



Eco-Schools USA School Grounds Audit



Learning Objectives

- To investigate school grounds use and identify ways to green the space.
- To record and analyze school grounds data.

Curriculum Links

English, Science, Mathematics, Geography, and Citizenship

Eco-Schools USA Pathways

School Grounds, Water, Energy, Climate Change, and Healthy Living

Background

The sample School Grounds Audit was developed as a tool for students to investigate school ground use and to be used as a basis for improving the habitat at school. Many of the questions will require the assistance of school staff, including facility managers. A full Schoolyard Habitat How-To Guide is available at <http://www.nwf.org/schoolyard/howtoguide.cfm>

Schoolyard Habitats® are more than just wildlife gardens or outdoor classrooms. The entire process of planning, building and maintaining a schoolyard habitat provides a wide range of benefits to students, teachers, the administration and the community, as well as to wildlife.

Some of the many **benefits of Schoolyard Habitats®** include:

- Increased student comprehension, performance and motivation
- Local site for teachers for interdisciplinary studies
- More opportunities and resources for creative instruction
- Reduced costs for school grounds upkeep and maintenance
- Restored habitat that gives local wildlife food, water, cover and places to raise their offspring

Procedure

1. The Eco-Action team should work together to gather the data needed to complete the audit.
2. Analyze the results and report the findings to the school community.
3. Formulate an action plan and be sure to monitor and evaluate along the way.
4. Keep this report with your records. This information will be needed when responding to periodic Eco-Schools USA surveys, when applying for awards, and when communicating with the community and members of the media.

What percentage of the school's property is in school gardens, raised beds, wetlands, forest, native grasses, etc.?	_____ %								
Does the school contain all four wildlife habitat requirements – food, water, shelter, places to raise young?	☐ Yes ☐ No								
Our students know the types of wildlife that inhabit the community. If yes, please list below.	☐ Yes ☐ No								
<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>									
Students know the birds and insects that migrate through the community? If yes, please list below.	☐ Yes ☐ No								
<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>									
Are the school grounds free from herbicides or pesticides?	☐ Yes ☐ No								
Are there plenty of objects for climbing and balancing on, and jumping and swinging from?	☐ Yes ☐ No								
There are several different surfaces and materials to feel, touch, and explore?	☐ Yes ☐ No								
Our school has a natural playscape. A natural playscape uses nature to build playgrounds where students can engage and connect with the natural systems in which they are growing up in. Resource: http://earthplay.net/	☐ Yes ☐ No								
There are murals, mosaics, and/or other artwork on school grounds.	☐ Yes ☐ No								
Are there games painted on the playground?	☐ Yes ☐ No								
Does the school have a pond, marsh, wetland area or vernal pool?	☐ Yes ☐ No								
Students know the square footage of the school grounds.	☐ Yes ☐ No								
There is a variety of vegetation on our school grounds.	☐ Yes ☐ No								
Are there native plants, shrubs, and trees on school grounds?	☐ Yes ☐ No								
Our school has fallen logs or a log pile(s).	☐ Yes ☐ No								

Does the school have trees? If yes, list the types of trees on property. It is important to have more than two variety of trees and even more important to have native trees on site to promote biodiversity. <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> </table>							☐ Yes ☐ No
The school has a meadow, hedgerow(s), and shrub(s).	☐ Yes ☐ No						
The school has bird boxes and/or a bird feeding station.	☐ Yes ☐ No						
Are the school grounds used for learning and teaching? If yes, please provide a brief description or bullet points. <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td></tr> </table>					☐ Yes ☐ No		
What percentage of the student body uses the school garden or other natural spaces on a regular basis?	_____ %						
What is the average time a student spends in the garden or outdoor learning classroom each week?	_____ %						
The school has a sprinkler system.	☐ Yes ☐ No						
The school hand waters vegetation.	☐ Yes ☐ No						
The school utilizes a drip irrigation system.	☐ Yes ☐ No						

NOTES:

Summarize results from data collection: