SECTION 1
To The Teacher

Rally Round!
INTRODUCTION

Teachers and students all over Virginia are becoming involved in caring for Virginia's environment. Rally Round! tells how to do it. In this publication you will find information about types of projects, step-by-step instructions from planning through closure, resources readily available to teachers, ways to make your students' efforts a recognized part of a statewide project, and much, much more.

Upper elementary and middle school students often feel strongly about environmental issues, but lack the skills and information necessary to take responsible and appropriate action. Rally Round! is a tool for teachers and students grades 4-7 to use in channeling this interest and enthusiasm into productive learning experiences which result in positive environmental outcomes. Rally Round! projects provide a structured approach to open-ended problem solving; teachers serve as facilitators and advisors and students have a real world experience in defining and addressing problems.

Most Rally Round! activities will take between one and three months to complete, but time frames will vary with individual project plans. Bay Team teachers are available for consultation throughout the school year; and upon receipt of documentation of successful completion of project activities they will provide recognition for classes in the form of a Bay Team membership award.

Through this project, teachers and students become part of Virginia's growing network of people who are making a difference. Interested educators apply for the program through the Virginia Bay Team at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Services and support are available for both informal and formal education groups. Organizations such as Scouts and ecology clubs are encouraged to apply. Groups accepted into the program receive a copy of the handbook, an on-site training seminar, an introductory lesson taught by the Bay Team, and advisory support services. Supplemental inservice training workshops are available on request.

To rally is to call to action; Rally Round! is a gathering together of a community of students to work for a common cause. The bicycle motif you see throughout this book was derived from a different kind of rally, a bicycle race in which participants may follow varying routes to a common destination. We hope both definitions of rally will inspire you as you plan and execute your projects.
THE TEACHER AS TEAM LEADER:
Rallying Classroom Groups to Action

Teamwork! It's not just for the athletic field — it's the key to a successful environmental action project. Like a coach, the classroom teacher must be a model, a guide, and a counselor for students as they learn to work together to accomplish a common goal.

When students share responsibility for organizing and conducting a project, they begin to develop skills and behaviors which are used not only in team sports, but by scientists, architects, engineers, and many other adults on the job. Students on a project team must communicate ideas, consider options, plan ahead, coordinate actions, anticipate problems, and evaluate results. They apply information and strengthen skills learned in English, social studies, math, and science classes. Team members will also disagree with each other on occasion, and must learn the art of compromise.

As team leader, the teacher has the responsibility of organizing and controlling all of this activity so that it leads students toward achievement of their project goal. The teacher is responsible for safety procedures, any insurance or liability arrangements, and ensuring that projects conform to school policy.

Once the class has decided what their project will be, the teacher should guide the students in the development of a work schedule and a timeline for the project. Using the work schedule as a guide, the class can be subdivided into workgroups, each responsible for a part of the project work. The teacher’s knowledge of each student’s personality, learning style, and preferences will be invaluable in organizing a classroom full of eager (or not-so-eager) workers into smoothly functioning workgroups.

After the workgroups are established, the teacher must direct and supervise their work, or arrange for other adults to be in charge. Unless the students are very young or have no experience in doing projects, the adults should avoid giving directions which are so structured that the students are merely following a set of “cookbook” instructions. Much of the learning that takes place in this type of activity, as well as the students’ sense of ownership and pride, results from the fact that they did a lot of the work on their own. However, they will need guidance from the teacher as their plans emerge, and all activities must be approved in advance by the teacher or other adults in charge.
Among the challenges a teacher faces when managing small group work is making sure that the work is divided fairly and appropriately among the group members, and that all students are contributing to the group effort. Some students will always do more than others; however, no student should sit back and let other people do all the work. Nor should an over-zealous student be allowed to take over and run the show without allowing others an opportunity to participate.

The teacher will need to schedule class meetings at critical points so that each workgroup can report to the other workgroups what has been accomplished.

Students' roles should be so clearly defined that they each know their responsibilities, how to start, and when to complete their work. Individuals in each team should be given role assignments, and clear, written directions defining their job, and deadlines. This information should be sent home to the students' parents so there is communication about what is expected. Parents should also receive information about the academic aspects of projects, such as competency and skill applications in English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

**Workgroup Assignments**

These roles are broadly defined so that they can be adapted for a variety of project plans. In making Workgroup assignments, consider in particular the needs of differently-abled students. The wide variety of tasks and roles available should provide all students with opportunities to do their best work.

**Workgroup Chairperson**

This person is responsible for coordinating the Workgroup so that the job gets done. This student conducts workgroup meetings, makes work assignments (with teacher's help), and makes sure all workgroup members understand their assignments and deadlines. This student will be the teacher's contact person, and will communicate information between the teacher and workgroup members. This student should get along well with people, be a good communicator, and be organized.

**Record Keeper/Reporter**

This person is in charge of all written information, including minutes of Workgroup meetings, letters, reports to the class, etc. This student should be skilled in written expression, and can also be responsible for giving oral progress reports to the entire class.
**Materials and Supply Manager**

With input from other workgroup members, this student is responsible for developing a list of the materials and supplies which will be needed for the workgroup’s assignment. This student will take the necessary steps to obtain the materials and supplies, and be responsible for keeping track of loaned and donated items. Two students may share this role, if there is enough work for both, and all workgroup members will need to pitch in and help provide the needed materials. For example, if the workgroup is in charge of preparing a school site for a butterfly garden, the materials manager would discuss with the workgroup what garden tools are needed, and whether they can be borrowed from parents, the school, or the local garden supply store. During the project, the materials manager keeps track of the tools and, with the teacher’s guidance, makes sure they are used and cared for properly. Once the project is complete, the materials manager collects the equipment, and makes sure everything is returned to its owner in good condition.

**Technician**

These students will be in charge of particular details which require specific skills and talents. For example, in an advertising or public relations workgroup, a student who has artistic talent could be the technician in charge of the design of posters or flyers. A student with computer skills could be in charge of word processing to assist the record keeper with minutes, letters, and reports. Technicians may also be in charge of a variety of tasks, serving as helpers in whatever type of work the workgroup undertakes.
Life presents everyone with a series of projects, major and minor: from small daily projects like meal planning and preparation to major projects like buying a house or managing a sales campaign. Adults routinely define goals, prepare schedules, coordinate with others, evaluate options, implement procedures, and evaluate outcomes. We usually know both the goals and the performance standards associated with the project’s successful discharge. School projects help teach skills that students will need to manage life’s projects. Assessment techniques for student projects should focus on and contribute to these skills.

Environmental action projects are by their nature “authentic,” that is, they deal with real and realistic situations, and apply content and skills which are actually useful in the real world. Authentic assessment presents some unique challenges, but has the advantage of enabling students to take an active part in shaping their own learning. Portfolios are popular tools for assessing authentic learning situations because they provide a comprehensive view of students’ progress in integrating skills and content in personally meaningful ways. The project portfolio allows students to take charge of the setting for their learning, and then to present their work within its own unique context.

**Project Portfolio Guidelines:**

The objective of a project portfolio is to provide an evidential record of students’ use of skills and information within the pursuit of the project’s goals. Teachers who use project portfolios for evaluation typically adjust specifications to meet their individual needs. Factors such as time frame, compatibility with other aspects of the curriculum, existing team and school evaluation practices, and student readiness for independent and cooperative group work will all influence how portfolio requirements are developed. Portfolios may be developed by individual students or by workgroups.

1. **Introducing Portfolios**

Introduce the concept of maintaining a portfolio as a record of student achievement and a demonstration that students can use information and resources to achieve identified objectives. Solicit students’ input on what things would best provide evidence of what the student knows and is able to do. Suggestions might include a statement of reason for the project, a statement of goals, lists of resources available to the class, project plans and schedules, summary of options considered, a project
journal, snapshots, drawings, charts and graphs, lists of certainties and uncertainties as the project develops, explanation of importance of certain items, copies of letters sent. Decide: does it have to be in ink? have a cover? a table of contents?

2. Defining Portfolio Contents
Decide exactly what records each student has to keep, and in what form you want them kept. Although projects may differ, and individual students may be doing different things, some consistency of format will be helpful. Decide how much material you want in the portfolio; selecting material gives students the opportunity to conceptualize contents, critically evaluate individual entries for applicability, and otherwise synthesize what they want to communicate.

3. Guiding Portfolio Development
Provide students with a list of the basic specifications and time frames for due dates, interim, and final portfolio presentations.

As project planning begins, help groups identify what they will actually need to do. Through class and group discussion identify the standards of excellence associated with project tasks. Use examples of excellence (exemplars) to determine standards. Talk about what project materials students might choose to include in their portfolios to show that they have used the standards effectively.

4. Interim Portfolio Review
Conduct a preliminary review and discussion of portfolios well before projects are completed. Compare materials presented with standards developed by the class. Analyze tasks to determine what needs to be done and what the differences between doing those things well and poorly might be. Try to catch students doing things right.

5. Final Portfolio Review
Require that students turn in, along with their portfolios, an overall essay or notes attached to individual portfolio pieces explaining how and why the pieces selected were chosen, and how the portfolio represents what the student has learned and accomplished.

Have a group conference with each project group, allowing each student to use the portfolio to describe how he or she contributed to the project.

7. Grading Portfolios
Portfolios are not always-easy to grade. How do you grade a superb effort which netted a disappointing outcome relative to a project which had impressive results

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attributable to a few lucky events? What do you do if some of the workgroup members failed to contribute? What happens to the grade if someone’s dog eats the portfolio? No one has all the answers, but the following should help:

- Focus on what is important for getting the job done. Although the results of any project should be meaningful to the students, of far greater importance is students’ developing ability to apply skills and content to effective problem solving.

- Rely heavily on the standards which the class identified as attributes of excellence. Apply these standards as numerical rating systems if necessary.

- Collaborate with other teachers on setting standards.

- Use several grades; if one portfolio is submitted by each workgroup, a group grade could be given for the portfolio, and individual grades for essays and performance of individual responsibilities as team members. For a win-win situation, award the group grade as extra credit, assuring that nobody could feel that their grade was damaged unfairly by other group members. A self-evaluation grade could also be awarded by students based on their own assessment of achievement.

Exemplars:

**Authentic Excellence**

Exemplars are samples of real-world excellence. They can serve as learning tools and set standards for evaluation; Students need exemplars to know how to approach tasks. Exemplars should be posted and discussed, and annotated with explanatory material as projects proceed. For example, many projects would require that students write a letter. Samples of excellent letters should be provided for the class to examine and dissect; what components make them excellent - spelling and punctuation? clear purpose? well organized? neat? looks like a standard business letter? In selecting exemplars, choose items that illustrate excellence but do not directly address the precise topic of the group: Students should not be provided with material that they may be tempted simply to copy.

Students may think of ways that the exemplars you have provided could be made even better. Post the exemplar letters and surround them with notes which explain the components. Students now have ready access to standards of excellence and models, and both you, and the students have agreed-upon criteria useful for evaluation. Use exemplars for all aspects of project development. Will the students be designing a survey? Is a press release going to be produced? Always identify and display the building blocks of excellence.
References:


SECTION II
Getting Started
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

SECTION I: TO THE TEACHER Introduction explains the purpose of this book and gives some general information about its use. Teacher as Team Leader and Assessment: Project Portfolios provide valuable guidance to teachers for leading their students as they cooperate to plan, carry out, and evaluate their environmental project.

SECTION II: GETTING STARTED How To Use This Book (the chapter you are reading right now) explains the different parts of the book and the purpose of each part. Choosing a Project will help your group to decide what kind of project you want to do and help you make a plan for doing it. Established Programs tells about some existing programs that you might want to join or find out about. There are some projects that are sponsored by organizations around Virginia and the nation. These organizations provide materials, training, and advice to groups who wish to participate in their projects. Most have at least some free informational materials. It's a good idea to review some of these before making final decisions.

SECTION III: PROJECTS contains plans, tips, and ideas for seven types of projects.

SECTION IV: FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH is important. It's always nice to get a pat on the back when you have accomplished something special. Getting the Word Out contains information on how to let your local newspaper and television stations know what you have done. You may want to read this chapter before you get started in case you want to let people know about your project as you are doing it. For example, you may decide to produce a play or musical about the environment for your project. You will need to advertise your show so that people will come to see it. Awards and Contests contains information about getting a different kind of recognition. There are several organizations, in Virginia
and around the country, which give awards to groups like yours for their efforts in working to protect and improve our environment. You may be so excited about what you have done that you will want to nominate yourself for one of these awards.

Reporting Results is important for you and for us. If you are part of a class, and your project is part of your grade, your teacher will need to know how to decide what you learned and what you achieved. We also want to know what you did and how you did it. When you finish your project and fill out and send us the reporting forms, we will send you your Bay Team membership materials. We hope that when you finish your project you will want to keep taking action to protect and improve our environment. You may want to continue working on the same project, or you may want to expand it to include a larger area or more people. Some of you may want to go on by yourself to plan your own individual projects. What Next? will give you ideas for continuing with efforts to preserve the environment.

SECTION V: TOOL KIT will teach you some new skills and help you to apply some of the skills you have already learned about in solving environmental problems.
CHOOSING A PROJECT

The hardest part of any project is the very first step: deciding what to do. This chapter will help you to do that, and will get you started on designing your plan for action.

Sometimes it's hard to decide what to do because you want to do everything, and you want to do it all right away. When making a plan for environmental action it's important to choose a project that you can accomplish in a reasonable amount of time, and with the people and materials you have or can easily get. It's very easy to get discouraged by a project that turns out to be more than you can handle. Make your first project a small one.

This book contains examples of and guidelines for seven types of projects as well as a section on established programs. Choose people in your group to read over the examples and think about similar things you could do in your own school or community. After they report back to the group, use their ideas as a starting point to develop a project on which everyone agrees.

To do that, have a group brainstorming session. Choose someone to be the secretary of your group and have that person write down every idea you have, even the crazy ones. Sometimes the silly ideas can be worked into a really good plan. Once you have your list, sort the items into categories such as recycling, wildlife, rainforest, or energy. (Your list will probably have different categories.) By voting, choose to work with one of the categories.

Once you have decided on a category, do another brainstorming session. This time be a little more specific in your ideas. Try to come up with a list of 20-30 possible project ideas from your chosen category. Then have the group secretary write down this list. Now go over these ideas, one by one. Some are obviously going to be impossible.
Some are going to be things that you might be able to do, and some will be things you know you can do. When you've finished reviewing your list, take out the project ideas that all of you agree are impossible, or that most of you don't want to do, or project ideas that you know are already being used. You'll probably have three or four good ideas remaining. Choose one.

Write the chosen project idea at the top of the blackboard or a big piece of paper. Have the secretary of your group write the answers to the following questions:

- WHAT are we going to do?
- HOW are we going to do it?
- WHO will do the work?
  - From WHOM do we need to get permission?
- WHO will help us?
- WHERE are we going to do this?
- WHAT supplies do we need?
- WHERE are we going to get the supplies?
- HOW MUCH money are we going to need?
- WHERE are we going to get the money?
- WHEN are we going to start?
- WHEN are we going to finish?

You may find when you have done all this that your project is more than you can realistically do. You may not have the necessary time, or supplies, or help. That's okay - just scale your ideas back a little. For example, if it isn't possible to recycle in every classroom in your school, try working with just the classrooms in your grade. If it isn't possible to recycle paper, glass, plastic, and aluminum, try just collecting aluminum. Remember: it's a lot easier to start small and let your project grow later than to start too big and find that you can't do everything.

Perhaps your idea would work best as part of an established program. Read the next chapter, Established Programs, for ideas. You may find out that the idea you chose would be completely impossible to do, even with scaling back or with help from an
established program. If that happens, choose another one of your ideas and work through the list of questions again for that idea.

Don’t throw away the ideas you don’t use. When you have finished your project, they will come in handy to start planning the next one.

After you have answered all of the preceding questions for the project you have chosen, identify all of the major tasks that will have to be done. Divide the class into workgroups responsible for these tasks. Each workgroup should go through the list of questions again, only this time writing down specific actions that will be needed to complete assigned tasks. For example, asking, “What supplies do we need?” will begin a list of items. How are you going to get all the items on your list? -Are you going to make them? Buy them? Borrow them? Select workgroup members to be responsible for getting all the items on your list. Asking, “Who will help us?” will start a list of people. Who is going to be responsible for contacting those people and asking them to help you? Select workgroup members to handle that job. Continue working through each of the questions for each task.

The last thing you need to do before you get started is to make a schedule. You decided when you would start your project and when you would finish. The overall project will have a schedule and each workgroup will have a schedule. Now go through your lists of things you need to do and decide how long it will take to do each of those things. Assign a date for completion of each task. Make a calendar for your project and write all of those dates on it. You may find that you haven’t allowed enough time to do everything you need to do to complete your project on time. You will have to decide what to do then. You may want to change the date you expect to finish. You may decide that you don’t have to do all those things on your list. You maybe able to think of ways to do some of the things more quickly. You may decide to do a smaller project.
Many agencies and organizations are working to keep the environment healthy. Some of these have programs that allow students to help them. There are several advantages to working with established programs:

1. You become part of a larger network of people who are working together toward a common goal.

2. They have already planned and prepared materials for you. That saves you time and effort.

3. There is usually somebody you can call if you have questions or problems with the project.

Established programs are all different. Investigate to decide which one might be right for your group. Some charge for their materials. Some projects are for groups. Some are for individuals. Some are for students and some are for adults. Follow these six steps to lead you to the right project:

1. Be sure that your group has decided what interests them. What kinds of projects do they want to do? See Choosing a Project for help.

2. Consider available programs. Select two or three that share your interests. The following list covers a few programs you might investigate. Your teacher might know of others. If your community has a litter control or clean community program, telephone that office to ask about local projects that your group might work on.
3. Use your telephone and letter writing skills to find out more about these programs. See Writing a Business Letter and Making a Business Telephone Call in the TOOL KIT section. Ask for printed information about the program and ask about costs. Ask if there is an informational videotape that you might borrow. If the program has a nearby office, perhaps you can schedule a guest speaker to tell your group about projects available. See Choosing and Inviting a Guest Speaker in the TOOL KIT section. Allow several weeks for this step. You want to be sure that you seek as much helpful information as possible.

4. Carefully read all the information you get. Which projects do you prefer? What might prevent you from doing these projects? List any possible problems. Can you think of ways to solve them? If you need ideas for solving problems, ask your teacher. Teachers have had many experiences solving problems.

5. Pick a project. If nothing is perfect for you, think about designing your own project. Use some of what you have learned through your investigation.

6. Make a plan. Get your teacher’s approval.

Some Environmental Education Programs:

**Kids Against Pollution**
P.O. Box 775
Closter, NJ 07624
Write for materials about what kids can do.

**Friends of the Earth**
218 D Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
Fact sheets for students include suggestions about how to start an environmental action group.

**Global ReLeaf**
The American Forestry Association
1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
Global ReLeaf kits help with tree planting projects.

**Chesapeake Bay Foundation**
162 Prince George Street
"The Church"
Annapolis, MD 21401
The Chesapeake Bay Foundation has a series of action plans for a variety of projects. Request "Conservation Projects" plans and information if you are interested in working on any of these topics: Tree Planting, School Yard Habitats, Consumer Analysis, Water Conservation, Storm Drain Painting, Home Energy Conservation, Sediment Control, Adopting a Stream, Bicycling, Oyster Gardening
Household Ecoteam Program
Global Action Plan
84 Yerry Hill Road
Woodstock, NY 12498
914-679-4830
This program helps people save money and resources by changing wasteful behaviors at home. Teams receive a workbook and a start-up kit. The program also assigns each team a coach.

Kids Save the Planet
P.O. Box 471
Forest Hills, NY 11275
This is a directory to environmental projects for children.

Earth Matters: A Challenge for Environmental Action
Girl Scouts USA
830 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022
Earth Matters is a resource book offering background information, projects, and information on resources for environmental education. A videotape about the program is available.

Many Hands
Children's Alliance for the Protection of the Environment
P.O. Box 307
Austin, TX 78767
This quarterly newspaper contains environmental news, activities, games, pictures, letters and book reviews.

National Directory of Citizen Volunteer Environmental Monitoring Programs
Rhode Island Sea Grant Office
Narragansett, RI 02882
Many environmental organizations use information about the environment collected by volunteers. Most of these programs have adult volunteers, some have materials and programs for students, too.

Adopt-a-Spot
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 10009
Richmond, VA 23240
804-762-4570
This project helps groups to select and care for a specific area. It provides guidelines and instructions. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality also has information about other anti-litter projects.

Kids for Saving the Earth
International Headquarters
P.O. Box 47247
Plymouth, MN 55447
612-525-0002
Kids for Saving the Earth (KSE) is an international program with hundreds of thousands of members. They do all kinds of projects to protect the environment. The Action guide has many ideas for projects. Students who participate in the KSE program form clubs with an adult advisor. They receive a newsletter and other "kid-friendly" membership materials:
Adopt-a-Highway  
Virginia Division of Transportation  
1401 E. Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
1-800-PRIDE VA  

Besides its successful Adopt-a-Highway program, the Department of Transportation publishes the Pickup Express Newsletter. It sponsors the Great State Trash-Off which cares for homes, yards, waterways, and more.

Children's Rainforest  
P.O. Box 936  
Lewiston, ME 04240  

Through this project children all over the world buy rainforest land in Costa Rica to conserve it.

Save Our Streams  
Izaak Walton League  
Suite 1100  
1701 North Fort Meyer Drive  
Arlington, VA 22209  

Save Our Streams is a network of people monitoring streams. A youth activities kit is available.

National Gardening Association  
180 Flynn Avenue  
Burlington, VT 05401  

This organization will provide information about gardening for youth.

National Wildlife Federation  
1400 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
202-797-6800  

The National Wildlife Federation has many activities and publications for students. Ask about the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program, the Activist Kit, teacher kits, and information about helping wildlife.

A Million Points of Blight  
Center for Marine Conservation  
306-A Buckroe Avenue  
Hampton, VA 23664  
804-851-6734  

Storm drains carry pollution to streams, rivers, and oceans. Students can stencil storm drains with messages that help people remember to keep pollutants out of the water. Information, instructions, and stencils are available. The Center for Marine Conservation has information about beach cleanups and a national database that compiles statistics about marine debris.

Global Response  
Environmental Action Network  
P.O. Box 7490  
Boulder, CO 80306  

Ask them for their "Young Environmentalists' Action Sheets" for ideas about what to do and how to do it.