

Ideas for Outreach Activities for AFS Student Units

Outreach projects are easy and fun means for AFS student units to work with the university and surrounding community. These tasks can provide service and educational opportunities that not only benefit the target audience but also teach valuable lessons to unit members about the elements of fisheries science and AFS. Participation in outreach activities allows for student units to advance the mission of AFS in their own way. Below is a brief list and description of potential projects based on the activities of other student units over the years:

1. *Campus-based Projects:*

a. Service:

- i. The campus environment offers a diversity of service opportunities. Many colleges and universities have their own “Adopt-a-Parking-Lot” in which campus organizations clean up trash in campus parking lots at least once a year. Some campuses have streams, ponds, or green spaces that students use for recreation or relaxation. Contact the appropriate university personnel to inquire how you can get involved in the maintenance or improvement of these areas. If your campus doesn’t have a recycling program, consider starting one with your own unit. Work with other service organizations and professional societies (e.g., Golden Key, The Wildlife Society) on your campus on these types of projects.

b. Education:

- i. Many campuses have numerous fairs and festivals that provide opportunities for the AFS student units to promote fishing and fisheries-related issues. Consider setting up a booth at one of these festivals and coordinating activities or other means of information distribution regarding a particular issue.

2. *Community-based Projects:*

a. Service:

- i. Many cities have “Adopt-a-Highway” or “Adopt-a-Stream” programs in which organizations or groups of individuals can clean up trash at least once a year. Contact your local community board to find out if these opportunities are available.
- ii. Often university faculty host community programs that provide environmental education or allow the public to participate in environmental projects. One such example would be the annual Christmas bird counts that occur all across the U.S. Find a similar program on your campus and inquire how your unit may get involved.
- iii. Host a “Kids Fishing Day.” Identify a child-based group such as the local Boy Scout Troup or the Boys and Girls Club. Show them some basic fishing techniques and let them try it out at a local pond. You can also set up different stations, such as knot-tying demonstrations, tips on how to pick the best lure, or why fishing regulations are important to follow.
- iv. Organize a community fishing tournament. Follow the tournament with a community fish fry. Make sure to check with your local state agency for rules and regulations for hosting a tournament. Sometimes a permit is necessary.
- v. Provide free sampling and assessment of the fish community in backyard ponds and streams. Allow the homeowner to observe sampling, and provide a report with the results.

b. Education:

- i. Community grade, middle, and high schools are highly receptive to educational programs provided by outside groups. Show these students how to sample fish and invertebrates, the types of zooplankton and phytoplankton that is in their local lake, and how to age fish. Field trips are fun, but not always logistically feasible. Work with the teacher to identify the subject and methods of teaching.
- ii. Contact the local environmental or fish and wildlife group (e.g., Trout Unlimited, Walleyes Unlimited, Wildlife Federation, Izaak Walton League) and volunteer to write a column for their newsletter about fisheries and fisheries-related issues.
- iii. Host a booth at an outdoor convention. Demonstrate fishing techniques and/or provide educational materials to your audience.

NOTE: Outreach activities allow for AFS student units to be creative in designing and implementing projects for their campus or surrounding community. We hope this tips will be used as a spring board for other entertaining and effective ideas!