



Connecting Families with Nature Passport Program Stewardship/Pollution Prevention Project Ideas

Participating in a stewardship or pollution prevention project is easy...

Projects can be big or small. They can take one afternoon or become a day to day part of your family's life. To earn this stamp, we want you to pick a project that works for your family's interests, abilities and time constraints. Hopefully when you are done you will want to do it again and again. Happier and healthier families and a healthier environment is our goal! Here are two ways for your family to earn this stamp:

1) Connect with a Local Stewardship Organization

You can volunteer with a local conservation or environmental organization on a variety of projects ranging from invasive species removal to river clean-ups. Hundreds of great projects take place in Kent County throughout the year. Contact one of the local environmental organizations below to get started today.



- **Connecting Families with Nature Partners** www.kentconservation.org/families
Each of the organizations listed on the back have opportunities throughout the year that fit this requirement. Or if you need to talk to someone about your ideas give one of them a call and they will be happy to help.
- **Friends of Grand Rapids Parks** www.friendsofgrparks.org
Join a work day or volunteer for a park event. Contact the Friends of Grand Rapids Parks by emailing steve.faber@friendsofgrparks.org or by visiting their website.
- **Kent Conservation District (KCD)** www.kentconservation.org
KCD has a variety of opportunities from helping with tree seedling sales and native plant sales to volunteering at educational events as a family. Call the district at (616) 942-4111 ext. 4 or email them at administrator@kentconservation.org for ways your family can help out.
- **Kent County Parks** www.accesskent.com/parks
A variety of stewardships opportunities are available. Contact Andrea Dunne-Sosa at (616)336-3884 or park.volunteers@kentcountymi.gov to learn more about volunteering with Kent County Parks.
- **Land Conservancy of West Michigan (LCWM)** www.naturenearby.org
Throughout the year, LCWM hosts workdays at their properties throughout Kent & Ottawa counties to remove invasive species, collect native seeds and clear trails. To participate in a wide variety of educational programs visit their website or contact them by phone at (616) 451-9476.
- **Stewardship Network West Michigan Cluster** www.stewardshipnetwork.org
The Stewardship Network West Michigan Cluster provides education and hands-on conservation activities from invasive species removal projects to educational workshops. Call the LCWM at (616) 451-9476 or visit the Stewardship Network's webpage and choose the West Michigan Cluster.
- **West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC)** www.wmeac.org
Serving West Michigan since 1968, WMEAC hosts a variety of activities, such as stream clean-ups, building rain barrels and creating rain gardens throughout the year that will qualify for this program. The best way to keep up- to-date on their activities is to check out the news section on their website or contact them by phone at (616) 451-3051.

2) Home-Based Stewardship Ideas

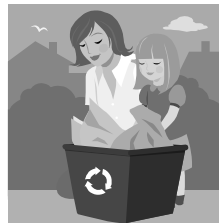


You can do a stewardship activity at your home or in your neighborhood. These projects can include starting a recycling program at your school, picking up litter in your neighborhood or putting up birdhouses around your yard. Visit the Environmental Protection Agency's website at www.epa.gov/pick5/ or www.epa.gov/kids to discover simple ways your family can help the environment or here are a few ideas to get you started.

- **Plant a vegetable or native wildflower garden**
Planting vegetables or native plants is a great way to help connect your family to the land. Growing our own food gives us an understanding of where our food comes from and native plants provide habitat for butterflies and critters. Several of the partner organizations sell native plants. For information on planting native gardens visit the Wildones at www.for-wild.org.
- **Become citizen scientists**
Help scientists collect valuable information about our bird populations. Participation in the Great Backyard Bird Count (www.birdsource.org/gbbc) during February or in the Christmas Bird Count (www.audubon.org/Bird/cbc/) is simple, educational and lots of fun.
- **Start a compost pile together**
Reduce your trash by starting a compost pile at your home. Visit How to Compost's website to get started at www.howtocompost.org.
- **Start recycling as a family**
If you live in Grand Rapids (GR) you can do this for free. Pick up your recycling bins at 201 Market Ave SW Monday - Friday. Recycling your cardboard, paper, glass and tin can reduce your garbage by 40% or more. Make this a challenge for your family. Not in GR, visit Kent County's website at www.accesskent.com and search for recycling options.
- **Plant a family rain garden**
Rain gardens capture and clean your storm water before it enters a storm water drain. Storm water drains, in most cases, into the nearest stream, polluting it with fertilizers, salts etc. You might also consider installing a rain barrel. For more information and step by step instructions visit www.raingardens.org.

Do you have a great idea of your own?

We want to know about them so we can share them with other families. Email your ideas to administrator@kentconservation.org. Each month we will post ideas from families like yours at www.kentconservation.org/families. So keep checking the webpage for new ideas to help make this world a better place!



Connecting Families with Nature Partners

For questions and stewardship opportunities contact one of the following partners:

Ada Township Parks

www.adatownshipmi.com
adaparks@ada.mi.us
(616) 676-0520

Blandford Nature Center

www.blandfordnaturecenter.org
info@blandfordnaturecenter.org
(616) 735-6240

Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve

www.calvin.edu/go/preserve
preserve@calvin.edu
(616) 526-7601

Howard Christensen Nature Center

www.kentconservation.org/hcnc
HCNC@kentconservation.org
(616) 675-3158

John Ball Zoo

www.johnballzoosociety.org
andy.mcintyre@kentcountymi.gov
(616) 336-4301

Wittenbach/Wege Agriscience and Environmental Center

www.lowellschools.com (click on Wittenbach-Wege Center)
mjohnson@lowellschools.com
(616) 987-1002