

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Youth Stepping Up As Environmental Ambassadors

(NAPSA)—When it comes to protecting the environment, the younger generation's involvement is sometimes limited to recycling paper and picking up trash. At 4-H, however, youth are tapping into their math, science, engineering and leadership skills to make a positive impact on their environment.

Birch Run High School in Saginaw County, Mich., was paying to remove the used cooking oil from the cafeteria without any thought as to how it could be reused.

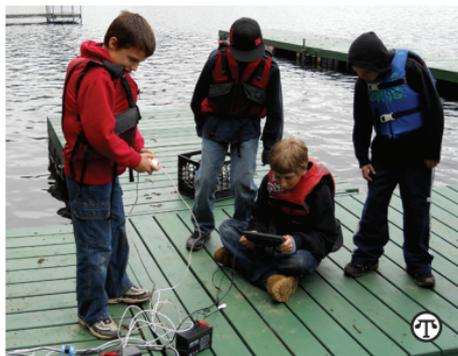
Five teens in the school's 4-H Club came up with a plan to collect the used cooking oil and turn it into bio-diesel fuel that could run some of their school buses.

The community joined in by donating its used cooking oil and the program now has 2,500 gallons of used vegetable oil to turn into bio-diesel fuel.

In San Leandro, Calif., another group of 4-H'ers decided to reduce its community's environmental footprint. Californians use hundreds of thousands of tons of polystyrene each year for packaging food, which accounts for a large percentage of the litter recovered from storm drains.

By educating restaurants, consumers and public officials about the negative effects of using non-biodegradable plastics, the 4-H'ers convinced the community to use alternative products.

Across the country in Oxford County, Maine, 200 students at the 4-H Camp & Learning Center are building underwater robots to identify milfoil—a weedlike substance that grows in fresh water. As an invasive species in the region's 11 lakes and ponds, milfoil can prevent fishing and swim-



4-H'ers from Oxford County, Maine, build underwater robots to identify milfoil, a weedlike substance that contaminates water.

ming, and contaminates clean drinking water.

The 4-H'ers use a video camera and GPS technology to identify the milfoil, so they can deal with the problem.

These 4-H'ers also do their part to educate the public about the environmental dangers of not cleaning off boats properly—the leading cause of milfoil buildup.

According to *The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*, conducted by Tufts University, compared to their peers, youth in 4-H are nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college, are three times more likely to contribute to their communities, and are more likely to pursue studies or a career in science, engineering or computer technology.

4-H's positive youth development programs are developed by the nation's 111 land-grant universities, and provide young people with firsthand experiences in learning how to limit humanity's impact on the environment. By taking part, youth are prepared to make a difference. For more information, visit www.4-h.org.