

February 2006

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.

Thank you for all your support,
Jennifer Seitz
Florida PLT Coordinator

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1. FL PLT News

2005 Numbers

Florida facilitators conducted 43 workshops in 2005 reaching 1070 educators! In addition, our facilitators participated in 40 additional activities such as school presentations, AgVenture Days, conference exhibits, and Earth Day celebrations reaching over 7197 youth and adults. Thank you to the following facilitators for volunteering your time at these workshops and event.

Christine Allen, Kate Anderson, Dale Armstrong, Florie Babcock, A.E. Balthazor, Marcia Bisnett, Marcus Boston, Heather Callahan, Colan Coody, Nancy Corona, Vicki Crisp, Jenny Dambek, Deirdre Irwin, Donnie Flemming, David Fogler, April Frederick, Cheryl George, Lisa Good, Lori Haynes, Mayfair Head, Michelle Hunter, Simone Fidy, Karen Johnson Folsom, Scott Kinsey, Michella Kippes, Bill Kleinhans, Glen Harris, Jamie Hayes, Becky Jordi, Ed Lewis, Joan Hourican, Peggy Hill, Lora Lindsey, Joe MacKenzie, Nonie Maines, Mark Miller, Brooke Mohr, Martha Monroe, David Moody, Teresa Mullinax, Mike Renwick, Stan Rosenthal, Royanne Reusch,
Jean Rogalsky, Debbie Sapp, Joel Smith, Lorraine Smith-Williams, Shaun Stewart, Tim Stuhr, Audrey Swindal, Amy Taylor, Sid Taylor, Eileen Tramontanna, Kim Ward, Forrest Watson, Brenda Weeks, Don Weeks, Kelley Weitzel, Fred Wiechmann, Robin Will, Kelliann Whitney, and Willie Wood.

Guess Who is 30 this Year?

PLT is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2006. Back in 1976, the United States celebrated its Bicentennial and the first Earth Day had taken place a few years earlier. Many of the environmental laws and educational reforms now part of everyday life were new on the books or barely imagined. And who knew you would be reading this article on a computer screen? Back then, natural resource managers and educators from the then-American Forest Institute (now

Foundation) and then-Western Regional Environmental Education Council (now Council of Environmental Education) developed and launched the first PLT workshops in 13 states. Thirty years later, educators in every U.S. state and 10 other countries are using PLT elementary and secondary materials with their students. Stay tuned for how we will be celebrating this milestone.

Energy & Society is now Correlated to SSS

The Energy & Society Kit is now correlated to the Sunshine State Standards! Visit http://sfrc.ufl.edu/plt/Correlations/correlation_main.htm and select Energy and Society Kit from the left column to see how the activities are linked to Florida's standards.

Florida Urban Forest Supplement

Our multi-year urban forest supplement to the PLT PreK-8 Activity Guide project is now complete. The vast majority of Florida teachers and youth live in urban forests. While some of the existing PLT activities are well suited to being used in urban areas, few of them convey the many benefits of urban forests to city residents. The Florida supplement identifies existing PLT activities that can help meet urban forest concepts, offers minor adaptations so more PLT activities can be relevant to the urban forest, and suggests several major extensions to six PLT activities. In addition, six new activities are offered. We will be scheduling urban forests themed workshops throughout the year. The first one is scheduled in Miami on March 4, 2006.

2. Upcoming PLT Workshops

*February 3: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Leon County Extension Office (Tallahassee). Limited spaces.

*February 4: 8-12 Focus on Risk Module Educator Workshop at Greynolds Park (Miami).

*February 10: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Leon County Extension Office (Tallahassee). Limited spaces.

*February 11: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Camp Crystal Lake (Starke).

*February 11: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Savannas Preserve State Park (Port St. Lucie).

*February 16: PreK-8 Educator Workshop at Leon County Extension Office (Tallahassee). Limited spaces.

*February 18: 3-12 Wildland Fire Educator Workshop at Greynolds Park (Miami).

*March 4: 3-8 Urban Forest Educator Workshop at Greynolds Park (Miami).

*March 12: PreK-12 Educator Workshop at Orlando Science Center (Orlando).

*March 17: 3-8 Wildland Fire Educator Workshop at Tree Hill Nature Center (Jacksonville).

You can register for any of these workshops by contacting the lead facilitator listed on the Calendar of Events web page from our home page: <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/plt/>.

3. Annual Florida PLT Awards

Here's your chance to recognize an individual or organization for their efforts in promoting and enhancing environmental education. Nominate an educator, PLT facilitator, or business partner of the year for the Annual Florida PLT Awards. Nominate an educator that incorporates PLT activities into the classroom or their programs and encourages the use of PLT activities by their colleagues. Nominate a facilitator that has energized you to bring the environment into the classroom by using PLT. Nominate an organization or business that has supported your efforts of using PLT in your school, center, or programs. Additional criteria for each award are listed on the nomination forms that can be downloaded from the PLT web site. The deadline for all nominations is May 5, 2006.

4. Conferences/Workshops

UF Summer Science Opportunity for Middle and High School Teachers

The Center for Precollegiate Education and Training at the University of Florida is offering the UF Summer Science Institute (SSI) again this year. Participants will have the chance to work with UF faculty and graduate students, perform authentic research, visit laboratories and facilities, hear talks by research and industry leaders, and develop classroom applications. This year there will be three one-week workshops: Biotech Basics (June 12- 16, 2006); Explorations in Environmental Science (June 19- 23, 2006); and Research Topics in Environmental Science (June 26- 30, 2006). All workshops will be held at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

The registration fee is \$350 for Biotech Basics and Explorations in Environmental Science; \$450 for Research Topics in Environmental Science. This includes materials, supplies and take-home resources. On-campus housing is available for an additional \$150. Teachers are encouraged to speak to their administrators and/or district science supervisor about funds set aside for professional development. Space is limited and registrations will be processed as they are received. Teachers should submit the registration form at their earliest convenience. More information and the registration form are available by contacting Julie Bokor at julie@cpet.ufl.edu.

LEEF Annual Conference

The Leagues of Environmental Educators of Florida's annual conference is around the corner. This year's theme is "The Learning of the Green." Join us March 17-19, 2006 at Camp Flying Eagle in Bradenton, FL. Join fellow educators and naturalists alike as we learn from each other through hands-on workshops, field trips, arts and crafts, presentations, and fellowship. For additional information on being a presenter, exhibitor or an attendee visit the LEEF website.

Florida Forestry Teacher's Tour

Florida's educators are invited to join us for an exploration of forestry in Florida June 20-23, 2006. Any Florida educators who teach environmental or social studies, science, math, multi-disciplinary classes or related topics and have not previously attended are eligible to apply. The

tour takes place in Northeast Florida. Tour is free to participants. Everyone is eligible to receive 30 CEU hours. Application deadline is March 17, 2006.

5. Grants

Healthy Sprouts Awards

These awards support school garden programs that use the garden to teach about nutrition and the issue of hunger in the United States. Sponsored by Gardener's Supply Company. In this grant cycle we will present awards to 25 schools or organizations. Each will receive a \$200 gift certificate to Gardener's Supply Company and a curriculum package from NGA. Apply by October 15, 2006.

HP Technology for Teaching Grant

Hewlett-Packard will award grants of up to \$8 million in cash and technology that are designed to facilitate innovative programs teaching with mobile technology in classrooms around the country. Grant applications are due by February 15.

6. Resources/Awards

Apply for a Christopher Columbus Award

The Christopher Columbus Awards Program combines science and technology with community problem-solving. Students in grades 6-8 work in teams with the help of an adult coach to identify an issue they care about and, using science and technology, work with experts, conduct research, and put their ideas to the test to develop an innovative solution. Eight finalist teams will receive an all-expense paid trip to Walt Disney World to attend National Championship week plus a \$200 grant to further develop their ideas. Two gold medal teams will receive a \$2000 U.S. Savings Bond and the winning team will receive a \$25,000 Columbus Foundation Community Grant. Teams do not need to be affiliated with a school to enter. The application deadline is February 13, 2006. This opportunity is sponsored by the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation in conjunction with The National Science Foundation.

AF&PA Recycling Awards

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) recently announced that the entry forms for the 2006 AF&PA Recycling Awards are now available. In 2006, AF&PA will recognize outstanding individual, business, community and school recycling efforts. Help us recognize those hard working and dedicated recyclers and nominate an outstanding workplace, community or school recycling program. Entries must be submitted by Friday, February 17, 2006. Winners will be announced on Wednesday, April 12, 2006, during AF&PA's 129th Annual Paper Week. For additional information, please contact Gretchen Kornely at (202) 463-5156 or gretchen_kornely@afandpa.org.

Spring's Journey North: New projects begin Feb. 1!

Join the more than 11,000 schools that will watch spring sweep across the northern hemisphere by following the migration patterns of monarch butterflies, bald eagles, whooping cranes, and other animals; the budding of plants; changing sunlight in "mystery class" locations; and other

natural events -- all for free! This premier Internet-based "citizen science" projects lets students share field observations with classmates across North America and analyze live maps and data from other classroom and professional scientists. Each Journey North study features standards-based lessons and challenges, stunning photos and video clips, weekly migration updates, interactive maps, reading selections, connections with field scientists, and compelling migration "stories." They also provide guidance for helping students conduct local inquiries and fit them into a global context.

MarcoGram: Spotlight on Italy

As the world prepares for the opening of the Olympics on February 10, this month's MarcoGram casts a spotlight on the nation hosting this year's Olympic Winter Games—Italy. From its rich and colorful culture to its fascinating history, Italy and its people consistently have played a prominent role in the course of human events. A variety of activities and resources are available to use in your classroom.

National Environmental Education Week 2006

National EE Week (April 16-22, 2006) is a full week of educational preparedness for Earth Day and will involved thousands of educators and millions of students. Visit the National EE Week web site for ideas on what you can do with youth.

USA Mathematical Talent Search (USAMTS)

This mathematics competition is open to all U.S. middle and high school students. Problems are published on the website four times a year one month before solutions are due. Problems range in difficulty from being within the reach of most high school students to challenging the best students in the nation. Students may use any materials -- books, calculators, computers -- but all work must be their own. This year's special topic is "expected value."

Biology Research Overview

Includes an interactive tour of the cell and discussions around questions: How do viruses attack cells? How will technology open new doors in biology? How can the mustard plant help us understand animals? How can neuroanatomy help us understand diverse life forms? How are fish and maple trees connected? What is life?

How Much Carbon is in Soda?

The NSF Science and Technology Center for Environmentally Responsible Solvents and Processes provides activities for exploring carbon dioxide and polymers. Learn how much carbon dioxide is in a soda. Make carbon dioxide and observe its effects. Create silly putty and oobleck to learn about polymers. Test how much water can be absorbed by polyacrylate (the absorbent polymer in disposable diapers).

Children's Environmental Literature

The Children's Environmental Literature Bibliography is available for download courtesy of Wisconsin's Project WILD, Project Learning Tree and Project WET programs. This popular resource was initially developed in 1997 and has been revised as a reading list for early childhood providers and to help teacher's meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB). The bibliography contains more than 400 books, over 300 of them new

additions. For easy teacher reference, the books are grouped according to topic area and age group.

eFieldTrips

Take your students to visit the desert or the Antarctic. Not enough school funds or time to take the trip? Add eFieldTrips to your lessons. eFieldTrips consist of four major components: Trip Journal, Virtual Visit (an interactive Flash movie), Ask the Experts, and Live Chat.

Recycle! It's A Plus for the Environment Poster (free!)

"Recycle! It's A Plus for the Environment" - brought to you through a partnership between Project Learning Tree and the American Forest & Paper Association - will help motivate students to take action. The poster shows how their choice to put used paper in the recycling bin starts a chain of events giving that paper new life as computer paper, grocery bags, newspapers, cardboard boxes, cereal boxes and more - items that are themselves recyclable in many communities. On the back of the poster is PLT Activity #51 "Make Your Own Paper" and a written description of how paper recycling works. Educators can order the free poster by clicking the link above.

Earth's Birthday Project Announces Recycling Campaign

You are invited to join students all over the United States who are collecting plastic bottles for Earth's Birthday Project's BIG GIFT. This fun activity teaches students that their small actions can add up to a big difference in the world. Since 1991, students have helped raise \$5.6 million to purchase and protect more than 363,289 acres of endangered rainforest! This year students will help The Nature Conservancy protect orangutans by conserving precious rainforest habitat in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, on the Island of Borneo. For every usable, 20-ounce bottle that you collect, 5 cents will be donated to the Big Gift to help save orangutan habitat. A thousand bottles protect an acre!

Around the Bend Nature Tours

Thanks to two major funding sources: Manatee County Conservation Lands and the Southwest Florida Water Management District SWFWMD, Around the Bend Nature Tours is providing free public tours for the winter and spring. SWFWMD would like the public to understand the concept of 'Watershed' and that everything we do in our yard eventually ends up in a water body. Our tours will focus on the plants that belong in each ecosystem and how they can help in your yard with filtering and using less fertilizer. We will also continue to watch the wildlife and tell the stories of the land and people who chose to live here. Current schedule can be found on the website. Reservations are strongly recommended - tours fill quickly. Call (941) 794-8773 or e-mail Karen@aroundbend.com.

Traveling Trunks from the Tallahassee Museum of Science and Natural History

Are you looking for a way to make your classroom more interesting? Need hands-on objects to help your students learn about Florida's history and/or natural science? A wide variety of traveling trunks are available. These resource kits are packed with activities, artifacts/biofacts, videos, audio cassettes, books, games, and more. Some of the titles include: "The Long Leaf Pine Forest: An Ecosystem in Peril", "Ecology of Pollution", "Hogsheads, Crummies, and Yard Geese: Florida Railroad History", and "World War II: The Home Front." Resource trunks are

loaned out for up to two weeks at a time. There is a small maintenance fee for each use. Educators outside of Tallahassee are welcome to borrow the kits. Contact Julie Dickey at 850 575 8684 ext 126 for information on availability, fees, and to arrange a time to pick it up.

Hutton Junior Fisheries Biology Program for Students

This summer opportunity for high school students is sponsored by the American Fisheries Society. Students (grades 10-12) spend 8 weeks in the summer working alongside a mentor who is a fisheries professional in their local community. Participants receive a \$3,000 scholarship paid out in 6 installments over the summer months. Applications can be downloaded from the website. Application Deadline: February 15, 2006.

Unsung Heroes Awards

The Ing Unsung Heroes Awards are given to K-12 educators pioneering new methods and techniques that improve student learning. 100 finalists will receive an award of \$2,000. 1st place receives \$25,000; 2nd place \$10,000; and 3rd place \$5,000. Deadline: May 1, 2006.

Young Naturalist Awards

The theme of the Young Naturalist Awards is the same every year: "Scientific Discovery Begins with Expeditions!" Students choose a topic in biology, Earth science, or astronomy and take an expedition to an area where they can explore their topic. The program invites youth to plan and conduct their own scientific expedition, one that will provide original data, questions, and observations on a topic in the natural sciences. They are not expected to make a new scientific discovery. However, the expedition should provide them with a new understanding about the question you investigated. Tell us about your expedition in an essay that includes artwork and/or photographs that help to illustrate your findings. Students in grades 7 through 12 that are currently enrolled in a public, private, parochial or home school in the United States, Canada, the U.S. territories, or in a U.S.-sponsored school abroad, are eligible to enter. Deadline for the Young Naturalist Awards Contest to May 1, 2006.

Volunteer Summer Program at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

This summer at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, we have designated our volunteer sites to accommodate educators or college students for a month (June, July, or August) of tropical living. As volunteers, these educators will be given the opportunity to experience a variety of educational workshops. Each adventurer is expected to volunteer 20 hours per week for one month. This volunteer work would include working on park projects, disposing of seaweed from the beach, placing mulch on trails, opening the park, cleaning latrines, and acting as a "host" maintaining campgrounds. Using a rotational system, each person is expected to perform equally in all of the above categories. In return, each volunteer will receive a campsite with water and electricity. Additionally, each volunteer is allowed free access to kayaks and canoes, glass bottom boats, snorkel equipment and trips, and scuba equipment, including free "air". Volunteers will be given the first priority in the formal educational opportunities which include a number of FREE workshops that may be taken by your school as "in-service" credit. These include "Project Learning Tree", "Project Wet", "Project Wild", as well as others dealing with the mangrove swamp and coral reef ecosystem.

Your educational opportunities do not stop there, however. There are numerous educational opportunities in the area, as well. Registration is expected to be large for these limited positions. Act now to insure your "lifetime" experience in the Keys. If interested in this challenging but rewarding experience, please fill out the application portion of the volunteer section on our web site or contact: Charlene H. Wylie, Park Services Specialist, at (305) 451-1202.

Partners in Ecology Teacher Guides

Through interactive exercises, the Ecology Awareness Program provides an understanding of the part people play in the environment and the ecological impact of our actions. It helps lead young people to make informed choices and grow into responsible citizens. Since Modern Woodmen provides all materials for free, the program is easy to implement. The leader receives a comprehensive guidebook, filled with activity ideas and reproducible handouts. Students receive useful, take-home items to reinforce what they learn. These include: magnifying glasses or mini binoculars, recycled pencils made from denim and retired U.S. currency, and log or field books. Contact info: 1-800-447-9811, ext. 7371 or 5654

Science News for Kids

Science News magazine has a site for kids.

7. Interesting Tree Fact #9

We all know that trees are used to fuel fires for warmth all over the world. One school district in Idaho has taken using trees to produce heat to a new level. This news article could be used to have an interesting discussion in the classroom.

Schools Look To Forests for Heating Fuel

November 6, 2005—By Anne Wallace Allen, Associated Press writer

COUNCIL, Idaho -- The tiny Council School District used to pour thousands of dollars into outmoded oil and electric heaters. Nearby, the Forest Service burned brush piles on the mountainsides to keep the brush from fueling forest fires in dry summers.

Looking for some savings, Council Superintendent Murray Dagleish developed Idaho's first public school biomass heating system -- a project that's expected to save Council \$1 million on fuel over the next 15 years.

"We're surrounded by the Payette National Forest," said Dagleish. "We're the Saudi Arabia of wood." Biomass is plant or animal waste that can be burned as fuel. Modern biomass furnaces burn such matter -- wood, manure or crop waste, for example -- at very high temperatures, reducing pollution to levels acceptable under federal air quality standards. "We're at a fraction of what our oil boiler used to stink up the air with," Dagleish said.

In some other heavily forested states -- such as Vermont, which heats many public buildings with wood -- biomass has long been used for fuel. But it hasn't taken off until recently in the West, where power has been relatively cheap. "It wasn't part of the culture out here," said David

Naccarato of Siemens Building Technologies, which installed the Council boiler. "People burned wood in their stoves, but they did not tend on an institutional level to look at wood as a fuel."

Dagleish started looking for oil alternatives in 2002. The high school, built in 1965, used costly radiant electric heat; the boiler at the elementary school next door was 50 years old and headed for extinction. Some months it cost Council \$10,000 -- about a third of its buildings and maintenance budget -- to provide heat for its 300 students and their teachers. So he turned to Fuel for Schools, a U.S. Forest Service program that promotes the use of biomass at schools in Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, and Utah.

The program gave Council a \$386,000 grant toward a new \$2.8 million heating system. The rest of the money came from a \$1.2 million bond approved by the taxpayers, and from projected savings on fuel. For now, switching to biomass is only feasible if the school is replacing an aging heating system anyway, as Council was.

For the entire article visit <http://www.enn.com/today.html?id=9184>.

Thank you to our contributors: SIFT listserv, NAAEE listserv, National PLT listserv, Shaun Stewart, VieVie Baird, and Robin Will. If you have a resource, grant, workshop, etc or topic of interest to share with other educators please send your information to Jenny.