School Conservation Volunteering

Sunshine Coast Council’s Community Nature Conservation Program supports the community to conserve and restore our natural environment in council’s bushland reserves.

Your school can join our 1,200+ volunteers annually planting 20,000 native trees and removing 550 wheelie bins of environmental weeds covering over 140 hectares of bushland.

Integrating conservation volunteering into your school curriculum is a great way for students to connect with their local environment and foster a sense of community.

What conservation volunteering activities do we offer?

**Bushcare**

Your school/class will assist with natural regeneration in our bushland reserves through the control of weeds to encourage natural recruitment of native species and provide in-fill planting when required.

- **Hand weeding**
  
  Using small hand tools to extract weeds and placing in bags and/or leaving in situ.

- **In-fill planting**
  
  If required, native plants will be planted in the weeded area. Small hand tools will be used for making a hole. A fertiliser/wetting agent, weed mat and tree guard may be added, followed with watering from buckets.

**Native tree planting**

Your school/class will plant natives to restore a degraded area where the soil seed bank is insufficient to allow natural regeneration.

Small hand tools will be used to remove loose soil from a hole. A fertiliser/wetting agent, weed mat and tree guard may be added, followed with watering from buckets.

In most circumstances the holes will be pre-dug prior to the day.

What is provided?

- **Planning & preparation of a suitable bushcare/tree planting activity**
  
  Where possible, we will select a location close to your school and choose an activity suitable for your age and size of group.

- **Supervision by one of our qualified Community Nature Conservation Officers**
  
  Our Officers are skilled in bush regeneration and working with volunteers and children and in possession of Blue Card and Provide First Aid Certificate.

- **All plants, materials, tools and first aid kit**

- **Safety & skills induction**

Information Sheet School Conservation Volunteering
- Information about the site and how their activity links to other local projects
- Upon request we can:
  - invite our local bushcare volunteers to talk about their volunteering, projects and work alongside the students (*NB: A majority of our bushcare volunteers do not hold a Blue Card*)
  - assist with the cost of transport to and from site
  - recommend (possibly assist with) additional educational activities (*NB: activities are usually best suited for groups of 10-15 students*)
  - provide a portable toilet if the site is not within walking distance of a public toilet and activity exceeds 2 hours.

**What is the school responsible for?**
- **Adequate staff supervision**
  This includes monitoring behaviour, head counts at start and end of activity and ensuring students bring any relevant allergy medication.
- **Ensure students are sun safe and wear appropriate clothing/equipment**
  For example hat, sunscreen and closed shoes.
- **Students bring along their own water bottle and any other refreshments/snacks**
  Reduce and/or eliminate the use of single-use plastic.
- **An understanding that we are working outdoors and activities may need to be re-scheduled due to dangerous weather conditions.**

**What commitment is expected?**
We aim to create long term partnerships and encourage activities to develop into annual/regular events. This will enable your school/class to re-visit sites and monitor changes overtime.

We welcome schools/classes that can only commitment to a once off activity.

To assist with our scheduling and budgeting we prefer to lock in dates at the beginning of a calendar year. A minimum of 3 months notice is required to enable us to select and prepare a site.

We recommend the school/class plan a contingency day as activities may need to be cancelled due to dangerous weather conditions.

If you have individual students wanting to gain conservation experience and/or give back to the community. They are welcome to attend one of our regular bushcare working bees. Contact us for more information.

**Safety**
Sunshine Coast Council is committed to providing a safe working environment for all our volunteers. All participants will be provided with a briefing and safety induction prior to commencement of any activities.

We recommend activities to be scheduled earlier in the day and for no longer then 3 hours.
See table 1 for general safety considerations.

**Contact**
For more information and/or to make an enquiry please contact Senior Community Nature Conservation Officer E: communitynature@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au P: 07 5499 5178.
### Table 1: General safety considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Safety &amp; Environmental Hazards</th>
<th>Control measures to reduce risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students not familiar with the site and conditions</td>
<td>• Conduct a site pre-start briefing to communicate information about the activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not familiar or competent to complete the task</td>
<td>• Clarify tasks, roles, PPE, materials, plant etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not familiar or competent to complete the task</td>
<td>• Clarify any site hazards, risks and controls, site rules etc. identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not familiar or competent to complete the task</td>
<td>• PPE must be worn eg sun safe clothing, hat, safety footwear, gloves, eyewear etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not familiar or competent to complete the task</td>
<td>• Practice good housekeeping to eliminate or minimise potential for slips, trips and falls eg keep the job site tidy and clear of obstacles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students not familiar or competent to complete the task</td>
<td>• Rotate and share work tasks to minimise worker fatigue. Avoid heavy exertion during the most intense heat of the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to site specific hazards eg uneven surfaces and footpaths that may result in:</td>
<td>• Demonstrate correct planting technique at start of activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to site specific hazards eg uneven surfaces and footpaths that may result in:</td>
<td>• Wear suitable PPE for the task. Gloves are essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to site specific hazards eg uneven surfaces and footpaths that may result in:</td>
<td>• Wash hands with soap and water before eating, drinking, going to the toilet or smoking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to site specific hazards eg uneven surfaces and footpaths that may result in:</td>
<td>• Ensure students bring any relevant allergy medication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to site specific hazards eg uneven surfaces and footpaths that may result in:</td>
<td>• Ensure students stay out of long grass and wear enclosed shoes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to site specific hazards eg uneven surfaces and footpaths that may result in:</td>
<td>• Be careful of litter items or piles that might be a refuge for snakes or spiders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to site specific hazards eg uneven surfaces and footpaths that may result in:</td>
<td>• Never put unprotected hands into enclosed or overgrown places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to site specific hazards eg uneven surfaces and footpaths that may result in:</td>
<td>• All areas zoned as possible risk (or higher) of UXO presence will be professionally scanned and cleared prior to activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) lying on or just under the surface</td>
<td>• Maintain a safe distance between team members and water that is deemed dangerous because of depth, current, murkiness, turbulence, difficulty of escape, steepness of banks, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) lying on or just under the surface</td>
<td>• Refrain from working on steep, slippery or unstable banks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) lying on or just under the surface</td>
<td>• Maintain a safe distance from water body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) lying on or just under the surface</td>
<td>• Designate any no-go zones in briefing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Current as at January 2018

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