



2023 Prize Winners

Kindergarten - 2nd grade

First Place

Governor Mifflin School District, Mark Engle, Golden Guardians

The Golden Guardians comprised of a group effort of students across a district, working to support Golden Coin Turtles. Students created community gardens by the school, supported their local riparian buffer habitat by planted wildflowers, collected bottle caps to be made into garden benches, and created commercials and games to spread the word about protecting habitats. They fundraised money to support the local Eastern Box Turtle as well!



Second Place

Frankford Friends School, Jamie Cho, Animal Rescuers

The Animal Rescuers focused on waste to protect the Golden Lion Tamarin. They worked with Rubicon to collect candy wrappers and other plastic materials throughout their school. In order to inform and educate others, they made a widespread video and facilitated live presentations about pollution and the importance of reducing waste.



Third Place

Dorothy L Bullock Elementary School, Aileen Castro, Lion's Keepers

The Lion's Keepers focused on saving energy in the name of African Lions. They reached out to numerous organizations within their community to enhance their understanding about sustainability, and put it into action! They made signs for the school to share with others what they learned about conserving energy, created informational upcycled projects, participated in a community cleanup, and helped restore their community garden.



Honorable Mention

Odyssey Charter School, Jackie Wolffe, Odyssey Bat Brigade

The Odyssey Bat Brigade focused on pollinators to support the habitat of Rodrigues Fruit Bats and local bats. Students got to work planning to create a pollinator garden and to install bat boxes. They hope to use of the fruit and veggies from the garden, and grown with the help of pollinators, to support their school cafeteria as well!

Honorable Mention

Mount Pleasant Elementary School, Elane Brown, Mrs. Brown's Class

Mrs. Brown's Class grew their understanding of birds, and worked to simultaneously support local wrens and the Indian White-Eye. They built birdhouses to distribute throughout the area in local parks, and supported habitat restoration through work in a garden and the planting of tree saplings.



3rd - 5th grade

First Place

Delran Intermediate School, Sharon Kernan Cumiskey and Patrick Myers, DIS Green Team

With the Golden Coin Turtle in mind, the DIS Green Team reduced waste by distributing reusable water bottles to students, protected habitat by participating in monthly cleanups, and worked to change policy by encouraging the collection of thin plastics for TREC to turn into tables and benches for other schools. Students collected signatures and wrote letters to legislatures with hopes to see widespread change!



Second Place

Green Valley Elementary School, Jennifer Richards, Shell Shockers

The Shell Shockers wanted to support Golden Coin Turtle and their local Bog Turtle simultaneously, and taught their community about these animals through presentations and bulletin boards in the school, Two Turtle Tuesday announcements, a district community event, and a school board meeting. To benefit many more local species and their habitats, students cleaned up the area of their school and hosted numerous, creative fundraisers to be able to install a floating bio island, nesting boxes, and bee houses.



Third Place

Dallas Intermediate School, Deborah Pike, Environmental Educators

The Environmental Educators worked to stop waste by educating others in many ways, shapes, and forms. In school, they spread awareness about reducing waste and encouraged others to participate in their Waste Buster Challenge through presentations and newspapers. They also opened their outdoor classroom for students, complete with an environmental education lending library and a Monarch Butterfly Waystation garden. Through fundraisers, they were also able to contribute to African Lion conservation and the North Branch Land Trust. They continued to spread the word about their work far and wide through numerous media outlets.



Honorable Mention

Mansfield Township Elementary School, Stacy Brophy, G.L.T.

The G.L.T. group at Mansfield Township Elementary School wanted to support habitat restoration and creation to support animals like the Golden Lion Tamarin, through the support of local habitats and species. Being a school directly impacted by bog turtle habitats, students collected plant donations to support their retention basin and created a butterfly garden. Students encouraged other schoolmates to get involved through presentations, flyers, and a school wide fundraiser. The raised money was sent to the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey to support even more local species.



Honorable Mention

Bells School, Lauren Sisco, Bells G.C.T Savers

The Bell G.C.T. Savers worked to protect both the Golden Coin Turtle and the local Diamondback Terrapin. To spread the word about these turtles with everyone in school, they made educational bookmarks for every student, and worked with the Wetlands Institute in New Jersey to organize an informational presentation for every class in the district. They also raised money for Diamondback Terrapin conservation to further support their new partnership!



6th - 8th grade

First Place

Ocean Township Intermediate School, Meghan Edson, Edson's Engineers

Edson's Engineers were dedicated to conserving water for the Golden Coin Turtle and the Eastern Box Turtle. Students worked to raise awareness about water conservation and created budget friendly solutions through workshops and videos of different ponics systems. To get students excited about conserving water, the engineers hosted a customized water bottle fundraiser, raising \$3000 to purchase a refilling station to limit plastic use and pollution. Students also supported local habitats through a fundraiser for reefs and a beach cleanup.



Second Place

Newtown Middle School, Sara Gordon, Newtown Middle School Environmental Action Club

The Newtown Middle School Environmental Action Club tackled many ways to support habitats. To support local pollinators at their local park, students organized a cleanup, made seedballs, and built bee houses. As ways to get others involved and excited about conservation, students made TikToks, Instagram posts, and an augmented reality game as a way for people to interact with nature. They also worked with a school in Florida in organizing "No Paper Days" at their schools.



Third Place

Ocean Township Intermediate School, Meghan Edson, Entrepreneurs of Nature

Having witnessed prominent habitat loss in the area, the Entrepreneurs of Nature were inspired to support numerous species, including the creation of a butterfly waystation the use of reclaimed materials to make bluebird houses, and built houses for other local species. Students also encouraged others to support these habitats with social media, brochures, fundraisers, building instructions, and by contacting policy makers.



Honorable Mention

William Davies Middle School, Vincent Petruzzi, Davies Environmental Dragons

The Davies Environmental Dragons noticed that the single-use plastic provided with their breakfasts was not being disposed of properly and decided to create a recycling program for these bags. Students educated and encouraged their school community and local businesses to participate in this recycling program. Through conversations with and support from local representatives, 3 schools have participated in this new recycling program. Students also restored their local garden to support local species.



Honorable Mention

Woodbury Jr/Sr High School, Joanne Salvatore, Lion's Pride

The Lion's Pride students noticed recycling was not effectively happening at their school and wanted to educate their fellow students about its importance. Students made posters in English and Spanish about what can and can't be recycled, and hung them around their school. The students also encouraged leadership of the school to figure out ways to use less single-use materials.

RECIOLA EN LA ESCUELA
Y EN TU CASA!



9th - 12th Grade

First Place

Maple Shade High School, Carmen Lynn and Melissa Buker, MSHS UNLESS

The MSHS UNLESS group spread awareness about Golden Coin Turtles and how to support them through billboards, a YouTube channel, WMMR Radio, Instagram, a website, commercials within the school, the Preston and Steve show, through a merch sale, and at a series of events. These students restored habitats by supporting the community garden, distributing biodegradable seed starters, planting trees in the community, and fundraising for the NJ Fish and Wildlife Bog Turtle Project. Students also diverted waste from the landfill by hosting clothing and shoe drive with Planet Aid.



Second Place

Haddon Township High School, Julie Ryan

The students at Haddon Township High School encouraged numerous recycling and upcycling programs by partnering with the Haddon Township Education Foundation, The Refill Market, Rubicon, and the Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter. To support habitats near and far, students planted milkweed for the local Monarch Butterflies, and fundraised money to donate to Save the Golden Lion Tamarins in Brazil.

Third Place

Community Academy of Philadelphia, Sara Gallagher, Bruin Pride

The Bruin Pride shared information about habitats loss and ways to help throughout their school with displays, a website, the school newspaper, and STEAM nights. Students also encouraged the collection of items to create upcycled art, bird feeders, bird houses, and a bee hotel. To further support habitats, there are also plans to create a pollinator garden.



Honorable Mention

REACH Cyber Charter School, Aislinn Benfield

The students at REACH Cyber Charter School spread awareness about the Golden Coin Turtle and local Bog Turtle and catered their information to better reach different age groups. Following their educational efforts, they reached out to their audiences to better understand what impact they might have made. Students also plan to plant a pollinator garden to be certified by Penn State.



Honorable Mention

Northern Burlington County Regional High School, Michael Keenan, Team Ninja Turtles (Period 1-2)

Team Ninja Turtles hosted two cleanups to support the habitats of box turtles, garter snakes, and sparrows locally, as well as the Golden Coin Turtle from afar. Students collected plastic from other students (and even the trash) to divert these materials from the landfill and instead created eco-bricks and artwork.

