

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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OFFICE OF THE  
ADMINISTRATOR

As Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, I am deeply aware that a vital part of our mission is the education of Americans for active involvement in efforts to clean up our environment. It is particularly important that today's young people share widely in the development of a new ethic leading toward environmental restoration and a more humane quality of life.

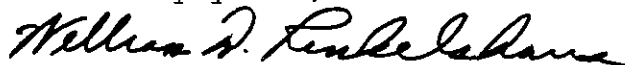
As a step to channel the manifest strengths, imagination, and energy of our youth into increasingly effective activities in behalf of this goal, President Nixon last October announced the President's Environmental Merit Awards Program, and assigned the EPA to run it. After only seven months of operation, the program has more than 2600 high schools enrolled and has been so successful that it has now been expanded to junior high and elementary schools.

On April 19, during Earth Week '72, Mrs. Julie Nixon Eisenhower presented the first certificates honoring work of environmental excellence to students from four schools representing all areas of the Nation. I think the program's theme, "Life...Pass It On," sums up in a few words the crucial importance of the work it seeks to advance.

Because of your interest in youth and the environment, I am enclosing materials regarding the President's program, as well as some recent press releases on a variety of important issues.

I would be interested in your comments on these activities in the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA has operated since its establishment in 1970 on the premise that response to comment and criticism by citizens is the best way to develop and maintain a sound public policy; please do not hesitate to communicate with me about your environmental concerns.

Sincerely yours,



William D. Ruckelshaus  
Administrator

Enclosures

## FACT SHEET

### PRESIDENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL MERIT AWARDS PROGRAM

The President's Environmental Merit Awards Program will make it possible for students of the Nation's high schools to receive recognition for individual or group projects that benefit the environment. Opportunity to participate in the program is being offered to some 38,000 public and private high schools across the country.

All students who undertake and complete a responsible environmental service project will receive an award. Additional awards will be given to projects deserving special recognition. Panels made up of student, faculty and community representatives will administer the program. National support for this program will be provided through the Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Education.

Suggested projects for the program could fit into four categories -- education, environmental awareness, community service and public affairs. Students could seek assistance with their projects from private as well as governmental agencies at all levels -- Federal, State and local. The best primary sources of help would be provided by local libraries and environmental groups.

Objective - To provide a vehicle through which the Federal Government may recognize and reward constructive, responsible environmental services performed by American high school youth throughout the country.

Scope - The President's Environmental Merit Awards will encompass youth activities throughout the entire country and will be offered through more than thirty eight thousand high schools, both public and private.

Structure - Environmental service awards will recognize two levels of accomplishment in the performance of environmental service. The first level will be granted to all students or student groups who undertake and complete a responsible environmental service project. The second level will be awarded for projects which are considered by a judging panel to merit special recognition for achievement.

Administration - The awards program will be administered at the local level, using judging and advisory panels made up of student, faculty and community representatives. This method of administration is considered essential because evaluation of projects should be made using community needs and problems to determine the criteria.

Participation - Students may take part as individuals or as members of school organizations. They can choose a more passive role concerned in a general education - type project or play a more active role by becoming involved in a project concerned with governmental process.

Categories of Concern - Individual or group activities could be undertaken under a number of objectives such as:

Education - Possible activities could be to conduct pollution surveys, to gather watershed analysis data, to develop inventories of consumer habits or to study government and legislative processes.

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Environmental Awareness - This category would carry the education process one step further by giving presentations at community meetings, preparing articles for local newspapers, sponsoring ecology fairs and working with younger children.

Community Service - Suggested projects could include restoring streams to their natural state, eliminating vermin, cleaning up litter, landscaping a park, staffing an environmental information center or operating a recycling program.

Public Affairs - Direct involvement in government at work could include cooperating with public officials, attending public hearings, presenting environmental data to zoning boards, sewage districts planning authorities and utility commissions.

Support - Private as well as governmental agencies at all levels -- Federal, State, and local offer a wide variety of assistance to projects. While capable of supplying general information needs, large agencies are best utilized once specific program objectives have been determined. Local libraries and environmental groups are the primary source of information during initial project development.

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