

Engaging Youth in Environmental Volunteering

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In the face of issues like climate change, there is a higher need for engagement in volunteer work that relates to the protection, conservation and advocacy of our environments. Unfortunately, the people who will experience most of the effects of our current climate's declining trend are today's youth. Notably, they are also our next generation of politicians, scientists and advocates, and encouraging them to participate in actions that contribute to sustainability is important.

Whether you are a young person looking for your next weekly activity, a parent looking to engage your child in volunteering or just browsing through this article, the aim is to give you access to resources and information in relation to engaging our youth communities in environmental stewardship.

What is environmental volunteering?

Environmental volunteering can be many things. There is a large list of 'chores' that need to be completed whether that's in-general sustainable action, animal welfare, land care, or bush care, etc.

The most important step is to think about your major interests and passions when it comes to the environment.



Figure 1. Photo by Vitaly Gariev on Unsplash

- Would you prefer cleaning up in nature or taking care of animals in a shelter?
- Are you looking to advocate in the political scene for change?
- Would you be willing to travel a little further for more environmentally engaged activities like bird or insect surveys?
- Or what if you started your own eco-club at your high school or university to engage other youth in participating with environmental activities?

Environmental volunteering is broad in a way that many skillsets are applicable and needed to continue responsible environmental stewardship across the world. There is always a place for you.

What are the benefits of participating?

- **Community:** You'll be surrounded by like-minded people who care for the conservation and needs of our environments. Just like you! Whether they are older, the same age or younger than you, the goal is the same amongst everyone, and it creates that sense of closeness that you may be struggling to get otherwise or just adds on to the friends and family you already have!
- **New skills:** There are a lot of skills you can develop from environmental volunteering. Whether that is learning how to scientifically identify birds and insects in a reserve for a survey; how to take care of your garden; or learning the right techniques of persuasion in your writing; there are valuable opportunities around every corner.
- **Impact:** The main thing about environmental volunteering is that you are assisting the world in becoming a happier world. Each bird you count lets scientists know how their populations are going, each weed you pluck allows a native plant to thrive, each mind you change about environmental policy will engage more people in its care. You are the change.

