

Where The Young Things Are – Diversifying Your LAC
Take Home Handout
Suggestions for Recruiting Young People

Connect Locally - School or University/College:

Students become aware of LACs when they hear about it from their teachers, professors or other school contacts/events. Below are mere suggestions when making contact with local schools and colleges.

□ **Initiate Contact with Local School:**

- Science Teacher or Environmental Science Professor/Department Head
- Coordinator of Community Programs/Student Engagement/Community Service

□ **Determine Level of Involvement:**

Find out what programs exist and see if they are willing to work with you.

- Professor/Teacher takes class to assist in LAC water quality monitoring or other hands-on activity
- Community service or volunteer hours/credits for assisting LAC event (e.g. River Cleanup). More information on how to write a volunteer description [here](#).
- Unpaid Internship – e.g. includes heavy science component (for environmental science majors – data collection and analysis), student develops education and outreach program for LAC(?), assists with social media management, abides with Labor Laws. What skills and experience will students gain?
- LAC member – student or professor
- Other Collaboration ideas?

□ **Tools to Connect:**

- Word of Mouth
- Outreach booth at university student engagement event or community fair
- Organize a community-based volunteer event (e.g. River Cleanup; Bug Night; volunteer work days)
- Website – include a “Get Involved” tab
- Social Media* – Facebook page, Facebook Events page & link, Twitter
- Local Podcast
- Post volunteer opportunity on [Stewardship Network New England](#) Event Calendar – a volunteer network. Examples: water quality training, river cleanup
- Create partnerships with other like-minded groups

**Social Media is known as the best mode of communication for the younger generation*

Connect Locally – Water Resource Engineering Consulting Firms

One water resource engineer recommended that LACs consider contacting these local dam removal/stream restoration consulting firms as they have young engineers that are looking for more experience to get involved.

List of dam removal / stream restoration consulting firms:

<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/damremoval/consultants.htm>

What Motivates Young People to Join?

Young people are driven by their passion, want to get their hands dirty and feel like they are contributing to a greater cause (e.g. help improve the environment, keep rivers clean and safe). Young people like to feel like they are part of the process with a hands-on experience. They want to make a difference in a simple way. College students say they are also looking for field experience and good resume builders.

- **Create Fun & Contributing Opportunities/Events** – create fun opportunities that make young people feel they are contributing to helping their environment and making a difference (e.g. volunteer river cleanup day, bug night). Young people don't necessarily want to give donations, they would rather be involved by doing something active and hands-on to help out. If you want younger people involved, you need to be DOING SOMETHING.

[Criteria for Crafting Fun & Contributing Opportunities:]

- **Hands-On** experiences with accomplishing something (volunteer trash cleanup challenge, monitoring of specific area-have some ownership of task). Again, Young Things like to be DOING SOMETHING, not sitting around. They like to be involved in the process, supporting activism and actively making a difference.
- **Make it Look Fun & Engaging** opportunities (e.g. Bug Night flyer). One 20 something biology teacher said people her age are so busy working that she looks for opportunities that get her outside of the house – target “get outside and have fun”. Post on FB event page pictures of younger people cleaning up the river.
- **Community/Team-Based/Socially-Friendly** events are better for Millennials. Young people like meeting new people and being around their friends. Advertise your events so you can “bring a friend,” work in groups to connect with others and develop relationships. Bear in mind that peer influence is a major reason why young people get involved. When sharing/posting event be sure to have pictures of other young people involved. Young people enjoy making connections.
- **Gain Knowledge, Skills, and Experience** – identify what kind of skills and experience they will gain from participating in your group/event. Volunteer Job Description – Social Media Expert to manage LAC website/FB page. More information on how to write a volunteer description [here](#).

- **Visuals & Videos** – When possible, use photographs of people doing things and being active to convey a sense that LAC is about people working together to make a difference. If you post videos on your website or Facebook page, keep them to 2 minutes long or less (best for grabbing attention). LAC members actively doing things/projects/monitoring. Include photos of young ppl when posting and recruiting for an event because young people are driven by peer influence.
- **Keep Your Message Simple and Clear** to attract Younger people. Avoid jargon as much as possible. Don't be overly technical. Use active verbs like "collaborate," "help," "prepare," and "build." Younger people read differently and won't read a bunch of text. Instead of reading left to right, their eyes skip around the page and look for key words and phrases that stand out. Website links also stand out so include a link in all your flyers and social media posts.

Once You Have Young People Join, What Motivates Them to Stay?

- **Productive Meetings & Good Leadership:** What makes a good leader?
 - Care about and passionate about what they're doing – it's easy to get behind someone (or a group) that believes in what they are doing
 - Organized
 - Good Personality / Friendly
 - Willingness to be the one that has to be the "adult" sometimes and either step in or help keep meetings on track
 - Good communication – consistent communication, regular monthly emails
 - Open-minded
 - Productive – making sure time spent together was useful at monthly meetings, actions to go with thoughts
 - Seek a balance of keeping the meeting comfortable informal/conversational yet generally on-track and productive
 - Ability to identify different members strengths and coordinating the use of those strengths to everyone's benefit
- **Ongoing projects and opportunities** – a couple younger people said they stopped going to LAC meetings because they weren't really doing anything, so it's important to have annual events/ongoing projects...something for people to do and look forward to ("doing something").

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about anything in particular on this handout. Thank you!

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