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## Green School Projects

### **Elementary**

Kindergarten students at Union Elementary School in Montpelier, VT noticed that the sun made the playground equipment too hot to play on. They learned about trees and shade and planted several to provide shade for their playground to keep the equipment cool.

Fourth grade students at Mount Desert Elementary in Mount Desert, ME realized that they did not know enough about where their food comes from. They wanted to provide healthy, locally grown food for the school lunch program. They visited nearby Beech Hill Farm to help harvest vegetables for the school lunch program. The students harvested carrots at the farm and then prepared them at school for a soup.

First graders in Weare, NH worked with a professor from New England College after they noticed the playground at their school was littered with trash. To combat this problem, they decided to educate the school community to be more environmentally responsible. The students designed posters, wrote letters, made presentations, performed a play, and monitored the playground appearance to let others know the proper way to dispose of trash.

At the Riverton School in Portland, ME, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students recognized the need for solid waste management. They discovered that they could recycle their school's food scraps by setting up a vermiculture (worm composting) bin. The composted material could be used in the raised beds outside the classroom. Gaining knowledge from other solid waste recycling programs in their community, the students also compared the rate of growth of plants in compost versus soil.

### **Middle**

Eighth graders at Pemetec Elementary School, in Southwest Harbor, ME sold compact fluorescent light bulbs as part of their energy unit in science class. The fundraiser was sponsored by Efficiency Maine, an energy saving program through the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Students educated community members about the advantages of CFL bulbs fundraising for the purchase of a solar panel for the school. Students also hosted a crepe breakfast to raise additional money for the solar panel and to inform their community about conserving energy. These projects were part of an academic unit on Energy Conservation.

Students at the junior high school, in Brunswick, ME saw a need to inform the student body about the amount of food waste in their cafeteria. They created signs educating students about the uses of food waste, built two bins for composting in the back of their school, and invited the students to take home free compost from the fruit/vegetable/bread compost.

A nationwide recall of school beef led eighth grade social studies students in Mount Desert, ME, to investigate cafeteria food standards and how they could be improved within their school. They worked with a food systems consultant to learn about food quality and processing. After surveying students, parents, and staff, the class created 'sustainable recipes' that reduced costs by using less beef purchased from small, local farms.

## **High**

A group of students at Mt. Abram High School in Strong, ME saw that the quality of their environmental studies program and the school's appearance would benefit from the addition of a greenhouse to their school. The students researched styles and costs of green houses, options for heating and siting, and began construction. At the conclusion of the project, they added a page to the school's web site so that other students could reference their work in the future.

Concerned about energy consumption, tenth graders at Harwood Union High School in South Duxbury, VT did an energy audit of their school. They discovered numerous ways in which their school could save money and reduce its carbon footprint. The students developed a plan and worked with local energy groups and the school board to implement the changes they identified as being beneficial.

A group of 10-12 grade students at Barnstable High School in Barnstable, MA decided to address the problem of their school's dependency on renewable resources by creating a school-wide paper-recycling program. The students also served as spokespeople for sustainable living, presenting their work to the entire school community.

Montpelier, VT high school students from an environmental applications class learned about solid waste issues and the effects of solid waste on social, ecological and economic systems. Students collected four weeks worth of junk mail from four buildings, weighed it and computed hauling and tipping costs. Through the investigation, they discovered a need for halting the delivery of junk mail to their school system. Students will be developing informational material to distribute to school district teachers and administrators to address this solid waste issue.