

Grayson LandCare Fair 2020: Information Packet

The 13th annual Grayson LandCare Fair (formerly Grayson Land Stewardship Competition), sponsored by the Grayson LandCare organization, provides high school students in Grayson County and the City of Galax (Grades 8-12) an opportunity to explore ways to increase livelihoods, enhance the environment, and improve quality of life in our community. **To enter**, students first submit an online entry form, found on the Grayson LandCare website. **LandCare Fair Project Proposal Entry Form.** The entry form is structured like a Grant Proposal. A committee of Grayson LandCare (GLC) members will review and judge all Project Proposals. Students with the top scoring proposals will be invited to present their projects, to another team of qualified judges, at the **LandCare Fair, April 25, 2020, at the Grayson Co. High School, in Independence, VA.** Top scoring projects will receive cash awards as follows:



1ST PLACE \$1000

2ND PLACE \$500

3RD PLACE \$250

A POSSIBILITY OF FIVE HONORABLE MENTIONS \$50

How to participate:

1. Be a student in Grades 8-12 in Grayson County or the City of Galax. This includes homeschoolers.
2. Review this information packet, especially criteria for the Project Proposal (page 2) and the Project Presentation (page 3).
3. Decide whether you would like to work individually, or as a team. A team is limited to two persons.
4. Pick a *specific* topic that can increase livelihoods, enhance the environment, and improve quality of life in our local communities (See pages 4 and 5 for resources, and examples of past projects page 6). If you would like to discuss your ideas with someone, or get in touch with experts on your topic in our community, contact Harriet Meinecke, at hhmeinecke@gmail.com.
5. Submit your online Project Proposal entry form through the Grayson LandCare website (www.graysonlandcare.org/our-work/landcarefair) by **March 20, 2020**. Follow all directions and fill in all the blanks. The Competition Committee will review and score your Project Proposal and let you know by **April 3, 2020**, if you have been selected to present your project at the Fair, which will be held on **Saturday, April 25, 2020**.
6. Present your project at the **LandCare Fair, April 25, 2020, Independence, VA**, at the **Grayson Co. High School cafeteria, 8 AM-1PM**, to a panel of judges. You will need to **develop your display to set up on a table** (slideshow, poster, or props).

Project Proposal Entry Form

Please follow all directions of the online Project Proposal entry form carefully, and give plenty of thought in describing the background, objectives, implementation plan, challenges, literature & research, outcomes, successes, etc., of your proposal. GLC members will judge the proposals prior to the LandCare Fair, and **the score of your proposal will count 1/3 of your final score.** Remember to submit your Project Proposal's entry form on the Grayson LandCare website (www.graysonlandcare.org/our-work/landcarefair) **no later than March 20, 2020.**

Your topic should be presented as an open-ended question or statement such as *“How can we develop a profitable and sustainable local business growing and selling ginseng?”* or *“Developing a profitable and sustainable ginseng business in Grayson County.”* We encourage students to explore relevant literature and other sources (books, articles, websites) to inform their proposal, and also to reach out to experts in their topic area. Many GLC members are available to assist students with expert advice and resources, on various subjects of community and Grayson Landcare matters. For those contacts, please email Harriet Meinecke, at hhmeinecke@gmail.com. Some participants may find it helpful to conduct their own investigation, including personal interviews, in the community or on the farm. **While parental/guardian/mentor involvement is encouraged, all hands-on work of the projects..ALL construction, building, arranging of props, visual aids, or project enhancements-All WORK-must be the student's, or student team's, own work.** Work on your project might include any of the following:

- Personal observation and experience
- Demonstrations
- Pilot projects
- Interviews, accounts, or stories
- Surveys
- Experiments or testing
- Computer models
- Evaluation of economic or census data
- Monitoring or evaluating existing operations
- Case studies

Project Proposal Criteria*	Points Possible	Points Received
Project Proposal Characteristics		
Executive Summary - Describes the need for the project, its purpose, goals, expected outcomes, and a timeline for completing all activities.	5	
Background and Objectives - Details the situation/condition the project will address. Identifies how the project will improve the situation/condition. List three objectives of the project.	5	
Project Work Plan – Lists and describes each planned activity including how it relates to the project objectives. Provides a date of completion, resources required and who will do the work.	5	
Project Challenges – Lists/describes challenges and how they will be overcome	5	
Citations – Provides resources and/or personal research that supports the project assumptions	5	
Expected Outcomes and Measures of Success – Lists and details the expected outcomes and measures of success	5	
Project Proposal Quality		

Writing Skills – Correct use of syntax, grammar, spelling and punctuation.	5	
Total Score (TS)	35	(= TS × .33)

Presentation Guidelines

The LandCare Fair is similar to a science fair. You will stand at a table where you have set up your presentation display. Each judge will come to your table, individually, and interview you about your project. You will be expected to describe and discuss your proposal, and to answer questions about your project for approximately 5 to 10 minutes, with each of the judges. Both members of a team will be expected to participate in the discussion of the presentation to the judges. Visitors from the public may also stop by to see your project, but they will be asked not to interrupt conversations between judges and student participants.

You may use whatever format or visual aids that are best suited to your topic (for example, creating a website, making a Power Point slide show, doing a poster or demonstration). On the day of the Fair, we will provide you with a table to set up your presentation. Electrical outlets will be available for those who need them. A panel of judges from local agencies and organizations and regional universities will assess your projects based on the criteria outlined in the table below.

Again, the **2020 LandCare Fair** will be **Saturday, April 25, at the Grayson Co. High School Cafeteria, Independence, VA, 8:00 am- 1 pm**. Parents and community members are invited to view the projects 10:00AM - 1:00PM, and attend the awards ceremony, which will follow the final tabulation of scores from the judging.

Presentations at the Fair will be scored on the following criteria. **The score of your presentation will count 2/3 of your final score.** Proposal and Presentation combined scores will be used to determine projects that receive cash awards.

Presentation Criteria*	Points Possible	Points Received
Quality		
Display (poster, slideshow, and/or props) is professional, creative, and helps visitors better understand the project	5	
Student or team clearly articulates the benefits of their project to livelihoods, the environment, and quality of life in Grayson County citing published research and/or their own observations	5	
Student or team acknowledges some of the challenges of the project	5	
Student or team is professional in attire (business casual) and demeanor	5	
Characteristics of the project		
Feasible for implementation in our region	5	
Creative and innovative	5	

Could benefit livelihoods, the environment, and quality of life	5	
Total Score (TS)	35	(= TS × .67)

*Scoring Values for both the Project Proposal and Presentation utilize a 1-5 scale as follows:
 1 = substandard; 2 = average; 3 = good; 4 = very good; 5 = excellent.

Resources

Local Resources

Grayson LandCare: We have experts available on many topics related to agriculture, land management, entrepreneurship, and the environment. We will be happy to put you in touch with someone who can help you gather information. Examples are: raising and marketing beef cattle, rotational grazing, riparian borders, water quality monitoring, raising chickens/poultry for eggs and/or meat, market gardening, raising sheep for wool and/or lamb for meat, raising rabbits for fur and/or meat, farmer’s markets, forest management, harvesting hardwoods, non-timber forest products, raising medicinal herbs, and ecotourism and birding. To inquire about resources through Grayson LandCare, contact Harriet Meinecke (hhmeinecke@gmail.com).

New River Hill Farm, a farm owned and operated by the **New River Soil & Water Conservation** (Office across the street from MacDonalds, in Galax), is available for student projects. (www.newriverswcd.org/#!new-river-hill-farm/cfmd). Contact Tracy Goodson thgoodson@embarqmail.net 276-236-7191 for more information.

Carroll County STEM Lab at Carroll County High School is available for use by students in Grayson County and Galax. The lab has microbiology and molecular biology equipment that would be helpful for projects dealing with crops, livestock, soil, water, and more. Contact Rachelle Rasco at rnrasco@ccpsd.k12.va.us to learn more about how to use the Lab for your project. Please note that you *may* need to purchase some consumable equipment such as petri dishes if used in a large quantity. Grayson Land Care has some funds to assist with this cost; please contact Harriet Meinecke, hhmeinecke@gmail.com, for more information.

School and County Libraries are available to check out books and access online resources. Contact your librarian for assistance finding books related to your topic. Please see below for additional local and regional resources as well as links that may help you choose a topic.

Local Organizations.

<p>Grayson LandCare at www.graysonlandcare.org</p> <p>Blue Ridge Woodland Growers http://blueridgewoodlandgrowers.weebly.com/ or https://www.facebook.com/BRWoodlandGrowers/</p> <p>Independence Farmers Market http://independencefarmersmarket.org/</p> <p>Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority http://www.brceda.org/</p> <p>Crossroads Institute http://www.crossroadsva.org/</p>
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Regional/State Resources & Organizations

Virginia Cooperative Extension Publications <https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/>

New River Conservancy, West Jefferson, N.C., (866)481-6267, info@newriverconservancy.org

Blue Ridge Permaculture Network Resources <http://www.blueridgepermaculture.net/resources.html>

Virginia Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition <http://www.vabeginningfarmer.alce.vt.edu/index.html>

Virginia Association for Biological Farming <http://vabf.org/links/>

Sustain Floyd Resources Page <http://sustainfloyd.org/news/resources/>

Links for Project Ideas

Check out these links for project ideas, guidance, and resources. Access the links to the book publishers where you can find lots of creative ideas just by reading through the book titles. You can then do further research or request the book from your school or county library.

Youth Business How-To <http://economicempowermentfoundation.org/entrepreneur-programs/>

Service-Learning Project Ideas <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/news/projects-work-applying-implementation-science-research-k-12-service-learning>

Chelsea Green Books publishes books focused on sustainability <http://www.chelsea-green.com/books-and-products>

New Society Publishers publishes books on sustainability <https://www.newsociety.com/Books>

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Learning Center <http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center> to find books, bulletins, videos, and fact sheets on sustainable agriculture.

Some Previous Project Titles

Here is a sample of some LandCare Fair projects from the past:

Grayson County Community Orchard
Grayson County Community Garden
Medicinal Greenhouses
Harvesting Wind Energy
Methanol from Saw Dust
Commercial Composting
Environmentally Friendly, All Natural Cleaning Products and Toiletries
Creating and Marketing Eco-Friendly Fertilizers and Pesticides
Creation of an Elk Creek Community Center
Creation of a Community Coffee Shop
Starting a Garden at the Nursing Home
Sustainable Sheep Farming in Grayson County
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and Riparian Buffers
Raising Meat Rabbits in Grayson County
Raising Alpacas in Grayson County
Setting up a County-Wide Bee Hive Business
Creating a Business Selling Organic Free Range Eggs
Bird Watching Tourism
Eco-Tourism
Converting Homes to be More Energy Efficient
Creating a Solar-Powered Greenhouse
Lavender : A New Cash Crop?
Positive Effects of Vermicomposting For a Single Home
How To Change Our Community By Recycling
Conserving Wasted School Food: Feeding Our Communities
Rural Beekeeping
Small Scale Farming for Low Income Housing