

# SERVICE LEARNING TOOLBOX:

WORK PAGES AND CHECKLISTS TO HELP YOU  
GET STARTED AND KEEP YOU GOING



Elke Geiger  
Rural Education Program



Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory  
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500  
Portland, Oregon 97204

# SERVICE LEARNING TOOLBOX:

## WORK PAGES AND CHECKLISTS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED AND TO KEEP YOU GOING

Each project is unique to the needs of the community. The purpose of these work pages is to help you clarify your goals and keep track of project details. You will need to figure out specifics on your own. You may or may not need to utilize each section of these work pages. You possibly will want to add to the sections to make them meaningful for your unique context, since these are not comprehensive. These work pages are divided into four key areas:

1. **Preparation (Project Identification and Planning)**
2. **Action**
3. **Formal Evaluation**
4. **Online Resources**

Success in developing something new takes time and practice. Reflecting, and keeping good notes as the project proceeds, will assist you with evaluating the process and its outcome.

## PREPARATION

Preparation for a Service-Learning Project consists of two parts: project identification and planning.

### PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Consider this first step as a needs assessment to determine what kinds of service will benefit the community and what skills your students can learn in this context.

#### **Brainstorming a Project: Community Needs**

Finding a meaningful and useful project may require some investigation. Are there community groups that could use a helping hand? What are some niches in your community that need development? *Brainstorm with your students about possibilities.* They could be aware of additional resources! The following people may have needs or ideas about possible projects. They also could have resources available, including assistance, sponsorship, or expertise.

- Business people
- Personal contacts
- Community groups
- Public agencies (forest service, library)



Who is your community partner? Your school? Another organization? To what extent will the partner work with you? Establish these mutual expectations early in the process.

List your ideas for projects here. This is a great opportunity for you and your students to discuss the possibilities and weigh the merits of each. Projects that are not selected may be explored another time (either as spin-offs or parts to an ongoing series of service-learning projects)?


**PLANNING**

The following checklist provides an overview of the main considerations for planning your project. Your project may or may not require all these considerations. Description, in further detail, for each consideration follows in alphabetical order.

- | <u>Done</u>              | <u>Considerations</u>         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Budget Requirements           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Celebration and Demonstration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Curriculum and Assessment     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goals and Objectives          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Liability Issues              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Media Coverage                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Participant Roles             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Scheduling                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Structure                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Supervision                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Timeline                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Training                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prepare for Reflection        |

## Budget

Service learning does not need to be costly; however, sometimes funds are required for materials or transportation. What parts of the project require funds?

AREA REQUIRING FUNDING	ESTIMATED COST
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>

Sources of funding include:

- Community partner sponsorships
- Grants<sup>1</sup>
- Business sponsorships
- Fundraising



## Celebration/Demonstration

Celebrating the accomplishments of your project is important, as it allows students to step back and see what they've achieved. Considerations:

- ❖ What will you demonstrate or exhibit?
  - Presentation of concepts learned during the project and how they relate to the service
  - Demonstration of the service or "product"
  - Possibilities for further service-learning
  -
- ❖ Who will be invited to the celebration? Any outside guests?
  - Parents
  - Community partner
  - Students and teachers from other classes
  - Local news media
  - District level staff
  - Chamber of Commerce or business leaders



<sup>1</sup> These require advance planning. Visit Learn & Serve America's Web site from more information: <http://www.cns.gov/learn/resources/index.html>.

## Curriculum for the Project

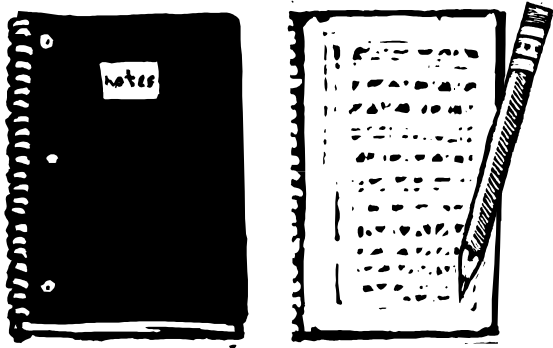
Service-learning will provide an alternative context for your existing curriculum. There is no recipe, since each project is unique. However, including the following in the development of the learning opportunities should provide a rich learning experience:

- Activities that stimulate the acquisition and application of course concepts and skills
- Promotion of high levels of thinking and the construction of knowledge
- Communicate of information and ideas, both directed and random
- Assessments that are integrated with instruction

Develop multiple methods for students to demonstrate their successes. Assignments that students complete for course credit may include:

- Journals kept for the entire service-learning process
- Oral presentations and/or demonstrations
- Essays
- Products developed for the project, or photos of them
- Diagrams that map out solutions to the defined problem
- Research papers on relevant background information
- Students self-evaluations (see Formal Evaluation section)

Include several of these items in a portfolio for students to use during the reflection process.



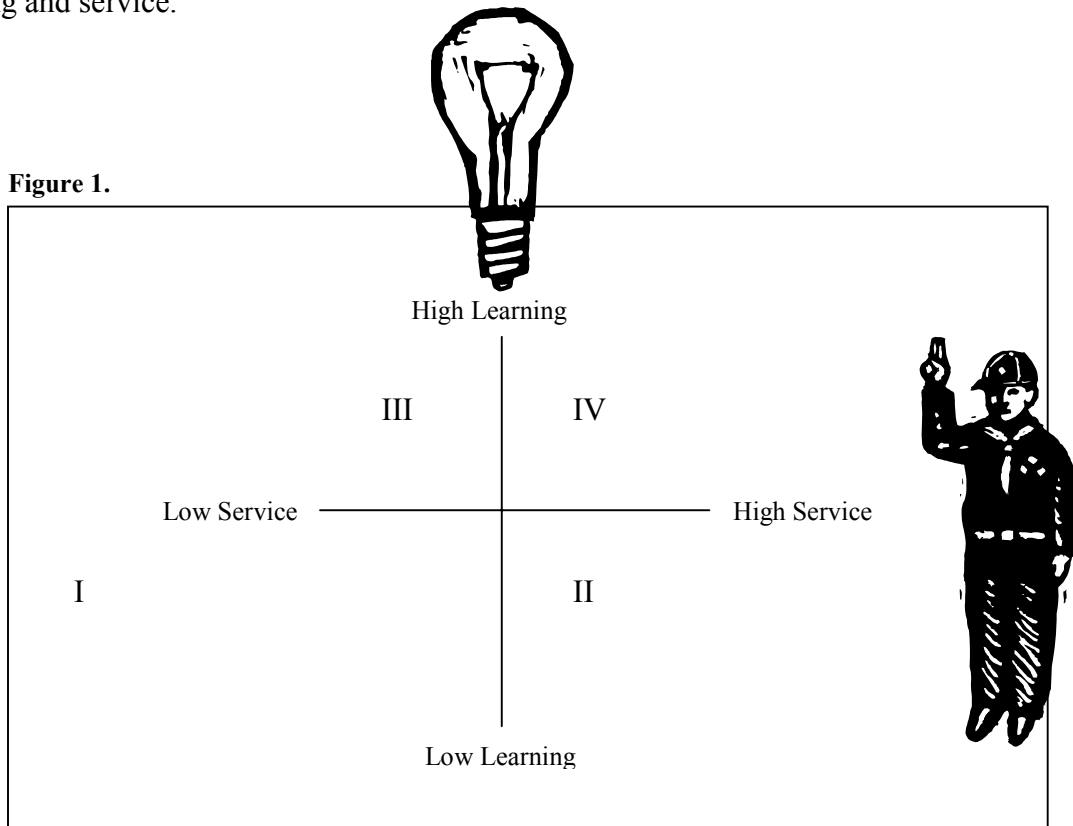
Developing your project curriculum in line with your goals and objectives (see the next section) increases your chances for success. *It is paramount to involve students in this process to give them ownership of the project.*

### ★Goals and Objectives

Tying project goals to specific outcomes of the project is one of the most important steps of the planning process. Whether you start with a service idea and seek learning objectives to match, or vice versa, it is useful to clearly develop goals for both. *Again, it is paramount to involve students in this process to give them ownership of the project.*

First, define where the project falls on the service-learning map in Figure 1. Consider the levels of both service and learning outcomes of the project. Some projects may have high levels of one continuum but do not have much of the other. For example, students may be studying a local watershed (high learning), but they do not assist in its needed restoration (low service); such a project falls into quadrant III. Likewise, some projects may have high levels of service but do not consider an academic component (quadrant II).

Aim for the top right quadrant, IV, which will provide participants with a good balance of learning and service.



Your overall goals can be outlined as follows:

SERVICE GOALS	LEARNING GOALS (KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES)
Benefits to students: _____ _____	Students will know: _____
Benefits to the school or community partner: _____	Students will understand: _____
_____	Students will be able to: _____ _____

### Learning Needs Assessment

What do your students need to learn, and how can it be linked to the project? Organize this by breaking down the learning goals into specific objectives that are clearly linked to your students' curricular objectives so outcomes are clear. The U.S. Department of Labor (1991) *SCANS*<sup>2</sup> Report offers a framework that integrates well with the principles of service learning. It includes five competencies and a three-part foundation that span both service and learning. (Note that your project may or may not lend itself to these competencies. You may also have fewer than three objectives for each one.)

#### FIVE COMPETENCIES

1. Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans and allocates
2. Interpersonal: Works with others
3. Information: Acquires and uses information
4. Systems: Understands complex interrelationships
5. Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

#### THREE-PART FOUNDATION

1. Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs math, listens and speaks
2. Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn and reasons
3. Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty.

Use the tables on the following pages to establish student learning objectives and their connections to curriculum and/or state/local standards. *Post these on large sheets for your students to use in reflection and evaluation of the project as it progresses.* Students appreciate knowing exactly how they will be assessed.

<sup>2</sup> More information on the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) can be found online at <http://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS>.

Why write out the objectives?

1. It can assist you with your learning needs assessment.
2. Clear objectives guide the evaluation of project outcomes (see Formal Evaluation section).
3. Tracking the objectives is very useful if you are using grant funds for the project; it facilitates the reporting process and increases the likelihood that you will be refunded.

Finally, look at what students know already, and what they'll need to know:

1. Define students' prior knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) and determine what additional KSAs they will need beforehand to be successful in carrying out the project; and
2. Determine the KSAs that students will gain while completing the project. Will they gain these "on the job" (OTJ) or in class? How do these match curriculum/standards?

Competency	Objective	Corresponding Curriculum
Resources	1.1: _____ 1.2: _____ 1.3: _____	
Interpersonal	2.1: _____ 2.2: _____ 2.3: _____	
Information	3.1: _____ 3.2: _____ 3.3: _____	
Systems	4.1: _____ 4.2: _____ 4.3: _____	
Technology	5.1: _____ 5.2: _____ 5.3: _____	

An example objective for systems competency for an environmental science service learning project might be, “Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding the positive effects of stream log jams on fish habitat.”

Foundation	Objective	Corresponding Curriculum
Basic Skills	6.1: _____ 6.2: _____ 6.3: _____	
Thinking skills	7.1: _____ 7.2: _____ 7.3: _____	*
Personal Qualities	8.1: _____ 8.2: _____ 8.3: _____	*

\*Your state or district may or may not have curriculum in personal qualities or thinking skills.

**Liability**

Talk with your school administrator about all liability requirements. Some of these include:

- Permission slips, releases for all minor participants
- Drivers insurance for those providing transportation
- Site/agency insurance for community partners
- Emergency binder to take with you to community sites (with student home contact information)

**Media**

Will you involve the local newspaper or television station in recording the project at all? Ideas include:

- Coverage during and after the project is in action
- Letters to the editor describing your students' accomplishments

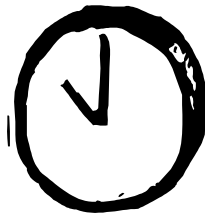


## Participant Roles

Roles of participants may differ from those in a traditional classroom setting. These multiple roles include but aren't limited to the following:

Participant	Multiple Roles
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• planners</li><li>• risk takers</li><li>• collaborators</li><li>• independent workers</li><li>• valuable contributors</li></ul>
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• facilitator</li><li>• community resource expert</li><li>• public relations director</li><li>• architect of safety</li><li>• leader</li><li>• mentor</li></ul>
Community partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• teacher</li><li>• leader</li><li>• supervisor</li><li>• information source</li><li>• mentor</li></ul>
Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• facilitator</li><li>• extra support</li><li>• information source</li><li>• mentor</li></ul>

See the Training section for more on exploring and making the most of these roles.



## Scheduling

How much time will you need for each component of the project? Do you need blocks of time? If you teach high school, you may need to combine efforts with other teachers/classes (see Structure section). Plan each session carefully to make sure the time of your students' and of your community partner is well spent. Align your needs with your Timeline (see Timeline section).

### Structure

How will you implement the project into your class(es)? How many teachers are involved? How does this effect scheduling? Is this project a stand-alone? Or is it part of a larger project?

### Supervision

The ideal number of students for each adult varies with the age range of the students, complexity and difficulty of the project, and the service site. What is the student to teacher ratio? Is this sufficient to carry out the goals of the project?

### Timeline

Map out the timeline for the project. Include start and end dates, onsite activities and any classroom instruction or reflections related to the project. Projects that involve frequent site visits and/or are relatively intensive may be more difficult to pinpoint.

### Training

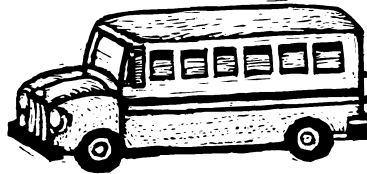
Preservice training is a good idea for all participants. It gives participants a better understanding of expectations and procedures, and may alert you to other needs.

PARTICIPANT	GENERAL TRAINING NEEDS
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective communication</li><li>• Problem solving</li><li>• Base knowledge required</li><li>• Cooperation and collaboration</li><li>• Appreciation for community and diversity</li><li>• Safety and workplace rules</li><li>• Understanding expectations of community members</li><li>• Philosophy and methodology</li><li>• Base skills/knowledge (see Goals section)</li></ul>
Community Partner and Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>★ Expectation for student learning (include SCANS info)</li><li>★ Expectations for student service</li><li>★ Evaluation strategies</li><li>• Where to go for help with challenges with students</li><li>• Philosophy and methodology</li><li>• Mentorship<sup>3</sup></li></ul>

<sup>3</sup> For more information on mentoring visit the National Mentoring Center Web site at [www.nwrel.org/mentoring/research.html](http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/research.html).

Tailor the general training needs to your project. Training can take place in the classroom, on site, or in smaller meeting spaces, if appropriate. It can be formal or informal.

A preliminary meeting for all participants to meet, prior to starting the project, is also advised; students may prepare questions or concerns in advance.



**Transportation**

Does the service project take place outside of the school? If yes, how will you get there? Options: school bus, public transportation, walking (if close by), volunteers (see Liability section).

**Reflection**

What are strong points in the service learning project? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

What needs more development? What are some possible solutions? \_\_\_\_\_

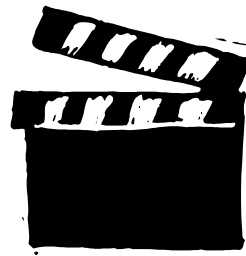
---

---

---

---

## ACTION



Go for it! Review your plans for each session to keep on track with goals, reflect on progress and problems, and continue striving for solutions. General questions to consider during the action phase:

- Is the timeline realistic?
- Have unseen needs arisen? Involve students in finding solutions. (Such reflection can assist in modifying the project, as in the case of “Fish to Goats,” see Appendix 1).
- How are students feeling about the process?
- How are community partners feeling about the process?
- How can you maintain/strengthen the connection between service and learning?

### **Reflection and Evaluation During the Project**

Reflection can be written, oral, or large group dialogue. It can be a self-evaluation done by students or evaluation of the project by the group. Suggested questions for reflection:

- ★ What kinds of things are we doing? How do our actions match our goals and objectives (both as a group and as individuals; refer to posted goals and objectives)?
- Do they match our expectations? If not, should we revise expectations? Or the project?
- Are leaders emerging? Who?
- What is the most difficult part? The most rewarding?
- What is your main contribution?
- Did we miss something in our planning? What?
- What kind of skills and/or knowledge do we need to make this project a success?
- What have you learned?
- How have we helped solve the problem that is the basis of the service component of this project?
- Are there any other needs arising that might be a good second project?

More questions are available at [www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/reflect.html](http://www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/reflect.html), *Reflection: Getting Learning Out of Serving*.

## FORMAL EVALUATION

The formal evaluation process can be broken down into three major areas: student learning, student service, and student experience. Evaluation is crucial in order to assess the success of the project and also give feedback for improvement in future projects.

### 1. Assessing your Students' Learning

Linking your assessment of the service and learning components to your earlier goals and objectives will give you the best picture for both summative and formative (for future projects) evaluations. It also eliminates surprises for students, provided that you have included them in the entire development process (see Goals and Objective section).

There are several ways to evaluate the success of the program. Using rubrics allows you to clearly link outcomes to objectives. Students, teachers and community partners can use these to evaluate the process as a whole, the project outcomes, or individuals (e.g., self-evaluation or teachers evaluating students). Students may also want to evaluate the community partner on willingness to work with them in positive ways.

An example of using rubrics for each participant is given below. Scoring occurs on a high-to-low scale. Scales can measure performance, satisfaction, learning, etc. Scales should be clearly stated at the top of each rubric.

It is essential if you are going to use rubrics that you also include a section for written comments so that students and the community partner have a chance to express additional thoughts or to refer to a tangible outcome (e.g., an assignment for the project; see Curriculum section).

Check one for each objective.

4=Outstanding; 3=Very well; 2=Satisfactory; 1=Needs Improvement

Objective	4	3	2	1	Comments
1.1...					
1.2...					
1.3...					

Assignments or portfolios that are submitted for course credit can be evaluated in accordance with your normal procedures.

### 2. Assessing Your Students' Service

Design an instrument to collect information from your community partner. You may want to ask about:

- Perceptions of students' willingness to participate
- The extent to which students met expectations

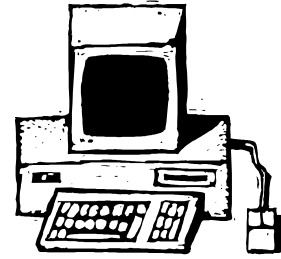
Share and discuss the information you receive with your students.

### **3. Assessing the Experience for Students**

Design an instrument to collect information on your students' attitudes about the project. You may ask them:

- What do they think they learned?
- What do they think they contributed to the community?
- What are their attitudes about service learning? Have they changed?
- Do they have any other ideas for projects?
- What is their perception of the community partner and their involvement?

## ONLINE RESOURCES



*Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Learn and Serve Project*  
[www.nwrel.org/ruraled/learnsolve/index.html](http://www.nwrel.org/ruraled/learnsolve/index.html)

This site is designed to provide contact information, highlight rural schools with service-learning programs, and provide links to local and national service-learning resources. It includes links to the Northwest Rural Learn & Serve Network and information on upcoming grants.

*The Solutions Primer*  
[www.shs-solutions.net](http://www.shs-solutions.net)

The Solutions Web pages provide examples of successes and failures experienced by one school in Shelley, Idaho.

*Corporation for National Service*  
[www.cns.gov/index.html](http://www.cns.gov/index.html)

The Corporation for National Service (CNS) is a federal agency that works with state governments and community organizations to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve through Americorps, Learn and Serve, and National Senior Service Corps programs.

*Learn & Serve America*  
[www.cns.gov/learn/index.html](http://www.cns.gov/learn/index.html)

Learn & Serve America is one of the "streams of service" administered by the Corporation for National Service. Learn and Serve America offers grants for service-learning programs in institutions of higher education, K-12 schools, and community based organizations. The Web site hosts resources, materials, employment and internship opportunities, and news.

*Close Up Foundation's Service Learning Quarterly*  
[www.closeup.org/servlern.htm](http://www.closeup.org/servlern.htm)

The Close Up Foundation's Service Learning Quarterly is a web-based resource for educators. The resources include three project plans that incorporate service into standards-based curriculum. The plans address issues such as tolerance of cultural diversity, prevention of cruelty to animals, and service for senior citizens. The disciplines addressed by the projects include English, Social Studies, History, Science, and Art. Additional project plans are included each quarter.

*Learn and Serve America Exchange*  
[www.lsaexchange.org](http://www.lsaexchange.org)

If you need assistance implementing service-learning programs, have questions, or simply want to speak with someone who has "been there," you can utilize the Exchange as a resource.

*Learn, Serve and Surf*

[www.edb.utexas.edu/servicelearning/index.html](http://www.edb.utexas.edu/servicelearning/index.html)

The Learn, Serve and Surf Web site is project completed by a master's degree student in the Instructional Technology Program, of the University of Texas at Austin. It showcases some of the most effective, educationally sound, service-learning resources and tools on the Internet.

*Learning In Deed*

[www.learningindeed.org](http://www.learningindeed.org)

Learning In Deed is an initiative which aims to make service-learning—a teaching strategy that integrates service to others with classroom instruction—a part of every K-12 student's experience. The Web site offers information geared toward policymakers, educators and students, researchers, service-learning leaders, and members of the media. The initiative is sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

*LEARNS*

[www.nwrel.org/learns/index.html](http://www.nwrel.org/learns/index.html)

Linking Education and America Reads through National Service (LEARNS) is a partnership of the following organizations: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), Southern Regional Council (SRC), Bank Street College of Education (BSC). LEARNS provides training and technical assistance to America Reads and other Corporation for National Service projects focused on literacy and education.

*National Service-Learning Clearinghouse*

[www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu](http://www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu)

The Learn & Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse is a comprehensive information system that focuses on all dimensions of service-learning, covering kindergarten through higher education and school-based as well as community-based initiatives. The Center of the Clearinghouse is located at the University of Minnesota, Department of Work, Community and Family Education, with collaboration from a consortium of 12 other institutions and organizations.

*National Service Resource Center*

[www.etr.org/nsrc](http://www.etr.org/nsrc)

The National Service Resource Center (NSRC) is a training and technical assistance provider to programs funded by the Corporation for National Service. NSRC is your one-stop shopping destination for information specific to community service programs.

*National Youth Leadership Council*

[www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)

The National Youth Leadership Council's mission is to engage young people in their communities and schools through innovation in learning, service, leadership, and public policy. As one of America's most prominent advocates of service-learning and youth service, the NYLC is at the forefront of efforts to reform education and guide youth-oriented public policy.

*Project Service Leadership*

[www.pie.wednet.edu/sl/psl\\_index.html](http://www.pie.wednet.edu/sl/psl_index.html)

Project Service Leadership (PSL) is committed to improving the quality of our schools and communities by tapping the talents and energy of youth. It assists Pacific Northwest schools in integrating service into their curriculum and assessment programs. PSL acts as a clearinghouse for publications and curriculum models and provides professional development and training for educators, students and community members.

*Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)*

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS>

Provides valuable information for individuals and organizations involved in education and workforce development.

*Service Learning Archive*

<http://csf.colorado.edu/sl/index.html>

The Service Learning Archive is an online collection of resources and a discussion list created by Communications for a Sustainable Future at the University of Colorado.

## Appendix 1: Fish to Goats

A team of Solutions students began working on a project to help increase the numbers of Yellowstone Cutthroat trout in local streams. Through a combination of research and trial and error, the students developed some very successful in-stream incubation techniques. As they worked on the project, they realized that there were many factors contributing to the declining numbers of trout. They realized that hatching lots of eggs wouldn't help unless they dealt with some of the other factors contributing to the problem.

Student research found that one contributing factor was weed infestation. Noxious weeds were crowding out the native grasses. When it rained, the weeds were not able to hold the topsoil as well as the native grasses and the streams filled with sediment. So, what began as a fish hatching project developed into a noxious weed elimination project. Further research indicated that weeds could be eradicated using a type of Cashmere goat. At that point the weed project developed into a goat project. Students began experimenting to see if goats would eat the weeds. The goats were so good at eradicating the weeds that students began further research to discover what could be done with goat by-products such as the meat, fleece, and hides. Then the goat project developed into a spinning and weaving project involving natural fibers. Currently, students are learning how to spin and weave, and have made scarves out of the Cashmere.

**Contact Person:** Mike Winston, Shelley High School, 570 West Fir St., Shelley, ID 83274.

