



# Earth Day Challenge

**2026**

[tracyearthproject.org](http://tracyearthproject.org)

# One Earth. One Future.

The choices we make today shape the world we will all live in tomorrow.

In our annual Earth Day Challenge, we ask students to answer the question: What can we do to protect our environment, promote sustainability, and work together toward a greener, healthier future?



# Earth Day Challenge 2026

[www.tracyearthproject.org/programs/earth-day-challenge](http://www.tracyearthproject.org/programs/earth-day-challenge)



Dear Teachers,

We are excited to invite you to participate in the 2026 Earth Day Challenge. Our annual Tracy Earth Day Challenge is a chance for K-12 students to share ideas on how we can do a better job protecting our planet, and win \$1,000 for your classrooms.

Working in teams of 3 or more, students are asked to incorporate California's Environmental Principles (see page 7) to identify an environmental issue. Students need to define the problem, then work with their team to find solutions and create an action plan to solve the problem. Teams will evaluate their work by reflecting on the process. All projects are judged using a rubric developed with help of the TUSD STEM team.

The students' projects will be displayed at our Tracy Earth Day, on Saturday April 25, 2026. A winning project will be chosen from an Elementary School, Middle School, and High School team.

Projects need to be submitted for the Earth Day Challenge by Friday, March 27, 2026, 4:00 pm. For more information on how to enter, visit [tracyearthproject.org](http://tracyearthproject.org) or email questions to [info@tracyearthproject.org](mailto:info@tracyearthproject.org).

We wish you the best with your project!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Manju Theresa Mathew".

Manju Theresa Mathew  
President, Tracy Earth Project

## **About Tracy Earth Project**

Tracy Earth Project is a non-profit 501(c)3 of community volunteers in Tracy, CA. that advocate for environmental policies that invest in a healthy community for our current and future generations.

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# Earth Day Challenge 2026



## Who Can Participate

- The Earth Day Challenge is open to all K-12 students in the Tracy area.
- Teams must include 3 or more students.
- Teams must incorporate California's Environmental Principles, which highlight the deep relationship between humans and our planet.
- Teams will incorporate these principles and concepts to:
  - Identify an environmental issue in their neighborhood, community, or world
  - Define the problem, then work with their team to find solutions and create an action plan to solve the problem
  - After taking action, teams will evaluate their work by reflecting on the process

## Judging Criteria

- Project Impact--how significant is your challenge and how many people might be impacted by your plan?
- Degree of critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity
- Overall presentation of challenge--neatness, grammar, etc.
- The degree and extent to which California's Environmental Principles are incorporated into the project
- Team/class interview with a judge



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## Submitting Criteria



- Projects must be submitted to the designated judging area at your school by Friday, March 27, 2026, 4:00 pm.
- Use of Microsoft Teams, PowerPoint, Google Docs, video, or any physical representation such as a model, poster, diorama, or artwork is acceptable.
- Paper documents must be submitted in page protectors and students are responsible for providing their own clearly labeled devices, thumb drives, laptops, etc. for project viewing.
- Approved projects will be displayed at Tracy Earth Day on Saturday, April 25, 2026 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Teams may collect their projects at the end of the event.

## Recognition

- One winning team will be selected from the K-5 elementary level, one from the 6-8 middle school level, and one from the 9-12 high school level.
- Winning teams will be awarded \$1,000 to spend on science related materials or science related activities for their classroom.
- Trophies will be awarded to the three winning teams and displayed at their schools. Individual medals will be awarded to winning team members.
- The three winning teams/ will present their work at a TUSD School Board meeting.
- The Tracy Press will feature winning teams in the newspaper.
- All registered students in the Earth Day Challenge will receive a certificate of participation.



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# Earth Day Challenge Score Sheet

Rating	<b>Excellent 21-25 Points</b>	<b>Good 16-20 Points</b>	<b>Average 11-15 Points</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
<b>CRITERIA: The degree to which the Earth Day Challenge process was followed</b>	This project has thoroughly followed the 5 steps in the Earth Day Challenge process.	This project has followed most of the 5 steps in the Earth Day Challenge process.	This project has somewhat followed the 5 steps in the Earth Day Challenge process.	_____/25
<b>Degree of Critical Thinking</b>	This project incorporates all of the STEM critical thinking skills: analysis, interpretation, inference, evaluation, explanation & self - reflection.	This project incorporates most of the STEM critical thinking skills: analysis, interpretation, inference, evaluation, explanation & self - reflection.	This project somewhat incorporates the STEM critical thinking skills: analysis, interpretation, inference, evaluation, explanation & self - reflection.	_____/25
<b>Overall Project</b>	This project is designed to allow full comprehension of its message. Use of color & materials is excellent. Use of grammar, vocabulary & spelling aid comprehension.	This project is designed to allow adequate comprehension of its message. Use of color & materials is appropriate. Use of grammar, vocabulary & spelling mostly aid comprehension.	The project is designed to somewhat allow adequate comprehension of its message. Use of color & materials is mostly appropriate. Use of grammar, vocabulary & spelling somewhat aid comprehension.	_____/25
<b>Interview  (See Environmental Principles Outline on next page)</b>	Student/team clearly explains how one or more of the CA Environmental Principles is significant to their project including personal reflection and/or action steps.	Student/team explains how one of the CA Environmental Principles is significant to their project.	Student /team somewhat explains how one of the CA Environmental Principles is significant to their project.	_____/25
<b>Total Points</b>				_____/100  <b>Judge's Initials</b>  _____

# California's Environmental Principles

Highlighting the deep relationship between humans and the natural world.

<https://www.californiaeei.org/epc/>



## PRINCIPLE 1

People Depend on Natural Systems

## PRINCIPLE 2

People Influence Natural Systems



## PRINCIPLE 3

Natural Systems Change in Ways that People Benefit from and Can Influence

## PRINCIPLE 4

There are no Permanent or Impermeable Boundaries that Prevent Matter from Flowing Between Systems



## PRINCIPLE 5

Decisions Affecting Resources and Natural Systems are Complex and Involve Many Factors