

NEWS FROM THE CREW

CONSERVATION CREW SUMMER 2024

FROM THE TRAILHEAD

Although the school year is complete, happy summer pollinators and growing gardens are a testament to some of the amazing work our middle schoolers accomplished in the 2023–24 Conservation Crew year. Over 32 schools and 250 students participated in conservation projects that impacted their schools and communities. **Conservation Crew students from across the state gathered at the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul on May 6th for the annual Conservation Celebration** to recognize their accomplishments and share their projects with peers.

Prior to the Conservation Celebration, a panel of judges reviewed projects based on creativity, impact, resourcefulness, execution, and presentation. Top projects received an achievement award and an additional \$500 grant to support future activities.

CREW VIEWS

2024 Conservation Crew Project Winners

Out of our 32 participating schools, 15 joined us for our wrap-up event at the Science Museum. Each Crew created a poster display to explain and share their projects with students from other schools around the state.

- **PROTECTING POLLINATORS**

Pillager Public School won 1st place for their work on a pollinator garden. They also introduced recycling to the school and educated other students and community members on Arbor Day. They expect to divert over 150 pounds of recyclable material from the landfill over the course of the school year.

- **WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING**

Tied for second place were **Black Hawk Middle School** (Eagan) and **Prairie Winds Middle School** (Mankato) who both focused on recycling and waste reduction.

continued →

Black Hawk Middle School implemented “Trash Talk Thursdays” to educate the student body on recycling and composting. They collected plastic bags to weave into mats and created a classroom greenhouse.

Prairie Winds Middle School implemented a recycling system in their school, hosted “conservation stations” at school dances to teach other schools and students how to recycle, and began restoring 3 acres of prairie on their school grounds.

- **MICROPLASTICS**

The winner of the student’s choice award was **Achieve Language Academy** (St. Paul), who educated their community on microplastics in air, food, and soil. They set up plastic-waste collection bins around the school and used the materials to make sculptures and displays with facts about waste.

We’re thrilled to see the positive impact these students are having on their communities, and the leadership skills they’re developing along the way!

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Lynell Senden has led the Crew at Prairie Winds Middle School in Mankato since the start of the 2022 school year. Over her tenure, her Crew has **worked on recycling, reducing litter, and habitat restoration**. This year they were awarded the Achievement Award at the end of year Conservation Celebration.

“Conservation Celebration was a perfect culmination to a year of hard work and dedication in conservation. The Crew was proud of their work and making the summative video allowed for reflection of their accomplishments. The icing on the cake was being awarded one of the winning projects!!”

GROWING THE FUTURE

We are proud of all the work our Crews accomplished this year and can’t wait to see what the future holds. We are dedicated to continuing this work and investing in programs that equip leaders of today and tomorrow. We are eager to welcome new schools in the 2024–25 school year and reach 40 schools statewide. If you are interested in being a part of our program, check out our website at conservationminnesota.org/crew. The deadline to apply is September 4th, but we encourage you to apply early as spots will fill quickly.

CONSERVATION CREW

CONSERVATION MINNESOTA