

York Community High School

2023 Project Report

The Project:

York Community High School's project spanned the entire school year, majority-led by 25 students in Eco Club. They learned about water quality, did a school water audit, participated in various local events to improve water quality, and committed to educating the community about water quality.

Project Focus: Path to Net Zero & Water Conservation

Location: Elmhurst, IL

Staff Involved: 2

Students: 25



The York Eco Club... identified single use plastic water bottles as the priority.



The Process & Outcomes:

The York Eco Club convened to discuss the biggest problem at the school and identified single use plastic water bottles as the priority. Students then met with founder of SCARCE Kay McKeen to learn about steps to earn the water quality flag for our school. With mentor Chris Philbrick, we outlined some projects the students wanted to tackle to educate on water quality.

- The club worked together to clean up the local Elmhurst Prairie Path. They learned about native grasses and invasive species and their contributions to water quality.
- With SCARCE, we organized a pumpkin smash event in our town. We learned that pumpkins are mostly water and leak greenhouse gases into the soil and water if sitting in landfills. We composted over 1,000 smashed pumpkins.
- Students posted weekly 'water quality tips' on the Instagram page to educate students and community members on how they can improve the local water quality.
- Students participated in the Trex Soft Plastic Recycling Challenge and properly recycled over 7,000 lbs of plastic, learning about microplastics and their effect on water quality.
- York earned a grant from the Illinois Green Schools Project to combine with a previous grant to purchase a water bottle filling station. Students partnered with the building manager to identify a high traffic place to put the water fountain, which will be installed soon!
- The Eco Club identified several students without a reusable water bottle, and purchased some in bulk to share with students to curb the use of single-use plastics at school.
- 7 groups from the school competed in SCARCE's Sustainable Design challenge, using their newfound knowledge of water quality to create sustainable buildings.
- York partnered with Elmhurst Cleanup Give Back to do a cleanup of trash around the school. They shared their knowledge of plastics/garbage and their effects on water quality if not properly disposed of.



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