



# PLT<sup>®</sup> 2010 Annual Report

## LEARNING GREEN, ACTING GREEN

### Dear PLT Educators, Partners, and Friends,

Preschoolers are learning, through music and play, about the natural world around them. Older students are analyzing school energy usage and making recommendations to administrators; researching soil conditions and planting gardens; planning and setting up recycling programs; and conducting scientific forest studies to help develop management plans—these and more happened in 2010, thanks in part to your efforts.

PLT has always sought to strengthen the link between knowledge and action. This past year, as *GreenSchools!* and other initiatives grew, we saw the power of these connections.

Current events underscored the need to understand the ecosystems around us. For several months, the country was riveted to news about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. To understand the spill, its effects, and the tradeoffs that we as a society make to acquire energy, many educators drew from PLT activities. Elsewhere in the news, there was much discussion about the best ways to get kids more active and healthy. Again, PLT's focus on hands-on, outdoor investigation is a tested solution.

The United Nations has set 2011 as the International Year of Forests. As we also celebrate 35 years of PLT in 2011, we look forward to working with you to cast attention on the ecological, economic, and social benefits that forests provide today and for future generations.

Best wishes,



Kathy McGlaufflin

### 2010 At a Glance

- Nearly 32,000 educators attended more than 1,600 PLT professional development workshops nationwide
- PLT's Early Childhood program wins a Teachers' Choice award
- More than 800 schools nationwide are participating in PLT's *GreenSchools!* program
- *GreenWorks!* service-learning projects awarded: 28 projects underway in 20 states
- State PLT programs strengthened to build capacity
- Recognition of National Outstanding Educators
- Leadership in connecting kids to nature and increasing support for environmental education at the federal level
- A new PLT online professional learning community

## PLT BY THE NUMBERS

- In 2010, 31,660 educators attended 1,604 PLT workshops. Of those, 10,396 were pre-service teachers
- 20,372 copies of PLT's PreK-8 Guide, 5,066 copies of the Early Childhood guide and CD, 690 *Energy & Society* kits, and 4,905 high school modules were distributed in workshops
- 10 curricula covering the total environment, plus 5 *GreenSchools!* Investigations
- 108 state PLT coordinators and co-coordinators
- 1,050 PLT workshop facilitators
- 70 schools in 19 states plus the District of Columbia pilot-tested *GreenSchools!*; more than 800 schools nationwide are participating
- 28 *GreenWorks!* projects to create pollinator gardens in 20 states funded by the U.S. Forest Service
- 18 states received competitive grants from the American Forest Foundation for leadership and organizational development
- 20 states implemented grants through the Environmental Education and Training Partnership for professional development and academic correlations
- 150 environmental education leaders attended PLT's International Coordinators' Conference; 40 leaders attended a regional training to grow leadership and organizational development
- 9 PLT mentors worked with their fellow state coordinators to assist with strategic planning and other capacity building
- 5 Outstanding Educators and 16 Honorable Mention teachers selected
- 44,500 educators receive the *Branch*, PLT's quarterly e-newsletter
- 809 members of PLT's new online professional learning community; 1,494 PLT Facebook fans; 1,827 followers on AFF's Twitter feed
- 860 messages from educators to policymakers in support of environmental education legislation



## FOCUS ON THE YOUNGER CHILD

PLT's *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* launched in early 2010 to both critical and popular success! It received a *Learning*® magazine 2011 Teachers' Choice award, one of the most recognized and prestigious awards in the education community. It went through three printings in less than a year due to high demand. And the material is already going global, with translations in Japanese and Spanish.

*"Direct experiences in nature are critical for young children. Time spent exploring outdoors not only gets children active, it fosters their inborn sense of wonder and curiosity, important motivators for lifelong learning. It also helps children develop an appreciation for nature—essential if we expect the next generation to care about forests and the environment."*

Kathy McGlaufflin, Director of Project Learning Tree







*Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* encourages young children to explore, discover, and communicate in expressive ways, and provides an introduction to environmental education at a key developmental period in children's lives.

*"The Teachers' Choice Awards for the Classroom* honors products for their superior quality and use in today's classrooms. *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* was well received by our teacher-evaluators and their students for its exceptional content and easy-to-integrate lessons."

**Heather Crews, Teachers' Choice Award Coordinator for Learning magazine**

Developed with preschool educators and early childhood specialists, the guide is designed for educators who work with children ages 3 to 6. It offers over 130 experiences that engage children in outdoor play and exploration. Topics include exploring nature with five senses, experiencing trees through the seasons, and meeting neighborhood trees. An accompanying CD features musical rhythms, instrumentals, cultural songs, and music from children's musician Bill Brennan that encourages children to sing, dance, and move.



Workshops have been held around the country to introduce the guide to those who work with preschoolers. We also made presentations at primary settings where national and international leaders in early childhood education meet: the National Science Teachers Association's national and regional conferences, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) conference, the Connecting Children with Nature Action Forum, led by the World Forum Foundation, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children's conference.

PLT's *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* has been correlated to the new Head Start guidelines, now called the Child Development and Early Learning Framework. We also helped NAAEE with the development of their Guidelines for Excellence for Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs, and PLT is cited as a model example within their guidelines.



*"PLT's Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* has been some of the most fun I have ever had! Watching a young mind be so excited about exploring and learning outside, and seeing the smiles as we dance the tree hoedown, is incredibly rewarding."

**Dianne Miller, South Dakota PLT State Coordinator**

## GREENSCHOOLS! GROWS

PLT-trained educators are taking PLT to a whole new level. More than 800 schools have registered on our website to participate in the *GreenSchools!* program ([www.pltgreenschools.org](http://www.pltgreenschools.org)), and that number is growing!

PLT's *GreenSchools!* program provides a blueprint for PLT-trained educators, students, environmental and health advocates, school board members, parents, and interested community members to teach, learn, and engage together in creating a more green and healthy learning environment at their school. It combines PLT lessons, service-learning, and leadership opportunities for students to help turn their school into a model green school.

*“PLT's *GreenSchools!* program is designed to let students analyze data and design a student-led project that will impact their school. Students are really taking charge of their own learning and becoming active participants in what is happening in their schools. These citizen scientists are the ones who are making recommendations to their school boards.”*

**Christina Stallings Roberson, Oklahoma PLT State Coordinator, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry**

A set of five investigations enables students to examine their school's energy use, waste and recycling, water consumption, school site, and environmental quality. Students use the information to recommend or take action to reduce their school's ecological footprint.

Students at Lowcountry Preparatory School in South Carolina, for example, formed teams and, once a week, for six weeks, they used light meters, thermometers, scales, and other tools to gather data and conduct their research. They shared their findings and recommendations with the school's board of trustees who were both excited by and supportive of their work. Along with

delamping, students changed 600 bulbs in their school to CFLs to save over \$5,000 a year. They also installed a “shut-down and boot” timer on each of the school's more than 55 computers, resulting in a savings of \$216 per computer per year. Teams of students made similar presentations regarding solid waste issues and school site improvements, such as tree planting.

*“We, as students, are the ones who are affected by changes in our schools. Expressing our opinions on what happens at our schools helps us learn to make decisions, keeps us devoted to being green, and gives us satisfaction in environmental achievements. It is a privilege for students to be given this opportunity of being taken seriously by adults.”*

**Elizabeth Zieser-Misenheimer, 9th grade student, Lowcountry Preparatory School, South Carolina**

PLT is working closely with 70 pilot schools in 19 states that have received grants from the U.S. Forest Service, Learn and Serve America through the Corporation for National and Community Service, the American Forest Foundation, or the Staples Foundation for Learning. Students are included in PLT *GreenSchools!* trainings to get the program up and running at their schools, rather than only have teachers attend and then tell the students what to do. More than 520 educators and 240 students attended 19 *GreenSchools!* workshops nationwide.





*"This program gives the school tools to make decisions, and gives kids a sense of purpose and worthwhile achievement."*

**Sandy Gresham, Science Teacher and Environmental Education Coordinator, Lowcountry Preparatory School, South Carolina**

In keeping with a student focus and providing a venue for youth voice, teams of students and teachers from participating PLT GreenSchools presented about the program at the 2010 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) conferences, the National Youth Leadership Council's (NYLC) National Service-Learning Conference, and Project Learning Tree's International Coordinators' Conference. National PLT has also formed a Student Advisory Board with student representatives from PLT GreenSchools around the country.



**At the national NSTA conference** in Philadelphia, 40 science teachers from across the United States were enthralled to learn from Washington, D.C. Paul Middle School students about ways to implement PLT and *GreenSchools!* in their own schools. Following their presentation, the students hosted a question and answer session and were met with a standing ovation! The students also showed hundreds of conference participants in the exhibit hall how to use some of the *GreenSchools!* monitoring equipment.

Green Team student leaders from Scuola Vita Nuova Charter School in Kansas City, Missouri, presented at the 2010 NYLC conference in San Jose, California to a standing-room-only crowd of more than 100 people. Officials from Learn and Serve America were impressed with their presentation and invited the school's Green Team President Zayra Soto, an 8th grader, to join the Youth Speaker's Bureau program that supports youth who speak publicly about the positive effects service-learning can have on youth, institutions, and communities.



*"The GreenSchools! program has made a remarkable difference in our impact on our environment and learning about how we can become better citizens through our stewardship of natural resources."*

**Zayra Soto, 8th grade student, Scuola Vita Nuova Charter School, Kansas City, Missouri**

## GREENWORKS! GARDENS BENEFIT POLLINATORS

*GreenWorks!* is PLT's grant program to support service-learning, community service projects—more than \$800,000 to date has been distributed to PLT-trained educators and their students to support nearly 1,000 projects nationwide!

*“Through our *GreenWorks!* project, South Tahoe High School students learned how to educate younger children about their environment, how to plant trees, how to create a DVD, and how to present a speech to a large group of professional educators. These students now have the confidence that they can do anything!”*

**Joy Barney, USDA Forest Service Conservation Education Program Specialist, California**

In 2010, 17 schools completed butterfly gardens in their school yards and communities to fulfill grants awarded to PLT-trained teachers and students participating in MonarchLIVE—A Distance Learning Adventure. Through MonarchLIVE, Project Learning Tree and its partners the U.S. Forest Service and Prince William Network promoted monarch butterfly conservation and education, and supported the creation of places for butterflies to find nourishment and rest during their impressive journey.



The annual migration of monarch butterflies is an “endangered natural phenomenon.” Every year, millions of these tiny travelers migrate thousands of miles from the United States and Canada to spend the winter months in Mexico. This yearly move has made monarchs dependant on conservation of habitats in all three countries.

In 2010 the program expanded to teach students about pollinators in general, including bees, birds, bats, and butterflies that play an important role in biodiversity, global food webs, and human health. This program, called PollinatorLIVE, is helping teach students in grades 4-8 about pollinators, gardening and conservation. And this coming year, thanks to funding provided by the U.S. Forest Service, students across the country will again engage with their communities in “learning-by-doing” projects to create more habitat for pollinators, including monarch butterflies! A total of 28 projects in 20 states were awarded *GreenWorks!* PollinatorLIVE garden grants.



*“Our butterfly shaped garden has provided a place for monarchs to find respite, and student learning has been enhanced beyond belief.”*

**JoAnn Cantlupe, Environmental Science Coordinator, Sawgrass Springs Environmental Magnet Middle School, Florida**



## WORKSHOPS OF NOTE

Amazing things happen at every PLT workshop, especially when participants are exposed to our materials and activities for the first time. The Early Childhood program brought PLT to a whole new audience this year, and overall, PLT and its partners conducted more than 1,600 professional development workshops nationwide. A few highlights include:

- In Minnesota half of all educators trained in PLT in 2010 were teachers from preschools, day care centers, kindergartens, and Head Start. In spite of the fact that it's winter most of the school year in the northern states, PLT workshops always practice what we preach—which means going outdoors! Participants are taught the benefits, strategies, and challenges for teaching in outdoor settings and how to prepare young children in their care for outdoor exploration, including dressing for the weather.

*“Amazing! I heard this was a cool workshop, but I had no idea how blown away I would feel by it.”*

**Starr Stolte, Kid's World Learning Center, Virginia**

- In North Carolina, PLT partnered with the statewide school recycling coordinator to offer “Where is Away?” workshops that focused on recycling and waste-related activities in the PreK-8 guide and Municipal Solid Waste high school module. Workshops included tours of local landfills and material recovery facilities, where co-mingled recyclables are sorted. Participants also learned how to start and fund school and community recycling programs.
- In Ohio, 13 new volunteers were trained as PLT workshop facilitators using a web-based course format, especially beneficial for school teachers and university professors who are not able to participate as readily in traditional site-based PLT

workshops. As part of the course requirements, participants must present PLT activity lessons to youth or other educators in their own community, and then share their experience online with fellow course participants. They have ongoing access to the program's professional learning community to seek advice as they plan and conduct PLT workshops in their own community.



- In Maine, a five-hour training session gave teachers of students with academic difficulties a specialized field curriculum for students to conduct a scientific forest study.

*“For students to be able to work with a forester and see how their work is used every day was a great way to connect what they learn in school to real-life situations.”*

**Brian Clark, Lake Region High School teacher, Maine**

- Two workshops were held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV for outdoor educators connected with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The educators will implement PLT activities from the PreK-8 guide and Places We Live high school module at various points on the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia.
- A workshop and special children's programming at the annual Tree Farm Convention in Burlington, VT introduced landowners and their families to specially adapted PLT activities for families to use with children while on a walk in the woods.

*"This workshop was highly recommended by past participants. I now understand why. A fabulous day and event. Thank you."*

**New Hampshire PLT workshop participant**

- A group of 14 educators from around the country participated in a PLT workshop on the Antarctic Peninsula and on their cruise ship while crossing the Drake Passage. This first-ever PLT workshop in Antarctica featured an investigation about climate change and unique habitats.



*"PLT is amazing!"* Students think I am so creative in coming up with these activities and they learn so much from them."

**Allen Nasworthy, Agriscience and Environmental Science Teacher, Locust Grove High School, Georgia.**

- Thanks to the Weyerhaeuser Foundation, a new PLT program is underway in Uruguay with the support of Uruguay's directors of public elementary schools and rural education, and the Uruguay Society of Forest Producers. A team of educators are working to expand PLT into rural areas across the country, adapting it to meet the needs of Uruguayan teachers.

## WELL-DESERVED KUDOS!

Al Stenstrup, PLT's Director of Education Programs, received an award for Outstanding Service to EE by an Individual at the Global Level from the North American Association for Environmental Education. The prestigious award recognized Al's contributions in the United States and around the world. He has worked in 49 states, as well as Japan, Russia, Cuba, China, Kenya, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Greece. He has advised the Caribbean Student Environmental Alliance and China's Ministry of Education. We are proud to have him at PLT.



*"I love Project Learning Tree's activities that increase awareness about forests and forestry."*

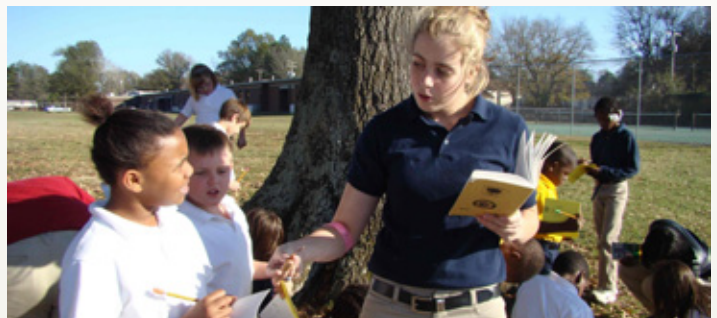
**Rose Calhoun, Clay High School biology teacher, Indiana**



## ADVOCACY: INCREASING SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

While education takes place in the minds of students, the fact is that federal and local policies play a role in determining how that education takes place and how it is funded. Over the past year, PLT state coordinators, educators, and even students have played a role in helping to increase support for EE at the federal level.

- Funding for the *National Environmental Education Act* (NEEA) was included in the President's Budget. However, it was far below the \$14 million authorized in the law. As a result of PLT's action alerts, educators sent close to 500 emails to Congress, urging them to increase NEEA funding in the federal budget.
- Support for the *No Child Left Inside Act* (NCLI) continued to increase in Congress, as we surpassed the 100 mark for the number of Representatives and Senators signed on as co-sponsors. PLT educators wrote more than 350 messages to Education Secretary Arne Duncan urging him to include NCLI in the President's Blueprint for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—and it was included! Though it was part of a "well-rounded" education piece, it was a strong start to get EE on the radar.
- When EPA's five-year strategic plan draft did not include EE, we submitted comments urging them to make it a priority. We also urged the President's advisory council on science and technology to include EE when they make proposals to increase STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education.
- Shawna Crocker, Colorado PLT State Coordinator, flew to Washington, D.C. in May and participated in AFF's Grasstops Leaders Fly-in. She visited her representatives and senators on Capitol Hill and talked with them about the importance of EE, sharing great PLT success stories. Representative Jared Polis (D-CO) continues to be a strong EE champion in Congress!
- Dan Ware, New Mexico PLT State Co-Coordinator, joined AFF's National Public Affairs Committee, which provides feedback to AFF on PLT policy priorities. He came to Washington, D.C. to participate in our December meeting, which included a discussion of the outlook for EE policy in the coming year.
- A nice finale for 2010... Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representatives Jared Polis (D-CO) and Mike Castle (R-DE) introduced a bill to reauthorize the *National Environmental Education Act* (NEEA). PLT and several of our partners have been working for a number of years to get Congress to reauthorize NEEA, and the introduction of a bill was a strong first step.



*"Schools need funding and other support to train teachers to incorporate environmental education into their everyday lesson plans, and develop the confidence and skills to take their students outdoors to learn."*

**Shawna Crocker, Colorado PLT State Coordinator, Colorado State Forest Service**



**Jacob Isbell** (pictured center), an 8th grade student from Vinton-Shellsburg Middle School in Iowa, described his energy-saving *GreenSchools!* project to Iowa Senator Tom Harkin and his staff. The Isbell family, along with AFF's Melissa Harden (far right) and James McGirt (far left) described how students' environmental investigations are empowering youth and paving the way for future savings and sustainable practices at schools across the country.

*"To fully prepare our young for the world they will inherit, we must make environmental education part of the core curriculum, instead of treating it like a nice-to-have-but. We know that PLT activities increase student test scores and foster positive changes in their attitudes about the environment. We should all want this for every child in America."*

**Esther Cowles, Executive Director, New Hampshire Project Learning Tree**

## CONNECTING KIDS TO NATURE

In April, President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and charged his Cabinet and other top staff with developing a conservation and recreation agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. During the summer, a series of listening sessions and other outreach took place throughout the country. Several PLT state coordinators and educators attended or helped in other ways to increase support for EE in the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative.

For example, Esther Cowles, New Hampshire PLT State Coordinator was part of a panel at a listening session. She shared her experiences, drawing upon a one-pager "Engaging Youth to be Future Conservation Leaders." Joy Cowart, a 2010 National PLT Outstanding Educator, posted an idea on the AGO website to

include EE as part of the recommendations in the AGO report, and she received close to 300 votes from PLT educators and the general public in favor of her idea. The AGO report, released in February 2011, included a strong focus on connecting youth to the outdoors.



*"At a time when too many children suffer from 'nature deficit' and increasing rates of obesity, forests provide opportunities to get kids outdoors and learning about our environment. We will continue to seek additional federal resources to ensure that environmental education is part of every child's education."*

**Tom Martin, President & CEO, American Forest Foundation, Washington, D.C.**



## STRENGTHENING STATE PROGRAMS

In its seventh year, the Model Program Initiative (MPI) provides training and funding to state PLT programs to build capacity through leadership and organizational development. This is so critical since our state programs and the networks they create are the backbone of PLT. In 2010,

- 150 participants from 47 states and Mexico attended PLT's 24<sup>th</sup> International Coordinators' Conference in Lake Tahoe, Nevada

*"You are without a doubt the best professional network I have ever worked with!"*

Andy Hart, Nevada Outdoor School

- 18 states received funding to conduct strategic planning; enhance their communications via online and print media; recruit and train PLT workshop facilitators; host workshops for pre-service students, and more.
- 20 states pilot tested PLT's "new and improved" Best Management Practices Self Assessment Tool, which contains 68 "best practices" for PLT state programs. States can use this tool to analyze their program's strengths as well as opportunities for improvement. The results are used to drive strategic planning, as well as improve program delivery and day-to-day operations. The new tool can now be completed online by PLT state coordinators, steering committee members, partners, workshop facilitators, and other stakeholders, and the results collectively compiled and analyzed.
- 12 states attended a Southern Regional Training in Memphis, TN to learn about tools and techniques for leadership and organizational development,

and to share innovations in program development and delivery. We look forward to building on the successes of this training and bringing similar professional development opportunities to other regions in the future.

*"Working through specific issues and possible solutions was time well spent and resulted in collaboration, problem-solving, and action plans—invaluable!"*

Jerry Shrum, South Carolina PLT State Coordinator



### You Can Bet On It!

You can bet that the 2010 International Coordinators' Conference, held in May at Lake Tahoe, Nevada, was a winner! Over 150 environmental educators from the U.S. and Mexico participated. *GreenSchools!* was a central topic, and students from schools in Nevada and Iowa presented. In addition, students from California's South Tahoe High School led conference attendees on a field trip to assess the survival of the 1,500 tree seedlings they had planted last year at the Angora Burn site with the help of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders as part of a PLT *GreenWorks!* project.

*"We truly have become leaders and role models for our community."*

Christina Ramos, South Tahoe High School student, California



**PLT's Gold Star Awards** are given to state coordinators and PLT partners who have provided outstanding leadership in the promotion of PLT. Kathy McGlauflin (center) presented awards to Jim Stark, Director of Environmental Education at Weyerhaeuser Company and Co-chair of PLT's Education Operating Committee (left), and to Pat Maloney, Maine PLT State Coordinator (right).

## OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

The hardest job at PLT—selecting only five Outstanding Educators from among the amazing nominations received. In 2010, states sent in a record 21 nominations—educators at all levels, from rural, urban, and suburban areas, and those in school systems and non-formal settings.

*"I think that the PLT curriculum is one of the best. A teacher who is busy can teach the standards and EE without reinventing the wheel or adding something new to their already busy, hectic schedule. 'Teaching how to think, not what to think,' is vital to good education, not just good environmental education."*

Michael Stewart, Ohio 2010 PLT Outstanding Educator

The 2010 Outstanding Educators were special guests at PLT's International Coordinators' Conference and were also invited to the World Forestry Center in Portland to participate in their summer institute. Pictured below with Kathy McGlauflin (far left), they were as follows (from left to right):

**Kurtis Koll**, Professor of Physical Sciences, Cameron University, Oklahoma

**Susan Cox**, Conservation Education Coordinator for the Northeastern region, USDA Forest Service, New Hampshire

**Reeda Hart**, Outreach Specialist, Northern Kentucky University, Kentucky

**Debra Wagner**, 4th grade teacher, St. Paul Lutheran School, Florida

**Joy Cowart**, 6-12th grade ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher, Lowndes County Schools, Georgia

*Congratulations to them, and a shout-out also to the 16 honorees!*





## CREATING AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

Our social media presence has grown through Facebook (1,494 fans) and Twitter (1,827 followers.)

In addition this past year, we launched an online professional learning community to help educators learn from each other and improve their teaching using PLT and environmental education. At <http://connect.plt.org>, PLT workshop facilitators can share their ideas for facilitating PLT workshops, and teachers can strengthen their content knowledge, share teaching strategies, and connect with other educators across the country to exchange ideas and resources.

Teachers can download PLT's *Biotechnology* and *Biodiversity* secondary activities, along with background information, introductory presentations, and other resources, and join a conversation about how to implement these activities in the classroom. There are different forums for discussions on different topics, for example, about PLT's new Early Childhood program, to education news and environmental education legislation, to teaching strategies such as Differentiated Instruction. Educators can also get more involved in PLT-related activities in their state. Many PLT state programs, for example, have created state specific groups.

## IN THE MEDIA

We also continue to reach out to "traditional" media—print publications and broadcast media—to spread the word about PLT. A few notable mentions in 2010 included the following:

Olivia Griset, a 2009 National PLT Outstanding Educator and high school teacher in Lisbon Falls, Maine, had an article about her PLT-based experiential environmental education course that primarily uses the school grounds as a field site published in



NSTA's *Science Teacher*, a peer-reviewed publication. *Science Teacher* also suggested PLT's *Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Risk* for high school educators as a resource in teaching about the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

There were positive reviews of PLT's Early Childhood guide and CD, including NSTA's *Science & Children*, and two reviews in NAEYC's *Teaching Young Children*.

Articles about Outstanding Educators, PLT workshops, *GreenWorks!*, *GreenSchools!*, and more appeared in local newspapers from Maine to Hawaii. They included the Louisville (KY) Courier Journal, Richmond (VA) Times Dispatch, Tulsa (OK) World, Charleston (SC) Post and Courier, Long Beach (CA) Press-Telegram, Oakland (MI) Press, Idaho Statesman, Savannah (GA) Morning News, Biloxi (MS) Gulfport Sun Herald, Home News (NJ) Tribune, Racine (WI) Journal Times, Bismarck (ND) Tribune, Rapid City (SD) Journal, Longview (TX) News Journal, and Rutland (VT) Herald.

TV stations in Georgia, Mississippi, and Washington, D.C. highlighted PLT workshops, Outstanding Educators, and a PLT GreenSchool on their local news broadcasts. In Washington, D.C., camera crews filmed the city's professional women basketball players volunteering to help elementary school students plant a garden and green their school.

## LOOKING FORWARD TO 2011: INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS

The United Nations General Assembly designated 2011 as International Year of Forests to promote broader understanding of the importance of forests and bolster global efforts to promote sustainable forest management and conservation.

Forests offer endless ways to explore nature with children, and PLT educators and students around the country will use this opportunity to learn about, and celebrate, forests.



During 2010, each state PLT program created a “Forest Exchange Box” with representative items from their state to showcase and teach others about the unique characteristics of America’s forests. Several boxes were on display at the United Nations in New

York City for the 2011 International Year of Forests kick-off, and all will be displayed at a variety of events across the country throughout 2011—including a special reception in celebration of America’s forests hosted by AFF in Washington, D.C.

*“By planting trees, growing food and working with alternative energy, students are exposed to a more environmentally conscious way of life and they build on and draw from these experiences later in life.”*

**Don Spranger, Washington Academy high school teacher, Maine**

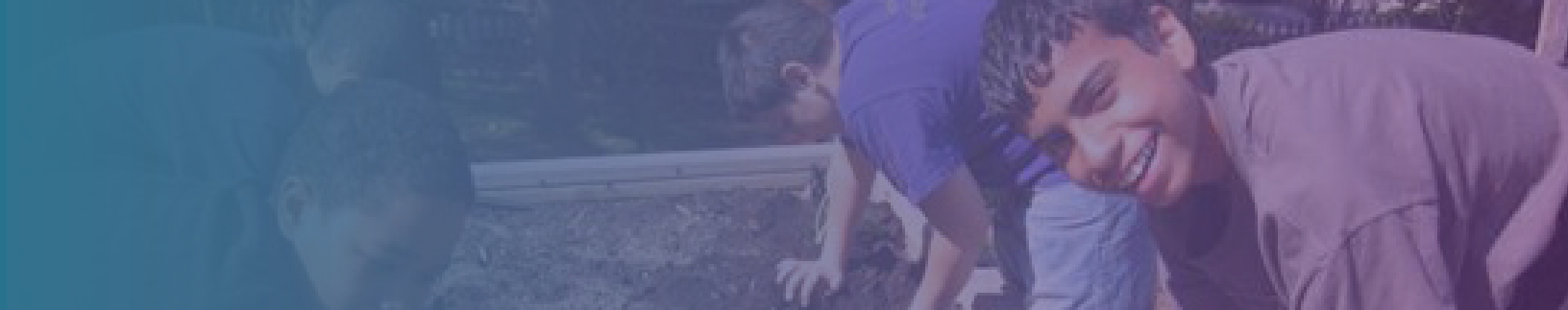
Meanwhile, the revision of the secondary-level *Forest Ecology* and *Forest Issues* modules is complete. The new module, entitled *Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Forests*, will provide opportunities for hands-on studies of forest resources while addressing concepts in ecology, biology, economics, civics, forest land management, and more. Topics include climate change, watersheds, and forest health, and the activities will help students develop the skills they need to participate meaningfully in public dialogue about forests. Through their investigations students will develop an understanding and appreciation for stewardship and informed decision-making about issues that affect forests.

Look for ways you can get involved to celebrate 2011 International Year of Forests... and be sure to take teachers and students outside to discover their forest!

*“For the active teacher who is looking for help in lesson planning a new unit, or a teacher who is starting a new curriculum, PLT is a fantastic place to go. The hands-on approach and critical thinking requirements of each lesson fulfill the expectations of today’s classroom.”*

**Charles Schnabel, Medina County Career Center, Ohio**





## PLT & AFF STAFF

Kathy McGlaulin  
Senior Vice President, Education

Rachel Bayer  
Manager, Education and Network  
Partnerships

Vanessa Bullwinkle  
Director, Communications

Kyle Cooper  
Program Coordinator

James McGirt  
Manager, Education Programs

Jackie Stallard  
Manager, Education Programs

Al Stenstrup  
Director, Education Programs

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Tom Martin  
President and CEO

Jerry Greenberg  
Senior Vice President,  
Conservation

Jennifer Jones  
Vice President, Communications

Rita Nezek  
Vice President, Public Affairs

Bob Simpson  
Senior Vice President, Forestry

Scott Smiley  
Vice President, Finance and  
Administration

Laura Tuel  
Vice President, Development

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## PLT OPERATING COMMITTEE

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National Audubon Society

Andrew Burnett  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Lisa Deaton  
Virginia Department of Forestry

Laura Downey, PhD.  
Kansas Association for Conserva-  
tion and Environmental Education

Carson Engelskirger  
Black Hills Forest Resource  
Association

Frank Gallagher, PhD.  
Committee Co-Chair  
New Jersey Department of Parks  
& Forestry  
Rutgers University, Department  
of Ecology, Evolution and Natural  
Resources

Mike Irvin  
Oil City Elementary Magnet School

Rafael Salgado  
Cal-Wood Education Center

Safiya Samman, PhD.  
U.S. Forest Service

Bora Simmons, PhD.  
University of Oregon

Jim Stark  
Committee Co-Chair  
Weyerhaeuser Company

Mary Tisdale  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Patti Vathis, PhD.  
Pennsylvania Department of  
Education

Brenda Weiser, Ed.D.  
University of Houston, Clear Lake

Meta Williams  
National Association for Equal  
Opportunity in Higher Education

Rick Zenn  
World Forestry Center

*“Project Learning Tree provides teachers with a powerful tool that they can immediately incorporate in their classroom.”*

**Tom Shimalla, Environmental Educator,  
New York State Department of Environmental  
Conservation**

## DID YOU KNOW?

American children ages 3–12 are spending 27 percent of their time with electronic media, and only 1 percent outdoors.

Contact with the natural world reduces symptoms of attention deficit disorder in children as young as 5.

Obesity among teenagers has doubled since 1970. One in three American youth aged 10–17 are now obese.

Young people recognize 1,000 corporate brands at a young age, but cannot name 10 plants or animals where they live.

The U.S. public suffers from a tremendous environmental literacy gap. Two-thirds of the public fail even a basic environmental quiz and 88 percent fail a basic energy quiz.

The vast majority of Americans are convinced that the environment will become one of the dominant issues and challenges of the 21st century. Our nation's future depends on our children being well-prepared for the future they will inherit.

America spends less than 30 cents per person per year on environmental education.

More than one in six people who live in the United States—55 million children, teachers, administrators, nurses and janitors—spend their days in K–12 schools.

Ninety-five percent of parents with kids in school support having environmental education as a central component in their kids' classrooms.

Environmental education uses the outdoors for hands-on learning, and connects classroom learning to the real world.

When integrated into the core curricula or used as an integrating theme across the curriculum, environmental education improves student achievement in science, reading, math, and social studies.



Project Learning Tree® (PLT) uses forests as a window on the world and provides educators with environmental education curriculum resources that can be integrated into lesson plans for all grades and subject areas. PLT teaches students how to think, not what to think about complex environmental issues, and helps them acquire the skills they need to make sound choices about the environment. Developed in 1976, PLT's 50-state network includes more than 500,000 trained educators using PLT materials that cover the total environment. PLT is a program of the American Forest Foundation.

1111 Nineteenth Street, NW • Suite 780 • Washington, D.C. 20036 • p 202.463.2475

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