

NEWS FROM THE CREW

CONSERVATION CREW WINTER 2025–26

SPOTLIGHT ON PINE ISLAND

When Pine Island teacher Megan Schimek signed up to start a Conservation Crew at her school this year, she was already leading an environmental club with high school students in her building, which serves grades 5 through 12.

“In the back of my mind, I was like, why aren’t we doing something in the middle school?” she said. “When I saw your advertisement last spring, I thought, this is it. This is how we connect the two.”

Schimek launched her Conservation Crew for fifth through eighth graders this year with 19 students. She says the most excited students are the youngest ones. Her hope is that students will join in middle school and continue on to join her environmental club in high school.

In its first year, the Pine Island Conservation Crew is off to a successful start. They’ve made pine cone bird feeders, set up luminaries on a walking path, and hosted a holiday lights recycling drive, where they saved 220 pounds of holiday lights from going to the landfill. Next up, they’re working on an Earth Day art gallery, with projects featuring threatened and endangered species from Minnesota.

WINTER ROUNDUP

Across the state, Conservation Crews have been hard at work on a wide variety of conservation projects this school year. Here’s a small sampling of what they’ve been up to:

- The **Burnsville** Crew visited a local recycling facility and built a bee and bug hotel out of upcycled materials.
- The **Prairie Winds** Crew made seed bombs.



- **Hopkins North** cleared invasive buckthorn (in knee-deep snow!)
- And Minneapolis' **Olson Middle School** introduced composting bins that will be used for garden planting this spring.

Explore more with Conservation Crew: conservationminnesota.org/crew

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