



KEY CLUB®

DISTRICT PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTALISM & SUSTAINABILITY

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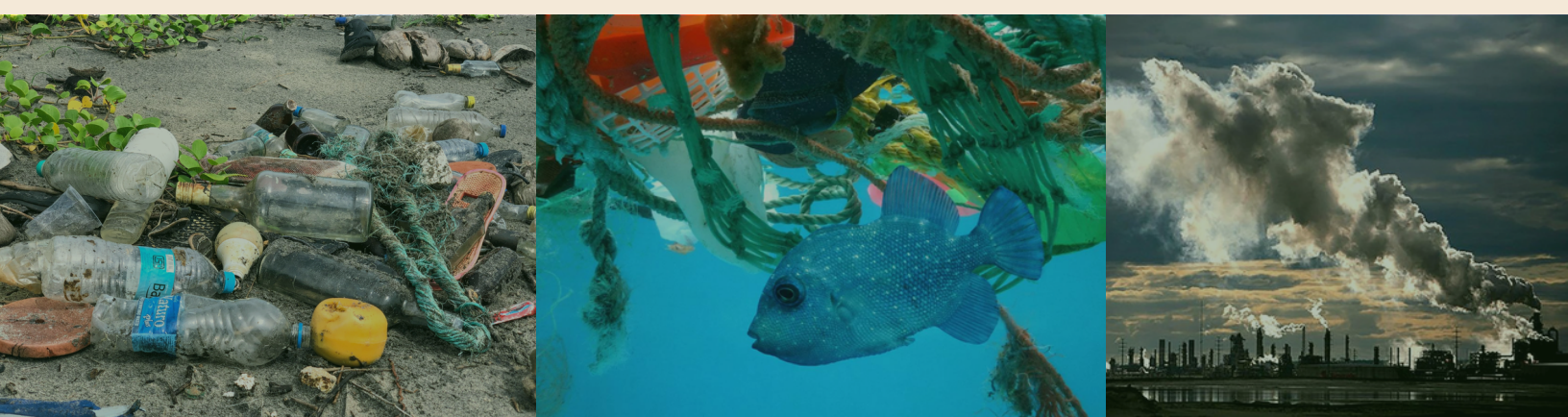


What is the District Project?

Environmentalism & Sustainability

The New Jersey District Project (DP) for the 2026–2027 service year is focused on environmental volunteerism and sustainability across our state. Endorsed by the District Board and supported through club-level and district-wide action, this initiative seeks to raise environmental awareness, mobilize student-led service, and take direct action to protect and preserve our parks, beaches, streets, and waterways.

Environmental degradation in New Jersey, from littered parks to polluted beaches and waterways, affects public health, wildlife, and quality of life in every community. Litter and debris travel from streets and sidewalks into storm drains, rivers, and ultimately the ocean, where they harm marine life and degrade the natural spaces we all rely on.



The project aims to:

- **Educate** members and communities about the causes and effects of litter, pollution, and environmental neglect
- **Organize** and lead park, beach, and street cleanups across New Jersey communities
- **Promote** long-term sustainable habits and environmental advocacy among student leaders
- **Encourage** clubs to build sustained relationships with environmental and conservation organizations
- **Empower** youth-led environmental action and amplify the importance of protecting shared public spaces

Key Club members will participate in cleanup events, awareness campaigns, recycling initiatives, and educational workshops that not only protect the environment, but also build civic responsibility, teamwork, and leadership within our schools.

What is “Clean and Green”?

The Importance of Park, Beach, and Street Cleanups

"Clean and Green" is this year's District Project campaign: a hands-on approach of organizing and participating in cleanup events at parks, beaches, and streets throughout New Jersey. Clubs will assemble cleanup crews, bringing people, gloves, and trash bags directly to the places that need them most.

What a Clean and Green Cleanup Looks Like

A standard Clean and Green event should be simple to plan and scalable to any club size. Based on guidance from NJ Clean Communities and Clean Ocean Action, a well-run cleanup includes:

- A clear location and permission: a park, beach, street, or waterway with any needed municipal or landowner approval
- Basic supplies: reusable or biodegradable trash bags, work gloves, and trash pickers/grabbers if available
- Safety basics: closed-toe shoes, sun protection, water, and awareness of poison ivy, ticks, and sharp debris
- A data log: a simple tally sheet or an app to record bags collected, pounds of litter, and notable items found
- Sorting on site: separating recyclables from trash where possible, and safely bagging hazardous items like glass
- A short debrief: a few minutes at the end to share totals, take a group photo, and note what was found



Timeline / Monthly Focus Ideas

August

- Introduce the DP Toolkit and explain how clubs can use it to guide their service efforts throughout the year
- Share toolkit resources, including flyers, timelines, and Clean and Green cleanup guides

September

- Host back-to-school awareness campaigns introducing the DP to new members
- Promote Fall Rally fundraisers, encouraging clubs to raise money for both Fall Rally and the District Project

October

- Participate in Fall Rally
- Launch each club's first Clean and Green cleanup event of the year
- Set up collection points for gloves, bags, and supply donations

November

- Host a fundraiser to raise funds for cleanup supplies
- Promote the district project via social media posts

December

- Focus: recycling education, reducing holiday waste, and proper disposal habits
- Tie into existing holiday drives or school spirit weeks

January

- Focus: adopt a park, street, or trail your club will maintain for the rest of the year
- Share progress with partner organizations and members

February

- Plan for spring beach and waterway cleanups
- Confirm logistics, permits, and supply needs with partner organizations
- begin recruiting for larger spring cleanup events

March

- Encourage clubs to submit final reports, impact, and more for DECON recognition and awards

April

- Attend DECON
- Participate in the Service Project

How to Participate?

Ways Your Club Can Get Involved

Educate Your Members

- Host a general meeting on environmental issues using provided slides or videos
- Invite local organizations or alumni to speak about global impact

Coordinate Drives

- Choose one or more categories: wildlife, biodiversity, sustainable fashion, etc.
- Publicize with flyers, social media templates, and morning announcements

Focus on Local Issues

- If a specific environmental issue is prevalent in your community, work with your club to brainstorm ideas to help locally
- Discuss which issues are important to your club members

Fundraise Creatively

- Partner with other clubs or community members
- Host themed events
- Use funds to donate to environmental organizations or buy products for donation

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Share your Work

- Post updates with appropriate tags and templates
- Raise awareness through social media or in-person

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Participation at every level matters!

Potential Organizations to Volunteer With

Clean Ocean Action

- Organizes beach cleanups and works to reduce ocean pollution throughout New Jersey.
- Clubs can participate in beach cleanups, help remove marine debris, and educate their communities about protecting coastal environments.



American Littoral Society

- Works to protect New Jersey's coastal habitats, marine ecosystems, and clean water.
- Key Clubs can support conservation efforts through coastal cleanups, environmental education, and other volunteer opportunities.



New Jersey Sierra Club

- Advocates for clean energy, climate action, and stronger environmental protections.
- Clubs can support environmental education, community outreach, and local sustainability efforts.



New Jersey Audubon

- Supports wildlife conservation, habitat protection, and environmental education across New Jersey.
- Clubs can volunteer through habitat restoration, trail maintenance, conservation projects, and educational programs.



The Nature Conservancy

- One of Key Club's international partners
- Supports land and water conservation, wildlife protection, and habitat restoration across New Jersey.
- Clubs can get involved by volunteering with habitat restoration and species monitoring, attending TNC events and educational programs, visiting preserves, and donating.



Why This Matters

Why Should We Care About the Environment?

The environment is a foundational part of our lives from the air we breathe to even our economy. Current environmental issues such as pollution, climate change, and deforestation threaten both humans and wildlife.

Although environmental threats may not seem evident to some individuals, the threat is real. In fact, New Jersey has the highest number of federal Superfund toxic waste sites. Heavy manufacturing from the past and into the future also left bodies of water, most notably the Lower Passaic Rivershed, heavily contaminated with harmful chemicals. Furthermore, the abundance of inactive landfills create public health concerns for nearby communities.



Altogether, these issues impact us. New Jersey's climate trends show increasing extreme weather and heat, paired with longer vector-borne disease seasons. Toxic waste sites, landfills, and unhealthy air quality trigger chronic diseases such as asthma, neurological risks, and cancer risks.

However, with cooperation and support from society, we can better the world by maintaining safe ecosystems, healthier communities, and a better future for generations to come. (Ex. recycling, energy efficiency, clean ups)

As members of Key Club International, we have the chance to lead service projects that inspire environmental change.

Resources

New Jersey Key Club (District Project Steering Committee)

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