



Choosing Outreach Projects



Tours and field trips are among the many ways to invite community involvement.

Outreach and education projects help Audubon program members gain recognition and support for their management efforts, while inviting the public to see that the organization is being managed with sensitivity to the environment.

This fact sheet describes a variety of outreach activities and community partner projects that have been successfully implemented by numerous Audubon program members. Your Resource Advisory Group or steering committee can help determine which activities will be most appropriate for your site.

Request help with nest boxes

Inviting help in building, mounting, and monitoring nest boxes is an excellent way to invite community participation.

- Invite people to “adopt-a-box” by donating money for one or more boxes and agreeing to check and maintain them throughout the spring and summer.
- Make a few extra birdhouses every year. Donate the boxes to schools, community groups, or employees to stimulate interest in your stewardship activities.
- Invite a local scout troop or Eagle Scout to make and monitor your nest boxes.
- Sponsor a workshop for children or community members to make nest boxes for your organization.
- Place a few nest boxes within view of your property border. These boxes will subtly communicate a message that you are concerned about local birds and wildlife.

Create a garden

If you choose to create a garden for butterflies, hummingbirds, or songbirds, invite gardeners from a local garden club or Master Gardener’s group to help with planning and planting. A local school class, scout troop, or after school program may also like to help. You can expand garden activities to include a brief lesson about connections between plants and wildlife. Invite a local newspaper to visit on planting day to garner positive publicity.

Inventory Wildlife

If you are interested in developing a list of wildlife species that visit or reside on your property, why not develop a list with the assistance of local experts or students. A call to your local nature center, bird



Make a list of people and organizations in your community who may be able to help with projects or outreach activities.

club, or cooperative extension service should turn up leads for people who may be interested. Alternately, contact a local college biology department to inquire whether a class would be able to conduct a wildlife survey. You might also consider simply posting a wildlife inventory list in a visible location and asking employees or guests to add their sightings. Provide field guides for reference. You may be surprised by how quickly this generates interest in wildlife on the property.

Create a nature guide

Create a simple nature guide to your property. Point out interesting natural features or environmental projects. This can include: native plants, nest boxes, unique trees, habitat areas, common wildlife, and water conservation measures.

Host nature walks

Ask people who are knowledgeable about birds to host an early morning walk to look for birds and other wildlife species on your property. People who attend can add their sightings to your wildlife inventory. Providing refreshments is a nice way to conclude the walk.

Lead a tour

Very basic property tour has a great impact on public perception. A successful outing demonstrates goodwill and will spread by word of mouth. Possible audiences include: grade school children, young adults, biology clubs, scout groups, college students, historical associations, or even local media. Decide in advance which features of your site you want to showcase so that you can include five to ten “stops” that highlight various aspects of your stewardship efforts.

Teach good stewardship to employees

Employee education and “buy in” is crucial to successful environmental management. Ask for suggestions and empower employees to put their best ideas into action. Incorporate brief training lessons into staff meetings. Post positive results in a visible location or offer rewards for outstanding employee involvement.

Offer a workshop

A wonderful way to develop communication skills is to begin talking to small community groups. You might speak with a local school class, garden club, homeowner’s association, or church group. Choose a topic you’re comfortable with, such as tree and shrub care, integrated pest management, environmental quality, gardening for butterflies, or your involvement with Audubon International.

Encourage neighborly stewardship

Write a letter to property neighbors to encourage participation in environmental stewardship activities in their own backyards. This may tie in well with nest box giveaways, providing garden or lawn care tips, or a seasonal tour. When your organization serves as a catalyst for such activities, it spreads the word regarding environmental stewardship and extends environmental quality improvements beyond your property.

Host kids projects

Get kids involved by making bird feeders or houses for the property or their own backyards or leading a school tour, if appropriate. You can also get kids involved with planting gardens, creating nature guides, or tracking wildlife in the winter. Getting kids involved in environmental activities pulls parents and community members in as well and helps people begin to see the property as a community asset.

Sponsor a school

Sponsor a local school in the Audubon Partners for the Environment Program. This is a sure way to let the community know you care. To find out about this exciting program and how to adopt a school, visit:

<http://www.auduboninternational.org/programs/>

Follow the links for Audubon Partners for Schools and Youth.

Branch Out with Art

If your property is especially scenic, take advantage of the artistic opportunities it provides. Invite photographers, local painting clubs, or art studios to use your site. This gets people seeing the property in new ways. You might also consider hosting an instructional class—perhaps there is someone within your organization who could lead it. If art activities become popular, you might consider hosting an art exhibit to showcase works done on the property.

Consider your audience!
Who do you want to target with outreach activities? Seniors, children, families, neighbors, employees, and community groups are just some of the potential audiences for reaching out.



e-Source

Visit our online information center for fact sheets on a variety of environmental topics:

www.auduboninternational.org/e-source

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