



Island STYLE



Environmental Action Projects



SUBJECT:

Interdisciplinary

GRADE LEVEL:

6th

TIMEFRAME:

45 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Access to technology
- Poster Supplies



ACTIVITY SUMMARY:

The students will design, create, and implement their own Environmental Action Projects that will provide a solution to their Driving Questions by using the information, tools, resources, and data gained through the Student-Selected Adventure.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will bring their projects from the ideas stage to the implementation stage
- Students will practice project management skills
- Students will increase their knowledge of existing environmental issues and will work towards developing/implementing solutions to these issues
- Students will connect with Exceptional Experts and stakeholders, utilize real data, and create a project that intrinsically create lasting positive changes in the environment

ALIGNMENT:

Ocean Literacy Principles

- 1 Earth has one big ocean with many features.
- 2 The ocean and life in the ocean shape the features of Earth.
- 3 The ocean is a major influence on weather and climate.
- 4 The ocean makes Earth habitable.
- 5 The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.
- 6 The ocean and humans are inextricably interconnected.
- 7 The ocean is largely unexplored.

VOCABULARY:

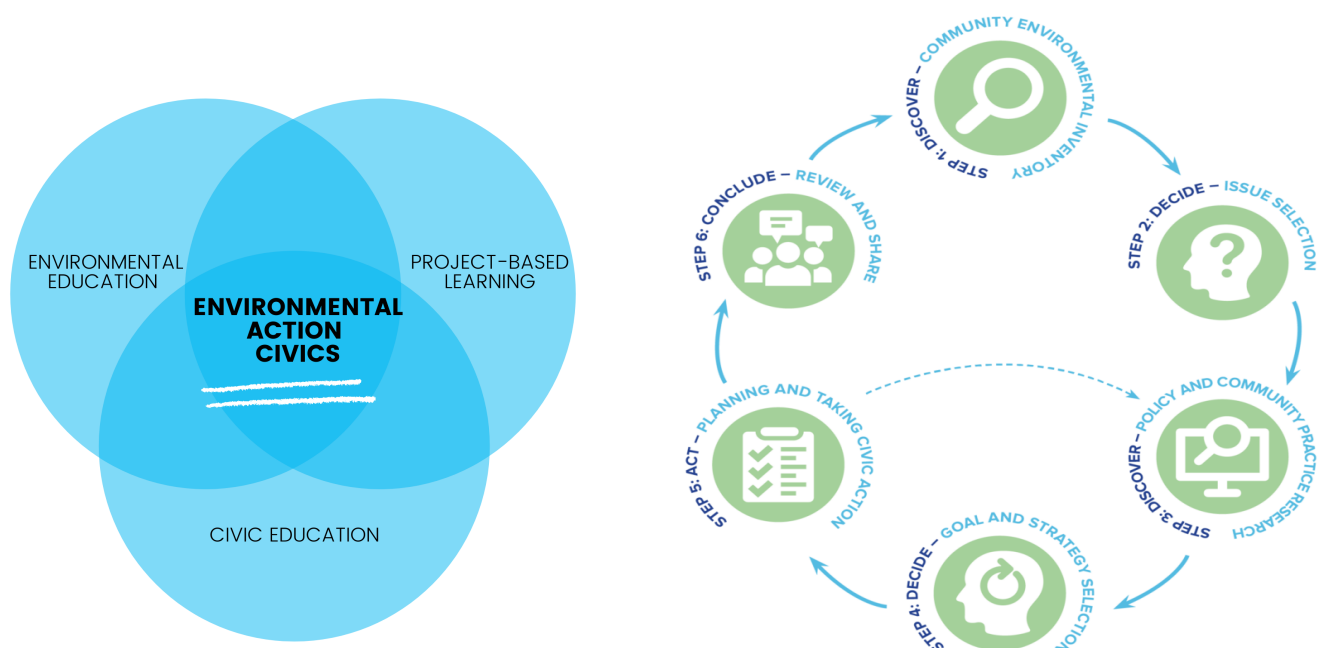
- **Environmental Action Civics** - An educational approach where youth work in partnership with adults to identify a local environmental issue and engage with community members to take action by advocating for systemic changes to policies/practices
- **Environmental Action Project** - Is a project that addresses the root cause or problem of a community issue, and has a long-term impact; example - implementing a permanent recycling process on a school campus
- **Service Project** - A project that addresses an immediate, short-term need in the community; example - volunteering time to clean up litter from the beach

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The culmination of the Island STYLE curriculum is for students to implement an environmental action project that will provide a solution to their driving question using information gained during the student adventure. This will look different for each class based on their driving question and their choice of student adventure. A **service project** is a project that address an immediate, short-term need in the community and can include volunteering time to clean litter off the beach. An **environmental action project** is a project that addresses the root cause or problem of a community issue, and has a long-term impact.

Environmental Action Projects can take many forms and may fall into the following types:

- **Restoration or Protection:** actions that assist in the recovery or preservation of a watershed or related ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. Examples include: plant or restore protective vegetation/trees; restore a local habitat; remove invasive plants; develop a school garden, natural history area, community garden, or other sustainable green space; install rain gardens to help manage stormwater.
- **Everyday Choices:** actions that reduce human impacts on watersheds and related ecosystems and offer ways to live more sustainably. Examples include: refuse/reduce/reuse/recycle; monitor and save water in the face of potential drought or reduction in water availability; compost food or yard waste; research and implement energy efficient strategies or energy alternatives at school and/or at home.
- **Community Engagement:** actions that inform others about how to address community-level environmental issues. Examples include: give presentations to local organizations; organize community events; record or broadcast public service announcements; share information on social media; post flyers in community; share posters at community events/fairs/festivals; mentoring.
- **Civic Engagement:** actions that identify and address issues of public concern. Students acting alone or together to protect societal values or make a change or difference in a student's school, neighborhood, or community. Examples include: present to school principal or school board; attend, speak, or present at town meetings; write to local or state decision makers or elected officials.



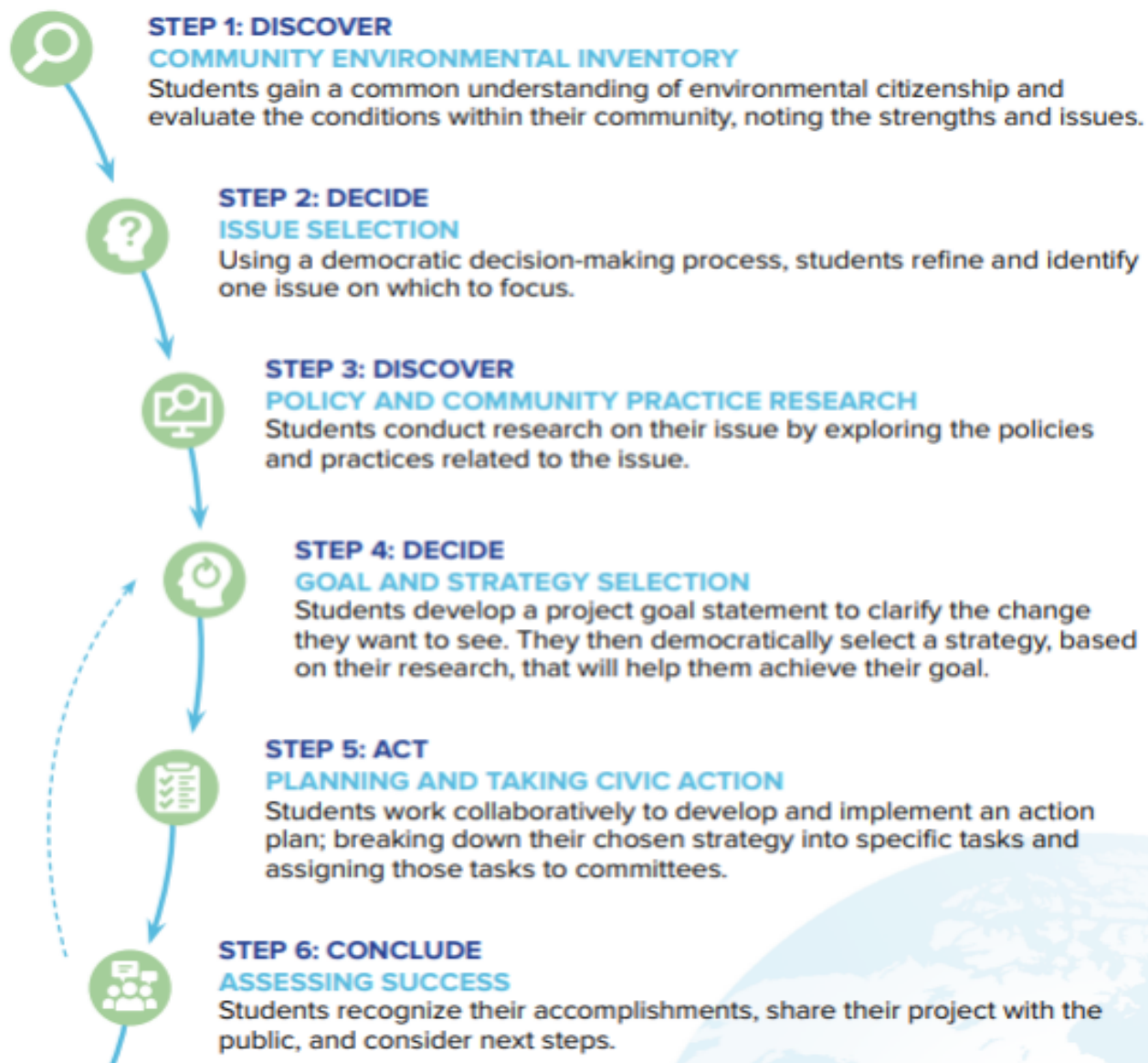
PREPARATION:

Print attached worksheets and be prepared to help prompt Environmental Action Project ideas and/or steer the students in the right direction.

INTRODUCTION:

EARTHFORCE

- A local nonprofit organization whose mission is to “engage young people as active citizens who improve the environment and their communities now and in the future.”
- Environmental Action Civics is an approach to teaching that helps young people learn by connecting their lessons to their own experiences and communities, and by practicing the skills and dispositions of citizenship.”



GUIDED PRACTICE:

You can support students in brainstorming action ideas and then choosing a single project to carry out as a class or small group in many different ways. These instructions describe one way of how you might transition from the “Moving from Claims” to “Informed Action” worksheet with the “Choosing an Action Project” worksheet. Adapt and create alternatives that meet your class’s needs.

1. Using the “Moving from Claims to Informed Action” worksheet provides space for students to brainstorm possible solutions to their environmental issue. The prompts on the left-most column can be helpful in flushing out concepts. This can be done individually or in pairs, and ideally students come up with at least three distinct ideas. Encourage innovative and divergent thinking.
2. Organize students into five small groups to discuss and debate their ideas. The focus is now on convergent thinking. Task them with developing a single idea they would want to carry out in order to take action on the issue. By the end, they should have a succinct one-sentence description of their action project idea.
3. Using the Choosing an Action Project worksheet, each of the five groups will briefly pitch their idea to the whole class. Each idea is written into one of the boxes of the grid.
4. Introduce the concept of criteria, or a set of “standards” on which decisions are based, in order to make a decision about which project to move forward with. The class will use these standards to narrow down the options and arrive at a final selection. It can help for there to be teacher-created criteria as well as student-created criteria. Examples of teacher-created criteria may include restrictions around timing (e.g., the project must be completed in two class periods) or funding (e.g., the project must cost less than \$50). Encourage students to think about what they value most when they create criteria. Examples of student-created criteria may be around impact (e.g., will this make substantial change in our community) or interest (e.g., will this project be fun to work on). Add the criteria into the boxes in the left-most column of the grid.
5. Finally, engage the class in voting on the action project ideas listed at the top against the criteria that were written along the side. This can be done as a large class discussion or students can vote individually by placing dot stickers or check marks in the appropriate boxes. Tally the results. One strategy may stand out as the clear winner. If one does not emerge naturally, students may need to establish additional criteria or use a different kind of voting technique to come to consensus. Or perhaps, students can brainstorm a way to merge the ideas and execute aspects of both.



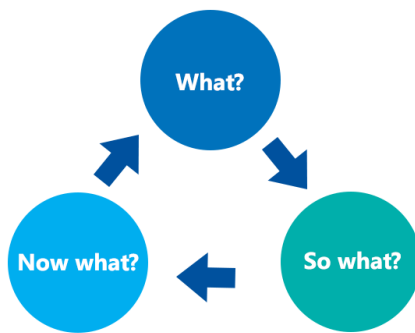
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:



Austin Campus Environmental Action Conference

At the end of the school year, the students will present their Environmental Action Projects at Environmental Action Conference. Their presentation might look like a tri fold poster that teaches us about their Driving Questions, their Student-Selected Adventures, and the outcomes of their Environmental Action Project through text, pictures, and artifacts. It could even include a multimedia presentation. Stakeholders in GISD, our partner programs, and the Exceptional Experts utilized in each project will be invited.

CLOSING:



After the students have designed, created, and implemented their Environmental Action Projects AND have presented at the Environmental Action Conference, allow for some final reflection time for your students to think back on their entire Island STYLE experience throughout this past school year.

Use the “What? So What? Now What” debrief method. Suggested questions below.

- What are some things that we learned over the first semester?
 - (Content from the various interdisciplinary classroom lessons)
- What did you find interesting from those lessons?
- How did those interests lead to your Driving Question?
- So, what did we do with the Driving Question? How did we answer it?
- What Student-Selected Adventure did we go on? What did we learn?
- So, what did we do with that information? What Environmental Action Project did we create?
- What issue did it address?
- What were the results from that?
- So, now what should we do?
- How do we sustain the solution to this issue?

NOTES:

To print these worksheets or work with an online fillable version please go to:

https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/8_NOAA_BWET_MWEE_Environmental_Action_Planning.pdf

For ideas on what other schools have done for their environmental action projects, go to <https://www.baybackpack.com/>

To learn more about Earth Force please go to: <https://earthforceresources.org>

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

ASKING FOR HELP: *LISTING CONTACTS*

Name: _____ Class: _____

Who can help you make your action project a success? You may need to ask for permission to do something, find an expert to help with a specific task, or recruit volunteers from your community or school to help make your project a reality.

Use this first page to list all the people or groups you should contact about your action project. Then use the second page to draft your requests for help. You'll complete the second page for each person or group, so make sure to make enough blank copies before filling in the questions.

	Person/Group	Why do you need their help? (Are you asking for permission? To borrow equipment? For their time and expertise?) Be as specific as possible.
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		



MOVING FROM CLAIMS TO INFORMED ACTION

Name: _____ Class: _____

Claim

.....

Question	Solution #1	Solution #2	Solution #3
What action could be taken to address the environmental issue?			
How would this action help to address the issue?			
What resources would you need to make it happen?			

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

ASKING FOR HELP: *DRAFTING A REQUEST*

Name: _____ Class: _____

Use this page to draft your request for help. Complete this page for each person or group you plan to contact so you can personalize their message and be specific about what you need from them.

Person or Group: _____

Tell them about your project. What problem or issue will it address? Make this personal and connect their values to this project— **why should they want to help?**

What else can you share to get them interested and motivated to help? Think about pictures, videos, news stories, etc., that would connect to their values.



CHOOSING AN ACTION PROJECT

Group/Class: _____

ACTION PROJECT IDEAS

	Idea #1	Idea #2	Idea #3	Idea #4	Idea #5
Criteria #1					
Criteria #2					
Criteria #3					

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

DRAFTING A REQUEST CONTINUED

Name: _____ **Class:** _____

Why do you need their help? Be as specific as possible (copied and expanded from the table on the previous page).

What are the logistics? Do you need help on a specific day or do you need them to complete something by a specific date? If they are helping on site, tell them the exact times that you would need help and how they should dress. If they are loaning you equipment or signing a permission slip, tell them when and how to deliver these items.

What is the best way to communicate with this person or group (email, phone call, letter)? Include your contact information so they can respond easily and follow up with additional questions.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

MAINTENANCE

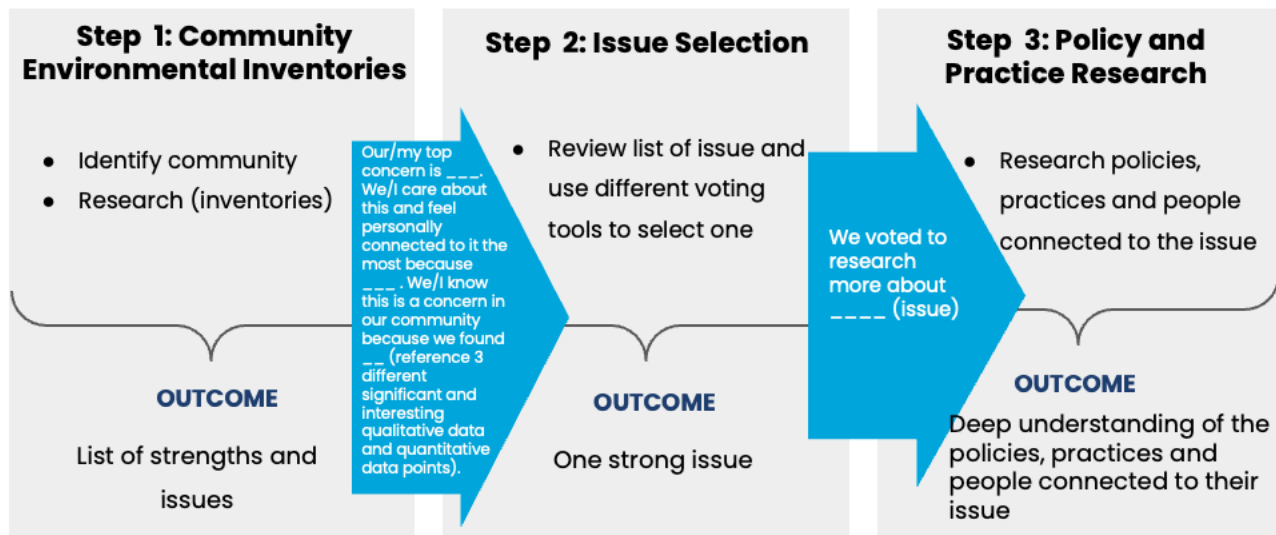
Name: _____ Class: _____

Many action projects are not one-and-done deals—they require someone to take care of them for years to come. Use the maintenance table to plan out what needs to happen for the next couple years to keep this project a success. Add additional pages of detailed task instructions or contact information if needed.

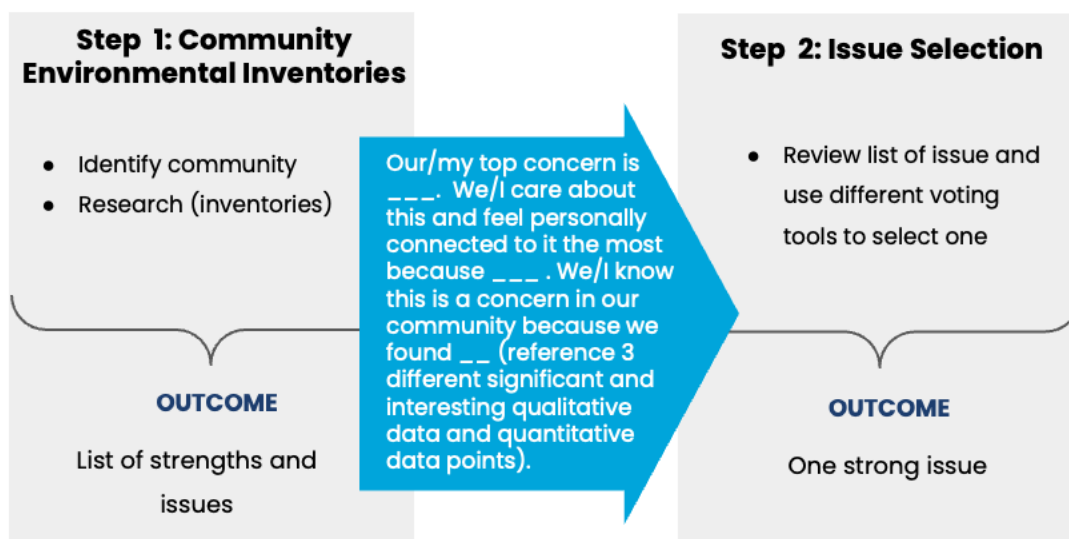
Maintenance Manager: Who will be in charge of this maintenance schedule? Make plans for at least the first year of maintenance. Will it be a student (one of you?), a teacher/staff, a class, or a club?

Maintenance Task	How often? (weekly, monthly, seasonal, etc.)

Step 1 and Step 2 (connection to Step 3)



Recapping Step 1 and Step 2



STEP 3:

- Define new concepts - policies, practices, and stakeholders
- Dig deeper - research policies, practices, and people connected to the issue
- Reach out - connect with the people who are directly connected to the issue

BUDGET

Class: _____

What is your budget? Do you need to raise money or look for donations? List all the supplies and equipment you will need to complete your action project.

[illegible]



GUEST SPEAKERS AND EXPERT VOLUNTEERS

Inviting someone to speak to your group can be a great alternative to an interview or survey. If looking to include multiple perspectives at once, consider a panel or World Cafe set up. Need help finding perspectives? See [TIP Card 16 Identifying Stakeholders & Beginning Questions](#).

Whenever you invite someone to visit your group, consider the following:

PLAN AHEAD

Book your speaker in advance. Choose several possible dates to propose to the speaker or expert volunteer. As you call potential guests and volunteers, explain the purpose for their visit and what you're hoping to learn from them. The more information they have ahead of time the better they can prepare.

CALL TO CONFIRM

Call a few days before the visit to confirm that the guest is coming. Find out if the speaker needs any special materials or equipment (AV hook-up is a big one!)

MAKE SURE YOUR GROUP IS PREPARED

Know what you want to learn from the guest. Prepare questions in advance. If there are any activities or project ideas you're wanting their advice on, make sure everything is good to go.

ASSIGN ROLES

Have someone greet the guest. Designate someone to introduce the speaker. (Make sure this person knows the speaker's background.) Someone also needs to moderate the discussion and thank the speaker at the end.

HAVE A VARIETY OF VIEWPOINTS REPRESENTED

If you are having a panel or World Cafe style discussion, different people usually speak on the same topic or issue. Find out the opinions and expertise of the guests ahead of time so you can make sure there are a variety of ideas presented. **Professionals are used to debating and discussing different points of view. This is a great opportunity to learn from them!**

SEND A THANK-YOU NOTE

Thank your guests for their time either with a written thank-you note or a thank-you email within a day or two of their visit. See [TIP Card 31 on Writing Thank-You Notes](#) for more information.

TASK MANAGEMENT

Class: _____

List out the major tasks, in order, that need to happen to complete your action project. Start with the planning and go through completion. Decide when each task needs to be completed for the project to keep moving forward. Assign one or two people to each task. The Task Manager(s) is in charge of making sure their assigned task has happened by the completion date and for sharing updates back to the group or class.