

# Environmental Stewardship

## course map

Instructor: Rachael Button  
Classroom: 133

Email: [Rachael.Button@conserveschool.org](mailto:Rachael.Button@conserveschool.org)  
Office: 115

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Part of the mission of [Conserve School](#) is to “Inspire Environmental Stewardship” through exploring stewardship ethics, writing reflectively, and learning how to be an environmental advocate. The purpose of this course is to equip you with practical skills such as critical thinking, communication, and knowledge so that you can live as an environmental steward: now and in the future.

This course explores environmental problems and solutions at the local, national and global level. In this course you will:

- Explore topics related to environmental ethics, environmental justice, advocacy, sense of place, youth in action and more.
- Learn how to be a steward of your future by exploring a variety of environmental colleges and careers through visiting guest speakers.
- Demonstrate your commitment to community by being a steward of our school environment through your participation in Stewardship Seminars and Campus Stewardship Projects.
- Have the opportunity to acquire practical skills in a variety of areas, which may include: trail maintenance, gardening, beekeeping, invasive species removal, maple sugaring and more.
- Develop a “Taking Action Project,” to promote/enhance environmental stewardship in your home community, connecting what you learn here with your future work as an environmental steward.

Skills explored: reflective writing, environmental advocacy, discussion and dialogue, understanding diverse perspectives, systems thinking, power mapping, and reliable sources.

### Essential Questions:

- What does it mean to be an environmental steward?
- How can you be an environmental advocate?
- How can you take what you’ve learned here about stewardship and apply it in the future?

### Course Objectives:

After completing the Stewardship course, you will be able to . . .

1. Define basic vocabulary around environmental stewardship.
2. Apply concepts of environmental stewardship to your daily life.
3. Articulate how you will be environmental stewards after you leave Lowenwood.
4. Understand educational and professional opportunities in the realm of environmental stewardship.
5. Learn about and practice reflection.

6. Participate in community stewardship activities, demonstrating a commitment and responsibility to community and an interest in serving others.
7. Plan an environmental project to implement in your home community.

### Grading Guidelines:

This course is graded using a weighted category grading system. The categories for grading include:

<u>Individual Taking Action Project</u>	<u>35%</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workbook</li> <li>• In-Class presentation</li> <li>• Symposium</li> </ul>	
<u>Class Taking Action Project</u>	<u>10%</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Reflection</li> </ul>	
<u>Heroes Presentation</u>	<u>5%</u>
<u>E-Portfolio</u>	<u>20%</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Page</li> <li>• Middle Assignment</li> <li>• Final Thoughts</li> </ul>	
<u>Discussion/Class Participation/Homework</u>	<u>20%</u>
<u>Campus Stewardship Projects (7)</u>	<u>5%</u>
<u>Stewardship Seminars (7)</u>	<u>5%</u>

Coursework is graded on a letter and percentage grade scale. The following grade scale is used:

A+ 96.7-100%	B+ 86.7-90%	C+ 76.7-80%	D+ 66.6-70%
A 93.3-96.7%	B 83.3-86.7%	C 73.3-76.7%	D 63.3-66.7%
A- 90-93.3%	B- 80-83.3%	C- 70-73.3%	D- 60-63.3%
			F 0-60%

### Grading Category Definitions:

- **Individual Taking Action Project (35% of final grade):** The Taking Action Project is a keystone experience of your time in the Conserve School program. For your Taking Action Project you will research environmental issues in your home community, then develop, plan and implement a project that furthers environmental stewardship in your home community. Some examples of past projects include: implementing a garden education program at school, starting a composting system at home, petitioning the city for the installation of bike lanes, advocating for cleaner water, and creating a school-wide initiative for the use of reusable water bottles.

- **Class Taking Action Project (10% of final grade):** The Class TAP is an opportunity for our class to define and address a need of Conserve School and work together on a project that will benefit the community. It's an opportunity to collaborate with your classmates to plan a project, identify and contact key players, create a budget, plan your time, implement your plans, and present your work. This project will mirror the structure of your individual TAP and (hopefully) prepare you for some of the challenges you may face planning and implementing your personal project.
- **E-portfolio (20% of final grade):** E-portfolios are a means for you to reflect on your journey at Conserve School as an environmental steward, an opportunity for you to reflect on the importance of stewardship and how you can be an environmental advocate now and in the future. In addition to promoting personal growth, creating e-portfolios will help you as you prepare for college and/or your careers. You can use your e-portfolios as material for your college applications, and outstanding e-portfolios are recognized with college scholarships.
- **Heroes Presentation (5% of final grade):** An effective way to develop ambition for the future is to look to the past. In order to gain a clearer vision for your goals in environmental stewardship, you will present on the work of a past environmental advocate. This presentation will include background information, an overview of the advocate's work, and an outline of how this advocate's work can be applied to your own Taking Action Project.
- **Campus Stewardship Projects (5% of final grade):** Campus stewardship includes work-based service projects done on Conserve School's campus that support our community and have an environmental stewardship focus. These are considered an extension of the Stewardship class. The Campus Stewardship Projects are led by the Stewardship teachers and involve projects such as: beekeeping, gardening, trail maintenance, invasive species removal, and more. You are expected to participate in at least 7 Stewardship Projects throughout the semester.
- **Stewardship Seminars (5% of final grade):** Stewardship Seminars are educational opportunities to further enhance topics studied in the Stewardship course. These are considered an extension of the Stewardship class. The seminars are led by the Stewardship teachers and involve activities such as: watching an environmental documentary, learning to make green cleaning products, a discussion on an environmental writing, and more. You are expected to participate in at least 7 Stewardship Seminars throughout the semester.
- **Discussion/Class Participation/Homework (20% of final grade):** This is NOT a lecture course. This is a small group / workshop / laboratory / playgroup. Reflection is an integral part of your experience in the Stewardship class and the semester program overall. Our class time will be devoted to discussions, writing exercises, small group collaboration, and peer response. Your active participation in all of these activities is essential to your growth and the growth of our classroom community.

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

### **General Expectations**

1. We all treat each other with respect.
2. Ask questions when they arise; as others might also have questions!
3. If you feel something is unfair, tell me! It's important to me to be a resource for whatever concerns may arise during this course.
4. When you are working on the computer, it is expected that you will be on task and working on the current assignment, with no other distractions.
5. I strive to create a friendly, engaging, and fun learning environment for students. Therefore, you are invited to participate actively in class. Participation should take the form of respectful, on-topic interactions with both peers and teachers. During class time, you are expected to stay on topic, and on task.
6. Please come to class prepared and be ready to participate actively on a regular basis. You are always expected to make your best effort. You are expected to take and demonstrate responsibility for your own learning. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions and to seek my help should you ever feel confused or uncertain or are concerned about the material or your grade. You are also encouraged to provide me with constructive feedback and suggestions. This is your class and we are here to help this be a rewarding experience!

### **Guest Speakers**

1. Speakers volunteer their time and expertise. Please be attentive and respectful.
2. We expect and encourage you to ask thoughtful questions during the presentation.

## **Class Assignments & Due Dates:**

### **1. E-Portfolio:**

E-portfolio entries are due by 10 pm on the following dates. E-portfolios may be edited for additional points until the next E-portfolio is due.

<b>Stewardship E-Portfolio Entries</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Home Page	Wednesday, 2/7 by 10 pm
Land Ethic	Wednesday, 2/28 by 10 pm
Final Thoughts	Monday, 5/14 by 10 pm

**E-Portfolio Scholarship Competition:      Due Date TBA**

This optional scholarship competition is a chance for the top three student e-portfolios (chosen by a

panel of staff judges and judged according to the E-Portfolio Scholarship Rubric in Google Sites) to receive a scholarship to the college of their choosing.

**Taking Action Project:**

**Assignments due in class unless otherwise noted.**

<b>Workbook Page</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<b>Experience &amp; Vision</b>	<b>2/21</b>
<b>Brainstorming &amp; Goals</b>	<b>2/21</b>
<b>Key Players &amp; Challenges</b>	<b>3/21</b>
<b>Resources &amp; Expenses</b>	<b>3/21</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>4/4</b>
<b>Timeline &amp; Sustainability</b>	<b>4/4</b>
<b>Completed Workbook due</b>	<b>4/4</b>
<b>Draft Presentation due</b>	<b>4/10</b>
<b>Final Presentation</b>	<b>4/11</b>
<b>Symposium</b>	<b>5/9</b>

## About Me:

I love to teach because I love to learn. I went straight from my undergraduate studies in English at Valparaiso University to graduate school at Iowa State University. My MFA program in Creative Writing and Environment emphasized not only the craft of writing but place, culture, geography, and ecology. This interdisciplinary approach led me and several members of my program to develop a place-based composition class grounded in environmental literature and land stewardship. Over the past eight years, I've worked with students ranging in age from first grade to college seniors in both traditional and nontraditional settings. I've taught in a Big Twelve University in Iowa, an environmental education center in western Washington, a remote public school in the Cascade Mountains, and a place-based elementary school in Maine. I believe in learning grounded in ecology, community, and respectful conversation.



At heart, I am an explorer who loves learning, listening, observing, and absorbing people and places. I've driven back and forth across the country half a dozen times--and I prefer roads that are winding and indirect--routes that take me through mountains or small towns. I love meeting strangers, trying new foods, and learning a new region by walking it, running it, working in it, and living in it. In addition to exploring and teaching, I enjoy trail running, cooking, climbing, writing, listening to podcasts, cross country skiing, making music playlists for friends and family, and hiking in the mountains or along the coast. Recently, I've enjoyed reading *The Green Shore* by Natalie Bakopoulos, *Girl at War* by Sara Novic, *The Wild Trees* by Richard Preston, and *No Matter the Wreckage* by Sarah Kay.

This class (your class!) was developed by a team of instructors who are passionate about stewardship, service, and helping you find both your place at the Conserve School and your vocation beyond this semester. You will have the opportunity to come out of this course with practical use-able skills ranging from professional communication to trail work, beekeeping to e-portfolio design. I am excited to not only have the opportunity to teach you but to work alongside you and learn from you. It's my hope that we'll form a cohesive and collaborative learning community and that the work we do together will inform our future visions of stewardship and leadership.

I look forward to meeting all of you!

With joy,

Rachael

## *The rules for success in this course are simple:*

1-Participate. This is NOT a lecture course. I try to structure class so it is student centered rather than teacher centered. In a teacher-centered classroom, the instructor lectures or leads discussions and the students listen, take notes, and respond to questions. In a student-centered classroom, students play a more active role: they initiate discussion, work collaboratively, and may even help set course goals. The rationale for this approach is that YOU will learn best when YOU are an active participant.

2. Be community minded. Treat others as they want to be treated. This means asking questions and listening when someone else is talking. As Simon Sinek said, *There is a difference between listening, and waiting for your turn to speak.* Come to class prepared. I respect your time by working hard on our class lessons and adapting to fit the needs of our class. Respect my time and the time of your peers by being on time, getting a good night's sleep, eating well, having assignments completed, and always having appropriate clothing for going outside.

3-Get comfortable with a DIY ethos. My goal in this class is to help you become capable of making, doing, and teaching yourself. This is a good strategy in any class, but especially important in a class like Environmental Stewardship, which is designed to launch you into your future academic and professional career. I'm going to give you what you need to get started, and then get out of your way to let you flail, flounder, and flourish! You can ALWAYS come to me with questions--but I will always begin our conversation with the question "What did Google say?"

You will receive consistent feedback from me and from your peers, so start getting used to hearing what they think of your work. Learning to evaluate your own thinking and composing is part of the DIY ethos. In the end, your work, your brilliance, and your high school career are yours--own them!

4-Challenge yourself. In-depth critical reading, thoughtful commentary, active participation, and ambitious projects are so much more captivating than safe, easy ones. Stretch yourself and I'll be impressed, even if you don't always pull it off. I promise, no one will be a bigger cheerleader for your success this semester than I will be – as long as I know you're working hard.

## *Course Contract:*

I have read my Environmental Stewardship Course Map. I understand my responsibilities as a stewardship student:

- to contribute to a culture of respect
- to ask questions
- to participate
- to contribute to class culture
- to come prepared
- to take responsibility for my own learning.

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(Signature)

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After reading the course map, please take time to reflect on the following:

A goal you have for Environmental Stewardship class (not related to grades):

A hope you have for Environmental Stewardship class (not related to grades):

A question/concern you have about Environmental Stewardship class: