# LOCAL PHENOLOGY PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDANCE

Use this guide to organize your thoughts and develop a successful long-term Local Phenology Program using *Nature's Notebook!*

## STEP 1. DEVELOP A RELEVANCE STATEMENT

**Guidance:** Why should your organization observe phenology using *Nature's Notebook*? If you can answer this question then you can develop a relevance statement related to embarking on the establishment of a long-term (2 year or more) phenology monitoring program.

**Example:** Our program needs activities for visitors that will provide educational information about seasonal plant and animal changes on native species.

## STEP 2. TURN YOUR RELEVANCE STATEMENT INTO A GOAL STATEMENT

**Guidance:** Your relevance statement can then be turned into a goal statement that describes the thing you'd like to achieve based upon participating in the program. Turn your relevance statement into a goal statement by using the following formula:

**Our goal is to...**
- **Action you will take**
- **Quantifiable and measurable statement**
- **Desired Outcome**

**Example:** Our goal is to use *Nature's Notebook* to monitor the phenology of four native species weekly for at least three years so that we can educate visitors about their annual phenology.

## STEP 3. STATE YOUR SCIENCE QUESTION

**Guidance:** Having a science question helps provide context for your program. It helps your participants understand why phenology data may be important locally and it offers a framework for sharing data each year to keep them engaged.

**Example:** When do pollinators, such as bees, bats, and butterflies, visit our nature center? When are they present, what plants do they visit, and what phenophases are the plants exhibiting?

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## STEP 4. STATE SHORT, MEDIUM, AND LONG-TERM GOALS

**Guidance:** Once you have a broad idea of your program's relevance and goals, it's time to break those goals down into what can be achieved on different timelines. Each of these goals should include the following formula:

**By (time)**
- **Who or what is affected**
- **What action will be taken**
- **The expected results**

**Example:**
By the first year, leadership will recruit 20 volunteers to monitor phenology at our park.

By the second year, volunteers will collect phenology data weekly to document seasonal changes.

By the third year, leadership will analyze the results and develop materials to educate our visitors about the phenology of our plants and animals.

## STEP 5. IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS

**Guidance:** Your stakeholders are the people who share an interest in your program. Think beyond the people who will be participating in your activities and consider the entire program.

**Example:** Internal staff, volunteers, students, visitors, donors.

## STEP 6. IDENTIFY RESOURCES

**Guidance:** Identify what resources you have and what resources you need in order to maintain your program.

**Example:** Staff members, volunteers, budget, equipment, materials, website, social media, space for training, time, knowledge, curriculum.

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## STEP 7. MOVE FROM IDEAS TO ACTION

**Guidance:** Now that you have identified your program goals and resources, it's time to turn them into actionable activities. These activities can include hosting a workshop, recruiting volunteers, creating photo guides, or writing annual reports. In order to ensure that each activity helps you reach your project goals, be sure to outline the following:

- The name of the activity
- Which goal the activity supports
- The person responsible for executing the activity
- Resources available to complete the activity
- Potential barriers and plans to overcome them
- Timeline for completion

**Example:**
- Volunteer Training Workshop
- Goal: Train 20 volunteers for weekly monitoring
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Advertisements (poster, social media), icebreaker game materials, outdoor space, datasheets, clipboards, pencils, water bottles, snacks
- Use common room and laminated plant photos in case if inclement weather.
- Date of workshop - 6 hours, post flyers 1 month in advance, weekly social media posts on Mondays.

## STEP 8. CREATE A SUSTAINBILITY PLAN

**Guidance:** In order for your Local Phenology Program to succeed beyond your time at your organization, it's important to provide resources and instructions so that different members of the organization can continue to maintain the project. Consider creating a sustainability document that contains the following information:

- Program Instructions
- Financial Information
- Plans for changes in program administration

**Example:** Our program is lead by the following administrators. Maps of our monitoring sites, education templates, and past reports can be found in the shared folder. Our budget is as follows, with funding from the listed sources. Upon termination of this funding, our program will... If administrative support shifts, please contact the following partners to plan continuation of the program.

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## STEP 9. WRITE AN ANNUAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**Guidance:** Impacts can be described and shared on an annual basis, based on your progress toward your goals. There are three key elements to a good impact statement:
Why did you develop this program?
How did you carry-out your program goals?
What were the results of your program?

**Example:**

- Plant phenology is a great indicator of environmental changes. Such data is not presently readily available in our area. Our LPP works to fill that gap by engaging people of all ages in phenology observation using *Nature's Notebook*. The goal of our project is to document the leafing, flowering and fruiting of common native plants. This data will help us measure the impact of environmental changes, including climate change, so that we can effectively respond and adapt.
- We held workshops, created and shared resources, provided training and educational opportunities, and shared a monthly newsletter reporting observations from the past month.
- In 2020, our second year, 62 observers made +62500 observations at 48 sites in 24 counties in our state. Our observers monitored over 150 different species of plants including Eastern redbud, Tulip tree, Sugar maple, Bur oak and Canadian serviceberry and around 60 animal species. We are 26% of our way to our long-term goal of observing in every county.

## STEP 10. COMPLETE ANNUAL REPORT & SURVEY

**Guidance:** Your annual report is a document that describes the status of your Local Phenology Program (LPP), including participant statistics, data volume statistics, and patterns in the data. You can use the USA-NPN Visualization Tool and Data Dashboard to create visualizations for your report. Your report can be uploaded on your LPP Profile Page. The LPP annual survey is a way for you to reach out the the USA-NPN coordinating office so that we can better understand how to support your program. It can be found on your LPP profile page on an annual basis.

**Example:** The USA-NPN has developed a Phenology Report Guide to help you through the steps of writing a report relevant to your Local Phenology Program