

PROJECT LEARNING TREE

COORDINATORS' HANDBOOK

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

This handbook is a guide for all PLT Coordinators. It explains PLT's mission and objectives, your responsibilities as a Coordinator, and the responsibilities of the national PLT staff. It discusses facilitator and educator workshops, steering/advisory committees, co-sponsors, fund-raising, quality control, and many other helpful items.

The handbook tries to answer most questions Coordinators might have concerning their leadership roles in their state PLT programs. Newer Coordinators can use the handbook as a guide for defining their workloads and establishing the necessary cadre to assist with the work to be done. More experienced Coordinators may use the handbook as a standard by which they can measure their effectiveness. The handbook is designed to allow for the insertion of state-specific information, subsequent documents, and new ideas.

PLT Coordinators have an immense impact on the success of the PLT program, both locally and nationally. You are charged with overseeing the quality of your state program and the management of your state's facilitators. It's a huge responsibility, and to borrow from the motto of the Peace Corps, "it's the toughest job you'll ever love!"

We hope that this handbook will be a useful resource for you and that it will assist you in making your PLT responsibilities easier and at the same time, more effective.

You and your day-to-day contributions to Project Learning Tree are invaluable and very much appreciated.

Thank you!

I. About PLT

The PLT Program

What is PLT?

Project Learning Tree (PLT) is an award-winning environmental education program designed for educators working with students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. The PLT program structure is made up of three basic components:

(1) curriculum materials, (2) an international network of volunteers, and (3) a workshop delivery system.

The PLT **curriculum** includes the *PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide*, which contains 96 hands-on activities, and the topic-specific secondary environmental education modules. All of PLT's materials are designed to work in rural, suburban, and urban areas; in formal and non-formal educational settings; and both indoors and outdoors. The PLT guides are provided to educators when they participate in a PLT workshop.

The PLT program works because of its extensive **network** of dedicated individuals and organizations. This network is made up of PLT state coordinators, facilitators, educators, resource professionals, and partner organizations that understand how and why PLT is successful at educating the student population.

Through this network the PLT environmental education curriculum is distributed at PLT **workshops**. The workshop is an opportunity to familiarize educators with the PLT materials, to help them become comfortable using the guides, to model for educators the value of the materials, and to engage the workshop participants in activities that they will be excited to use with their students.

PLT offers two types of workshops: an **educator workshop** and a **facilitator workshop**. The goals of an educator workshop are: (1) to encourage educators to approach learning and teaching with an environmental perspective, (2) to prepare educators to use PLT materials with their students, and (3) to create a setting in which educators, resource personnel, and others can meet and share information, encouraging continued communication and support for environmental education. The goals of a facilitator workshop are: (1) to familiarize the participants with the PLT program and materials, (2) to allow participants to learn from and with each other as well as the facilitators, and (3) to prepare participants to plan, organize, and conduct their own PLT educator workshop.

PLT promotes the *process* of education and advocates sound principles of teaching, helping

students learn about the world around them, their place within the world, and their responsibility for it. The activities encourage educators to provide students with opportunities to gather information, communicate, cooperate, assess values, solve problems, and use critical thinking. The activities emphasize conceptual learning and skill building and use effective, student-centered instructional strategies, such as hands-on and cooperative learning.

PLT is balanced on value-sensitive topics. The activities and materials are designed to treat issues fairly and do not advocate any one particular point of view. PLT recognizes that people need information from a variety of sources in order to make their own informed decisions. In short, PLT helps teach students *how* to think about complex environmental issues, not *what* to think.

History of PLT

In the early 1970s, the founders of PLT had an idea for developing an effective environmental education program. To build an effective program, the founders established two goals. The first goal was to design an environmental education program that would gain the confidence of the education community—educators must like it, trust it, and use it. The second goal was to develop partnerships between public and private sectors that ensured the curriculum was balanced, fair, and accurate—and that the curriculum encouraged students to consider all sides and factors when making decisions about the environment. In addition to creating quality materials, they also created a system of implementation. They believed that for the curriculum to be used effectively, it should only be available through workshops where educators would receive training in how the materials would work for them.

To develop materials that met those goals, a strong partnership was created when the Western Regional Environmental Education Council¹ (now the Council for Environmental Education) approached the American Forest Institute² (now the American Forest Foundation) to work together on developing and implementing a high-quality environmental education program. The result of this partnership was the Project Learning Tree environmental education program.

The first edition of the PLT materials was published in 1976. It was developed by a team of writers and was thoroughly tested and evaluated. Two activity guides were available, one for K-6 grade educators and one for 7-12 grade educators. Those two guides were in use until 1993 when

¹The Council was an organization of representatives from 13 state departments of education and state resource agencies. It was formed in the early 1970s with a grant from the Federal Office of Environmental Education. Initially, the 13 western states sponsored PLT. Now, all fifty states plus the District of Columbia are sponsors.

² AFI was a forest products companies trade association that later formed the American Forest Foundation as an independent not-for-profit charitable educational 501(c) 3 organization.

the materials were revised into the current PreK-8 Activity Guide and topic-specific secondary modules.

Administration and Sponsors

Today, Project Learning Tree is nationally administered by the American Forest Foundation (AFF). AFF was chartered in 1982 to develop and administer programs that encourage the long-term stewardship of the environment and natural resources. AFF is a charitable education and conservation foundation supported by grants from individuals, foundations, government agencies, and corporations. PLT's partners include the Council for Environmental Education (CEE), the National Association of Conservation Districts, U. S. D. A. Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters, the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges, the Society of American Foresters, the World Forestry Center, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Peace Corps.

From the beginning, PLT has been administered under the direction of a broad-based National Education Operating Committee that brings together all the PLT partners. The committee includes representatives from national PLT sponsors, education, industry, state coordinators, and other partners. The Committee meets several times annually. There is usually a Committee meeting held during the annual coordinators' conference, which allows coordinators to join the meeting.

State Coordinators are represented on the Committee by one of their peers who is elected to this position for three years. The national staff polls coordinators to ascertain who would like to serve, then an election is held in which coordinators vote for their representative. Since this is a rotating position, many coordinators will have the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

PLT's Mission

PLT uses the forest as a “window on the world” to increase students’ understanding of our complex environment; to stimulate critical and creative thinking; to develop the ability to make informed decisions on environmental issues; and to instill the confidence and commitment to take responsible action on behalf of the environment.

PLT's Goals

PLT's goals are to:

- # Provide students with the awareness, appreciation, understanding, skills, and commitment to address environmental issues.
- # Enable students to apply scientific processes and higher order thinking skills to resolve

environmental problems.

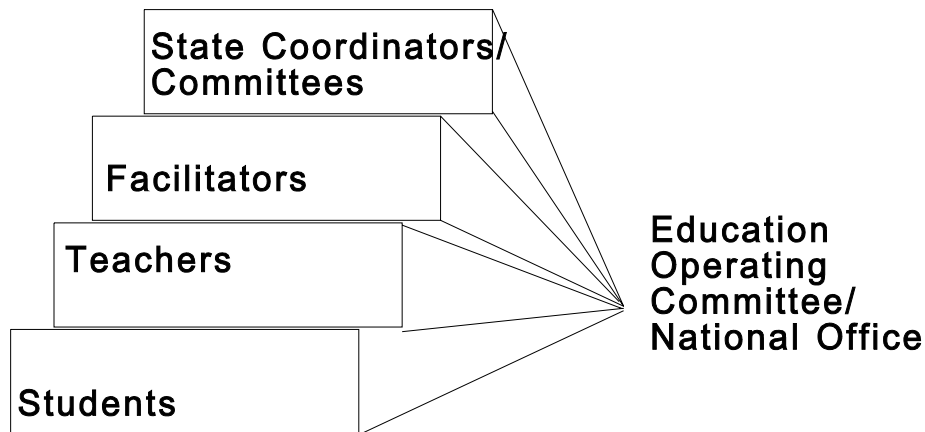
- # Help students acquire an appreciation and tolerance of diverse viewpoints on environmental issues, and develop attitudes and actions based on analysis and evaluation of the available information.
- # Encourage creativity, originality, and flexibility to resolve environmental problems and issues.
- # Inspire and empower students to become responsible, productive, and participatory members of society.

The PLT Network

The PLT network includes approximately 100 state coordinators from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Over 3,000 volunteer facilitators across the country reach more than 30,000 teachers each year. To date, more than 750,000 educators have participated in PLT, reaching millions of students. In addition, PLT has a network of international partners. See page 12 in Part II for more information on the international program.

Associated Programs

The PLT Network: Built from the Ground Up



WREEC also created a partnership with Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to develop Project WILD in 1983. Using the successful PLT development and implementation model, they published a K-6 guide and a 7-12 guide in 1983, and subsequently combined the

guides into one volume in 1992. In addition, an Aquatic WILD supplement was published in 1987. In 1990, WREEC partnered with Montana State University to form Project Wet and together they published a K-12 guide in 1995.

The PLT Curriculum

Project Learning Tree has created a variety of supplementary environmental education materials for formal and non-formal educators. Curriculum materials include the revised PreK-8 Activity Guide and the new topic-specific secondary modules. Other materials include posters, the GreenWorks! guide, correlations to national and state education standards, and more (please see pages 4-6 in Part II for additional details).

PLT and Education Reform

One of the most important features of the revised PLT curriculum is the integration of education reform principles. All PLT activities are designed to promote conceptual learning, teaching with a thematic approach, teaching across disciplines, teaching in a constructivist manner, and the use of whole language. In addition, PLT activities provide many opportunities for hands-on learning, authentic assessment of student achievement, and flexibility in designing lessons.

Although the guide and modules contain in-depth information on specific topics, they are designed to *supplement* educators' *existing* curriculum. In addition, teachers are encouraged to augment the PLT materials with content that relates to their community, expertise, or interests. The activities can be structured into story-line units, or used individually to teach a particular topic or reinforce the concepts indicated in the activity. For more information on PLT and education reform, please see the article in Appendix L.

PLT's Conceptual Framework

PLT's conceptual framework, including descriptions of the five themes, is thoroughly covered on pages 375-376 in the PreK-8 guide, pages 7-8 in the Introductory Handbook to the Secondary Modules, and is included as an appendix in each of the secondary modules. PLT's conceptual framework provides continuity between various content areas and promotes conceptual understanding. All PLT activities relate to the concepts in the framework with the side bar on the first page of each activity indicating the PLT concepts that the activity supports.

This conceptual framework lets the users of this program know what kinds of knowledge students can expect to acquire when using the PLT curricula. And it provides the structure, direction, and purpose for the activities.

Interdisciplinary/Multidisciplinary Applications

PLT is for any educator wishing to introduce environmental objectives into their curriculum. Because each of the activities found in the PLT PreK-8 Activity Guide and secondary modules joins at least two different learning disciplines together, there are many opportunities for

interdisciplinary team-teaching. In addition, the multidisciplinary nature of the PLT PreK-8 Activity Guide and secondary modules allows for PLT activities to be infused into established curricula for science, language arts, social studies, reading, math, music, civics, geography, and so forth.

Constructivism and Whole Language

One of the unique characteristics of PLT is its emphasis on constructivist learning theory and whole language teaching strategies. *Constructivism*, also known as constructivist learning, is based on the principle that students construct new understandings by combining previous understandings with new discoveries. Constructivism is the learning philosophy that has been guiding the reform of today's education. Its teaching/learning strategies are aligned with how educational researchers now believe students learn best.

In contrast to the more "traditional" classroom instruction which emphasizes that students learn because teachers teach, the responsibility for learning lies with the student. Educators are responsible for facilitating learning experiences which enable students to manipulate materials, consider multiple points of view, participate in group work, and focus on learning concepts. Using this technique, PLT teachers can guide their students toward new discoveries and scientific understanding while helping them develop critical thinking and creative problem solving skills.

PLT activities are designed using a constructivist approach. For example, step one in an activity is designed to create student awareness and to find out what students already know about the topic. It serves as the "hook" to develop their interest. Step two develops their knowledge and skills. Step three challenges their preconceived notions about the topic, helps them come to consensus, or builds new knowledge. Finally, step four provides ideas on how they can take positive action regarding the new information and knowledge they have gained on this topic. The final step may also show how they can apply this new learning to other situations.

Whole language—teaching holistically rather than in bits and pieces—allows teachers to integrate connecting themes, conceptual understandings, and critical thinking skills rather than simply transferring bits of information. In this way, students can engage in writing and oral language activities related to experiential learning. Teachers who successfully employ the constructivist and whole language theories to the PLT curriculum can maximize effective teaching strategies including cooperative learning—team or group approaches to learning and problem solving—identifying problems, determining desired outcomes, and testing solutions.

Using these approaches, teachers will find that PLT activities can guide learners through the process of awareness, understanding, challenge, motivation, and action, using active involvement and hands-on experience.

II. PLT National Staff Program Responsibilities

Overview

The Project Learning Tree national staff is responsible for the 'behind the scenes' component of the PLT program. This includes the development and upkeep of all curriculum materials, supporting materials, communication materials, and special projects.

The national staff is also a major support system for PLT Coordinators. As such, members of the national staff are responsible for responding to concerns, questions, and suggestions put forth by the coordinators. The national staff is also available for assisting coordinators with planning and/or facilitating leadership workshops. In addition, national staff members can provide support in establishing and managing a steering committee. This can include participating in meetings where you feel their presence would be helpful, as well as lending guidance in the selection of committee members and setting the agenda. National staff can cover their own travel expenses for facilitator workshops or steering committee meetings.

The PLT national office is located in AFF headquarters at 1111 19th Street, NW, Suite 780, Washington, DC 20036. Please refer to Appendix A for a complete list of PLT staff responsibilities and individual contact information.

Annual/Long Range Plan. In 1997, PLT developed a long range plan (LRP). The LRP sets forth the goals and objectives for developing a stronger and more effective PLT program through the year 2002. The purpose of the plan is to guide the direction and efforts of the national PLT office. In addition, on an annual basis, PLT staff and the PLT Operating Committee develop an annual work-plan and budget based on the LRP. Copies of the long range plan have been distributed to the PLT network of national and state sponsors and state coordinators. To obtain a copy of the LRP, please contact the national office at 202-463-2462.

Curriculum Materials

Activity Guides. The PLT activity guides are broad-based environmental education supplementary materials. The PLT activity guides are divided into the PreK-8 Activity Guide and the secondary modules. The PreK-8 Activity Guide includes 96 activities covering many aspects of environmental studies—from forests, to wetlands, to pollution. The activities are presented in five sections, corresponding to the five themes of PLT's conceptual framework. The secondary modules are topic-specific activity guides that provide an in-depth look at specific environmental issues. Each module includes, on average, 9 lessons in addition to numerous appendices. Currently, we have published an *Introductory Handbook to the Secondary Modules*, *Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Forests*, *The Changing Forest: Forest Ecology*, *Exploring Environmental Issues: Municipal Solid Waste*, and *Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Risk*. Topics for future secondary modules include air quality, the built environment,

biodiversity, and world forests.

Spanish Translation. In response to the growing need for bilingual academic material, PLT has translated into Spanish the Student Pages and Glossary of the PreK-8 Activity Guide. In schools where students have an opportunity to receive instruction in two languages, the translation provides ready-to-use materials for both bilingual educators and learners. Moreover, in schools where Spanish-speaking students are interspersed in classrooms where English is the primary language of instruction and no bilingual education is available, the PLT translation will serve as a bridge to facilitate the acquisition of content to limited English-speakers. As of January 1999, plans are underway to translate selected student pages for secondary educators.

Development. In 1993, PLT introduced the revised PreK-8 curriculum. The extensive multi-year revision began with a survey of more than 50,000 teachers, environmental educators, and curriculum specialists across North America. It included writing workshops with more than 600 educators, scientists, natural resource managers, and technical specialists. This effort was guided by the national staff and involved all partners in the planning, writing, and testing of the curriculum materials.

In addition to the PreK-8 Activity Guide, PLT has developed a series of modules on specific topics for the secondary audience. The process for developing the secondary modules is similar to the PreK-8 Activity Guide. To begin, a focus group of educators and content specialists meet to determine the scope and content of the curriculum. The goal of the focus group discussions is to develop an outline and subsequent first draft of a module. This draft is generally authored by a team of writers made up of PLT staff members, secondary educators, and content experts. The first draft is then sent to other content experts and educators for review. These reviewers submit their comments to the PLT national office. The PLT staff then compiles and incorporates the comments into a second draft. The second draft is sent to secondary educators for pilot-testing. The pilot-test stage entails teaching the activities from the module and then submitting answers to follow-up questions, which each reviewer receives with a copy of the draft. At the same time, this revised draft is reviewed a second time by content experts. Again, the staff at the PLT national office incorporates the suggestions made by educators and content experts into a final draft. Due to the many stages that each module goes through, it typically takes two years for the production of a module.

Evaluation. Following is an outline of the process PLT undertook to evaluate its PreK-8 curriculum. PLT contracted with the North American Association for Environmental Education's Research Commission to evaluate all phases of the development process. To do this, a state-of-the-art evaluation was designed in three phases. The first, the planning stage, allowed PLT to determine the needs of its users and to develop a process for the curriculum development. The second, the formative evaluation, was administered at the beginning of the evaluation process and continued throughout the life of the project. For example, all PLT materials were pilot tested to make sure that the activities actually work in both formal settings, such as classrooms, and nonformal settings, such as nature centers. On the basis of the pilot tests and reviews, PLT

revised the materials and then moved the evaluation process into the final phase. This third summative evaluation phase used field testing to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in the classroom. This part of the evaluation was conducted to determine (1) if the new materials were meeting the goals and objectives of the program, and (2) whether or not the students who participate in the program benefited from it. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to assess the overall effectiveness of the curriculum. In this final phase, students were given a pre-test, then the teacher conducted specific PLT activities, and finally the teacher administered a post-test to the students.

For the revised *PreK-8 Activity Guide*, the results of this comprehensive evaluation indicated that it can be an effective program for increasing environmental knowledge and affecting positive attitudinal growth in students. In addition, teachers who completed at least one PLT teacher training workshop and who implemented the new PLT activities as intended are likely to observe knowledge gains and attitudinal change in their students—even when students are exposed to a series of new PLT activities over a relatively short period of time. The full report of this evaluation is available from the PLT national office.

The same process outlined above is used for the evaluation of the secondary modules. Copies of the evaluations are available from the PLT national office.

In addition to an evaluation of the program at the national level, numerous states have conducted user surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of their PLT program, the usefulness of PLT workshops, and the usefulness of PLT materials. Information from these surveys is used to improve state programs and respond to the needs of the local volunteers and program participants. Copies of state evaluations are available from the national office.

Guide Production and Sales. Once a year, usually in the summer, PLT state coordinators are asked to submit their order for PreK-8 Activity Guides and the secondary modules. This order is designed to cover *all* workshops for the coming year. The national office then prints enough guides and modules to fulfill the orders. A small overrun is also printed to cover additional needs throughout the year. The **annual** printing allows us to make updates and corrections to our materials as needed. See Appendix B for a guide and module price list and order form.

In general, PLT materials are not sold directly to educators. However, some states are offering secondary modules for sale to workshop participants who have received training in one or more of the other modules.

Requests for Reprinting PLT Activities. The American Forest Foundation is the copyright holder for PLT's curriculum materials. All requests to reprint activities from PLT's PreK-8 Guide or secondary modules are handled by the national office. Each year the national office receives many requests for reprinting activities. We generally grant permission to reprint up to five activities from the PreK-8 Activity Guide and one activity from a secondary module. Permission

is granted *only if* the publication is offered free of charge to educators. We do not encourage the reprinting of PLT activities for the purpose of creating a new activity guide (for example, a publication that would include a compilation of activities from a variety of guides). In this situation, we prefer the inquirer to reference PLT and encourage educators to attend a PLT workshop. It is also our policy to work with the state coordinators to make sure that they know a request has been made from their state and to seek their input. Currently, we don't grant reprint requests for activities to be posted on the Internet.

Supporting Materials

PLT also produces two other types of materials. The first consists of materials that support the curriculum materials, such as posters, the Demonstration Forest Handbook, and the correlations of PLT activities to national and state education standards. The second consists of materials that help support the coordinators such as the facilitators' handbook, network database, and material evaluations.

Posters. PLT has developed a number of informative, colorful posters that can be used to augment the PLT written materials. The posters currently available include "We All Need Trees," "Forests of the World," and "Where Does Your Homework Go?" The PLT posters are a good give-away item at workshops! See Appendix B for information on ordering these posters.

Demonstration Forest Handbook. In 1995, PLT began the development of a handbook for creating a demonstration forest in memory of Brenton S. Halsey, Jr. (1955-1994), a forestry executive with James River, who loved to teach children about the environment and who was an active PLT volunteer. Brent served on PLT's National Education Operating Committee and was responsible for creating a demonstration forest on James River property in Old Town, Maine. A demonstration forest is a small-scale version of a working forest that can demonstrate techniques of forest management. It is a piece of land, usually just five to ten acres, that typically includes trails, outdoor classrooms, and learning stations. To obtain a copy of the demonstration forest handbook please refer to the order form in Appendix B.

Correlations. The setting of standards is a key element of the education reform movement that has been occurring across the country. In response to this trend, PLT has made it a priority to correlate the PreK-8 Activity Guide and the secondary modules to national education standards. Correlation documents for the National Science Education Standards and the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies have been posted to the PLT web site and can be easily downloaded or printed for your use. (These documents may also be obtained in hard copy from the national office.)

The science and social studies standards correlation were conducted by outside contractors and then reviewed by educators trained in PLT, as well as someone who had been involved in the development of the standards.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) has spearheaded the Standards movement on the environmental education front by initiating the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education. Among its many worthwhile efforts, this project has developed national EE guidelines for the development of EE programs. These guidelines are similar to those established by the other core disciplines. A correlation document between the PLT curriculum materials and the guidelines will be available in 2000.

In addition, PLT materials have been correlated to the Girl Scout Program and a number of states have developed correlations to their state education standards. When possible, the state correlations are posted to the national PLT web site. (Please see page 8 in Part IV for more information on state curriculum correlations.)

There are a variety of materials that provide valuable background information regarding standards and guidelines for environmental education. Please see Appendix L for a list of references.

GreenWorks! Guide. The GreenWorks! Environmental Action Guide is in production. The estimated distribution date is on or prior to December 4, 2000. Please see page 10 in Part II for more information about the GreenWorks! program.

Facilitator Handbook. A lot of planning and preparation goes into conducting educator workshops; therefore, we have developed a handbook with lots of important and useful information to help out our network of facilitators. The handbook contains items such as the goals and mission of PLT, arranging for a workshop, publicizing a workshop, fees, time considerations, and much, much more! All PLT Coordinators should have a copy of the Facilitators' Handbook on disk so that they may tailor it to best fit their state. The handbook is available as a downloadable Word document off of the coordinators' corner of PLT web site (see appendix H for information on how to access the coordinators corner.) If you do not have a copy on disk, and cannot download it from the internet please contact the national office. *A copy of the handbook should be given to all individuals who complete a facilitator training workshop.*

PLT Network Database. The PLT national database stores educator and workshop information. Every PLT workshop evaluation form received from PLT state programs is entered into the database. Educator names and addresses are stored in the database and constitute the *Branch* newsletter mailing list. All responses to the workshop evaluation questions are also stored in the database and can be retrieved through a variety of reports.

As a service to the states, national PLT will print state specific reports and educator addresses by request. Educator mailing addresses can be printed in both label and hard-copy format, and are available by state, zip code, grade level, workshop type, date of workshop, subject area, and last name alphabetically. National and state reports can also be printed for a particular time period or

all dates for the following: how workshop attendees heard of PLT, grade level and subjects in which PLT will be used, and the responses to the workshop and survey questions and comments. Because this database is used for many purposes, it is important that state coordinators forward workshop evaluations to the national office in a timely manner. To access information from the database please contact the national office.

As of Spring 2000, the database had more than 200,000 individuals on the mailing list.

Materials Evaluations. All of PLT's curriculum materials undergo an extensive evaluation process during the field test stage of development. The results of these evaluations have been compiled into a set of documents and are available from the national office. In addition, various states have conducted their own evaluations of the PLT materials. Copies of those reports that have been forwarded to the national office have been summarized and are also available upon request.

PLT Promotional Items. There are additional materials such as stickers, shirts, and brochures that state coordinators may order from the Atlanta office. Prices and order forms for these items are in Appendix B.

Communication Materials

An important part of the PLT network is maintaining the lines of communication among the national office, State Coordinators, volunteers, and partners. There are several instruments available to accomplish this goal, including the *Branch* newsletter, the PLT Web site, coordinator memos, and the PLT listserv.

The *Branch* Newsletter. The *Branch* is the national newsletter of Project Learning Tree. The *Branch* updates readers on new national PLT initiatives, provides resources, and features other educational articles. Coordinators and facilitators can become involved in the content of the newsletter by submitting article and resource ideas to the national office.

The newsletter is mailed twice yearly (Spring and Fall) to approximately 200,000 PLT trained educators. Educators are added to the PLT *Branch* mailing list from the evaluation forms that are collected at the end of educator and facilitator workshops.

Please be sure to tell educators that the address they provide on the evaluation form is used for our newsletter. Clear and accurate mailing information provided on the evaluation forms will expedite the arrival of the newsletter. The *Branch* is mailed bulk rate, non-profit so it may take up to three weeks from mailing date to be received. Also, because it is mailed at this discounted rate, it will not be forwarded if the recipient changes their address. Periodically, however, we do a list clean-up and pay for forwarding and returned mail.

Once the *Branch* is printed and mailed, national PLT sends extra printed copies to state

coordinators to distribute at conferences and workshops.

The PLT Web Site: www.plt.org. Project Learning Tree has set up a national Web site for educators, current PLT facilitators, and students. This site provides useful information on PLT, its materials, network, and workshops. The site includes:

Calendar of Events

This portion of the site allows Web users to retrieve information about specific state and national PLT events. In order to do this, a password protected portion of the PLT site just for the state coordinators has been set-up. This allows you to enter PLT events onto the calendar from your very own computer. To input information you enter a password that allows you access to an events form. On this form you are able to input workshop times, dates, and locations, PLT sponsored events, PLT at state conferences, PLT Earth Day events, etc. This information is then transferred onto your state calendar on the PLT Web site for users to view.

Environmental Exchange Box

The Environmental Exchange Box activity from the PreK-8 Guide and an On-line Exchange Box is now available on the Web site. Three times a year PLT highlights a different exchange school on the home page. This school provides PLT with Exchange Box □items□ such as pictures of local trees/forests and wildlife, poems about the local flora and fauna, descriptions of geology and climate, a short video highlighting local culture, and articles and student work about current environmental issues. These □items□ are scanned onto the Web site. Educators interested in doing the activity can pull-up this school on our Web site and compare and contrast their environment to that of the highlighted school on the site. A □communication corner□ is available for schools to communicate with the featured exchange school.

Resources for Educators

This portion of the site provides information regarding other resources for educators such as posters, videos, books, Internet sources, and audio cassettes, as well as links to other educational Web sites.

PLT in Action

This portion highlights our Outstanding Educators, GreenWorks!, PLT in the City, and a listing of national awards that PLT has received.

The Branch

The PLT National Newsletter is available through the Web site. The current issue of the *Branch* is accessible in pdf format. This allows you to view and print the Branch in a high quality format. Past issues of the Branch have been put in the archives so readers may retrieve past articles of interest.

A copy of the web site user guide is included in your handbook in appendix H. *The user guide contains the password and user ID that you need to gain access to the PLT Calender of Events and Coordinators' Corner.*

Coordinator Memos. An extremely important communication tool is the coordinator memo. The national staff uses these memos to correspond with the network of PLT Coordinators. These memos provide information on the latest news regarding the PLT program. They provide a means of informing coordinators about new materials, events, coordinators' conferences, and any other information relevant to the PLT program. The coordinator memos are distributed via regular mail as well as posted on the PLT listserv.

PLT Listserv. Tom Seibert, a previous Nebraska PLT coordinator, set up a listserv for PLT Coordinators and national staff members. The listserv provides an additional forum for coordinators to pose questions, make suggestions, and provide comments concerning PLT issues and activities. To subscribe to the listserv send an e-mail to **listserv@unl.edu** with the following message:

subscribe followed by a space **plt-c** followed by a space and **your name**

For example: subscribe plt-c sheri soyka

DO NOT include the quotation marks and DO NOT include any other message besides what is shown above (and leave the subject line blank). This will automatically sign you up for the listserv. Send this e-mail from your own computer because it uses the sender's address as the address for subscription to the listserv.

Once you have successfully subscribed to the listserv you will receive a message that contains information on how to reply to and send messages, and how to sign off. Please read that information carefully and save it!

We are excited about the potential this holds for improved communications within our network. This is an open discussion that is unmoderated. That means that your message is not screened before it goes on-line. Sometimes it is more appropriate to respond to an individual rather than the entire list. To avoid sending your message to everyone, do not hit reply. Instead, e-mail the person directly to their address.

Special Projects

PLT in the City. "PLT in the City" is a targeted initiative of Project Learning Tree designed to broaden the reach of PLT and address the needs of urban educators and students. This initiative was launched in the summer of 1995 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Since then "PLT in the City"

initiatives have been developed in Houston, Texas, Richmond, Virginia, and Washington, DC. The newest programs in development are Atlanta, Georgia and Oakland, California. Funds are raised, nationally and locally, specifically to set-up a local steering committee, hire a city coordinator, and train a network of PLT facilitators from the urban area. The state PLT program assists with all stages of development for the city program and ultimately incorporates the city program into the state cadre of facilitators and steering committee. The current initiatives are funded for three-year grant periods.

If you are interested in a "PLT in the City" initiative in your state call Caroline Alston at 202-463-2472.

GreenWorks! In 1993 PLT developed GreenWorks!, PLT's community action and service learning program. The program was initially developed in an exclusive partnership with the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees), however, the program is no longer limited to the Jaycees as partners, and participants are encouraged to partner with those groups within their communities that best complement their projects. The Phillips Petroleum Company and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation provided the funding for the GreenWorks! Program from 1993-1996. Under this grant more than 500 GreenWorks! community action projects were conducted throughout the country involving more than 35,000 children. The Phillips Petroleum Company is currently the sole supporter of the grants portion of the program and the PLT national office continuously seeks additional funding.

PLT's GreenWorks! community action and service learning program is designed to offer PLT educators and their students the opportunity to make a real difference in the communities in which they live and work. GreenWorks! encourages students to participate in community-based partnerships by developing and implementing action projects such as graffiti paint-overs, tree plantings, stream clean-ups, and recycling projects. When PLT educators and their students partner with local community groups with the goal of improving the environment, they help educate the community on environmental issues that specifically effect their community. This supports one of PLT's goals of bringing students from awareness to action.

There are opportunities for PLT educators to apply for GreenWorks! mini-grants (see Appendix B for a sample grant flier).

Outstanding PLT Educators. PLT designed a recognition program in 1994 to showcase the dedicated efforts of the people that bring PLT into classrooms, nature centers, universities, and scouting troops. Five educators per year are honored with an all expense paid trip to the International Coordinators' Conference and an opportunity to participate in the World Forestry Center's Teacher Institute. Every year, state coordinators are asked to nominate one outstanding educator from their state. The nominees are reviewed by the PLT Operating Committee and the five winners are selected through a voting process. See Appendix B for a sample nomination form.

EETAP: Environmental Education and Training Partnership. In September 1995, the North American Association for Environmental Education and the United States Environmental Protection Agency signed a cooperative agreement to undertake a three-year national program to provide environmental education training for education professionals. The program, known as the Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP) was formed with funding provided by EPA under the National Environmental Education Act of 1990. EETAP is a consortium of organizations, one of which is Project Learning Tree, that work together in a coordinated manner to design and implement EETAP's training objectives. In 1997 EPA agreed to extend the project for a total of five years, adding two more years onto the original agreement.

Project Learning Tree's role in the consortium is to support environmental education and training by providing additional funding to state PLT programs. In 1995, the first year of the project, PLT awarded a total of \$132,000 in pass-through grants to 28 states. These states committed to train an additional 4,400 educators and 400 high school facilitators during the grant period of October 1995 - September 1996. At the completion of the first year of the grant, a total of 5,600 educators and 600 high school facilitators had been trained in Project Learning Tree.

Year Two of the project started in October 1996 with \$72,000 given to 20 states in pass-through funds. Training targeted audiences from urban and rural areas, nonformal and secondary educators, and multicultural and other underserved audiences. The national goal to train 2,300 educators and 200 facilitators was exceeded and in Year Two PLT trained a total of 2,959 educators and 215 facilitators.

In Year Three of the project, beginning in October 1997, a total of \$75,000 was allotted to develop new programs and train new audiences. Project Learning Tree had committed to developing state correlations to national standards, work with pre-service audiences, expand PLT in the City, collaborate with Project WILD and NAAEE's Urban Leadership Collaborative, expand state capacity building by partnering with state EE associations, and train secondary educators. PLT trained over 2,600 educators in Year Three of the project.

Starting in October 1998, PLT entered into Year Four of EETAP. PLT committed to train 3,100 educators and facilitators during the grant period which ends in October 1999. PLT awarded \$104,000 in grants to 22 states to initiate state standards correlations, joint workshops with WILD and WET, pre-service training, secondary implementation, advanced workshops, urban training, collaboration with the State Education and Environment Roundtable, and the development of education reform workshops and training materials. National PLT also agreed to implement projects at the national level which include correlations to the Environmental Education Guidelines and the National Social Studies Standards, increasing training workshops for "PLT in the City" and supporting our state involvement in the National Environmental Education and Advancement Project.

States can become involved in EETAP by submitting proposals to the PLT national office. Please contact Tess Erb at 202-463-2457 for more information.

International Coordinators' Conference. Each year PLT coordinators meet to share information and ideas, and interact with program sponsors and other environmental education experts. Conference attendees include PLT state coordinators, educators, facilitators, state and national committee members, conference sponsors, and various environmental education partners. The conference is traditionally held in May. The location of the conference is determined by state coordinators volunteering to host the conference, the Education Operating Committee, and economic and logistic concerns.

The PLT Coordinator hosting the conference and their state planning committee work closely with the PLT national office to plan and implement the national conference.

The first PLT Coordinators' Conference was held in 1979 in Jackson Hole, Wyoming (at that time, 25 states were in the network). The next conference did not take place until 1987, in California, and since then the conference has been an annual event. Following is a list of previous and future conference locations:

1987- Menlo Park, California	1997- Bar Harbor, Maine
1988- Callaway Gardens, Georgia	1998- Clearwater, Florida
1989- Squam Lake, New Hampshire	1999- Snowbird, Utah
1990- Santa Fe, New Mexico	2000- Hendersonville, North Carolina
1991- Mammoth Cave, Kentucky	2001- Fish Camp, California
1992- Keystone, Colorado	2002- Charleston, South Carolina
1993- New Orleans, Louisiana	2003- Huron, Ohio
1994- Oconomowoc, Wisconsin	2004- Bismarck, North Dakota
1995- St. Louis, Missouri	2005- Welches, Oregon
1996- Post Falls, Idaho	2006- Virginia

Conference Presentations. The PLT national office exhibits and makes presentations at several national education and environmental organizations' annual meetings. These include the North American Association for Environmental Education, the National Science Teachers Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Alliance of Black School Educators, the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Future Farmers of America, the California Association for Bilingual Educators, and the National Council for the Social Studies, among others. We typically request help from the PLT coordinator(s) and volunteers from the state in which the conference takes place. Coordinators may also request the use of our national exhibit for state or regional meetings and conferences (see page 8 in Part IV for more information on the PLT display.)

PLT International. Currently Project Learning Tree has sponsorship agreements with Brazil, Canada, Chile, Finland, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, and Sweden. The sponsoring agency within a country must enter into a legal agreement with PLT. This requires a one-time sponsorship fee (U.S. \$10,000) and any additional costs, such as travel costs for training. All costs related to translation, adaptation, and implementation are the responsibility of the sponsors of Project Learning Tree in their country. All requests for international sponsorship must be submitted to the national office and approved by the Project Learning Tree Education Operating Committee.

III. State Co-Sponsors

Letters of Agreement

In order to establish a PLT program in a state there must be at least one sponsoring organization. For example, in a number of states the Department of Forestry is the PLT co-sponsor, while in other states it is the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Education, or a university. The sponsoring organization(s) must sign an agreement with national PLT before becoming an official sponsor.

Over time, it is possible that the role of co-sponsor will change hands or expand to include additional organizations, depending on the needs and growth of your PLT program. When this occurs, a new letter of agreement must be established with national PLT.

Letters of agreement should also be obtained on the state level. These agreements should establish the roles of each co-sponsor, the state coordinator, and the steering committee. (See Appendix F for sample letters.)

Roles

The roles of the state co-sponsors can vary from state to state and from co-sponsor to co-sponsor. Where there is a single co-sponsor of PLT, the roles are clear and easy to establish. However, when several agencies serve as co-sponsors the lines can become tangled unless everyone works together to establish who will do what.

Support

By signing on as a state co-sponsor of PLT, an agency establishes the fact that it supports PLT and its mission and goals, and will use its resources to help achieve the mission and goals. Likewise, such an agreement indicates that PLT supports the sponsor's mission and goals, since the relationship that is established is mutual.

Local support can take many forms. Co-sponsors may provide state coordinators, in-kind services, funding, fiscal management, or publicity in any combination. Co-sponsors should provide at least one of these categories.

Fiscal

Co-sponsors often provide bookkeeping services to local PLT programs. Others provide actual funding. It is beneficial if at least one state co-sponsor has or can establish a 501 (c)3 non-profit entity for the handling of PLT funds. This facilitates fund-raising because donors can get a tax break on donations made to such a non-profit organization.

Publicity

If co-sponsors have an in-house newsletter or magazine, they should be willing to devote space in each issue to news about the local PLT program. Co-sponsors frequently have staff members who are accustomed to dealing with the media, and these staffers can usually help to get articles published or get television or radio crews to show up for events. Articles and events dealing with children are particularly attractive to the media, but it takes some skill to know who and when to approach.

As with coordinators, co-sponsors should publicly proclaim their sponsorship of PLT at every opportunity. For example, a statement at the bottom of the co-sponsor's letterhead could read:
 Proud sponsor of Project Learning Tree in _____ (state name). Co-sponsors often have constituencies which are important to PLT. Publicity about your program to these members can strengthen your support.

Fund-raising

Many PLT state programs need to raise money to fund their PLT activities and often the coordinator's salary. The steering committee usually takes the lead with assistance from the coordinator (see page 2 in Part V for more information). The coordinators' conference usually has at least one session to help with fund raising. Contact the national office or other coordinators for ideas and assistance. See Appendix J for a sample state fund-raising strategy, including donations breakdown list, funding request letters, and development strategy plan.

IV. PLT Coordinator's Responsibilities

The most important roles of a PLT coordinator are:

- To serve as PLT's representative in the state.
- To train and manage a cadre of in-state PLT facilitators.
- To implement the training of educators throughout the state.
- To serve as the state's liaison with the national PLT staff.
- To serve as liaison with the state PLT co-sponsors.
- To serve as staff person for the state PLT steering or advisory committee.
- To maintain and report on PLT records in the state.

Representing PLT in the State

The PLT coordinator serves as PLT's chief representative and program director in the state. All program information and updates flow from the national office to the coordinator. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to disperse appropriate information throughout the state network.

As the PLT representative in your state, it is critical to be proactive in your promotional efforts. A successful PLT program is one that not only has developed strong partnerships, but is always seeking new partnerships and new ways of establishing the credibility of the program. It is also up to the coordinator to be aware of the program's strengths *and* weaknesses; to build on those strengths and overcome the weaknesses. See Appendix F for a sample letter of agreement between a state PLT program and a new partner.

The coordinator is ultimately responsible for program quality, publicity, and growth. As director of PLT in the state, you have the authority to make any and all program decisions, provided these decisions do not conflict with national standards and guidelines.

Most coordinators wear many hats. When you are representing your employer or another program and introduce yourself to an audience, it may be appropriate to mention that you are also the PLT coordinator.

Facilitator Management

There are many facets to facilitator management, and these may vary from state to state depending upon local requirements. Good management is time consuming, but it's a very important part of your duties as a state coordinator. Generally, facilitator management falls into these categories: training; facilitator compensation; quality control; follow-up; list maintenance; communications; and incentives.

Training. Training PLT facilitators is paramount to the success of any state program. Since educators can obtain PLT guides and modules only through attendance at a PLT educator workshop, each state needs a cadre of volunteer facilitators who can and will conduct those workshops. To do their jobs, facilitators must have appropriate training in conducting PLT educator workshops and be effectively managed. They must also be kept abreast of changes and new information regarding the national and state PLT programs.

PLT facilitators may be classroom teachers, college or university faculty, industry employees, Girl Scout leaders, Boy Scout leaders, 4-H leaders, nature center personnel, resource professionals, or anyone else who is interested in helping to spread the use of PLT in the state.

State coordinators are ultimately responsible for all facilitator training. In some instances, coordinators may elect to have the training conducted by others, but in every case the coordinator must maintain oversight of the agenda and be assured of the quality of the training.

Deciding when a facilitator workshop is needed is the responsibility of the coordinator, working with the steering committee. There are several factors to consider when making this decision. You should conduct a needs assessment to determine: Are there areas of your state where there are not enough facilitators? Do you have a large number of facilitators who have dropped out of your program because they have moved or changed jobs? Do you have quite a few facilitators who are not performing? (See page 5 in Part IV for more on problem facilitators.) Scheduling a facilitator workshop should be based upon need, and not just because it is □time to have one.□ Once the decision has been made to hold a facilitator workshop, the real work begins.

Before deciding when and where to hold your workshop, consider your target audience. When would be the best time for the majority of the people you want to reach? In what part of the state would you be able to attract the most people?

If possible, choose a location that provides overnight accommodations. There is value in having your trainees spend time together in the evening to get to know each other better. This is often when they will have time to plan their strategies for educator workshops.

While any location can work for a facilitator workshop, it is certainly preferable to have one that has easy access to the outdoors, and one where interruptions and distractions will be minimal.

Compensation. Different states approach the issue of facilitator compensation for conducting educator workshops differently. Following are a variety of scenarios that are currently employed by various coordinators:

- . Some programs are able to offer a stipend for conducting educator workshops ranging from \$50 - \$250, depending on available resources. This may or may not be in addition to travel and out-of-pocket expense reimbursements.
- . Some programs can only offer out-of-pocket reimbursements.
- . Some programs do not offer facilitator compensation.
- . Some programs offer facilitator compensation only to individuals who conduct workshops in addition to their regular job (as opposed to individuals whose job description includes teacher training).

Whether or not you are able to financially compensate your facilitators will depend upon your budget and resources.

For information regarding workshop fees for participants please see page 3 in Part VI.

Quality Control. **Workshop proposals** must be submitted to you by every facilitator prior to that facilitator receiving materials for the proposed workshop. It is your job to review those proposals and make sure that all elements of a proper educator workshop are included. The proposals require the facilitator to list the activities that will be conducted at the workshop. You should make sure these activities utilize an appropriate mix of learning styles and are representative of the broad-based nature of PLT (i.e., not all tree oriented). Reading and reacting to the proposals at this stage can help the facilitator have a more productive workshop and can also deflect problems.

Workshop evaluations are critical. If you know that a workshop has been held and you have received no evaluations, the facilitator should receive a reminder. If you have appropriately expressed the importance of these evaluations during your facilitator training, the problem should be minimal. Some state coordinators require that evaluations from one workshop be returned before the facilitator can receive materials for subsequent workshops.

When a facilitator continually gets outstanding marks on evaluations, a congratulatory phone call will signal that you noticed and that you care. On the other hand, if a facilitator frequently gets negative comments on evaluations, you should discuss this with him or her. If the negative comments continue, you may want to audit the next workshop or have someone you trust do so and report back to you.

Inappropriate workshop formats. Occasionally you may hear about a facilitator or facilitators who have conducted or plan to conduct workshops that do not meet the standards set by national PLT and/or your state program. First, you must ascertain whether the information is correct.

Never take one person's word as fact. That person may have misunderstood the situation. Ask the facilitator(s) for his/her evaluation of the charge, then if necessary you can phone several people who also attended the workshop. If you need to take this last step, state that you routinely make these calls, and ask their opinions about several facets of the workshop. When you have ascertained that standards have been breached, you need to discuss this with the facilitator and request format changes. Certainly future workshops conducted by the facilitator must be audited.

Hold the diploma. There may be times when you are faced with a volunteer who (for one reason or another) should not be a PLT facilitator. While good training and skillful management can sometimes be enough to solve the problem, occasionally someone shows up for training who simply is not a good candidate. As the state leader of PLT, you do not have to accept just anyone who shows up, but be careful about how and why you decline to accept someone into the program. The reasons should be extreme, and it should be obvious that the person would be a serious detriment to the program. Don't let personal issues cloud your thinking.

Most situations are salvageable if you take time to analyze the problem. Sometimes a simple explanation of why certain behavior is causing a conflict is enough. Ignoring a persistent problem will never solve it, however. Gentle but firm action is needed if you are to stay in control of quality.

Someone who may not be a candidate for serving as a PLT facilitator can still help run a PLT workshop. For example, there are opportunities to help with workshop promotion, registration, set-up, clean-up, etc.

Handling Problem Facilitators. Unfortunately, from time to time a coordinator must face the fact that a problem-causing facilitator is doing harm to the PLT program. When this happens, how do you fire a volunteer? It isn't pleasant, but it can and sometimes should be done. First you should be sure that the facilitator's conduct is damaging to the reputation of PLT and that the person's problems do not stem from a personality conflict with you or someone else in the program. Next, you should have exhausted every means available to remedy the situation. When nothing else works, you can simply ask in writing that the facilitator withdraw from further participation in the program. If the facilitator refuses, and his or her employer backs them up, you can refuse to supply the facilitator with program materials. These are drastic steps, and should be utilized only when the situation itself is drastic.

Follow-up. **Personal contact** is important. If your facilitators never hear from you, the reverse will be true more often than not. A letter to newly trained facilitators welcoming them to the world of PLT is more than just a nice touch. A welcoming letter provides a sense of belonging and emphasizes your support. Enclosed with the letter you might send a list of reminders, for example, Don't forget to send all workshop evaluation sheets to the state coordinator as soon

as possible after your workshop.”

List Maintenance. You should maintain good, up to date **records** on your state’s facilitators. At a minimum, these records should include name, address, office and home phone, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses. It would also be relatively simple to add statistical information such as number of workshops completed, numbers of educators trained, and workshops scheduled. Then, when you talk with a facilitator, you can cite their achievements and it will make them feel an important part of your program, which they are. Keeping this statistical information also helps you to formulate your annual report to national PLT.

Some states group their facilitators into districts or regions and then appoint a “team captain” for each region. This person is the key contact for workshop information and scheduling. Grouping facilitators allows you to make sure there is a good mix of both educators and resource managers for every workshop. It also makes the job of finding a facilitator for an upcoming workshop much easier for you and for other facilitators who are looking for a partner. All facilitators should be given a list of state facilitators during training so they know who is in their region.

You may want to use the list to help you develop a state map showing where facilitators are located, and another map showing where workshops have been held. A quick glance at these maps will tell you where facilitators are needed or where few workshops have been conducted. See Appendix E for samples of facilitator maps.

In addition, the national office keeps a database of educator information. You can use this database to get mailing labels and other information you might need to help keep track of workshop participants in your state. (Because this is a mobile society, we frequently have mail returned with no forwarding address. When this happens the person is removed from the database. For that reason we cannot use the database to determine the annual numbers.) See page 6 in Part II for more information on the database.

Communications. An easy way to communicate with all of your facilitators at one time is through a **newsletter**. The newsletter can be one that is strictly for PLT, or you may be able to negotiate space in an ally’s newsletter on a steady basis. Of course if your PLT program has its own newsletter, you can control content, space, and production time. Your newsletter need not be fancy or slick. The information it conveys is what is important. New program ideas, success stories, individual facilitator recognition, and news from national PLT can be incorporated. You may want to list facilitators who have conducted workshops since your last edition, or you might consider highlighting one or two facilitators per issue. See Appendix C for an example of a state newsletter.

Although they are important tools in your communications program, newsletters can be time consuming and costly to mail. Is there someone on your steering committee or in your facilitator

cadre who is a communications professional and who might be willing to serve as editor? Is there someone with industry who could provide paper free of charge or at cost? Could a state PLT co-sponsor do the mailing as an in-kind service?

All members of your steering committee and other supporters should be on your newsletter mailing list. It's a good way to keep them apprised of what PLT is doing in your state.

Note: if your state PLT program has a newsletter, please be sure that both the Washington, DC and Atlanta PLT offices are on your mailing list! Some states also mail copies to all the state coordinators.

If you have a state PLT **Web page** then you can easily communicate to your facilitators, educators, and anyone else who might be interested in the PLT program.

Telephone. Most coordinators have a few facilitators with whom they converse on a regular basis. How about the rest of your group? Try to discipline yourself to make a set number of calls each month to facilitators you don't normally see or talk with. Take this opportunity to ask them about problems and/or successes. Offer your support. Listen.

Letter writing has almost become a lost art, which is too bad because letters make people feel special. Consider writing a thank you note to your facilitators when they have completed a workshop. Also, write to those who have not done workshops, or who haven't done one in a long time and ask if there is anything you can do to get them turned on to PLT. Or you can write a couple of random letters per month. By all means, when facilitators turn in great performances, write acknowledgment notes to their supervisors!

Incentives and Awards. Everyone likes to receive rewards for a job well done, but not everyone responds to the same type of incentive. Establish a well-rounded incentive program and you can motivate almost anyone.

National PLT has a selection of incentive prizes and awards which can be ordered through the Atlanta office. Most items are stocked in the office and are ready for immediate shipment. Generally good prices can be obtained because of the bulk orders, and the staff is open to suggestions for additional items as long as there is a foreseeable market. If you would like to have a PLT item but you don't need the amount required to receive the bulk rate, you may want to check with other states to see if you can get together a large order that will bring the price down. There is an extra charge for items personalized with the state name or logo. See Appendix B for an order form or contact the Atlanta office, 770-451-7106.

Some states use a graduating level of awards for workshops conducted. For example: a PLT pin for the first workshop; PLT mugs for five workshops; t-shirts for ten workshops; and so on. More and more states are using a sponsored trip to the International PLT Coordinators'

Conference as an incentive for excellent productivity. On a local basis, attendance at a PLT co-sponsor's annual meeting may also be a sought-after reward.

Most people respond well to **public recognition**. Whether it's a feature in your newsletter or an award presented before a group, personal recognition is an important part of your program. Many states have submitted top facilitators for the National PLT Outstanding Educator recognition program. See Appendix B for a sample nomination form.

Recruitment of Facilitators

As a PLT Coordinator, it is your responsibility to expand your network by recruiting new facilitators. This will help ensure that the PLT program in your state remains strong and active. One of the best ways to recruit facilitators is at educator workshops. Remind your facilitators to mention this opportunity at their workshops and to circulate a list of interested individuals. Also, keep an eye out for professionals who may serve as good resources at workshops, such as a local forester, staff development coordinators, solid waste coordinator, or naturalist.

Promotion of Educator Training Workshops

Everything you do to train and manage your facilitators is done with the ultimate goal of educator training. However, there are other methods to reach educators which should be pursued.

Presentations. Most states have local chapters of associations for educators. You should not only be aware of these organizations, but you should get on their mailing lists so you will know when and where their meetings will take place. Often you can get on the program to make a short presentation on PLT. During your presentation you should make it clear that PLT materials can be obtained only through attendance at a workshop, and offer to set up workshops for those who are interested. Hand out state PLT brochures or fact sheets that contain your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address.

Presentations can also be scheduled for meetings of civic clubs, PTAs and PTOs, Boy Scout and Girl Scout leaders, home schoolers, nature center personnel, and so on.

Displays. If your state does not have its own PLT display, one may be borrowed from the national office when enough lead time is provided and the display is available. The national office can also assist you in ordering a small version of the display which you can keep permanently and tailor to your state. Displays can be effective tools for reaching educators at their meetings. It is highly recommended that displays be staffed at least during peak visiting hours. Displays can also be utilized at fairs, industry meetings, co-sponsors' meetings, and a variety of other venues.

Please refer to Appendix B for information on how to sign out the PLT exhibit as well as how to order you own display. Ordering information is available for both a 6' x 6' and 8' x 10' display.

Curriculum Correlations. One of your best tools for getting formal educators interested in PLT is to provide a correlation with the state curriculum standards. This can appear to be a formidable task, especially for those who are not directly connected with education. However, there are several ways to get the job done. One is to pay a stipend for a teacher to do the correlation. Another is to find a graduate student in education who may be willing to do it as part of course work. If your state has an education cooperative, they may be willing to take on the task for a relatively small fee. Or, you can hire an intern. Once the correlation is completed, be sure to provide copies for your facilitators, or at least let them know the correlation is available.

Before the final publication of the document, a state correlation should be reviewed by experts, yourself, PLT educators, and people who worked on the standards.

Frequently a state curriculum correlation is a healthy-sized document which is costly to copy and mail. At least one state has their correlation broken down by subject matter. They provide one subject free, but charge a small fee for additional subjects. You may also want to consider both providing the correlation on diskette for easy searching of key items and posting the correlation on your web site.

Liaison with National PLT Staff

PLT Annual Events at a Glance			
January	February	March	April
-Ideas for Spring Branch articles due -Outstanding Educator nomination deadline the 15th	-Annual report numbers due	-Conference registration mailed	-Spring Branch Mailed - EETAP interim reports due
May	June	July	August
-PLT Coordinators Conference	-Guide orders due	-Ideas for Fall Branch articles due	-EETAP call for proposals -Activity Guides printed
September	October	November	December
-EETAP proposals due	-Fall Branch Mailed -EETAP final report due -Outstanding Educator Nominations out	-Call for conference presentations -GreenWorks! proposals due	-Collect annual report figures

As mentioned above, national PLT regards the state coordinator as the leader of PLT in each state. The national staff provides you with on-going informational updates, and except for occasional items in the *Branch*, such information is not provided to your facilitators or steering committee members. Therefore, it is your responsibility to communicate appropriate information to your state network.

Guide and Module Orders. With a few special exceptions, all orders for PLT guides and modules must come from the state coordinator. An important part of your responsibility is to order and store enough of these materials to meet the needs of your state.

Facilitator and Educator Evaluations. It is also very important that you forward all evaluations to the Washington, DC office as you receive them. All facilitators and educators are entered into the PLT database, which provides labels for the *Branch* and allows us to survey PLT users.

Reporting/Suggestions. National staff looks to you to provide them with ideas, information on what is and isn't working well, and how various PLT initiatives are being received in your area. One way to do this is through your coordinator representative on the Education Committee, but national staff is receptive to hearing from you directly as well. Likewise, from time to time national PLT has specific needs which require assistance from the field. Examples of this are names of educators for pilot or field testing and nominations for the Outstanding PLT Educator recognition program.

International Coordinators' Conference. State coordinators are expected to attend the annual conference. This is your chance to get to know staff and each other, to get first-hand information on new initiatives in a setting which allows you to ask questions, to participate in sessions which will help you do your job, and to exchange ideas with PLT volunteers from other states, provinces, and countries. It is also a great time to share your success stories with your peers.

Liaison with State Co-Sponsors

It is your responsibility to keep state co-sponsors informed about PLT. If you are employed by a co-sponsoring agency, the task is simple, but don't neglect to provide all necessary information to other supporters of the program in your state. Co-sponsors can provide tremendous benefit to your program, but they must be aware of what is needed.

Co-sponsors should be prominently acknowledged in all state PLT publications and in any type of publicity.

Records Maintenance and Reporting

Annually you will be asked for a state report. This report reflects the number of workshops, both facilitator and educator, held in your state during the previous year, and the number of people

trained. It is very important that you respond to this request. The measurable success of PLT is in these numbers, and unless every state provides the information on a yearly basis, the nationally reported numbers will always be less than the actual. When AFF seeks additional funding for PLT, numbers become even more critical.

A copy of the most current annual report survey questions can be found in Appendix B. Please take some time to review these questions so that you are familiar with the data that you need to collect and keep track of over the course of a year.

Steering Committee

Many states have established a steering committee that helps oversee the PLT activities in their area. It is the job of the coordinator to work with the steering committee and to use them to help promote and strengthen the PLT program in their state. See the next section for more information on establishing a steering committee.

Moving On

Every so often it is time for one of our wonderful coordinators to move on. If you find that you will be leaving the position of PLT coordinator we ask that you please provide the in-coming coordinator with, at minimum, the following items:

- a copy of the coordinator handbook
- a copy (or disk) of the facilitator's handbook
- a checklist of things they should know about your state program
- a list of state steering committee members (if applicable)
- a list of state PLT facilitators
- a copy of your state PLT plan
- a copy of your state PLT budget
- copies of your state PLT annual reports

See Appendix K for a sample position announcement for your reference.

V. Steering/Advisory Committee

Establishing the Committee

If your state PLT program does not already have a steering committee (also called advisory committee or task force), a golden opportunity is being missed for on-going support and additional hands to get the job done.

To establish a committee, you first need to think about what you want them to do. Next, think about who might logically fit into the various roles the committee will play. Here's a partial list of suggested representatives:

- . Co-sponsors
- . State Forestry agency
- . Industry Extension Service
- . U. S. Forest Service
- . Education cooperatives (if applicable in your state)
- . Other environmental education programs (Project WILD, Project Wet, etc.)
- . Non-formal educators (nature centers, Boy and Girl Scout leaders, 4-H, etc.)
- . Solid Waste Management Agency
- . College/University teacher education departments
- . State Department of Education
- . Other formal educators
- . Environmental Protection Agency
- . Forestry schools

Naturally, some people will wear more than one hat. For example, state coordinators may be employed by one of the co-sponsors. It's still a good idea to get another representative from the sponsor, if possible, to help share the workload.

Send a letter to each potential committee member asking them to serve. Some states ask members to sign a letter of commitment, and this isn't a bad idea. The letter of invitation should outline the duties of the committee members, terms where applicable, number of meetings per year, and information on when and where the first meeting will be held. A PLT brochure should be enclosed with the letter.

Before the initial meeting, ask someone to serve as chair until the members know each other well enough to elect their own chair.

During the first meeting, a general outline of past accomplishments and future goals should be presented. Sub-committees can also be set up at this time.

Staffing the Committee

The state PLT steering committee's function is to support you as program leader, as well as PLT in general. As a rule, with the exception of sub-committee meetings, the state coordinator should attend all steering committee meetings. State coordinators should not, however, serve as steering committee chairs.

It is up to the coordinator to keep the committee informed and to let them know about program needs. The coordinator should then assure that the committee makes decisions that are always in the best interest of PLT.

Role of the Committee

Support. The chief role of the steering committee is to support the PLT program and the state coordinator(s). This support can be as simple as providing a sounding board for ideas, to the actual accomplishment of duties. All forms of support should be aimed toward achieving the mission and goals of the state PLT program.

State Plan. It is difficult to know where you are going and where you have been if you don't have a plan. Each state PLT program should have a long-range plan. (See page 1 in Part II for information on the national long-range plan.) If you do not already have a plan, devising one would be an appropriate task for the committee to undertake. A good plan would include mission, goals, and objectives. It would also outline how those goals and objectives could be accomplished. The plan might also include budgets, terms for the steering committee, the roles of the coordinators and co-sponsors, and other organizational information.

The Washington, DC and Atlanta offices of AFF have copies of plans from other states which can readily be sent to assist you in devising your own.

Fund-raising. A major function of the steering committee is to help raise funds for the state program. A fund-raising sub-committee, chaired by someone who has experience in raising funds, is a good idea because this is an area almost everyone wants to avoid! If fund-raising is not assigned to anyone, it will probably not happen. Fund-raising can be an on-going effort, or it can be individual events such as silent auctions, raffles, or golf tournaments.

Idea Generation. Many minds thinking about a problem and many hands helping with the solution are far better than having one person try to do it all. Having a diverse group of people on your steering committee certainly helps in this area.

Special Projects. The committee can take on special projects which you may not have the time or the network to accomplish. One example of a special project could be the Tree Trunk program. In some states, industry members have volunteered to get the Tree Trunks built. Other members could help with stocking the trunks. Still others might be instrumental in getting the trunks distributed around the state.

Broaden Constituency. Again, the diversity of the committee is a real benefit. Everyone on your committee has contacts. These contacts represent a wide range of people who can assist the program in various ways. Urge your committee members to spread the word on PLT throughout their own circles of constituents and friends.

State EE Committee

Some states choose not to have an independent state PLT steering/advisory committee. Instead, these states may have active environmental education advisory councils or steering committees. It is important for states (both with and without a steering committee) to have a PLT representative on the state environmental education committee. This state EE committee may be responsible for serving a role similar to a PLT-specific steering/advisory committee.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) has an Affiliates program which is a potential resource for you in this area. The Affiliates Partnership is comprised of a network of professional environmental education associations in 52 states, territories, provinces, and regions throughout North America. The Affiliates work toward:

- supporting EE efforts at the local level to further environmental education,
- providing resources and training,
- creating a more integrated and effective network of environmental educators,
- cooperating on mutually beneficial projects.

Visit the NAAEE Web site (naaee.org) for Affiliate contact information, state conferences, and other resources the Affiliates have to offer.

An additional resource you may want to tap into is the National Environmental Education Advancement Project (NEEAP). NEEAP is a national organization which aids state and local environmental education leaders in promoting their environmental education efforts, and develops informational items on building capacity for environmental education at the state level. To learn more about NEEAP visit their Web site at neeap.uwsp.edu

VI. PLT Facilitator Workshops

Workshop Goals

PLT facilitator or leadership workshops are held to train people how to plan, organize, schedule, and conduct PLT educator workshops. State coordinators must, of course, be very familiar with all elements of these workshops. While styles, locations, and needs vary, all facilitator workshops should address these goals:

- # To produce knowledgeable facilitators who are comfortable with all facets of planning, organizing, promoting, and conducting a PLT Educator workshop.
- # To provide a setting in which educators, resource personnel, and others can meet and share information, and to encourage continued communication and support for PLT and environmental education.
- # To provide an open, fun, and motivating forum that encourages participants to enjoy their own learning processes, where everyone has the opportunity to learn from everyone else.

The *Project Learning Tree Facilitator Handbook* has been created to make life easier for you and your facilitators. Be sure to provide a copy for each facilitator you train. Details on arranging, planning, and conducting a PLT educator workshop are fully covered in the Facilitator Handbook. The Facilitator Handbook is designed to allow for personalizing by each state. You may want to add local information such as workshop fees, a list of trained facilitators in your state, a copy of your state plan, a listing of local resources, and so forth.

Facilitator Workshop Format

The facilitator workshop format should include all elements of a PLT educator workshop. However, several additions are necessary in order to complete the training. At a *minimum*, facilitator workshops should include:

- # Welcome, workshop overview, workshop objectives, and agenda review
- # Getting acquainted/introductions
- # National and State background, history, goals, and mission of Project Learning Tree
- # Information on education reform, learning styles, environmental education, and how PLT fits in
- # PLT activities modeled by workshop leaders

- # □Hike Through the Guide□ for PreK-8 Guides and/or high school modules
- # Leadership and Workshop skills
- # Planning time for group activities
- # PLT activities led by participants (group activities), set up as a mini PLT educator workshop
- # Facilitator responsibilities
- # Planning time for future educator workshops
- # Workshop evaluations

The following may also be included in your workshop:

- # Field trip
- # Learning stations
- # Integration of supplementary materials
- # Resource table
- # Tree Trunk
- # Content expert

(The different elements of a workshop agenda are covered in greater detail on the pages that follow.)

Remember that your workshop should follow the □AKCA□ model, which leads participants from awareness, to knowledge, to challenge, and finally to action. (See the Activity Components section in the PreK-8 Activity Guide or the Module Components section of the Introductory Handbook for the Secondary Modules for information on the AKCA model.)

Time Requirements

Facilitator workshops generally are from one and three quarters to two days in length. They can, of course, be longer when that is desirable. However, it is difficult to do an adequate job of training in less time. It is important that the trainees have time to get to know each other. Many of them will be working together in the future, and workshop teams can begin to form and to plan strategies. It is even more important that *you* have the time to get to know them, and vice versa.

Workshop Fees

The per-person cost of attending a facilitator workshop will depend on several factors including room, board, travel, materials, and whether or not you are able to subsidize any of those expenses. Taking into account the costs and any available funds, participants may be asked to pay all expenses, partial expenses, or no expenses. Some states may even be able to offer a stipend in addition to covering all expenses.

Conducting the Facilitator Workshop

As with PLT educator workshops, it is strongly recommended that a team of leaders conduct the facilitator workshops rather than just one person. Coordinators should choose seasoned facilitators to work with them. Facilitator workshops can be exhausting, and using a team is better for everyone involved.

Your overall goal for a facilitator workshop is, of course, to train facilitators to conduct excellent educator workshops. It is vital, then, for each trainee to know exactly what an educator's workshop entails, and for them to be comfortable with each facet of that training. They also need to know how to promote and set up an educator workshop, about all forms that are involved, fees (if any), and reporting systems. See Appendix D for sample facilitator workshop agendas.

Remember: check your biases at the door. One of the most important features of the PLT curricula is the presentation of information in as unbiased a form as possible. Likewise, the expectation for workshops is that all facilitators present the materials as such. This may not be an easy task for anyone, since we all have our own opinions and biases regarding environmental issues. Therefore, it should be stressed to your facilitators that they make that extra effort to put aside any biases they may have for the duration of the workshop. And the most effective way to convey this is for you, as the facilitator workshop leader, to check your biases as well.

The Nuts and Bolts of a Facilitator Workshop

□ Welcome, Overview, and Objectives

You may choose to give a very brief welcome and introduction of the workshop leaders, and then immediately begin an ice breaker activity. This gets everyone up and moving around right in the beginning, and also signals to them that they are going to have an enjoyable time. The ice breaker should be designed to allow introductions of everyone present and can be one of your choosing, though we recommend that it is one of the PLT activities (if it is, be sure to point this out). Please see Appendix E for examples of ice breakers.

Following the ice breaker, you may want to state the objectives for the workshop, then ask participants to briefly write their individual and professional goals for being there. This should be something that they keep to themselves. Later in the workshop, take a moment to check in with them -- how are they coming along in meeting their goals? You may also want to add that while it is the facilitator's responsibility to meet the goals of the workshop, it is the participants' responsibility to make sure that they leave the workshop having met their own goals.

Following the goal setting, review the agenda to demonstrate how you plan to reach the workshop goals and how the agenda may help them reach their goals.

□ Background, History, Goals, & Mission of Project Learning Tree.

This information can be covered at any time during the workshop. However, it is important that you stress the fact that facilitators will need to relay this same information to educators. You may want to provide a handout or copies of overheads with this information, so your facilitators can use these when conducting their workshops. (See Appendix I for overheads.)

□ Education Reform.

Facilitators need to know how PLT fits in with education reform because this is a major selling point with educators. Discuss how the PLT curriculum was designed with hands-on learning, constructivist teaching, using story lines, and so forth. If you have educators in the audience, you might ask them to contribute examples or comments. You can also hand out copies of the PLT correlation to national education standards, as well as any state standards. (See the article in Appendix L.)

□ Environmental Education.

Appendices 1-8 in the PreK-8 Guide and pages 10-12 in the Introductory Handbook to the Secondary Modules provides useful information on environmental education and PLT. In addition, the North American Association for Environmental Education has published a set of recommendations for developing and selecting environmental education materials titled *Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence*. The six key characteristics are (1) fairness and accuracy, (2) depth, (3) emphasis on skill building, (4) action orientation, (5) instructional soundness, and (6) usability. The following summarizes how PLT's materials

correlate to those guidelines.

1. Fairness and Accuracy

All of PLT's materials go through an extensive evaluation process from developing the scope and objectives, through content writing, to pilot testing and field testing. This process provides the opportunity for reviewers to give input at all stages of development. Reviewers include content specialists, educators, and both industry and government representatives. For the PreK-8 Activity Guide, more than 400 individuals contributed to the revision process. Likewise, each PLT secondary module goes through an extensive review and revision process during the development phase of the material.

PLT activities strive to present a fair and accurate view of environmental issues to provide the building blocks upon which to develop personal knowledge and opinions. When we skip the building blocks of knowledge and go straight to the opinions, we are no longer educating; we are lobbying for the minds of the student.

2. Depth

The foundation of PLT's curriculum is its Conceptual Framework, which includes the five major themes of diversity, interrelationships, systems, structure and scale, and patterns of change. Under each theme are the subtopics of environment, resource and technology, and society and culture. Hence, PLT encompasses the total environment, both natural and built. All PLT activities support one or more of the concepts from this framework, leading to conceptual understanding. Activities are designed to be woven together in a story line to provide a more in-depth investigation of a specific topic.

3. Emphasis on Skills Building

Part of the mission of PLT is to teach students the skills to learn *how to critically and creatively think* about complex environmental issues, not what to think. A list of the skills addressed is provided in the sidebar for each PLT activity in both the PreK-8 Activity Guide and the secondary modules. A few of the skills include researching, comparing and contrasting, analyzing, verifying, discussing, problem solving, and decision making. Because skill building is so important to sound education, many educators choose to teach PLT activities based on the skills they meet. The Skills Index in the PreK-8 Activity Guide provides a correlation among the 37 skills addressed and the activities.

4. Action Orientation

Each PLT activity in the PreK-8 Activity Guide and secondary modules is designed to guide the student through the process of *awareness, knowledge, understanding, challenge*, and finally to *responsible action*. In addition, the secondary modules are designed with a culminating action project. PLT also has an action program, GreenWorks!, that provides mini-grants to educators for students working on community action projects with a local partner.

5. Instructional Soundness

The revised PLT materials reflect current education reform. The activities are designed to be taught in a constructivist approach, to use cooperative learning, and to provide hands-on and minds-on lessons. The approach is interdisciplinary, incorporating important environmental lessons into all areas of the curriculum including science, math, social studies, language arts, civics, and so forth. In addition, authentic assessment suggestions are provided for each activity so the teacher can evaluate students' learning.

6. Usability

PLT materials are designed for ease of use. Each activity has a sidebar that can quickly be scanned to see the following: the subjects, concepts, and skills addressed; the student learning objectives; the materials needed to conduct the activity; and the time it will take to prepare and teach the activity. For convenience, copyright-free □Student Pages□ are provided for many activities. The appendices provide useful information including a bibliography, glossary, topic index, and additional supporting materials. The PreK□8 Activity Guide is color coded by theme for easy reference and all PLT curriculum materials are printed with a lay-flat binding to allow for easy copying of the Student Pages.

In response to the growing need for bilingual academic material, PLT has translated into Spanish the Student Pages and Glossary of its PreK□8 Activity Guide. In schools where students have an opportunity to receive instruction in two languages, the translation provides ready-to-use materials for both bilingual educators and learners.

Another effort we are undertaking to make PLT easier for educators to use is the correlation of PLT activities to the major disciplines at both the national and state levels. At the state level, more than 15 correlations have been completed. At the national level, the correlation to the new national science standards is complete and correlations to the other national standards are in process.

As part of PLT's implementation process, educators must take a training workshop to receive PLT curriculum materials. This workshop gives teachers the opportunity to try a variety of activities, learn how to effectively use the materials, and plan how they will adapt the activities for their particular setting. After attending a workshop, many educators tell us they use PLT activities the next day in their classroom. The training workshops also introduce the teacher to a network of other educators and resource professionals. Follow-up is provided after the workshop through PLT's newsletter (*the Branch*), via our Web page, and through opportunities to become a volunteer facilitator.

□**Copyright.**

Carefully explain the copyright procedures, and stress that these must be explained to educators. Copying parts of an activity or student pages for use in an activity is permissible. Copying PLT

activities for inclusion in a separate document requires written permission from the national PLT office. For additional information about permission to reprint PLT activities, please refer to page 4 in Part II of this handbook.

□ **PLT Activities Modeled by Workshop Leaders**

he workshop should include several PLT activities modeled by you and/or other experienced facilitators. Select activities that have a variety of learning styles. Be sure to do a complete wrap-up of each activity and explain why the wrap-up is so important. (It encourages participants to think about how they will use the activity within the framework of what they do/teach. It also allows participants to learn from each other.) Model activities from the PreK-8 Guide and the high school modules as appropriate.

Workshop leaders should model for the participants how to correctly conduct a PLT activity. The activity should be briefly introduced before people are put in groups. Then, rather than just numbering off, for each activity modeled choose different methods for arranging the audience in small groups. Give clear instructions on what the participants are to do. Ask if everyone understands the instructions before proceeding with the activity.

After the activity has been completed, bring everyone together in one group and conduct the activity wrap-up. Ask pointed questions about the activity. Grade level? Subject? What can students be expected to gain from the activity? Ask for suggestions about specific ways the activity can be used. Note that when conducting an educator workshop, facilitators should always wrap-up an activity by getting the educators to contribute the answers rather than the facilitator simply telling them how the activity can be used. Everyone learns from everyone else at a PLT workshop! (It is easy to gloss over this part of the modeling session because the activity part is over. However, this is where we make that connection between the activity and the educator, by giving them an opportunity to think about how the activity will work for them.)

Activities chosen should demonstrate different learning styles. For example, one could utilize □“thinker” skills, one could utilize arts and crafts, and one could utilize role playing, and another could be more scientific.

□□ **Hike Through the Guide** □.

Make your □Hike□ as interesting as possible (see Appendix E for sample □Hikes□). It is important that facilitators be intimately familiar with how the Guide and modules are set up. Some trainers choose to allow silent time for participants to look through the Guides, then have a discussion. The downside of this method is that some people are slow readers and may completely miss important aspects of the Guide. Most seasoned trainers choose to lead the audience through the Guide, pointing out each element along the way. They will frequently follow this with a game-show style question and answer session. Small prizes can be used for those who come up with the correct answer first. The game-show emphasizes how easy the Guides are to use. If you use this method, be sure to point out that the □Hike” and game-show

questions and answers are both included in the Facilitator Handbook.

□ Leadership and Workshop Skills.

This session of your workshop provides an opportunity to show facilitators exactly how an educator workshop should be conducted, and how to teach teachers. It also allows you to give pointers on avoiding common mistakes facilitators can make.

An important point to make is that training teachers requires some skill and finesse, but it does not need to be an intimidating experience. Teachers are professionals and should always be treated as such. There should be no attempt to tell them how or what to teach. The facilitator's job is to familiarize them with the PLT guide or modules, expose them to a variety of activities, and to get them to think about how each activity (or adaptation) can fit in with what they are currently teaching.

See the Appendices in the PLT Facilitator's Handbook for helpful information on facilitator skills, leadership skills, and teaching methods.

□ Planning for PLT Activities Led by Participants

When the "business" portion of the workshop has been concluded (usually by the end of the first day), prepare the participants to lead group activities for each other. Stress that this is their opportunity to practice, and each person must have a role in helping to conduct his or her group's activity. For example, one person can introduce the activity; a second can provide the initial instructions; a third can conclude the activity; and the fourth can stage the wrap-up.

In addition to having them lead activities, you will need to select four volunteers to help lead the opening of the mini-model workshop. These volunteers will be responsible for providing the following parts of the workshop: welcome and introductions; icebreaker; goals of workshop and PLT; and a brief history of PLT. Make sure that these volunteers understand that they will also be helping to lead an activity! These four parts should all be completed in 30 minutes. You may want to provide overheads for some parts of this and provide suggestions for the icebreaker.

We suggest designing the presentations according to the following agenda which can be modified depending on your time and number of participants. This agenda is based on 30 participants divided into 8 groups of 3-4 people. With this many groups you may want to divide them into two sections that will present in different rooms simultaneously.

Sample Mini Workshop Model for 30 Facilitators

8:00 am - (whole group) Instruct the four volunteers to provide the following: Introduction; Icebreaker; Goals of workshop & PLT; History of PLT		
8:30 am - (two groups)		
Presentations		
	<u>Room A</u>	<u>Room B</u>
8:30	Grp 1	Grp 2
9:00	Grp 3	Grp 4
9:30	Break	Break
10:00	Grp 5	Grp 6
10:30	Grp 7	Grp 8
11:00 - (whole group)		
Wrap up of all activities, offer positive reinforcement from the list of facilitator skills generated in the facilitator and leadership workshop session.		

When you divide the audience into groups, make sure there are educators and resource professionals in each group. Give them about thirty minutes to select an activity which they will present with the other groups as participants. Have a flip chart handy so groups can write the name of their activities on a first-come, first-served basis. Be sure to remind each group what the time limitations will be for presenting their activities. Usually about 30-45 minutes will work, anything less is not suggested since it does not give them a good feel for the actual time recommendation. Also, let them know that their audience is all the other groups. (This seems obvious, but it's a question that always comes up.)

You should check with each group during the activity selection stage to answer questions and to give guidance. If you notice that several groups seem to be selecting similar type activities, you

may want to make some suggestions on alternate choices that will provide the different learning styles and different types of activities you want exhibited.

After all activity selections are made, the groups should be given time to plan their activities and gather the necessary materials. If everyone is staying overnight at the workshop facility, this should pose no problem. If, however, everyone goes home or to a hotel at the end of the day, you will need to start the group proceedings early enough to provide them adequate planning time. You should now determine how best to divide your group to fit the mini model agenda. Make sure that if you will be dividing into two larger groups in two different rooms that each group has a variety of PLT activities to experience (i.e. elementary, secondary, outside, inside, arts and crafts, role playing, etc.).

□The PLT Mini-Model Educator Workshop

After your participants have had adequate time to plan and prepare to lead an activity and to provide the opening for the workshop, you may begin the mini model workshop. This mini-model workshop should give everyone a sense of what goes on in a real educator workshop. This part of the facilitator workshop is an opportunity for the participants to practice teaching a PLT activity to other adults. We suggest you use this as an opportunity to reinforce good facilitation skills through the critiquing process.

Critiquing the group activities is a critical part of the training. For each activity presentation ask a couple of volunteers from the observing groups to provide a critique of that presentation. These volunteers will still participate in the activity! (They are active observers.) The critique should come only after the activity has been completed. Interrupting an activity to suggest a better way of doing something will make your participants nervous and will reduce the potential effectiveness of the activity. Remember to be honest but gentle. These are volunteers! Use the facilitator skills checklist (found in the facilitator handbook) as a guide for providing positive feedback. For example, □I liked the way the group kept the momentum throughout the activity,□ □They gave us clear instructions,□ or □They were friendly and well prepared.□

After all groups have made their presentations, you should spend a few more minutes debriefing this part of the activity. (If the group was divided into smaller sections, bring everyone together.) This is an opportunity for participants to offer their comments, ask questions, and listen to each other as you guide them through the debrief. Some questions that may help to get the participants thinking include: □What worked well,□ □What are some of the ways you would adapt an activity,□ What did you learn from observing the other groups,□ □Which of the activities will you use with your students,□ and so forth.

□Facilitator Responsibilities.

New facilitators need to know exactly what is expected of them. One session in your workshop should focus on their responsibilities. The following should be reviewed:

- All necessary forms (who, when, why)
- Fees (if any) and how they should be handled
- Lead times and process for ordering Guides
- Marketing PLT (see below)
- Minimum number of educator workshops

Planning Time for Future Educator Workshops.

Providing time for new facilitators to plan a workshop agenda is another opportunity for them to become comfortable with the PLT materials and workshop format. It also gives them a chance to apply what they have just learned from you, address any difficulties they may anticipate when planning an educator workshop, and learn with whom in their area they can conduct workshops.

Marketing PLT.

Newly trained facilitators frequently will do nothing until they are asked to assist with an educator workshop. Usually this is because they are uncomfortable with their role as a facilitator until they have the opportunity to get experience. A good session on PLT marketing may help alleviate their concerns. It cannot be overemphasized that part of their role is to work toward getting workshops set up. Part of the marketing session could be devoted to having the participants, in small groups, create a promotional flier for an educator workshop.

State coordinators and seasoned facilitators can provide tips on who to contact, or everyone can participate in brain-storming ideas. Experienced facilitators can also relate success stories. (I did it. So can you!) Another method is to put participants in groups, assign each group a type of contact, i.e. government agency, nonformal educators, different types of school systems (private, public, county, etc.) and let them explore the possibilities.

Workshop Evaluations.

Most people tend to fall into the trap of doing things the same way over and over -- even if it's not all that effective. Evaluations serve as a barometer for how you are doing as a trainer. Note recurring criticisms in evaluations of your workshops, and positively respond to those criticisms in the next workshop. Note just as carefully the good points reflected in the evaluations so you can capitalize on these in the future.

Be especially aware of those who state that they do not feel adequately trained to conduct a workshop. A follow-up phone call or meeting can often provide answers to their questions or alleviate their concerns. Taking the time to do this may turn a non-productive facilitator into a productive and enthusiastic one.

Resources.

The most successful coordinators do an excellent job of providing resources for their facilitators. While there is a good listing of resources in the Guides, facilitators will feel better if they leave your workshop with some of these resources in hand. You may want to have a **resource table**

where they can pick up what they need. For example, posters, sample *Branch* newsletters, PLT maps, etc. Consider asking your attendees to bring resources to share. Some coordinators send a set of resources with a facilitator's first order of Guides.

You may also want to develop a PLT **Tree Trunk** for your state. A Tree Trunk is a trunk that contains all sorts of state related resources that may be used with the PLT activities. Possible items to store in your trunk include field guides, videos, tree cookies, pine cones, forestry tools, etc. Facilitators may then borrow the Tree Trunk for educator workshops.

Any resources you and your workshop participants bring may be displayed throughout the duration of the workshop. This allows participants to peruse the materials at their leisure. However, if time permits, you may choose to spend some organized time going over the available resources and discussing how to integrate them into the PLT activities.

□ **Field Trips.**

Many facilitator workshop agendas include a section of time designated for a field trip. This can provide a nice change of scenery and enhance the workshop experience. The field trip usually complements a theme in the workshop, for example if you are focusing on the Forest Ecology secondary module you may arrange a visit to a lumber mill, or if the Solid Waste Management module is being introduced you might plan a trip to a recycling facility or landfill. Other ideas include a guided hike, a visit to a local nature center or wildlife refuge, etc. Since field trips can be time consuming (though fun) be sure to plan enough time into your agenda so that there is still plenty of time to cover all of the workshop basics.

□ **Learning Stations.**

As you know, there are so many wonderful PLT activities to choose from when planning which ones to model for your workshop, but only a few can be presented in the allotted time frame. A good way to expose workshop participants to a larger number of activities is through learning stations. In general, a learning station is an area where the activity background and instructions (copied from the guide or module) are displayed along with any materials necessary to do the activity. This allows individuals to read about an activity and see the □ finished product. □ You may want to set up around 6 activities this way and let the workshop participants know that they can check out the stations at their leisure. Many facilitators also use learning stations in their educator workshops.

□ **Wrap-Up.**

Each workshop should end on a positive note. You may want to give a short wrap-up speech thanking them again for their time, offering your support, and giving them encouragement. (You can do it!) If your state provides facilitator certificates, this is a good time to give them out. A nice way to wrap-up is to gather everyone together in a circle and ask each person to give a one word or one sentence description of his or her workshop experience.

Reunion Workshops

Reunion Workshops provide an opportunity for additional training when necessary. (For example, supplemental training became necessary when PLT switched from a high school guide to the module format.) New information on PLT initiatives can be supplied to the facilitators in a format that allows for questions and answers. Reunions are a great venue for awarding incentive prizes, and these often mean more when they are received before an audience of peers. Perhaps best of all, the workshops bring everyone together and usually result in facilitators becoming revitalized in their PLT roles.

Here's a chance for everyone to exchange success stories, or to get help with problems they may have encountered. It's also an opportunity for you to thank them personally for the job they are doing. Be sure to introduce any new resources you have discovered, and let them know about program successes in your state. For example: grants received, other successful fund-raising efforts, PLT presentations made, awards or recognition received, publicity, etc.

You may want to consider holding a reunion workshop that overlaps with a regular facilitator workshop. New facilitators get the benefit of hearing those success stories first hand, and a joint workshop is less work for you. See Appendix F for samples of reunion workshop letters.

**Key PLT Contact Information
National Office Staff & Responsibilities**

1111 19th Street, NW
Suite 780
Washington, DC 20036
General Number: 202-463-2462
Fax Number: 202-463-2461

Larry Wiseman, President, American Forest Foundation

202-463-2460
larry_wiseman@forestfoundation.org

Kathy McGlaufflin, Senior Vice President*

202-463-2468
kmcglaufflin@plt.org

Rachel Bayer, Program Assistant*

202-463-2475
rbayer@plt.org

Catherine Estes, Program Manager*

202-463-2728
cestes@plt.org

Barbara Pitman, Director of Operations*

202-463-2592
bpitman@plt.org

Al Stenstrup, Director of Curriculum Programs*

202-463-2457
astenstrup@plt.org

Pam Rockland, Vice President, Development

202-463-5170
prockland@forestfoundation.org

Brigitte Johnson, APR, Director of Communications

202-463-5163
bjohnson@forestfoundation.org

Amanda Rudy, Manager, Communications

202-463-2442
arudy@forestfoundation.org

* All PLT national staff members assist with leadership and educator training.

Icebreaker Samples

Icebreakers are an important part of your workshop. They set the tone for the workshop by getting everyone up and participating. They are also a great opportunity to model an additional PLT activity. Below are several PLT activities that can be adapted for icebreakers. You may have your own favorite that you wish to use in place of one of these. Do make sure you include introductions.

For a PreK-8 Workshop:

"Forest Products in the Bag" - [variation of activity #2 Get in Touch with Trees] put matching pairs of forest products in small lunch bags and give each person a bag. (See PreK-8 activity #13 "We All Need Trees" for products ideas.) Using the sense of touch (not sight), they must mingle, trying to find a match to their item by feeling what's in everyone else's bag. After they find their "match," they will introduce each other.

□ Tree Treasures □ (activity #12) - hand out a mystery product to each person by taping it to their back. Pair up the participants and have them work together to guess their product by asking □yes/no□ questions. After all pairs have figured out their products, they will introduce each other.

□ Tree Cookies (activity #76-variation) - explain what a tree cookie is. Hand out paper plates and instruct each person to create a □personal tree cookie□ that would explain their age or number of years they have been at their current position (you can vary the instructions). They can put stickers on the rings to identify special events in that time frame. Have each person introduce themselves and explain their tree cookie.

□ Poet-tree □ (activity #5) - have participants look outside for a few minutes and then write a short poem about what they saw. Go around and have each person introduce themselves and share their poem.

□ The Closer You Look □ (activity 61) - have people draw their favorite tree, their ideal tree, or a tree that they can identify with. Go around and have each person introduce themselves and share their drawing.

□ Our Changing World □ (activity 86) - sit in a circle and give one person a ball of string. This individual will say their name and then name something in the environment. He/She will then roll the ball of string (but keep holding the end) to someone else (doesn't have to be the person next to them) who will say their name and then name something that connects to the first word. Continue passing the ball of string until everyone is connected.

For a Secondary Workshop:

□ Words to Live By □ (activity #7 from Focus on Forests) - cut out author descriptions on page 44, and the quotes - without their author □ - on pages 45-46. Hand out either an author or a quote to each participant. Have them walk around and try to find their match (author + quote). After everyone has a match. Go around to each pair, do introductions, and find out if they were correct in their match.

□ The Risks We Face (see next page for an example) - create a list of risks that people take and hand out a copy to each person. Instruct them to find another member in the group who has taken one of the risks on the list and have them sign their name beside the risk. See if they can find a person for each risk listed. After, have a few people read their lists and as they go down, introduce the people who have signed their sheet.

□ The PreK-8 suggestions can also be used.

For both types of workshops:

□ Glossary Charades - choose an appropriate number of terms from the Prek-8 Guide or secondary module glossaries and write them on separate 3" x 5" cards (number of terms should equal half the number of participants). Pair up the workshop participants and hand out a card to each pair. Each pair will need to come up with a means of acting out their definition for the rest of the group, and the rest of the group will need to guess what the term is. Before each pair performs their charade, have them introduce themselves.

The Risks Among Us

I have ...

- _____ Been sky diving
- _____ Had an x-ray
- _____ Driven a motorcycle
- _____ Played high school/college football, basketball, hockey
- _____ Worked with heavy machinery
- _____ Jay walked
- _____ Been skiing
- _____ Fought a wildfire
- _____ Had my home tested for radon
- _____ Used saccharin as a sweetener

I live ...

- _____ Near a nuclear power plant
- _____ Near electrical power transmission lines
- _____ Near a fault line or floodplain

A Hike though the PreK-8 Guide should include the following:

1. COPYRIGHT: Point out that PLT materials are copyrighted and items should be copied for classroom use only.

2. INTRODUCTORY PAGES

A. Pages iv-vii: Opening statements by PLT sponsors, mission, goals, and description of methods used in PLT activities.

B. Page viii: Description of the activity components.

C. Pages ix-xi: Storylines
Storylines are broad generalizations that are supported by many PLT activities. These storylines are suggestions. Teachers may wish to expand on them.

D. Pages xii-xiv: Acknowledgements of all the people who contributed to the creation of this new guide. Emphasize the broad based support used to create this new guide.

3. ACTIVITIES

A. Are color-coded by theme: diversity, interrelationships, systems, structure and scale, and patterns of change.

B. Choose one activity and have everyone turn to that activity. Point out the following components of the activity.

- 1) Overview and background.
- 2) Sidebar: levels, subjects, concepts (related to conceptual framework in back), skills (complete listing in the back), objectives, materials, and time considerations.
- 3) Getting ready
- 4) Enrichment/variations
- 5) End notes: assessment, related activities, and references

C. There are 96 activities in all.

4. REFERENCE PAGES AT THE END OF THE GUIDE

A. Glossary: pages 371-374

- 1) The activities are written so that extensive knowledge of forestry, biological or ecological sciences is not necessary. The few technical terms that are used, are defined in the back of the book.
- 2) All terms are listed alphabetically.

B. PLT Conceptual Framework: page 375-376

- 1) All PLT activities are built around five major themes: diversity, interrelationships, systems, structure and scale, and patterns of change.
Each theme covers the areas of environment, resource management, technology, and society and culture.

- 2) These concepts are defined on these pages.
 - 3) This is the knowledge that students will gain from participating in these activities.
- C. Appendices: pages 377-382
- 1) These appendices cover a wide range of issues and topics that seem to occur whenever teachers deal with environmental issues in the classroom.
 - 2) The authors of this guide have put together some insights and suggestions that you may wish to incorporate when you deal with some of these issues in your classroom.
 - 3) Topics covered in the appendices include teaching for conceptual understanding, cooperative learning, roles of environmental educators, teaching controversial issues, multicultural education, working with exceptional students, organizing environmental clubs and outdoor classrooms, and bringing nature indoors.
- D. Additional resources: pages 382-383
- 1) Teachers should request information from local sources first before contacting national sources.
 - 2) Emphasize the guidelines for requesting information.
- E. Bibliography: pages 384-386 (This is a list of reference books, children's books, field guides, directories, articles, pamphlets, and other curricula, videos and posters that can be used with PLT activities).
- F. Indices: pages 387-401
- 1) All PLT activities are cross referenced a number of ways to help teachers access information quickly.
 - 2) Topic index
 - 3) Subject index
 - 4) Grade index
 - 5) Time consideration
 - 6) Skills index (This is a list of thinking processes and skills used in PLT activities.)
 - 7) Alphabetical listing of activities: Titles are catchy to help you remember them.

SAMPLE

PROJECT LEARNING TREE: HIKE THROUGH THE PreK-8 GUIDE [ANSWERS]

1. What are the goals of PLT? [pg vi]
2. What is a climax community and where can you find this information? [glossary, pg 371]
3. What is the role of the teacher in presenting controversial issues? [pg 378]
4. Find an activity which addresses diversity, can be done indoors and requires a semester to complete. [time considerations, pg 398]
5. What are common links between environmental education and multi-cultural education? [Appendix 4, pg 378]
6. How can you find information to help you evaluate the effectiveness of activities with your students? [End Notes...]
7. Where could you find tips for bringing nature indoors? [Appendix 8, pg 381]
8. How would color blindness put you at a disadvantage in using this guide? [activities are color coded; themes are delineated]
9. How many activities deal with the urban environment? [18, Topic index, pg 388-391]
10. What is the fastest way to find an activity in a particular subject area (e.g. math, language arts, etc.)? [Subject index, pg 392]
11. Find an activity that involves the skill "Comparing and Contrasting." [How Big is Your Tree?: Skills index, pg 401]
12. What are two ways to find activities that support each other? [Storylines, pg ix-xi; Related Activities in Sidebar: End Notes...]
13. Where could you find information on environmental organizations? [pg 382-383]
14. What are the 7 listing in the sidebar of each activity? [Levels, Subjects, Concept, Skills, Objective, Materials, Time Considerations: Any activity]
15. What is the fastest way to find an activity that you know the name of? [Alphabetical listing. pg 402]
16. How many ways are activities cross-referenced? [6, pg iii]
17. (extra) What is a suggested way to link activities? [Storylines, pg ix]

SAMPLE
WALK THROUGH THE SECONDARY HANDBOOK
AND FOCUS ON FORESTS MODULE (DISCOVERY QUIZ)

1. Q. The Introductory Handbook for the PLT High School Modules provides background information in six main areas - name them.
A. History; Revision Process; Mission, goals, and methods; Conceptual Framework and Themes; Module components, and teaching tools and resources. - Page 4.
2. Q. What did the evaluation of PLT involving more than 3,000 students in North America discover?
A. That teachers who complete at least one 6-hour PLT Workshop and use the new PLT activities as intended are likely to observe knowledge and attitudinal change in their students. - Page 2.
3. Q. What are the five main goals of PLT listed in the Secondary Module Handbook?
A. Page 5 - "Goals"
4. Q. What are the three major sections of the Secondary Modules?
A. Teacher background info., student activities, and appendices. - Page 4.
5. Q. What are the five major themes featured in both Pre K-8 and the secondary modules?
A. Diversity, Interrelationships, Systems, Structure and Scale, and Patterns of Change. - Page 7 & 8 (secondary).
6. Q. In the secondary handbook discussion of the instructional method called "cooperative learning", what are the eight steps listed?
A. Form cooperative groups, assign roles, develop and post rules, etc. Page 11-12.
7. Q. The article on use of PLT secondary module activities with exceptional students (Both mentally challenged and gifted) was written by a special education teacher. What was her name?
A. Karen Blodgett. - Page 15.
8. Q. In the secondary Handbook section on "Bringing Nature Indoors", what are the three main types of terrain mentioned?
A. Desert, Woodland, and Tropical - Page 20.
9. Q. A number of activities in the Pre K-8 PLT guide and in the Secondary Handbook can be modified for use with High School students. The Handbook lists ten of them. On what page is this list found?
A. Student Activities. - Page 25.
10. Q. Six key benefits from the forests are highlighted in the "Focus on Forests" Secondary Module. Name them.
A. Oxygen Recharge, Nutrient Recycling, Soil Protection and Flood Control, Climate

11. Q. Four important categories of products and by-products from trees are listed in the "Focus on Forests" module activity "What's a Forest to You?" Name these.
A. Paper, Bark, Cellulose, Gums and Resins. - Page 14.
12. Q. What are the skills to be learned from activity #5 in the "Focus on Forests" module?
A. Side Bar. - Page 34.
13. Q. What's the definition of the word "deforestation"?
A. The permanent removal of trees from a forested area. - Page 53 (Glossary)
14. Q. Where in the "Focus on Forests" secondary module is mention made of a book titled "American Forests, A History of Resiliency and Recovery"?
A. Appendix 1 - Bibliography. - Page 50.
15. Q. A federal Act designating funds for forestry research at land grant schools and state supported forestry schools was co-sponsored by a famous Mississippi Senator. Who was he?
A. Senator John C. Stennis. - Page 54 Appendix 3.
16. Q. What percent of the U.S. is still covered by forests?
A. 32 percent - Appendix 5 pie chart.
17. Q. Who owns most of the timberland in the U.S.?
A. Non-Industrial Private Landowners (59%) - Page 68.