

# LAND STEWARDSHIP COMPETITION 2018–2019

The 12th annual Land Stewardship Competition, sponsored by Grayson LandCare, 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. Students first submit an online entry form (in place of the previously required project essay) on the Grayson LandCare website for the Land Stewardship Competition Project Proposal. This new entry form is structured like a Grant Proposal. A committee of Grayson Landcare (GLC) members will review and judge all Project Proposals. This committee will then invite students with the top scoring proposals to present their projects at the Land Stewardship Competition, Saturday, April 13, 2019, at the Grayson Co. High School Cafeteria, in Independence, VA. These students will have the opportunity to compete for the following cash awards:



**1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE \$1000**

**2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE \$500**

**3<sup>RD</sup> 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.
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). 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](mailto:hhmeinecke@gmail.com).
5. Submit your online Project Proposal entry form through the Grayson LandCare website ([www.graysonlandcare.org/our-work/land-stewardship-competition](http://www.graysonlandcare.org/our-work/land-stewardship-competition)) by **March 8, 2019**. Follow all directions and fill in all the blanks. The Competition Committee will review and score your Project Proposal and let you know by **March 22, 2019**, if you have been selected to present your project at the Competition, which will be held on **Saturday, April 13, 2019**.
6. Present your project at the Land Stewardship Competition, on April 13, 2019, in Independence, VA, at the Grayson Co. High School Cafeteria, 8 AM- 1 PM , to a panel of judges and community members. You will need to develop a display (slideshow, poster, or props) to set up on a table.

## 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 Land Stewardship Competition, and the score on your proposal will **count nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup>** of your final competition score.

Remember to submit your Project Proposal's entry form on the Grayson LandCare website ([www.graysonlandcare.org/our-work/land-stewardship-competition](http://www.graysonlandcare.org/our-work/land-stewardship-competition)) **no later than March 8, 2019.**

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 of 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 [hmeinecke@gmail.com](mailto:hmeinecke@gmail.com). Some participants may find it helpful to conduct their own investigation, including personal interviews, in the community or on the farm. **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
<b>Project Proposal Characteristics</b>		
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	
<b>Project Proposal Quality</b>		
Writing Skills – Correct use of syntax, grammar, spelling and punctuation.	5	
<b>Total Score (TS)</b>	<b>35</b>	(= TS × .33)

## Presentation Guidelines

The Land Stewardship Competition 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 their 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 competition day, 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 2019 competition will be Saturday, **April 13, at the Grayson Co. High School Cafeteria, Independence, VA, 8:00 am- 1 pm.** We invite parents and community members to view the projects between 11:00 am and 12:00 pm and attend the awards ceremony, which will follow the final tabulation of scores from the judging.

Presentations at the Competition will be scored on the following criteria. Report and Presentation scores, together, will be used to determine top projects to receive the cash awards.

Presentation Criteria*	Points Possible	Points Received
<b>Quality</b>		
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	
<b>Characteristics of the project</b>		
Feasible for implementation in our region	5	
Creative and innovative	5	
Could benefit livelihoods, the environment, and quality of life	5	
<b>Total Score (TS)</b>	<b>35</b>	(= 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 Land Care:** We have experts available on many topics related to agriculture, land management, entrepreneurship, and the environment and 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](mailto:hhmeinecke@gmail.com)).

**New River Hill Farm,** a farm owned and operated by the New River Soil & Water Conservation District, is available for student projects ([www.newriverswcd.org/#!/new-river-hill-farm/cfmd](http://www.newriverswcd.org/#!/new-river-hill-farm/cfmd)). Contact Tracy Goodson [thgoodson@embarqmail.net](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

**Grayson LandCare** at [www.graysonlandcare.org](http://www.graysonlandcare.org)

**Blue Ridge Woodland Growers** <http://blueridgewoodlandgrowers.weebly.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/BRWoodlandGrowers/>

**Independence Farmers Market** <http://independencefarmersmarket.org/>

**Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority** <http://www.brceda.org/>

**Crossroads Institute** <http://www.crossroadsva.org/>

### Regional/State Organizations

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

**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** <http://readwriteact.org/files/2013/01/55-Environmental-Service-Learning-Projects.pdf>

**Chelsea Green Books** publishes books focused on sustainability  
<http://www.chelseagreen.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.

## Past Land Stewardship Project Titles

Here is a sample of some of the past Land Stewardship Competition projects that have been presented:

- 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
- Building a Dog Bed Using Recycled Materials