Suggested PLT Outdoor Activities

The following PLT activities are particularly visual and would be good to use during an event to which you have invited the press or elected officials.

PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide

"Adopt a Tree" (Part A: Grades PreK-2; Part B: Grades 3-8)
Students "adopt" a tree, deepening their awareness of individual trees over time and encouraging a greater understanding and appreciation of their local environment.

"Birds and Worms" (Grades K-6)
Camouflage is an important survival strategy in the animal kingdom. In this activity, students will discover the value of protective coloration as they pretend to be birds in search of colored worms or bugs.

"The Closer You Look" (Grades PreK-6)
All students, no matter how young, have an idea of what a tree looks like. But many are unfamiliar with the actual structure of a tree. In this activity, your students will go outdoors or view pictures to take a closer look at trees and their parts.

"The Fallen Log" (Grades 4-8)
It's amazing how many things live in and on rotting logs. In this activity, your students will become familiar with some of those organisms by observing fallen logs. They'll gain an understanding of how *decomposition* takes place and a better appreciation for *microhabitats* and *communities*.

"Have Seeds, Will Travel" (Grades PreK-8)
A plant is a biological system. Its systems, processes, and components enable it to grow and reproduce. By observing, collecting, and classifying seeds, students are introduced to one aspect of a plant's reproductive system.

"Improve Your Place" (Grades 5-8)
(final implementation stage of this activity is most appropriate for inviting press)
Each living thing has a habitat – a place to live that suits its needs. For human beings, the community they live in is their habitat. In this activity, students are encouraged to plan and carry out a service learning project that focuses on making positive environmental changes in their community.

"Plant a Tree" (Grades 1-8)
Never underestimate the power of a tree! Besides giving us an amazing array of paper and wood products, trees provide a host of other benefits – from shading our backyards to assisting in the maintenance of the global climate. Students can express their appreciation of trees by planning and carrying out their own tree-planting project.

"Poet-Tree" (Grades 3-8)
Writing and sharing poems gives students an opportunity to express their thoughts,

values, and beliefs about the environment and related issues in creative and artistic ways. You can do this activity in combination with Activity 21,"Adopt a Tree," to allow students to explore their adopted tree through poetry. You may also adapt the activity to explore parts of the environment other than trees and forests, such as art or architecture.

"Pollution Search" (Part A: Grades 2-6)
Here's a way for your students to take a closer look at pollution: what it is, what its sources are, and what people can do to reduce it.

"Schoolyard Safari" (Grades PreK-5)
Every organism requires a place to live that satisfies its basic needs for food,water, shelter, and space. Such a place is called a habitat. In this activity, students will go on a safari to explore a nearby habitat – the schoolyard – while looking for signs of animals living there.

"The Shape of Things" (Part A: Grades PreK-K; Part B: Grades K-3)
As humans we depend on all of our senses—touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, and seeing—to gather impressions of our environment. Our brains sort out the diversity of sizes, colors, and shapes that we see. In this activity, students will focus on the many shapes that are found in both natural and built environments.

"Signs of Fall" (Part A: Grades K-5; Part B: Grades 3-6)
In temperate regions, people can observe the annual change of seasons. In this activity, students will look for signs of autumn. They will also try an experiment to discover why leaves of deciduous trees change color in the fall.

"Soil Stories" (Part A: Grades K-4; Part B: Grades 5-8)
In this inquiry-based activity, students will explore differences in soil types and what those differences mean to people and to plants.

"Water Wonders" (Part B: Grades 4-8)
The water cycle is the system by which Earth's fixed amount of water is collected, purified, and distributed from the environment to living things and back to the environment. Through a game and an experiment, this activity will introduce students to the various steps of the water cycle and will help them make connections between the water cycle and all living things.

The Changing Forest: Forest Ecology (secondary module)
"Adopt-a-Forest"
Forests support a diversity of plants and animals that vary according to the geographic location of the forest. In this activity, students will identify a section of a local forest or wooded area to study and investigate the types of plants and animals that live there. Through this investigation, students will identify the biological and structural diversity within a forest ecosystem.

“Cast of Thousands”
Students will explore the variety of life in a forest and will discover the importance of biological diversity. They will take measurements, in much the same way as a forester does, to draw conclusions about the overall health of the forest.

Exploring Environmental Issues: Places We Live (secondary module)
“Community Character”, Part A
In this activity, students explore community character and investigate the ways that communities, including their own, are responding to growth and development pressures.

“Green Space”, Part B
In this activity, students investigate green infrastructure and native plant communities at the neighborhood, community, and regional scales and then explore the dual needs of accommodating population growth while protecting green space and native plant communities.

Exploring Environmental Issues: Biodiversity (secondary module)
“Global Invaders”, Part B, Option 2
People have intentionally and unintentionally moved plant, animal, and other species to new environments. Many of those species cause environmental—and sometimes economic—harm. In this activity, students will research invasive species in the United States and then investigate the presence and effects of invasive species in their own community.