, online, television, poster)? How will you share your experience with others (send it to DUC's Wetland Heroes, write a story for your school paper, other)?

FUNDRAISING

You may need to raise funds to do your project, or you may decide that you want to raise money to support a conservation project in your community or support an organization that is doing valuable work. Here are a few ideas to help you:

Be creative. Fun events attract people. How about a “Whacky Waddle for the Ducks” race in your school or selling “marsh muffins”. Look around for other fun ideas. Put out a donation box at your event — people may place extra donations there, too!

If you're asking for funds for a specific project, draw up a budget outlining what you need to spend money on. This lets people know how their money will be spent, and they may recognize things they can donate to save money (e.g. a local store might provide drinks and snacks, a printer might donate paper for posters, or you might receive items for prizes).

Promote your fundraiser. If it's a school event, don't forget the posters, announcements and web postings. How about inviting the media or inviting a special guest to take part?

Look for organizations that fund school action projects — your project may qualify. You will likely need to submit a proposal, but this is a great skill to learn. Get help from your teacher or from another adult.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is an important part of a project and helps assess your impact in creating change. No matter the size of the project you undertake, there are ways to evaluate. Here are some questions to think about:

- + **Write out the impact of your project.**
- + **Compare what you set out to do and what you did.** What's important here is not necessarily succeeding in what you set out to do, but to see how well you adapted to unexpected challenges that presented themselves. How did you react in face of difficulty?
- + **What did you learn from your experience?** What would you have done the same and what would you have done differently?

Once your project is completed, make sure to celebrate with everyone who helped out! Also, you can apply on DUC's website to nominate your project and become a **Wetland Hero!**

Let us know!

Tell us what you're up to! Email us at education@ducks.ca or complete our online Wetland Hero application form.

