



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Commitment to Service

Sierra Club's Building Bridges to the Outdoors (BBTO) program empowers youth from underserved communities to give back to their country by providing critical ecological services on public lands. BBTO partners with schools and non-profits to provide outdoor learning opportunities to approximately 70,000 youth each year. Nearly 12,000 of these youth participate in service projects ranging from trail maintenance to river cleanups. Studies show that service-learning leads to civic, academic and behavioral improvements, and enhances social skills and confidence.

Land restoration and trail maintenance

BBTO grantees and partners provide a critical service to our nation's public lands by engaging in wildfire prevention, trail maintenance and land restoration. The Rocky Mountain Youth Corps trains 200 at-risk youth per year from northern New Mexico to participate in Youth Conservation Corps activities, ranging from wildfire prevention to building trails on public lands. BBTO also works closely with youth participants from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago who spend their weekends restoring the ecological health of the local prairies, savannas and woodlands by removing invasive species, sowing native seeds, picking up trash and maintaining trails in the Forest Preserves in and around Chicago. Additionally, urban communities across the country are planting more trees. Sierra Club-sponsored projects include planting trees along 98th Street in Oakland and in the forests and along the riverbeds of Taos, NM.

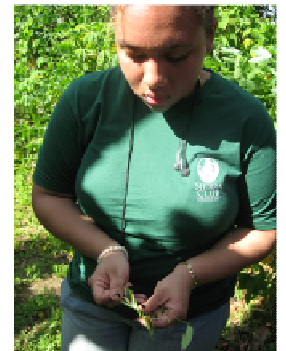


River cleanup and restoration

Many BBTO-supported youth come from places with compromised watersheds and rivers. Sierra Club works closely with local partners to support programs that link this critical resource with outdoor education projects. Kids For the Bay, a partner in Berkeley, CA, promotes watershed cleanup by working with over 1,000 participating students to develop individualized projects. Rivers and Birds in Taos, NM works with Sierra Club's Water Sentinels program and the Bureau of Land Management to test the water of local rivers to better understand the impacts of pesticides and fertilizers on the local watershed. Youth in our nation's Capitol volunteer their time to clean up the Anacostia River and students in Puerto Rico participate in beach cleanups where plastic bags continue to be a major cause of death for Leatherback turtles, who mistake them for jellyfish when searching for food.

Community Gardens

Studies show that children who participate in gardening activities are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables, exhibit positive environmental attitudes and stewardship behavior, and benefit from improvements in self-esteem, relationships with peers, and attitudes towards school. With BBTO support, nearly 700 students from the Bronx Lab School and the High School for Leadership and Public Service in New York City and 450 students in Boise, Idaho, participate in community and school garden projects.



Outdoor experiences and service projects that improve the health of communities and natural spaces deepen our commitment to protecting public lands, air and water. Sierra Club's dedication to providing outdoor and service-learning experiences to underserved youth across the nation is helping to develop the next generation of environmental stewards.

To learn more, visit: www.sierraclub.org/youth