

October 2005

This bi-monthly newsletter is for you. Let me know what type of information you would like to see. I invite everyone to submit an environmental related article or blurb that would be of interest to PLT educators and supporters.

Thanks for all your support,
Jenny Seitz
Florida PLT Coordinator

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1. New PLT School

Congratulations to our newest PLT School, Medart Elementary! Located in Wakulla County, over 70% of the teaching staff has been through a PLT Educator Workshop! Robin Will, from the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, presented Medart with a plaque designating them a PLT School, a trunk full of resources, and a PLT School flag in September. PLT School Coordinators, Charlotte Hoover and Brooke Mohr, are energizing their colleagues as they prepare for PLT Week this Spring.

For information on the PLT School Program please visit the description web site or contact PLT Central at 352.846.2329.

2. Special Events

Advanced Educator Workshop-Forest Explorers

Interested in learning more about the forest? Join us for a hands-on exploratory day at Mizell Lodge on November 19. This workshop is designed for educators who have previously attended a PLT Educator Workshop. If you have a PLT Certificate you are eligible to attend! Additional information can be found on our web site on the Calendar of Events page. Scroll down to the bottom under Special Events and click on the flyer link. Registration deadline is November 17. Contact Jenny to register.

Integrating Reading and Writing into Science Lessons Through PLT

Join us at the Florida Association for Science Teachers Annual Conference on November 5 in Orlando. Presentation is scheduled for 12:00 P.M. in the Seminole B room of the DoubleTree Hotel Conference Center. Participants need to be registered to attend the conference.

PLT and WILD Facilitator Training Workshop

Interested in becoming a PLT Facilitator? Mark your calendar for December 2–4. Training will be held at the Everglades Youth Camp in West Palm Beach. Contact PLT Central if you are interested in attending.

3. Upcoming Workshops

*October 6: Fire Themed PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Nature's Classroom (Thonotosassa). Limited spaces available.

*October 8: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens (Jacksonville).

*October 18: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Leon County Extension Office. Limited spaces available.

*October 22: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Greynolds Park (Miami).

*November 4: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Leon County Extension Office. Limited spaces available.

*November 16: PreK-8 Educators Workshop at Nature's Classroom (Thonotosassa). Limited spaces available.

4. Resources

Ology "The Study Of" Sites for Students

American Museum of Natural History web site providing age appropriate materials for students (grades 1-6) to explore subjects such as biodiversity, marine biology, paleontology and Earth. Links to a teachers section with education guides and suggestions for after school activities.

Free Plant Materials

The Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants provides large poster-sized charts showcasing Florida's native freshwater plants and invasive nonnative plants. Educators can receive these free with a written request on school/organization letterhead. One time only deal.

America's Rainforests Electronic Field Trip

Join students, biologists, and researchers during a live broadcast and explore America's Tropical and Temperate rain forests. Take a virtual visit to the Caribbean National Forests in Puerto Rico and the Tongass National Forest in Alaska.

Careers in Florida

Florida teachers can receive a copy of the DVD “Careers in Florida’s Freshwater Environments” for FREE. Call 1.800.226.1764 to order.

Mystery Plants

There are more than 4,000 plant species in Florida. Who can know them all? Want to ID a plant? Send it to the Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants for identification. This is a FREE service! You can send a plant sample or photos. For additional information ask about the “What is it? Services” by calling 352.392.1799.

Online Soil Survey Maps

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Viewable maps and tables for more than 2300 soil surveys. A soil survey is a detailed report on the soils of an area. Soil surveys are used by farmers, real estate agents, land use planners, engineers and others who desire information about the soil resource complete with soil boundaries, photos, descriptions, and tables of soil properties and features. This site can be used in conjunction with PLT activities: Soil Stories; Field, Forest, and Stream; and The Forest of S.T. Shrew.

Going Bananas in Middle School

The Rainforest Alliance is ringing in the new school year with an improved and expanded Learning Site. New curricula for seventh and eighth grade teachers are now available and ready for classroom use. Lesson plans, stories, posters and fact sheets draw on the social studies, math and science disciplines as a means of exploring the environmental, cultural and economic aspects of banana production in Honduras, while hands-on activities, such as scavenger hunts, immerse students in the subject matter. Connecting rainforest conservation issues with a product as commonplace as the banana helps students to better understand the link between the rainforest and their lives and shows them how consumer choices impact natural resource conservation. Visit the Learning Site to access the free elementary and middle school curricula and supplementary materials.

Adventure is Waiting with Space Science

The new Space Science: Adventure Is Waiting education program for grades 3-5 and 6-8 is now available online. Developed in cooperation with NASA and Scholastic, and generously sponsored by Columbia Pictures, this program contains easy-to-use standards-based lessons and reproducibles.

(Courtesy of NSTA Online)

The Greatest Good

A great addition to a history or natural resource class, The Greatest Good is a story of the public land we all own and where we resolve our conflicting interests. Since 1905, the United States Forest Service has been at the forefront of this ongoing experiment of democracy on the ground. An experiment that asks: What is the greatest good?

Online Marine Life Field Guide

The NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program has unveiled a new, online resource that highlights the diverse marine life of America's ocean and Great Lakes treasures. The Encyclopedia of the Sanctuaries is available online and is part of a continuing NOAA effort to enhance public awareness, understanding and appreciation of the marine environment. This online field guide provides photos, streaming video and important biological information for over 100 marine species from each of the national marine sanctuaries in the United States, ranging from spiny lobster to killer whales and white-tipped reef sharks to sea turtles. (Courtesy of NSTA Online)

5. Grants/Contests/Awards

National Gardening Association

Various grants are available to support a garden at your school or in your community.

Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl's Garden Club 2006 Poster Contest

This year we dedicate the poster contest to the prevention of the spread of invasive species in our Nation. It is our intention that students, teachers, parents, and youth leaders are introduced to and gain information about this key environmental issue. We envision and encourage that the students might weave the message of "Help Us Stop the Invaders" into the design of their poster. The slogans to be included on the posters are: (1) "Only YOU Can Prevent Wildfires!" on the Smokey Bear posters and (2) "Lend A Hand - Care For The Land!" on the Woodsy Owl Posters. Any of the posters may also include the message of "Help Us Stop the Invaders".

Draw Your State Flower National Contest

The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company invites elementary school children to draw their state flowers. One winner will be selected from each state, and winning entries will be displayed at the National Garden, part of the U.S. Botanic Garden adjacent to the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. This competition is open to students in grades K-6 from all 50 states; contest deadline is November 1, 2005. Visit the Scotts' Web site for more details.

Action For Nature Young Eco-Hero Awards

Action for Nature is seeking applications from students 8-16 for its 2006 Young Eco-Hero Awards program. The Young Eco-Hero Awards Program recognizes the individual accomplishments of young people who have carried out environmental action projects. Projects must concern environmental advocacy & health, protection, or research. Winners will receive a cash award. Deadline to apply is February 28, 2006. (Courtesy NAAEE)

Bingham Environmental Education Foundation (BEEF)

The Bingham Environmental Education Foundation's mission is to help provide quality environmental education for today's youth through sound environmental education and research. To achieve this mission, BEEF supports an annual environmental education grant competition for both a Florida K-12 educator of \$1000. Application Deadline is November 1, 2005. (Courtesy of SIFT)

Build an Outdoor Classroom at School

Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation, International Paper and National Geographic Explorer! classroom magazine have partnered to create an outdoor classroom grant program to provide K-12 schools with additional resources to improve their science curriculum by engaging students in hands-on experiences outside the traditional classroom. This school year, the program will award grants up to \$2,000 to at least 100 schools. In some cases, grants for up to \$20,000 may be awarded to schools or school districts with major outdoor classroom projects. The grants can be used to build a new outdoor classroom or to enhance a current outdoor classroom at the school. Deadlines vary.

SeaWorld/Busch Gardens/Fujifilm Environmental Excellence Awards

K-12 educators and community groups are invited to apply for the SeaWorld/Busch Gardens/Fujifilm Environmental Excellence Award. Since 1993, the awards have recognized the outstanding efforts of students and teachers across the country who are working at the grassroots level to protect and preserve the environment. The prize for eight groups is \$10,000 and an all-expenses paid trip to Orlando SeaWorld for an awards event, as well as other prizes. From those eight teams, one educator/leader will be selected to win \$5,000 and an all-expenses paid trip to the 2006 NSTA Annual National Convention in Anaheim. The deadline is November 30, 2005. (Courtesy of NSTA Online)

6. Events/Workshops

Spirit of the Woods/Outdoor Expo

Hillsborough River State Park is hosting a full day of activities on October 29, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. The Outdoor Expo will include numerous vendors and organizations from the local community with a goal of providing environmental education and highlighting various aspects of outdoor recreation. The Outdoor Expo is free to the public. Contact the park at (813) 987- 6771 for additional information.

Insects In The Classroom Course

This online course explores the use of insects as teaching tools in K-12 education. Aligned with No Child Left Behind standards, the course focuses on teaching science concepts and developing critical thinking skills. The online self-paced program offers continuing education credits through Texas A&M University. (Courtesy of NAAEE)

National EE Week!

Mark your calendars for April 16-22, 2006, for the second annual National EE Week. This is a week of celebration to commemorate Earth Day. Visit the web site for ideas on how to become involved.

The Wonders of Wetlands

WOW!: The Wonders Of Wetlands is an acclaimed, comprehensive, interdisciplinary curriculum guide for educators of grade levels K-12. The latest edition includes more than 50 fun and

effective learning-activities for both indoor and outdoor use. These activities focus on the three definitive wetland parameters: water, soil, and plants; there are animal-oriented exercises as well. To attend the Wonders of Wetland Workshop on October 14, 2005 at Brevard Zoo from 9:00a.m. - 4:00p.m contact Lisa Good at 312.633.2014. There is a \$17.00 registration fee with a refund of \$7.00 following workshop attendance.

6. Tree Fact # 7

Did you know we had two types of Slash Pine trees in Florida? The common slash pine (*Pinus elliottii* var. *elliottii*) and the South Florida variety (*P. elliottii* var. *densa*). The common slash pine occurs throughout most of Florida, except at the south end of the Florida peninsula. The transition zone between the two is in south Florida, just north of Lake Okeechobee. In South Florida the slash pine is commonly found in the Pine Rocklands Habitat in parts of Dade County and in the Everglades National Park.

The two varieties are similar to each other. One major morphological difference involves the seedlings, the life stage that it is most susceptible to fire. Similar to longleaf pine, South Florida slash pine starts out in a grasslike, almost stemless, stage that lasts from 2 to 6 years, providing resistance to fire at an early age. Other characteristics of the South Florida Slash pine that allow seedlings to be more resistant to fire than the common slash pine are the ability to resprout from the root collar after a surface burn, a large taproot and thick bark.

For additional information on slash pine in Florida visit
http://www.sfrc.ufl.edu/4h/Slash_pine/slaspine.htm .