

*Topic:* Creating a Healthy Watershed for Species

*Objective:* Throughout this lesson, place an emphasis on rapid species loss and how we can all make a difference. Also teach participants the four key ideas of waste reduction: reduce, refuse, reuse, and recycle. Then give participants the opportunity to put these ideas into action by collecting trash and turning them into a work of art. This in turn creates a sense of agency among the students through education and application, in turn manifesting the idea that you can be any age and be a steward of the planet.

*Supplies:*

- Life-sized armature
- Paper bags to collect trash
- Gardening gloves for each participant
- Hot glue gun and glue sticks
- Scissors

**Prep work:**

This project requires some planning several months out. First, you'll need to find a volunteer to build a life-sized armature. There are several options including building one out of reclaimed wood or with [paper mache](#). Connect with art teachers, engineers, builders or DIY aficionados to help with the design and construction.

The life-sized armature can be reused year after year, so you'll need to consider having a place to store it.

Challenge your group to explore their own backyards and bring found items with them leading up to the project. For a successful sculpture, you'll need a found ball for the head, and clothing like an old jacket or old shirt and jeans. Before adding found items to the sculpture, you'll want to secure the head (from a ball) and clothing.



Watershed Wilma, Earth Day 2009

**Welcome/Introduction:**

Improper disposal of trash, especially plastic, can be very harmful to wildlife in watersheds. Creating an ethic of responsibility for the appropriate disposal of plastics and other trash starts in our own communities. This project helps us better understand how much mismanaged trash can accumulate in our own backyards and within the grounds of our faith communities, negatively impacting the health and wellbeing of our waterways and species.

**Activity:**

Depending on your faith tradition, this intergenerational activity can take place within or outside of time set aside for religious education. Each participant should have a pair of gardening gloves, and precaution should be taken to educate participants about what kind of trash is safe to pick up (cans, bottles, etc. and what isn't (broken glass, needles, etc.). In small groups, participants will gather trash in paper bags. After a set period of time, participants will bring their found trash to a central location and an adult will assist in the construction of the watershed sculpture by using a hot glue gun to adhere items.

**Closing:**

Ask the participants what they have learned today? What can they do to take better care of our watersheds and the species that live within them? Why are things like recycling important? Why is it important to consider that "Everyday should be Earth Day"? What should be their next steps to fight pollution in their community?



Sample Armature