



PROTECT THE PLANET

Suggestions on Service and Community Outreach
Related to Conservation and Protection of Water



Prevent Water Pollution – Improve Water Quality – Conserve Water and Protect its Sources

Start simple. Start small. Take action & inspire.

This guidance document suggests service and community outreach activities aimed at preventing water pollution, improving water quality, and protecting the ecosystem. The underlying five-stage plan is to:

1. Undertake feasible action(s)
2. Evaluate outcomes
3. Present/share and inspire
4. Continue the same service action(s) into the future
5. Undertake the next service when ready

It all adds up! As Mother Teresa said, “We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.”

Suggested list of service activities concerning protection and conservation of water, benefits derived from the performed actions and necessary implementation methods for executing a successful action:

Service Actions	Benefits	Implementation Approach
<p>Surface water (river, stream, lake, wetlands) cleanups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces or eliminates trash and litter (also referred to as “dry solid waste”) from the cleanup area • Helps improve and maintain the water quality • Protects the health of surface water resources and all who depend on it, including aquatic plant and animal species • Restores scenic beauty 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify grassroots organisations or townships hosting any cleanup events and coordinate participation for your group 2. In the absence of an organised cleanup event by others, identify the cleanup site (affected area) and organise the event for your group and if feasible, publicise the event to the community at large 3. Prior to organising a cleanup event, find out about local directives, laws and regulations, and contact appropriate authorities (townships/boroughs/localities) to determine necessary approvals/permissions (if any) 4. Keep track of collected waste (plastic, glass, scrap metals, tires and other debris) and take photos during the cleanup for reporting and evaluation, and for assessment of the service for future consideration or planning purposes 5. Follow proper waste disposal practice for collected waste (recycling and trash)

<p>Beach cleanup or scavenger hunt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above 	<p>1. Follow above steps #1–5 Alternatively, organise a beach cleanup or scavenger hunt in your locality. This can be organised for kids or adults. You will need to pick an area of the beach and mark it. Have a list of scavenger hunt items that can be gathered from beach trash (e.g. plastic bottles, plastic bags, spoons, etc.). Arrange for proper recycling and waste disposal http://www.mykidsadventures.com/cleanup-scavenger-hunt/</p>
<p>Local park/area cleanup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents litter from entering into the storm drains and nearest body of water • Beautifies neighbourhood • Protects the environmental health of surface water resources in the watershed 	<p>1. Follow above steps #1–5 <u>Additional service:</u> Contact township for permission to paint signs that remind people not to dump rubbish into the storm drains, because they transfer rainwater directly to a stream or river</p>
<p>Proper disposal of unused prescription and over-the-counter medications (take-back initiative)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces the risk of inappropriate use of pharmaceutical products and prevents contamination of our water supply and potentially harming aquatic life 	<p>1. Educate community and organisation members/work colleagues/school community on safe disposal of unused and expired medicines</p> <p>It is important to remember that medication products should never be poured down the sink, flushed down the toilet or thrown in the trash because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they get into the ground or surface water system, they can contaminate the environment • If flushed down the toilet or drain, they may kill bacteria or produce drug-resistant bacteria in sewage treatment plants and septic systems as a result of long-term exposure to low levels of antibiotics
<p>Installation of rain garden</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces stormwater runoff and flooding, reduces water pollution, and helps recharge groundwater 	<p>1. Help create a rain garden in the community participate in an event hosted by others or organise one where your group as well as the public can participate (check local ordinance or needs for necessary approvals prior to planning)</p>
<p>Installation of rain barrel: Rainwater harvesting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces stormwater runoff, reduces water pollution, and helps recharge groundwater 	<p>1. Help install a rain barrel at your group or family members' or neighbours' yards to harvest water for outdoor uses, such as watering a garden, bathing pets, recharging groundwater, etc.</p>

<p>Planting native vegetation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shrubs and trees on river or stream banks • Beach grass on beaches or dunes • Shrubs and trees anywhere in the community (school, park, spiritual centre, sidewalk/roadside, central reservation), where permitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Planting in general:</u> helps preserve and provide natural habitats and food for local and migratory birds, beneficial insects and other animals; absorbs carbon from the atmosphere and releases oxygen; provides shade and a cooler environment • <u>Planting shrubs and trees on river or stream banks:</u> in addition to the above, protects banks from erosion and the waterways from sedimentation and provides food for aquatic life and structure to streams/ivers • <u>Planting vegetation (beach grass) on beaches or dunes:</u> in addition to the above, helps stabilise existing dunes or build new dunes, where dunes act as wind breakers and natural barriers from coastal surge preventing erosion and flooding, and enhances aesthetics, wildlife habitat and foraging area for migratory birds 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify grassroots organisations or townships hosting a planting event and coordinate participation for your group 2. In the absence of an organised planting event by others, identify planting site and plan to organise the event for your group and if feasible, publicise the event to the community at large 3. Prior to organising a planting event, find out about local directives, laws and regulations, and contact appropriate authorities (townships/boroughs/localities) to determine necessary approvals/permissions (if any) 4. Take photos before, during and after planting for reporting and assessment of the service activity for future consideration or planning purposes 5. Perform post-planting follow-ups of your planting site and further volunteer for watering and maintenance activities, as needed
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Notes:

- **Community involvement.** Local civic groups, environmental organisations, township, or environmental commissions conduct above-mentioned environmental service activities throughout the year. Centres/groups/individuals may coordinate a group service activity by contacting the local community or environmental organisations for logistical planning and **either organise the environmental service event for the group and public, or join the one hosted by others.**
- **Participate** in citizen scientists programme or similar, involving water quality monitoring effort that aims to assess and monitor the health of rivers and streams in a watershed. Such programmes are likely run by grassroot organisations, townships or regional government environmental agencies.

Other suggested activities to engage the public:

Community Outreach Activities	Implementation Approach
<p>Awareness Campaign</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop an awareness programme/campaign on: the significance of water, the need to be aware of conserving water and preventing water pollution, and the practical ways to reduce water usage. ● Promote awareness and education through a public event (for example, Walk for Values walkathon¹) or by organising an environmental festival. Invite other centres/groups/neighbourhoods to attend or participate. Demonstrations at the public event could likely include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do it yourself (DIY) workshop on creating environmentally-friendly household cleaning products ● Exhibition to raise awareness, including an awareness poster-board, such as posters on previously conducted or ongoing environmental service activities, etc. ● Play or skit, talk/workshop/panel discussion, games, quiz, video presentation, etc.
<p>Advocacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote advocacy/legislation on water pollution prevention or regulating use/enforcing waste segregation and management, or write to your local elected officials on community issues concerning drinking water quality and water pollution/impairment

¹1. Information available at: <https://saicouncil.org.my/youth/walk-for-values/>

Illustrations of relevant service activities performed around the world by Sathya Sai International Organisation members:



Below is a list of pages with details on various service activities concerning conservation and protection of water that have been conducted across the globe.

- [Shoreline cleanup in Canada](#)
- [River cleanup in Maryland, USA](#)
- [Restoring a river in Germany](#)
- [Tree planting in multiple schools in New Jersey, USA](#)
- [Local park/area cleanup and tree planting in Canada](#)
- [Park serve day in Massachusetts, USA](#)
- [Stream cleanup in Tennessee, USA](#)
- [Sri Sathya Sai community drinking water projects in multiple villages in Nepal](#)
- [Water filtration system for villages in India](#)
- [Drinking water filtration \(defluorination\) plants in Andhra Pradesh, India](#)
- [Drinking water projects in tribal hamlets in Andhra Pradesh, India](#)
- [Various tree planting and local area cleanup services in the USA](#)



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