



Youth Sign Toolkit

Overview

Using art as a tool for conservation, youth are invited to create artwork that would be used as educational signs on the beaches. These signs will help more people understand how they can be a respectful visitor by sharing the beach with birds, as well as encouraging more people to get involved in conservation actions. Youth generated signage is often viewed as very welcoming and engaging and has received very positive feedback from the public.

Similar projects have been conducted by many organizations, including various chapters of Audubon across the United States.



Recruit and Conduct a Classroom Presentation

My best results we recommend that you conduct a 20-30 minute presentation with the classes or youth groups that will participate, and then guide them in the production of the artwork. We have included several outreach and guidance documents that may be helpful in recruiting classes or youth groups.

It is also possible to have children produce signs at special events or on their own without a presentation, but we have found that a presentation of at least 15 minutes will produce higher quality signs that illustrate the conservation concerns well.

Organize and Select Signs

- Label each piece of artwork with a number to easily identify them.
- Scan each piece of artwork with a high quality scan. Label file to include the school or group name and sign number.
- If you will have a selection committee, set up a system for sharing and voting on artwork.

Seek Display Locations

Unless you are the land manager/owner for the areas that will receive signs, you will likely need to seek permission to install signs. There is a two-page sample document included in the

templates that can be modified to explain your project to land owners/managers at potential sign locations.

Seek alternative places to display the artwork. Inevitably, there will be more good signs than places to install them. To share their messages even further, you can work with local art galleries, museums, businesses, libraries, or schools to share the artwork as an exhibit. Email Laura Chamberlin for a sample gallery display sign.



Produce and Install Signs

- Recommended size: Min: 12" x 12", Max: 20" x 20" (not including footer)
- Recommended material: 6 mil PVC with weatherproof vinyl (PVC that is a little thinner or thicker will also work.)
- Highly recommend including a 'footer' to the sign to give provide education and conservation action. A sample has been included in the packet.
- Try to find existing poles or posts to use.
- Signs can be attached to wooden posts with a couple of screws. They can be attached to sign posts with screw and bolts. Zipties also work well with metal posts.
- Remember to consider the wind and weather when installing. If needed shelter

Evaluation

Currently there is limited formal evaluation of youth signs and their impact on shorebird disturbance and increasing knowledge of visitors. However, all partners who have utilized youth signs on beaches or other wetland habitats, report positive anecdotal feedback from participating youth, teachers, beach visitors, community residents, and local leaders.

Additional Resources and Templates

To help get you started with this project we have provided several templates and samples.

All templates can be updated with information relevant to your site. Yellow highlights have been provided to highlight areas that need your info. You are also welcome to make additional changes as fit your needs.

Sample documents are from sites that are already conducting activities. These documents should be seen as inspiration. You can use language directly from them, or create your own.

1. **Teacher or Youth Leader Outreach Template- Long Version:** This version is great as a follow-up to explain the project in detail to a teacher or leader that is interested in participating. It also provides enough information for teachers to conduct the activity on their own.
2. **Teacher or Youth Leader Outreach Template- Short Version:** This document is best used to drop off with schools or other opportunities. It is short and concise, but it may not provide enough information for teachers and youth leaders to conduct the activity on their own.
3. **General Outreach Sample:** This sample can be used to explain the project to land owners/managers, community leaders, businesses, and other community facility.
4. **Footer for Signs Sample:** These samples can inspire your own footer for the signs.

For Questions or Advice

Laura Chamberlin

Assistant Director for North America

Executive Office of Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network

lchamberlin@manomet.org

302-922-0682