



Getting Started

**So you want to start a Youth Guide to your creek, river, or watershed?
Fantastic!**

Here are the steps you should take to get started:

1. Fill out the sign-up form on this website. We will contact you with more information.

- If you wish to contact us with further questions, email us at info@deckerscreek.org or call the office at 304-292-3970

2. Organize a group of youth in your community to do the Youth Guide.

- If your organization doesn't have an existing youth group try contacting local schools, 4H and FFA chapters, or any other youth-oriented groups. Recruitment is very important, so make sure you develop a recruitment strategy.

3. With your group, create a list of areas within the boundaries of your watershed, river, or creek that represent the "good" and "bad."

- Good sites can include:

- Parks, trails, historic sites, waterfalls, fishing spots, or everyone's favorite places. Are there places some group members have already explored that could be good places for the group to visit?

- Bad sites can include:

- Sources of environmental impairment (such as acid mine drainage, combined sewer overflows, stormwater runoff, stream bank erosion), trash dumps, industrial sites, etc. Talk to local experts to help find these places.

4. Visit all of these sites with your youth group. (This is the fun part!)

- Record the GPS coordinates for each site with a GPS unit, phone apps, or Google Earth

- Write down information for each site to include on your Youth Guide

- For example, if you are visiting a park note the amenities available, or if you are visiting a good fishing spot note the species of fish that are found there.

- Take lots of pictures!

- Invite local experts (biologists, naturalists, etc.) to speak during site visits.

Create A Logo!

- Starting with the Creating Artwork Guide, create a logo for your group. You'll send it to webteam@fullsteamlabs.com and we'll put it on your group page when you start uploading guide information.(See the Deckers Creek web page as an example).

6. Conduct a website training and upload your points and information on the website.

- We have some great tutorials that make uploading information easy! Visit the 'Start a Group' link at the YWC website.

7. Promote your new Youth Guide.

- Advertise your Youth Guide on social media, create brochures, or host a launch party!
 - The Friends of Deckers Creek Youth Action Board organized a Watershed Walk along the Deckers Creek Rail Trail to promote their Youth Guide.

8. Continue to add to your Youth Guide.

- You can never have too many places in your Youth Guide, so continue to visit new places and add them to your guide. For places that you have already added, visit them again and create blog posts to keep people updated on what is happening in your watershed (check out the blog tutorial). You can keep adding pictures and other information, such as maps and links to websites, to your sites.

9. Share your Youth Guide using social media!

- Make sure you spread the word about Youth Watershed Connections so that your community can see the great things you have seen in your watershed! Use social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to show off your Youth Guide to your watershed. This is a great way to share your work with a larger number of people.