

## Community Focus Statement D: Preserve the unique natural environment.

**Action Statement D.1: Coordinate with the local schools and other youth organizations to develop a program focused on educating children regarding the natural environment and its protection.**



**Benchmark:** Partnerships established to develop educational programs that focus on protecting the natural environment and how to become better citizens and stewards of natural resources.

**Champion:** Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

**Estimated Cost:** \$500–\$1,500 per school



*Eco-Schools USA engages school communities from coast to coast and from cities to rural communities in creating and implementing healthy solutions for sustainable education. Photo source: National Wildlife Federation.*

Schools in mountain areas can be effective incubators because students can learn at an early age about their connection to nature and can engage with the environment throughout their education. The Rim of the World Unified School District and the mountain communities are dedicated to ensuring that each child achieves individual excellence by engaging all children in meaningful programs. These programs meet the highest educational and ethical standards in a caring and collaborative learning environment. Other youth organizations, including the Rim Communities for Youth Coalition, also promote positive choices in the communities. Educational programs that are focused on protecting the natural environment, and how to become better citizens through the communities' stewardship of natural resources, could make a remarkable difference on the impact on the environment. These programs could be interwoven with the environmental science curriculum at local schools or

provide tools and ideas to begin green practices at school, home, work, or any other place. Sustainability activities often include the following:

- Provide outdoor learning opportunities to explore the nature resources in the community.
- Engage in eco-literacy, viewing the community as an ecosystem and understanding the relationships and processes necessary to support a healthy environment.
- Identify various forms of natural resources and show how different forms can change over time and climate.
- Cultivate a community garden with native plant species.
- Promote recycling and composting programs.

By adding sustainability activities and showcasing them in Charles Hoffman Elementary School, in other youth organizations and youth groups, and in the community, the Hilltop communities can lay a solid foundation for the next generation of sustainability leaders.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Create a Natural Reserve Committee of interested individuals.	Champion	Month 1	Rim of the World Unified School District
2. Work with school communities to determine environmental learning opportunities.	Committee	Month 2 – 4	<a href="http://www.rimspd.k12.ca.us/">http://www.rimspd.k12.ca.us/</a>
3. Appoint a green ambassador such as an administrator or a teacher to start an educational program, lead school efforts, and get students involved in making schools and communities greener.	Committee and Rim of the World Unified School District, Charles Hoffman Elementary School, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Preschool, Pali Institute	Months 2 – 4	Project Learning Tree, Curriculum Overview <a href="https://www.plt.org/environmental-education-curriculum">https://www.plt.org/environmental-education-curriculum</a>
4. Brainstorm with students, administrators, and the school community on a list of organizations and government agencies that could serve as resources to the school programs. Reach out to the California Environmental Protection Agency, local groups, and other organizations and agencies to give students access to the professional expertise of a forester and related occupations and education opportunities.	Committee with support from Rim of the World Unified School District, Charles Hoffman Elementary School, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Preschool, Pali Institute, with support from California Environmental Protection Agency, other organizations and agencies	Month 4 – 5	Rebuilding Together Mountain Communities <a href="http://rebuildingtogethermountaincommunities.org/">http://rebuildingtogethermountaincommunities.org/</a>  National Wildlife Federation, Eco-Schools USA <a href="http://www.nwf.org/Eco-Schools-USA/Top-10-Eco-Schools.aspx">http://www.nwf.org/Eco-Schools-USA/Top-10-Eco-Schools.aspx</a>
5. Help build a community of environmentally conscious citizens through classroom activities, field studies, community gardens, recycling, composting, Eco literacy, and green practice.	Committee with support from schools.	Months 4 – 6	
6. Encourage green ambassadors and student leads to attend leadership training provided by the Alliance for Climate Education and related training opportunities.	Committee with support from schools	Months 4 – 6, on-going	
7. Continue to get community members engaged, active, and involved in efforts to save energy in their schools, homes, businesses, and the broader community.	Committee	On-going	