

Stride and The Nature Conservancy: Challenging Students to Solve Environmental Issues

The Nature Conservancy is a global environmental nonprofit working to create a world where people and nature thrive. Founded in the U.S. through grassroots action in 1951, The Nature Conservancy has grown to become one of the world's most effective and wide-reaching environmental organizations. Thanks to more than a million members, and the dedicated efforts of our diverse staff and 400+ scientists, we impact conservation in 72 countries and territories.



Our mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. To achieve this, we must boldly address the biodiversity and climate crises over the next decade. By maximizing our ability to affect change between now and 2030, we can shape a brighter future for people and our planet. We focus on four key areas:

TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change isn't a distant threat—it is happening now. The past decade has been hotter than any other time in recorded history. The impacts of climate change include more extreme weather and natural disasters, chronic drought, and economic instability. To match the urgency of this crisis, we're deploying innovative solutions that maximize nature's ability to fight while bolstering resilience for our most precious ecosystems and vulnerable communities. Together, we can halt the worst impacts.

Ways we are approaching climate change:

- We develop nature-based solutions because nature plays a major role in regulating the climate by storing carbon dioxide. By conserving forests and wetlands, adding regenerative practices to agriculture, and planting trees, we're unleashing nature's full potential to stabilize the climate.
- We promote smart clean energy policies and work with governments to show how renewable energy can grow economies while reducing carbon emissions as global energy demands rise.

- We build resilience and help the most vulnerable communities adapt to climate change by restoring habitats, such as mangroves that reduce the impact of severe storms.
- We inspire productive conversations and encourage people to talk more frequently and constructively about global warming so we can build a stronger common ground.

Students can read our [climate change FAQs](#) and learn about how young people are taking action with the [Maine Environmental Changemakers Network](#).

PROTECT LAND AND WATER

We're facing dual threats with the climate crisis and extreme loss of biodiversity, and we won't survive without clean water and land. In the next decade, we're working to protect ourselves and our planet by conserving 650 million hectares of healthy land, 30 million hectares of freshwater, and 4 billion hectares of oceans. Through protected areas, sustainable fishing, forest management, and working with Indigenous peoples, we're taking action to shape a better future for people and the planet.

Ways we protect land and water:

- We protect treasured forests and landscapes, such as the Great Bear Rainforest in British Columbia, so wildlife like the region's iconic spirit bear can thrive.
- We think big and invest in large-scale land conservation, such as protecting half a million acres in Montana and restoring habitat along the Gulf of Mexico.
- We protect and restore coral reefs and other ocean habitats from Mexico to Australia to help fish populations recover and protect coastal communities from storms.
- We secure funding, such as when we helped create a way for the island nation of Seychelles to reduce its debt by protecting one-third of its territorial waters—an area larger than Germany.
- We partner with indigenous peoples and local communities to protect nature in ways that reinforce cultural connections to land and water.
- We build economics through promoting ecotourism and sustainable fishing to preserve the \$1.5 trillion that the ocean adds to the global economy each year.

Students can [discover how water is the source of life](#) and learn about a group of young people taking action with the [Delaware River Watershed Fellows](#).

PROVIDE FOOD AND WATER SUSTAINABLY

Food demand is expected to increase by more than 50 percent in the next 30 years as the world's population continues to grow—it's a challenge that can be met. Land and water stewardship can restore health to our food systems. Food is sustainable when it benefits the environment and maintains soil fertility. We're fostering innovations in technology, collaborating with communities to use resources more efficiently, and promoting policies that enable sustainability. Together, we can secure healthy food and clean water for all people without sacrificing the environment.

Ways we secure food and water:

- We manage fish stocks by supplying fishers with electronic monitoring and promoting fishing practices that reduce bycatch to help species recover while feeding the world.
- We work with soil scientists to help increase soil productivity and improve water quality, carbon storage, and biodiversity—all while increasing profits for farmers.

- From New Mexico to Nairobi, TNC develops water funds that invest in strategies to secure better water quality and improve the health and well-being of communities.
- We aim for zero deforestation by working with farmers, ranchers, and landowners in Latin America and Southeast Asia to meet demands for food while protecting forests and growing incomes.

Students can learn more about the [biodiversity of coastal systems](#) and see how the [SEAS program](#) is helping young people take their own action.

BUILD HEALTHY CITIES

Cities are growing—fast. By 2050, two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas. The actions we take now will define the planet's path over the next century. We're urgently taking on the dual threats of biodiversity loss and the climate crisis, maximizing resilience and benefits for communities. Plus, people in cities are increasingly disconnected from nature. What we achieve is just as important as how—we let science guide our focus and equity guide our execution.

Ways we work to build healthy cities:

- We include nature and are helping integrate urban forests, rain gardens, parks, and wetlands into sustainable city planning to bring nature's benefits to urban residents.
- We promote green city growth and designs like permeable surfaces and rain gardens that can manage stormwater while providing health benefits and reducing pollution in our rivers.
- We work with cities from New Orleans to Beijing to plan for and use nature as the first line of defense against the effects of climate change, like low air quality and urban heat-islands.
- We facilitate access and engagement to build a movement to increase physical, emotional, spiritual health by getting people outside.

Students can [discover what sustainable cities can look like](#) with nature-based solutions and learn more about young people taking action with [Imani Green Health Advocates](#).

Be sure to enter the Stride Innovation Challenge before November 30, 2021. [Learn more and enter](#) at the Stride Competitions website.