



## Earth Day Activities

Earth Day, April 22, is an opportunity to focus on protecting the Earth's resources. Celebrate Earth Day on April 22 by learning about natural resources and taking action to make a positive difference in your community. And, since every day is Earth Day, schools can use these activities throughout the school year to educate students and staff about conservation practices.

Visit <http://www.earthday.org/> or <http://www.epa.gov/earthday/> to learn more about Earth Day. Visit the [King County Green Schools](#) website for additional resources available from the program.

### Educational and promotional campaigns

- Make daily announcements during Earth Week.
  - Use [waste reduction and recycling facts and announcements](#) on the Green Schools Waste Reduction and Recycling page
  - Use energy conservation facts and announcements on the [Green Schools Energy Conservation Resources](#) page
  - Use water conservation facts and announcements on the [Green Schools Water Conservation Resources](#) page
- Conduct a campaign to encourage durable water bottles, waste free lunches, paper use reduction, or no-idling in the school parking lot. Find step-by-step "[Green Team Project Ideas](#)."
- Take a pledge. Student green teams, classrooms, or the entire school could sign a pledge to do one more action between April and June to reduce waste or recycle, conserve energy, or conserve water. Visit [Green Schools Energy Conservation Pledge](#) and <http://www.earthday.org/takeaction/>.
- Create posters or other visuals to educate others about how much water we use. Visit the [Green Schools Level Three – Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention](#) page. Get more ideas from "[The Hidden Water We Use](#)" by National Geographic.
- Teachers can use these elementary school activity guides in their classrooms: <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/elementaryschool/guides.asp>
- Ask students to share with their families the "[4-R](#)" survey about reducing, reusing, recycling and rethinking. On page two of the survey, there's a "Family Pledge." Visit the King County [Green Tips](#) page for additional resources.

- Show a video. Then lead a follow up discussion in class or during a student Green Team meeting that inspires students and staff to take action. Video suggestions:
  - [PBS Earth Day videos](#)
  - “Fun” movies
    - [WALL-E](#)
    - [The Lorax](#)
    - [Disneynature Earth](#)
    - [Disneynature Oceans](#)
  - Documentaries
    - [“What Happens to my Recyclables?”](#)
    - [“Be a Better Recycler”](#)
    - [The Story of Stuff](#)
    - [Chasing Ice](#)
    - [Waste Land](#)
    - [Garbage Island](#)
- Celebrate Earth Week with different themes each day, including
  - [Black Out Day](#) –Utilize daylight instead of turning on the lights and turn off electronic equipment when possible to conserve energy.
  - [White Out Day](#) – To reduce paper waste, select a day to avoid making copies or using paper.
  - [Waste Free Lunch Day](#) – Encourage students and staff to bring lunch in reusable containers and to minimize packaging waste.
  - [Water Appreciation Day](#) – Conserve water by turning off faucets when not in use. Students can write one thing they appreciate about water on paper water drops to add to a display in the lunchroom or a common area.
  - [Walk, Bike, or Carpool Day](#) – Reduce vehicle carbon emissions by encouraging staff, students, and parents to use alternative transportation options.
  - [Carbon Footprint Reduction Day](#) – Use an online tool to calculate carbon footprints and take at least one action to minimize your footprint. For footprint calculators, see the Green Schools Level Two resources page - [Energy Conservation Resources](#) - or visit <http://www.earthday.org/footprint-calculator> and <http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/>
- Explore [The Great Energy Challenge](#) by National Geographic
- Use Google Earth to explore earth-related topics: <http://www.google.com/landing/cop15/>
- To help students make the connection between their cafeteria sorting efforts and what happens to the food scraps and food soiled paper, place small plants potted with Cedar Grove compost on each lunch table and a sign that reads “this plant is growing in your recycled food scraps.” Give students raffle tickets when they bring a waste-free lunch, and then raffle the plants as prizes.

## **Educational field trips**

- **Cascade Recycling Center (Woodinville):** Visits include about 45 minutes in conference room to talk about recycling and to observe sorting activity on closed circuit television screens. At the end of the visit, participants watch sorting from the observation deck for about 5-10 minutes. Schedule a tour [online](#).
- **King County Cedar Hills Regional Landfill Tour (Maple Valley):** Schedule tours by calling 206-296-4466 or fill out an online form at <http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/about/tours.asp>
- **[King County South Wastewater Treatment Plant in Renton](#)** – Schedule a tour if school teams are interested in learning more about water quality.

## **Community and stewardship activities**

- Host a litter clean up. Increase awareness that littering harms the environment and our quality of life and that each person can make a difference in reducing littering. Visit the [King County Green Schools Program Litter Resources](#) web page. Take before and after photos, noting what students collected, including cans, plastic bags, wrappers, etc. Take photos of the quantity of bags to show the rest of the school. Ask students how the school could reduce waste and litter.
- Create a No Idling policy and encourage alternative transportation options. Help school staff, students, and parents reduce or eliminate modes of transportation that pollute the air, negatively affect human health, and increase carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Reduce impact on climate change by encouraging and facilitating alternative transportation such as walking, bicycling, using the school bus and public transportation, and carpooling. Visit the [King County Green Schools Program Transportation Resources](#) web page.
- Participate in a habitat restoration project. Remove invasive species and install native plantings on school grounds or volunteer with a local organization to help restore a community habitat site. Find volunteer opportunities throughout King County at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/stewardship/volunteer.aspx>.
- Stencil storm drains to protect our surface water from pollutants. Ask a basin steward about volunteer opportunities: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/watersheds/central-puget-sound.aspx>
- Hold a Swap Day using the King County Green Schools Program [Swap Day](#) guide. Collect books, school supplies, clothing, and athletic equipment that students and staff no longer need or want. One person's trash will be another person's treasure. Donate leftover items to a donation center such as Good Will, or ask your school's PTSA to host a family garage sale day.
- Take the [Cool School Challenge](#) to conserve energy and reduce your school's carbon emissions.

- Install a rain barrel or rain garden on school grounds to conserve water. Check to see if your school is part of the [Cascade Water Alliance](#).
- Create a worm bin and learn more about composting food scraps. To schedule a workshop, contact a King County Green Team Specialist at 206-583-0655 or [greenteam@triangleassociates.com](mailto:greenteam@triangleassociates.com).
- Plant a garden with native plants, vegetables, or flowers. For a list of Northwest native plants, visit <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/stewardship/nw-yard-and-garden.aspx>.

### **Competitions**

- Host a recycling “[quiz show](#)” during lunch or at an assembly to test students’ recycling knowledge. Here’s a King County [quiz show](#) guide that includes energy and water conservation questions.
- Hold a waste-free lunch day. Visit <http://wastefreelunches.org/> for resources. Weigh the waste from each lunch period or determine which lunch period has least contamination on a day before Earth Day. Then, promote the Waste Free Lunch and weigh the waste or measure contamination on Earth Day to compare and see how little waste or contamination the school can generate. Your school can continue a waste-free day each week for the remainder of the school year, and you can track your progress.
- Hold a competition between schools in one school district, between grade levels, or between two or more lunch periods in the same school to see which group can generate the least amount of garbage (per person/student) in cafeteria . The winning group earns a waste-free prize such as listening to music during lunch, watching a video, a teacher wearing a silly outfit, lunch outside, or another waste free prize.
- Host a “trash fashion show.” Students at one high school made some incredible clothing from recycled or disposable materials. Give out prizes.
- Post trivia questions (perhaps one to three questions), and invite students to write down their answers and place them in a box. The drawn entry with correct answer(s) wins a prize like a recycled notepad or reusable water bottle.
- Hold an art contest or exhibition using all repurposed or recycled materials. Collect bottle caps to create murals for hallways or garden spaces.

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