

Youth Conservation Summit

Planning Tips





Youth Advisors,

Planning a Youth Summit is an exciting, rewarding and challenging undertaking. Through The Ocean Project's market research we know that supporting youth can have a far reaching effect on relatives, peers and other members of the community. Findings show that while youth are very interested in conservation and knowledgeable about issues, many don't have the confidence to take action. The goal of this project is to support youth ages 11-18 by empowering them with the information and tools to take steps in conservation. Youth have the ability to continue making a difference in our community for their whole lives. Inspiring youth to take steps toward conservation will empower a generation invested in preserving our environment.

This guide has been developed to help lead youth through the process of hosting their own summit event. Youth at our organization have responded very well when provided with goals, deadlines, examples and constructive feedback.

Desired outcomes of the Youth Environmental Summit Project are:

- Mentor a group of 5-10 youth volunteers in event planning and conservation education. Provide weekly support as they plan the summit event.
- Hold a one day Youth Environmental Summit with at least 100 participants.
- Inspire participants to take steps to make a difference in a conservation issue of their choice.
- Follow up with participants to encourage and assist them in meeting goals set during the summit.
- Share our experience with other organizations.

Please feel free to contact us if we can be of assistance as you plan a similar event.

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From our Staff: Best Practices for Planning a Youth-led Conservation Event



Keep youth informed- Young people already know a lot about why conservation is important. Keep them informed by introducing hot topics and making them feel included in your organization's conservation work.

Maintain a safe atmosphere and structure- A balance of fun activities and freedom to express opinions is important to keep youth involved. Set boundaries and rules to keep a safe space. Youth need to know ahead of time what will be expected of them and when. Meetings run smoothly with an agenda, group leader and someone to record and share what happened. Allow several months for planning.

Provide examples, but allow room for creativity- Planning an event is a lot of work. Collect examples and break down jobs into manageable chunks. If possible, attend other youth events and discuss what worked and what they might do differently. Encourage creativity and allow individuals to use their strengths.


Focus on local issues- Actions will be more relevant.

Identify projects youth can actively participate in- Projects and issues that youth can get directly involved with will be most appealing. Youth want to take action, they just need to know what they can do. Have teens brainstorm projects that they find most interesting.

Meet face to face with presenters- Have the group brainstorm what they would like to discuss ahead of time. What kind of presentation are they looking for? What does each presenter need? What kind of space do they want? Meeting face to face helps presenters understand what will engage youth.

Money- You can make a difference even with a small budget by using volunteers, asking for donations and identifying partner organizations to donate their time. We found that charging participants a small amount to attend ensured that they would show up and be interested. However, we didn't expect it to cover our costs. Grants and sponsorships will allow you to expand and add to the event.





From our Teens: Best Practices for Planning a Youth-led Conservation Event

Variety- Have a lot of activities and allow participants to choose what interests them most. Leave time for fun and social time- some of the best ideas come from collaboration with peers! Everyone seemed to enjoy the event more when we let them choose the workshops that interested them.

Advertisement- If you are holding your event when school is out think of local places to spread the word (like movie theaters.) Make and distribute brochures and fliers. Spread the word online.

Giveaways that match your message- People really liked the bags with our logo on them. To quote Daniel: “You NEED bags.” Think about what things are made of and use products with a smaller environmental impact. Examples include reusable pencils, pens and bags. Offer food and drinks with minimal or environmentally friendly packaging.

Make connections and talk with your speakers- Talk to speakers ahead of time and start planning months in advance. Make sure speakers will be relevant, interesting and know what to expect from the event.

Hands-on activities- Listening for hours is a little too much like school. The more interactive stuff is what people remember and seemed to enjoy most.

Helpers- Estimate how many people you will have and make sure you have enough help to direct people and assist speakers. Ask other volunteers to join and help out. Just asking can go a long way to getting more people involved.



Planning Goals

Goals 6-12 Months before Event:

- Recruit a committee and leader
- Schedule a date for your event
- Schedule a location for your event
- Plan target audience (number of participants, age)
- Prepare a planning calendar with target dates, meetings and deadlines
- Determine a budget and seek sponsorship if needed
 - Sponsorship: do we need sponsors?
 - Determine needs- what do we need sponsors to provide? Food? Water? Notepads? Pens? Pencils? Money for these items? Venue funds? Speaker funds?
 - Compose letters requesting help from sponsors if needed
 - Turn in letters to adult advisor for editing and distribution
- Create a name for the event
- Schedule a keynote speaker if you plan to have one

Goals 3-5 Months before Event:

- Decide what areas you need leadership in and delegate responsibilities to make progress in the following areas:

Agenda

- Discuss a tentative agenda- updates can be made later
- Make a list of possible partner organizations
- Make a list of potential speakers
- Turn in tentative agenda to adult advisor for editing

Marketing

- Create a logo for your event
- Make a list of ideas about how to get the word out about your event
- Write a message platform that includes:
 - who/what/when/where details
 - sponsor information
 - purpose of the event
 - context of the event
- Turn all of the above in to adult advisor

Registration

- Discuss how you will take registrations. Online? By mail?
- Determine a registration fee – keeping it low cost means using sponsors
- Determine registration deadline
- Make a registration form and turn in to adult advisor for editing



Planning Goals

Goals 3 Months before Event:

Agenda

- Make changes based on advisor feedback
- Compose invitations for partner organizations
- Determine speakers
 - Compose invitations for speakers (include message platform)
 - Send out edited invitations, respond to replies
- If other activities are planned- delegate responsibilities for these as well
- Talk about food. Is lunch provided or an extra cost? Make a list of food options/costs

Marketing

- Write a press release (use message platform) and turn in to adult advisor
- Plan other ways to get the word out- e-mails, schools, groups, newspaper, internet
- Decide who will help with marketing and turn plans in to adult advisor for feedback

Registration

- Your organization may handle registering participants. Consult advisor
- Determine when registration will start and begin encouraging people to sign-up
- Decide what you will give to participants
 - Ideas: Folders, notepads, t-shirts, backpacks, water bottles
 - Decide what these items will look like and make a list of costs
 - Turn in requests to adult advisor

Decorations

- Set your goals for decorations
- Decide who will be responsible for decorating
- Turn in decoration plans and a list of supplies needed to adult advisor for feedback

Goals 2 Months before Event:

Agenda

- Follow up with all speakers, brainstorm what questions to ask and answer
- Prepare introductions- who will introduce each speaker?
- Plan an event introduction. Who will present? Plan your presentation
 - Share your presentation with your adult advisor for feedback
- Agree on food based on advisor feedback, order once you know how many participants to expect

Marketing

- Continue to get the word out!
- Registration
- Order items to give participants based on advisor feedback

Decorations

- Make or order decorations based on advisor feedback



Planning Goals

Goals 1 Month before Event:

Agenda

- Finalize agenda, turn in to adult advisor for printing
- Continue to plan and practice your presentations based on advisor feedback

Marketing

- Check-in and find out how registration is going, find more ways to get the word out as needed
- Plan for marketing on the day of the event
 - Invite local media
 - Plan for someone to take photos and video
 - Turn in plans to adult advisor

Registration

- Prepare and collect materials to hand out to participants
- Ideas: Candy, pencils, flyers from local conservation organizations, seed packets
- How will you evaluate the event? Turn in an evaluation to your adult advisor for editing
- Prepare signage or banners
 - Make a list of your needs and costs, design signs
 - Turn in requests to adult advisor for feedback and ordering

Decorations

- Decorations should be 50% complete, continue to make progress on decorations
- Schedule a time to setup the event
- Determine room layout
- Turn in an update to your adult advisor

Goals 1 Week before Event:

Agenda

- Check on food order and provide final numbers
- Contact all speakers and make sure they are ready for the event
- Remind speakers of allotted time, if you will have a Q&A session, setup plans etc.
- Finalize your presentations
- Practice at the venue if possible

Marketing

- Follow through on plans for marketing the day of the event

Registration

- Close registration and determine final number of participants
- Print nametags for all participants
- Stuff packets to pass out to participants as they arrive

Decorations

- Decorations should be ready to go
- Remind everyone about plans for event setup
- Give your adult advisor a detailed report of your progress and needs



Planning Goals

Day of the Event:

- Follow through with all of your amazing plans!

Goals after the Event

- Send thank you notes to speakers, panelists and volunteers
- Set up a debrief meeting with group afterwards to discuss what went well and what can be improved in the future
- Discuss survey results
- Follow up with attendees to see what great ideas they put into action!

