

2013-2014 Green Team Final Report

The Center for EcoTechnology (CET) continued to administer the MassDEP Green Team program in the 2013-2014 school year. In the fourth year of this partnership, CET improved access to Green Team materials by promoting the new Green Team website. The Green Team website plays an important role in connecting teachers to forms, useful educational tools, provides the Green Team community a display forum for media highlights and includes a Photo Gallery of Green Team participants. CET also created a trial-use of a private Facebook page for teachers to use and share resources, updated and improved the Green Team database and created a new page on the website dedicated to food waste diversion.

Participation Summary

The following table details the participation in the Green Team program this school year compared to FY13 and FY12. A reduction in outreach clearly resulted in reduced registrations. CET’s Education Director located in the Pittsfield office left in October 2013. Significant outreach in Berkshire County used to be performed by this position and was not continued through the remaining school year. Less time was directed to general outreach in FY14 with a negative impact on registration numbers. Outreach will be a larger priority in FY15.

Proactive outreach for submissions increased Teacher Response Form submission by 3% in FY 14 compared to FY13. Out of 79 Teacher Response Forms submitted this year, only 28 had submitted the previous year.

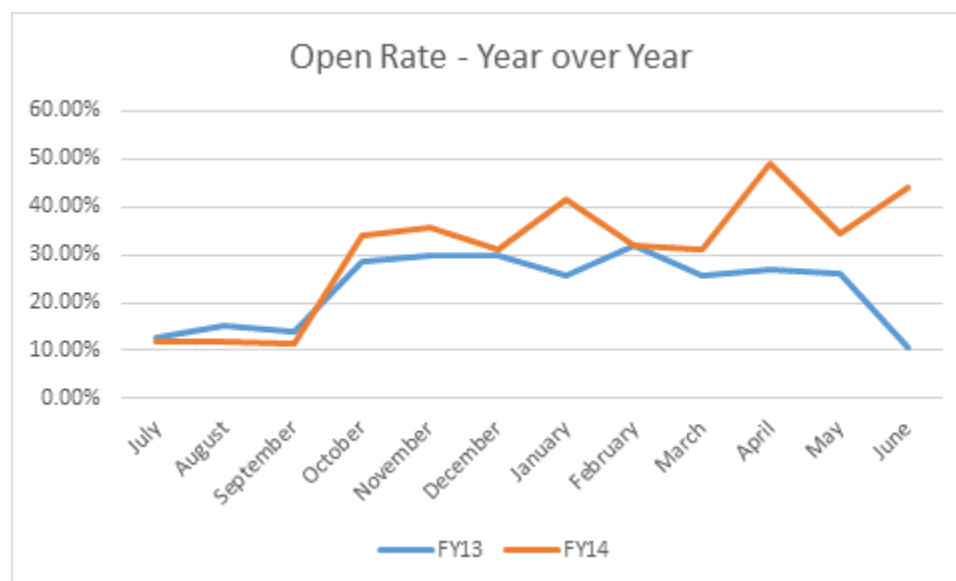
	2013-2014 School Year	Percentage Change	2012-2013 School Year	2011-2012 School Year
Participating Green Teams	289	28% Decrease	401	417
Participating Schools	237	21% Decrease	301	327
Participating Students	59,128	35% Decrease	91,634	94,475
TRFs Submitted	79	3% Proportional increase	98	102

Publicity

The primary communications vehicle with Green Team teachers is the monthly electronic newsletter. Registered and previously registered Green Teams received monthly emails containing relevant news stories, event listings, grant applications, contests and other inspirations to “green” their classrooms. Monthly newsletters were sent from September through June with two extra newsletters announcing the prize winners. The newsletter contact list reached 1983 email addresses by the end of the school year. CET has proposed additional funding in FY15 to analyze trends in the newsletter effectiveness and propose ways to improve this tool.

Green Team Email Newsletter Metrics		
Fiscal Year	Average Open Rate	Average Click Rate
FY14	32.92%	25.71%
FY13	23.04%	25.20%

*These numbers and the graph below show that this year's Green Team Newsletters inspired increased activity from recipients compared to last year.



In the 2013-2014 school year, CET continued to emphasize re-registering and the submission of Teacher Response Forms to teachers in monthly newsletters. Program results are published on the Green Team website at the end of the school year detailing school participation. Several news articles covering the activities of different Green Teams in the state are included below.

Participation and Results

289 teachers from 237 Massachusetts schools representing 59,128 students registered for the 2013-2014 school year (see *GT FY14 Registrations*, attached). This number of registrations is down from previous years due primarily to less specific targeted outreach recruiting teachers, further detailed in the Program Administration section below. Participants received a Green Team Kit containing a classroom poster, lesson plans, press release and suggested activities. 79 teachers submitted response forms indicating the Green Team activities they conducted with their students. Over 5,500 students pledged to recycle and prevent pollution at home, school and in their communities. Many teachers reported they have now made Green Team lessons part of their regular curricula and have linked lessons with other school wide initiatives, such as school gardens.

Equipment & Materials

Recycling

MassDEP provided recycling equipment to 48 participating schools across the state to help support school waste reduction efforts. Equipment distributed included recycling set out bins, desk-side bins, wheeled totes, compost bins and worms for vermiculture. The following chart breaks out the distribution.

	2013-2014 School Year	2012-2013 School Year	2011-2012 School Year
Schools Receiving Equipment	48 (50 requests)	54 (60 requests)	61 (64 requests)
New Programs*	34	47	53
Set Out Container	636	1191	850
Recycling Desk Side Bin	278	6	N/A
Recycling Cart	76	113	144
Compost Bin	27	32	53

*Quantity represents all new composting and recycling programs

Idling Reduction

Green Team classes requested and received Idling Reduction materials from the Green Team.

	2013-2014 School Year	2012-2013 School Year	2010-2011 School Year
Schools Receiving IR Materials	13	17 (18 requests)	18 (19 requests)
New Programs	11	14	17
Idle-Free Zone Sign	41	27	22
5 Minute Idling Limit Sign	6	15	65
Idle Reduction Pledge Cards	1550	500	1800
Static Sticker Windshield Decals	1100	1050	2300
Bumper Stickers	700	750	1000
School Bus Dashboard Stickers	750	250	1050
Palm Cards	1400	1800	4100

Idling Reduction materials remain to be in high demand. More signs were distributed this year than last year. CET started to ship the metal signs this year which has worked well.

Awards

Green Team members were asked to submit a list of climate change, waste reduction and clean air activities they completed by March 31, 2014. MassDEP recognized all 79 classes that responded with award letters, Certificates of Recognition and prizes for each student.

Of the 79 classes that submitted their Green Team activities, 19 classes representing 19 different schools were selected as grand prize recipients. The grand prizes awarded included 9 different assembly presentations by environmental “edu-tainers” and gift cards to a nearby garden center for plants or school gardening supplies. Green Team prizes were awarded to the other 60 classes (representing 47 schools) that conducted activities. These other prizes included Green Team wrist bands for children and adults, Green Team pencils, Green Team bookmarks, compost books, key rings made from recycled tires, key rings made from corn resin, and three types of information wheels: Daily Household Management, Composting and Daily Recycler. 6 out of the 9 planned performances have been delivered in FY 14 and payment has been processed for them. The remaining shows are scheduled for September, 2014. Once evaluations are received, CET will provide payment to the performers.

Program Administration

CET staff input registrations, assembled and mailed Green Team kits to teachers, forwarded equipment requests to MassDEP for distribution, corresponded with program participants, maintained the database of participating schools, solicited and entered Teacher Response Forms and prepared and mailed Certificates of Recognition, student prizes and grand prizes.

In 2013-2014, CET continued and expanded the use of an EcoFellow to help with administrative tasks, website support and primarily electronic outreach to recruit new Green Team teachers. Additionally, a CET Green Business Specialist was able to assist many teachers with questions about recycling and compost programs as requested on registration forms. CET continues to receive positive feedback from the Green Team Teachers and MassDEP. When appropriate, the Green Team is also promoted during the execution of other CET programs.

Participation levels with class registrations is directly correlated to outreach strategy and hours. CET lost an Education Director position in our Berkshire County office and it was not re-filled. As we once had a block of dedicated hours for outreach in this region, CET used different and less staff-resource intensive approaches in 2013-2014 to recruit teachers with limited success. CET attended events to table and recruit members, but the majority of the rest of the outreach was electronic. As in years past, we collaborated with partner organizations and our own network of email contacts to encourage participation. There are some important lessons learned from the approach this year that will be addressed in FY15. .

- Significant reliance on electronic communications will not produce the registration numbers CET and MassDEP expect. It does seem to reach a segment of the teacher population and has brought in significant new registrations as noted so it will be continued but not relied upon as exclusively.
- Our EcoFellows are less effective at maintaining relationships with our collaborating partners and permanent staff will play a more central role in this function moving forward.

- Additional Outreach through mailings, in-person speaking engagements, increased collaboration, conference attendance and other strategies will be employed in FY15 for higher participation.
- Work with MassDEP to recruit Green Team participation in school districts that received SMRP grants to implement district-wide recycling.
- CET Green Team staff will work more closely with our relatively new Marketing Department to develop and propose for approval, additional outreach strategies in FY15.

The issue of needing to re-register each year has been an ongoing discussion. CET will continue to have teachers reregister for the Green Team as part of the process to capture current contact information and quantifiable metrics of participation. We hear from teachers that many past participants in Massachusetts continue to use Green Team resources and lesson plans year after year, but do not “actively” reregister in the program, which would allow us to capture their metrics. Creative ways to capture these metrics may be explored in FY15.

Website Metrics:

Website Metrics 2012-2013

	Total Sessions	Users	Page Views	Pages/Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	Bounce Rate	% New Visits
Total, 2/14/13-6/30/13	592	454	2,230	3.77	4:18	60.81%	76.69%
Monthly Average	132	101	496	3.77	4:18	60.81%	76.69%

Website Metrics 2013-2014

	Total Sessions	Users	Page Views	Pages/Visit	Avg. Visit Duration	Bounce Rate	% New Visits
Total 7/1/13-6/30/14	11133	9123	30,582	2.75	5:01	61.83%	81.70%
Monthly Average	928	760	2,549	2.75	5:01	61.83%	81.70%

*The website saw a great increase in activity this past year; garnering many more users who spent more time using the site. The most significant increase was in average sessions/visitors per month. This year, we were also more successful at attracting new visitors.

Special Projects:

Green Team Facebook Page:

- An attempt to engage teachers through a private Green Team Facebook account proved not to be successful. CET started to promote the page in the November Newsletter and it was officially launched and promoted in the December Newsletter. Details on how to choose the correct security setting to access the Green Team Facebook page were given in Newsletters and it was promoted monthly until April. By that point, it was clear that traction was not gaining and CET was guided to terminate the page at the end of the year. Reasons for low participation may be due to Facebook participation bans for teachers, high security setting on the group or general disinterest in participating in a Green Team networking platform. The Green Team Facebook account was terminated in June 2014.

Green Team Database:

CET updated the MassDEP Green Team Access database. The following tasks were executed:

1. Updated the software to the most current version of Microsoft Access.
2. Updated layout for efficient data entry from new website forms.
3. Updated fields to capture all data submitted on forms.
4. Examined automated systems to upload data to the database from the web forms. Due to the existing configuration of the database, an update of this kind was not feasible. Re-created all queries needed for monthly/annual reporting and other reports as requested by MassDEP.

Green Team Food Waste Reduction web page:

CET developed and launched a new page to <http://www.thegreenteam.org/recycling-facts/food-waste-reduction/>. This Food Waste Reduction page has information on reducing food waste at schools, the Massachusetts Commercial Organics Disposal Ban, composting 101 and direct links to all food waste/composting resources throughout the Green Team website. The page is live and plans to improve it are noted in the FY15 Work plan. This page was launched in May and was promoted in the May Newsletter. The number of visitors to the website that day increased to 106 from an average of 68.

Green Team Media: 2013-2014

The following schools were highlighted in local media. CET requests links like these from Green Team teachers and support contacts across the state. These links will also be posted to the <http://www.thegreenteam.org/testimonial/gt-in-the-media/>.

Thorndyke

Telegram Towns reported that Thorndyke Road School received an award from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs as well as the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection because of the school's effective utilization of environmental resources provided by the Green Team. Recycling and leadership activities were led by Thorndyke's Focused Instructional Coach Stephanie Syre-Hager.

<http://www.telegram.com/article/20130629/TOWNNEWS/307019998&TEMPLATE=TOWNPORTAL>

Hingham

Hingham Patch reported that two Hingham schools were selected to receive special recognition for their Green Team activities. Hingham High School and Foster Elementary School received notice due to their participation in various environmental activities, composting and recycling.

<http://patch.com/massachusetts/hingham/hingham-schools-honored-by-state-officials-for-green-efforts#.U9aa3fldWwI>

Melrose

Melrose Recycles reported on the composting efforts at Horace Mann School. In partnership with the Department of Public works the Horace Mann School received worm composting kits and ran a year-long sustainability project. The Horace Mann has also participated in other green efforts.

<http://melroserecycles.wordpress.com/2013/08/06/worm-composting-at-horace-mann-school/>

Middleboro

Jeff Stevens, the recycling coordinator for the Middleboro School District was a recipient of the MassDEP's School Recycling Assistance Grant in 2013.

<http://www.thegreenteam.org/testimonial/>

Boston

Green Ribbon School awardee Boston Latin School participated in the national Green Ribbon Schools award ceremony in Washington D.C.

<http://bostongreenschools.org/blsgreenribbon/>

Green Team General

Wicked Local encouraged local schools to join the Green Team, providing a link to the Green Team's new website.

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/x2139024321/THE-GREEN-LINK-Is-your-child-a-member-of-the-Green-Team>

Attached:

- FY 14 Green Team Summary Report