



Minnesota Project Learning Tree Educator Update

October 2009

*"Come forth into the light of things. Let Nature be your teacher."
William Wordsworth, English Romantic poet 1770-1850*

E-newsletter for educators who have attended a Project Learning Tree workshop

NEWS

Panel releases draft of national education standards

A group of experts and educators has released a draft of its proposed [national education standards](#) for students in English and math. The broad curriculum guidelines are expected to get more specific in 2010, when grade-by-grade standards will be outlined. For now, the proposal includes an expectation that **students will be able to solve systems of equations and real-world problems using math and develop writing skills based on tone and topic.**

We're in the Top 25!

[Backpacker magazine](#) ranked the top 25 cities in the country to raise an outdoorsy kid - and thus combat nature deficit disorder.

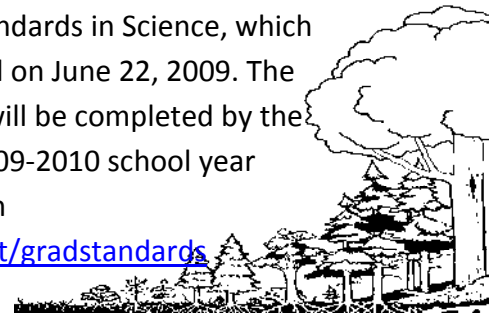
#22 Twin Cities

#24 Duluth

2009 Science Standards and PLT

Minnesota PLT is working on correlating PLT K-8 activities to the Minnesota Academic Standards in Science, which were released on June 22, 2009. The correlations will be completed by the end of the 2009-2010 school year and posted on

mndnr.gov/plt/gradstandards



CONFERENCES & EVENTS

[Minnesota Naturalists' Association](#)

November 6-8, 2009

[Lake Shetek Lutheran Camp](#) in Slayton, Minnesota (20 miles north of Worthington)

Theme is *People and the Prairie*

Keynote speakers are **Wes Jackson** (President of The Land Institute), **Michael Caduto** (author, storyteller, and musician), and **Jim Gilbert** (consulting naturalist for WCCO radio, author, teacher, eco-tour leader, and columnist).

[Webinar: Educating for Sustainability in K-12 Schools](#)

November 5, 2009, 3 pm-4:30 pm ET

Join this presentation and discussion on the national trend occurring in K-12 schools, education for sustainability (EFS). Educators will present case studies and share resources on how they are successfully using sustainability as an integrative theme in diverse elementary, middle, and high schools across the country. Together the presenters will provide an overview of the national trends, related research, and more. Co-sponsored by the U.S. Partnership for Educ. for Sustainable Development, Am. Association of School Administrators, among others. To register, send an email to green.and.sustainability.leaders@gmail.com

GRANTS

Healthy Sprouts Award

The award is to encourage the connection between **kids' food gardens** and improved nutrition. To be eligible, a school or organization must



plan to garden in 2010 with at least fifteen children between the ages of 3 and 18. This year [twenty awards](#) will be given to schools or organizations. Each program will receive gift certificates towards the purchase of gardening materials from the sponsoring company. The top five will each receive a certificate valued at \$500; fifteen more will each receive a \$200 gift certificate; a kit of engaging taste education and nutrition lessons; 25 packets of seeds.

Applications due October 17.

Lowe's Toolbox for Education Grant

www.toolboxforeducation.com

Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation offers this grant program to schools to help them succeed on a school project. **Deadline: Whatever comes first—October 16, 2009, or when 1500 applications have been received**

Project Learning Tree Green Works! Grants



www.plt.org/cms/pages/21_22_21.html

GreenWorks! grants engage PLT educators and their students with their local community in "learning-by-doing" environmental projects. Student leadership, service-learning, and community participation are the cornerstones to *GreenWorks!* projects. These grassroots action projects enable schools and youth organizations across the country to make a positive impact on their communities. **Only PLT-trained teachers are eligible.** Grants of \$250 to \$5,000. **Deadline October 31, 2009** (The deadline for the next grant round is Apr. 30)

Target Field Trip Grants

5,000 [field trip grants](#) are available this school year to qualified applicants. These field trip grants can be applied to visits to nature centers, state parks and forests, etc. **Deadline: Nov. 3, 2009**

Three Grants from the National Education Association Foundation

1. [Green Grants for Public School Teachers](#)

Grants (up to \$5,000) are designated for projects that integrate green-related topics ([like those in the PLT activity guides](#)) and experiences into the classroom.

Application deadline:

October 15 (for Jan. 2010 notification)

Next application deadlines are Feb. 1 and June 1.

2. [Learning & Leadership grants](#)

For teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff to engage in high-quality professional development ([such as a PLT workshop!](#)) and lead their colleagues in professional growth.

Applications due:

Feb 1 (for April 15 notification)

June 1 (for Sep. 15 notification)

Oct. 15 (for Jan. 15 notification)

3. [Student Achievement grants](#)

Up to \$5,000. To improve the academic achievement of students by engaging in critical thinking and problem solving that deepens knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-

directed learning, and critical reflection.

Sounds just like a PLT activity!

Applications due:

Feb 1 (for April 15 notification)

June 1 (for Sep. 15 notification)

Oct. 15 (for Jan. 15 notification)

Toyota TAPESTRY Grants for K-12 Science Teachers

www.nsta.org/pd/tapestry

These grants are sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., and administered by NSTA. Grants up to \$10,000 are available to K–12 science teachers for innovative projects that enhance environmental science and literacy education in their school and/or school district over a one-year period.

Deadline: January 18, 2010

Disney's Planet Challenge CONTEST

Who: Walt Disney Company, and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)

What: Project-based environmental competition for grade 4-6 classrooms. Projects can be easily integrated with Minnesota Academic Standards.

How: The [Web site](#) has several suggestions, including using [PLT activities such as "A Peek at Packaging," "Trees in Trouble," "Every Drop Counts," or "Energy Sleuths"](#) as a base for investigation.

When: Registration for the competition closes **December 18, 2009**. Registered teams have until February 26, 2010 to complete their project portfolios.

The Prize! The grand prize-winning classroom will win a three-day trip to the

Disneyland® Resort May 6-8, 2010, meet a Disney “star,” and be featured on the Disney Channel. Up to 55 classrooms will win additional prizes (\$1,000-2,500 grants, Disney DVDs, student prize packs). Teachers can win a one-year NSTA

membership and an expense-paid trip to NSTA's 2011 National Conference in San Francisco where he or she will be recognized at a special awards ceremony. www.Disney.com/planetchallenge

TEACHER THRIFTIES: Free and cheap stuff

Free Stickers for Schools

Intended to raise awareness to reduce the unintentional overuse of paper. Wash-resistant stickers can be posted on paper towel dispensers, photocopiers, etc. Free to K-12 schools. Permission of the school's administration is required.

- [Apply online for a free set of stickers](#)
- [Lesson ideas](#)



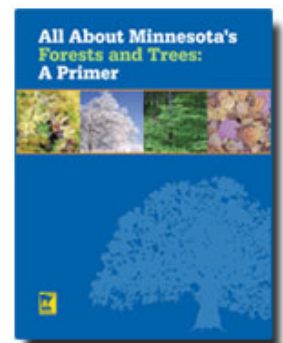
Free Map Posters “Forests of the World”

Both were developed by PLT and are free as PDFs. You need a fast Internet connection, because the files are BIG.

- [Forests of the World Poster](#)
- [Forests of the World Ecological Zones Map](#)

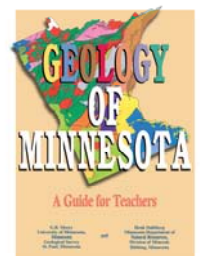
Get a Free Classroom Set of Books

If you're teaching about basic botany, ecology, or Minnesota's social and natural history around forests and logging, get a free classroom set of this award-winning book, [All About Minnesota's Forests and Trees: A Primer](#). Chapters: “Tree Basics” and “Forest Ecosystems,” and more. Includes useful appendices on how to read tree rings and plant a tree. FREE! Send an email to the DNR Info Center at info@dnr.state.mn.us 58 pages. 8”x 11.”



Get A Free Classroom Set of Books (2)

[Geology of Minnesota: A Guide for Teachers](#), is available free for the asking. Includes chapters on Minnesota landforms, geologic processes, and geologic history of Minnesota. To order, send an email to the DNR Info Center at info@dnr.state.mn.us



RECOMMENDED

How Green is Your School?

Measure your “greenness” with five investigations created by [Project Learning Tree](#).

- [Energy](#)
- [Water](#)
- [Waste and Recycling](#)
- [School Site](#)
- [Environmental Quality](#)



Visit the PLT [GreenSchools!](#) Web site to learn how these investigations can turn into student service-learning projects that engage the community.

Habitat: Imagine That!

(Resource for PreK-8’s “The Forest of S.T. Shrew,” “Planet Diversity,” “Trees as Habitats,” “Schoolyard Safari” and more.)

[Habitat: Imagine That!](#) is an art contest for grades 2-4 organized by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. It challenges young scientists and artists to become wildlife investigators by exploring habitats, small and large, in their backyard or around the world, and then draw a picture showing what they learned.

Deadline: October 26

Book: *Smart by Nature: Schooling for Sustainability*

By: Michael K. Stone and Center for Ecoliteracy

www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/WM0047.php

Throughout the U.S., educators, parents, and students are remaking K-12 education

to prepare students for the future environmental challenges. **What would a green school or an eco-schooling curriculum look like?** This book offers firsthand accounts and strategies for greening campuses, rethinking school food, and transforming schools into model sustainable communities. Green and healthy campuses with rooftop gardens and innovative designs are serving as living laboratories in which educators teach energy conservation, resource management, and earth sciences. Practical “what you can do” checklists and pages of resources make this a 21st century guide for our educational future.

[DNR for Kids](#)

Are your kids and family interested in Minnesota nature? Visit DNR for Kids. Includes items such as:

- Minnesota facts and figures
- Coloring, comic and activity books
- Podcasts and videos
- DNR volunteering and internships

“Hidden” Section of PLT Web site Just for PLT Teachers

Go to www.mndnr.gov/plt.

Click on “Trained Teachers and Facilitators.”

Username is: teacher

Password is: minnesotaDNR

This site is a bonus for teachers who have attended a PLT, WET, or WILD workshop, so use your benefits!

PRESCHOOL CORNER

Want to see a nature-based preschool?

Recommended FIELD TRIPS

- All Seasons Preschool, Inver Grove Heights
- Dodge Nature Center Preschool, West St. Paul
- Forest Lake Family Center, Nature Explore Classroom, Forest Lake
- Tamarack Nature Center's "Wild Place," White Bear Lake
- Wargo Nature Center Preschool, Lino Lakes

(Do you know of another nature-based preschool outside the Metro area? Please let me [-laura.duffey@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:laura.duffey@dnr.state.mn.us) know!)



Preschoolers quickly learn to transform a log into a balance beam.



Preschoolers display their "Shape Bracelets" (PLT Activity #1, *The Shape of Things*) while searching for shapes in the woods. *The boy in the red shirt is the son of your friendly Minnesota PLT coordinator.*



Using binoculars made of toilet paper tubes helps preschoolers focus on the many wonders awaiting their discovery. ("Nature Adventures" from the Minnesota PLT Early Childhood Supplement)



Upcoming Teacher Workshops

from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Calendar & registration on www.mndnr.gov/plt/workshops.html

What are the Projects?

Project Learning Tree (forests), Project WILD (wildlife), Project WILD Aquatic (aquatic wildlife), and Project WET (water) are award-winning international K-12 education programs. Together the programs offer a suite of books that contain more than 300 lessons on water, wildlife, forests, and natural resources issues. All three "Projects" use the natural world to increase students' understanding of the world around them.

WET, PLT, and WILD Activities are:

- Interactive and hands-on,
- **Correlated to Minnesota Academic Standards,**
- Ideal for reaching different learning styles,
- Flexible to be used in- or outdoors,
- Easily incorporated into existing curricula.

Activity guides are available only through attending a workshop.



All three Projects emphasize teaching students **how to think**, not *what* to think. Lessons are designed to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills and help provide our youth with the knowledge and experience they will need to make informed decisions.

Workshops are designed for K-12 classroom teachers, naturalists, homeschool educators, scout and youth group leaders, pre-service teachers, university and college instructors, or other educators of K-12 students.

For information about the activity guides and programs, see:

www.mndnr.gov/plt
www.mndnr.gov/projectwet
www.mndnr.gov/projectwild



New workshops being are being scheduled all the time! Check out the Workshop Calendar at www.mndnr.gov/plt/workshops.html

PLT Early Childhood Workshop

November 7, 2009

Redeemer Lutheran Church, Rochester

8 am – 3 pm

The day will include instruction on the benefits of, barriers to, and strategies for outdoor learning. You will get nature-based preschool activities and practice outdoor teaching skills using PLT materials. You will also devote some time to integrate new activities into your existing yearly teaching themes.

Cost: \$55 (\$45 for FCCI members- www.fccimn.com)

Participants will get:

- * Minnesota *PLT Early Childhood Supplement*
- * *Natural Wonders Guide to Early Childhood for Environmental Educators*
- * *PLT PreK-8 Activity Guide*
- * Six (6) hours of continuing education units (CEUs)

To register: Contact Kari Fairclough at 507-282-1799 or by email at [snjnet@chartermi.net](mailto:sjnjet@chartermi.net).

PLT, WILD, WET Workshop for K-6 Educators

December 4-5, 2009

Silverwood Park, St. Anthony (Twin Cities)

9 am 3:30 pm each day

This fun, two-day workshop is for formal and non-formal educators of students in grades K-6. This professional development workshop is designed to introduce hands-on activities that engage students in and about their local environment.

Cost: \$85, which includes

- * Lunch (both days)
- * *Project Learning Tree (PLT) K-8 Activity Guide*
- * *Project WET K-12 Activity Guide*
- * *Project WILD K-12 Activity Guide*
- * Option to buy Early Childhood activity guides
- * A certificate for 12 clock hours of instruction

Optional: One graduate credit from Hamline University is available for the half-price rate of \$115.

To register: Use registration form on www.mndnr.gov/education/teachers/calendar.html

Registration deadline is Nov. 25, 2009

PLT/WILD Early Childhood Workshops

9 am – 3:30 pm

Nov. 20, 2009 Head Start NW Site, Rochester OR

Jan. 22, 2010 Anoka/Washington County Head Start, Coon Rapids

These 7-hour educator workshops will introduce the PLT and WILD early childhood activity guides. Learn nature-based preschool activities and methods through fun, hands-on, indoor and outdoor experiences that will teach science, math, language arts, social sciences, art, health, and physical education.

Activities are correlated to the Head Start domains.

Cost: \$30, includes

- * *Minnesota Project Learning Tree Early Childhood Supplement Guide*
- * *Project WILD Early Childhood Supplement Guide*
- * *Natural Wonders Guide to Early Childhood for Environmental Educators*
- * Six hours continuing education units (CEUs)

To register: Please register on Survey Monkey (Copy and paste this URL)

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=fUYw5WrHfuyzzUoPEECnxw_3d_3d