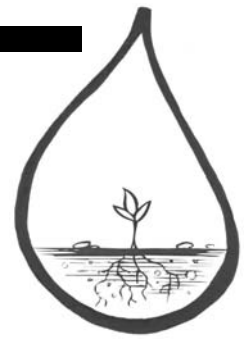


# Building Environmental Youth Leadership

## A High-School Service-learning Curriculum



### TOPIC:

Action -planning

### OBJECTIVES:

- Students will identify and assign tasks requisite to completion of the service project

### LENGTH:

1 hour

### ENVIRONMENT:

Indoors in a classroom where students can gather in small groups.

### MATERIALS:

- A chalkboard or other large display and chalk or markers for recording group answers.
- Copies of the Task List for each student group.

## Tasking Out the Project

### Background:

Service project goals are achieved through completion of many small tasks. Consequently, detailing and assigning responsibilities for these duties is essential to effective action planning. In this activity, team members generate their action timelines. They define goals requisite to completion of their project, segment these into prioritized tasks, and assign individuals to complete them. Resulting task lists provide the team a clear map for attaining success in their projects.

### Activity Outline:

#### *Beforehand:*

Set up the work area so that 1) an initial whole-team brainstorming session can be conducted and results recorded, followed by 2) a break-out session where students work in small groups to detail action timelines.

Copies of the Task List worksheet should also be made for each student group. Because the number of groups will derive from major goals identified during brainstorming, however, it is difficult beforehand to identify an exact number of copies needed. One copy per 2 to 3 students is likely a good estimate.

#### *Defining Major Goals:*

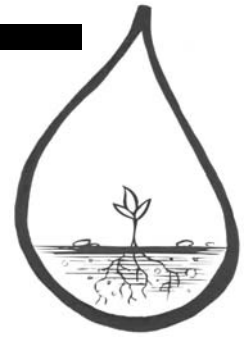
Students gather for instructions. Take a moment to preview the objective of the activity. Then, introduce the initial brainstorming activity, in which the entire team segments major goals to be accomplished in completion of the service project. It is helpful to depict this as part of a 3-level breakout chart (see Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Example breakout chart.

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The ultimate project goal, such as wetland revegetation, is depicted at the top of the chart. In this activity, group members should focus on defining the next level of subordinate goals. For instance, they might suggest “getting to the site,” or “having seed to plant” as goals at this level. Stress, however, that team members should not yet focus on individual tasks, such as “booking the van” or “ordering seed,” as these fall under the third level of the chart. Small groups will detail these in the next activity. Answer any questions about the activity or difference between levels of the breakout chart. Spend time as a group detailing major goals requisite to completion of the service project.

Upon completion, revisit the second-level list of goals. Ask team members to call out repetition or suggest subordination of any third level tasks that made it into the list. Prioritize the list, and set target dates for completion of each goal. Once members are satisfied, move to small group work.

### *Setting Tasks:*

Divide the team into small groups of 2 to 5 students. Introduce the activity. Groups will adopt one or more of the major goals defined before to segment into individual tasks, including priority, person responsible for completing the task, and date to be completed. These should be as detailed as possible. For instance, students may break down “getting to the site” into tasks like “writing a permission slip,” “booking a van,” “making sure the van has gas,” “getting directions to the site,” etc. Stress that groups adopting a goal take charge of ensuring its completion by the target date. Similarly, individuals will be expected to complete tasks assigned to them. Success of the team depends on taking these responsibilities seriously.

Hand out copies of the Task List worksheet. Each group should fill-in the major goal at the top of the sheet, brainstorm and list tasks, etc. Once all tasks have been listed, then group members can assign priorities and completion dates. Students should think carefully about the tasks necessary to achieve their goals. But, it is important to suggest that additional tasks may be added later if they arise. Answer any questions.

Fairly assign one or more goals to each group. For instance, groups might choose order of selection by taking numbers from a hat or rolling a dice. Then provide team members time to work on their task lists. Visit briefly with students during work-time to assess their progress and suggest additions.

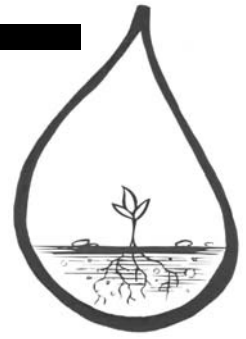
### *Mapping the Action:*

Once all groups have finished their task lists, students gather for conclusion. Review the objective of the activity. Then ask each group

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briefly re-state their goal and describe tasks assigned. It may be helpful to conglomerate these on a master timeline. Provide team members a moment at the end of each presentation to suggest additions or deletions. After all have described their tasks, discuss lessons learned from the activity. Was developing task lists really necessary? Why? How might this process be improved? Etc.

Assess the progress of task completion periodically throughout the project. Visit with groups to ensure their work is progressing. Once every week or two, groups should briefly update the team on their achievements and stumbling blocks.

