KEEP OKLAHOMA BEAUTIFUL

LITTER EDUCATION: MIDDLE SCHOOL

UPCYCLED

OFFICIAL RULES & GUIDELINES 2025-2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We are challenging students to create an upcycled invention using reused materials that serves a purpose at school, at home, or in their community. This hands-on project encourages creative problem-solving while promoting sustainability through reuse. Photos of the inventions will be posted online for public voting, with the top three finalists determined by the number of votes. From those finalists, a winner will be selected based on the class essay.

Educators and group leaders are encouraged to incorporate this project into their curriculum as a fun and meaningful way to explore real-world environmental issues.

Each submission must include a collaborative essay that explains the environmental impact of landfills, the benefits of reuse, research on local landfill practices and ways they could be improved, and how the invention is or will be used.

KEEP OKLAHOMA BEAUTIFUL

CONTEST TIMELINE

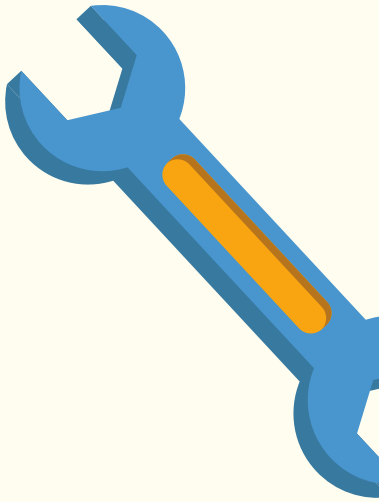
Registration
August 18-September 19*

Submission
September 22–October 31*

*Registration and submission forms will open at 10:00AM and close at 3:00PM

Public Online Vote
Late October

Finalists Announced
Mid-November



Winner Announced and Honored
March 2026 at the
Student Environmental Champions Awards

KEEP OKLAHOMA BEAUTIFUL

ELIGIBILITY & HOW TO ENTER

Middle school students in public, private, and parochial institutions, as well as those who are home-schooled, are eligible to participate.

- **Individual Entries:** Only students who are home-schooled may submit entries as individuals.
- **Group Entries:** All other entries must be submitted by a group of **6 to 30 students.** If your group exceeds 30 students, please divide into two or more groups. Each group must register, complete the project, and submit their entry separately, but may be represented by the same teacher or adult supervisor.

To participate in the contest, entrants must register during the designated registration period listed in the contest timeline on these guidelines or on www.keepok.org. **Please note that registration and the submission of the essay and photo of the completed invention are separate steps.** After registering, the primary contact listed will receive an email with detailed instructions for submitting the project.

Entrants retain ownership of their physical invention. Finalist pieces may be displayed at the Student Environmental Champions Awards, where the winner will be announced.

By entering, participants agree that submissions may be used by Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB) and its sponsors on websites and social media for public viewing. Entrants grant KOB a perpetual, exclusive license to publish, display, or otherwise use submitted photos and essays without further notice or compensation. KOB may choose not to post all submissions. By submitting, entrants agree to indemnify and hold harmless KOB and its sponsors from any claims, damages, or legal expenses related to the use of submitted materials.

KEEP OKLAHOMA BEAUTIFUL

PROJECT GUIDELINES

INVENTIONS

- All inventions must serve a clear purpose or function.
- Inventions are to be made of items that would otherwise end up in a landfill. (Please do not buy items specifically for this project. Students should be challenged to get creative!)
- All inventions must be accompanied by an original, collaborative essay.
- Entries must be created solely for the purpose of this contest and cannot have been submitted previously in a promotion or contest of any kind, or previously displayed publicly through any social media platforms.
- Entries must not include or reference any brand names, company logos, products, or services. This includes third-party trademarks, logos, or other brand identifiers. However, the name and/or mascot of the entrant's school may be included with permission from school administration.
- Photo must be in one of the following formats: JPEG or PDF.

***ALL File names should include the name of the entrant or school (e.g., SchoolName.jpeg). If submitting multiple group entries, please distinguish each file with a group name or number (e.g., SchoolName-3rdHour.pdf)**

ESSAY

- Essay must be between 300-500 words.
- Essays must be entirely original work.
- **Essay should answer the following prompt:**

Explain how human activity has impacted the environment in your community. Describe how your UpCycled invention helps reduce that impact by reusing materials to solve a real-world problem. Support your ideas with research, data, or observations, and share how your invention has been or could be used to make a positive difference.

- Essay must be submitted in either **.pdf** or **.docx** format.

SUBMISSION & JUDGING

SUBMISSION

Submission of a physical invention is *not required* for contest judging. To complete an entry, participants must upload a photo(s) of the invention and a PDF of the essay to www.keepok.org during the submission period outlined in the contest timeline. For online voting, the use of any "boosting" websites, programs, or other technology is strictly prohibited and will be grounds for **immediate disqualification.**

JUDGING PROCESS

All eligible entries will be posted on the KOB website in October for a one-week public voting period. The three entries with the most votes will be named finalists. From those finalists, a winner will be selected by KOB-appointed judges and program sponsors based on both the invention and essay. Finalists will be notified by email and publicly announced in November 2025 on KOB's social media and via email to participants and supporters.

All finalists will be invited to the Student Environmental Champions Awards in March 2026, where the winner will be revealed. Finalists are encouraged (but not required) to bring their physical invention for display. All entries will be included in a slideshow presentation during the event. The winning entry will also be featured on KOB's website, social media, and sponsor platforms after the event.

PRIZES

The winning submission will be recognized and celebrated with prizes from Keep Oklahoma Beautiful! All finalists will be invited to the Student Environmental Champions Awards in March 2026 (location TBA).

KEEP OKLAHOMA BEAUTIFUL

OKLAHOMA ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE

Below is a list of Oklahoma Academic Standards for science curriculums where incorporation of this program is compatible. **This list is not exhaustive**, and we encourage educators to expand their lessons to subjects outside of the "Earth and Human Activity" standards. More information on the Oklahoma Academic Standards of Excellence can be found on the Oklahoma State Department of Education website.

7.ESS3.3 Earth and Human Activities

Disciplinary Core Ideas: Human activities have significantly altered the biosphere, sometimes damaging or destroying natural habitats and causing the extinction of other species. But changes to Earth's environments can
have different impacts (negative and positive) on different living things. Typically, as human populations and per-capita consumption of natural resources increase, so do the negative impacts on Earth unless the activities and technologies involved are engineered otherwise.

Performance Expectations: Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing human impact on the environment.

Clarification Statement: Examples of the design process include examining human environmental impacts, assessing the kinds of solutions that are feasible, and designing and evaluating solutions that could reduce that impact. Examples of human impacts can include water usage (such as the withdrawal of water from streams and aquifers or the construction of dams and levees), land usage (such as urban development, agriculture, or the removal of wetlands), and pollution (such as of the air, water, or land).

OKLAHOMA ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR SCIENCE CONT.

7.ESS3.4 Earth and Human Activities

Disciplinary Core Ideas: Typically, as human populations and per-capita consumption of natural resources increase, so do the negative impacts on Earth unless the activities and technologies involved are engineered otherwise.

Performance Expectations: Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per-capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth's systems.

Clarification Statement: Examples of evidence include grade-appropriate databases on human populations and the rates of consumption of food and natural resources (such as freshwater, mineral, and energy). Examples of impacts can include changes to the appearance, composition, and structure of Earth's systems as well as the rates at which they change. The consequences of increases in human populations and consumption of natural resources are described by science, but science does not make the decisions for the actions society takes

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful reserves the right to change, update, or otherwise amend these rules & guidelines at any time.