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Project Learning Tree



# Project Learning Tree is

- A program of the American Forest Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works for:
  - Quality environmental education
  - Informed decision-making about our communities and our world
  - Healthy forests
- PLT is sponsored by state partners across the Country



American Forest Foundation



# Project Learning Tree is

## A Comprehensive EE Program

- Diverse, international network of partners
- Implementation via a successful delivery system of professional development
- High quality, PreK-12 EE curriculum materials and programs





# PLT's Mission

**PLT uses the forest as a “window on the world” to:**

- Increase students understanding of our complex environment
- Stimulate critical and creative thinking
- Develop the ability to make informed decisions on environmental issues
- Instill the confidence and commitment to take responsible action







# Project Learning Tree History

- **Early 1970's:** Partnership between education, resource agencies, and businesses
  - started Project Learning Tree to teach young people about the environment
- **1976:** PLT materials first implemented in 13 western states
  - K-6 and 7-12 Environmental Education Guides
- **1992:** GreenWorks!
- **1993:** PLT materials revamped into PreK-8 and Secondary Modules
- **2006:** Major revisions to the PLT PreK-8 Guide and continued development of Secondary Modules
- **2008:** GreenSchools!
- **2010:** Early Childhood Guide
- **PLT was so effective it inspired other EE programs based on the PLT model**
  - Project WILD in 1983
  - Project WET in 1992



# PLT's Environmental Goals

Awareness



Knowledge



Challenge



Responsible  
Action

“Teaching students how to think, not what to think about complex environmental issues”

*-Rudy Schafer, Founder of PLT*



# PLT'S Network

- All 50 states and the District of Columbia
- Brazil, Canada, Chile, Finland, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Slovakia, Sweden, Uruguay, U.S. Trust Territories, The Peace Corps
- National PLT
- Operating Committee
- State Sponsors
- State Steering Committees
- State Coordinators
- Facilitators
- Teachers
- Students





# National, State, and Local Partnerships



*and 88 State Partners*





# Implementation

50 + State Network

“Train the Trainer Model”

Professional Development

- Inservice
- Preservice
- Nonformal

30,000 Educators Trained Each Year Across the Country  
in over 1500 Workshops

During the average business day,  
a PLT workshop begins every hour.  
More than half the teachers who  
attend use PLT in their classes  
at least six times a year.



# PLT Curriculum

- PLT for PreK-8
  - Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood
  - PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide
  - Energy and Society
- 5 GreenSchools! Investigations
- PLT for Secondary
  - 5 printed modules
  - 2 online modules





# Curriculum Development Process:

1. Advisory Committee
2. Formative Evaluation
3. Focus Groups
4. First Draft of Activities
5. Teachers Pilot-test Activities
6. Activities reviewed by Education and Resource Professionals
7. Activities Revised/Edited
8. Activities Reviewed
9. Final Editing
10. Design and Publishing
11. Implementation through workshops
12. Teachers Field-Test Module



# Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood:

Eleven activities and over 130 experiences that engage young children in outdoor play and exploration.

## Topics

- Exploring nature with five senses
- Meeting neighborhood trees
- Experiencing trees through the seasons

*Has accompanying Music and Movement CD*







# PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide

Features:

- Reading Connections
- Technology Connections
- Differentiated Instruction
- Over 100 topics covered

Aligned to National and State Standards

Classroom Friendly

- 96 hands-on, interdisciplinary activities
- Indoor and outdoor activities





# Energy & Society Kit

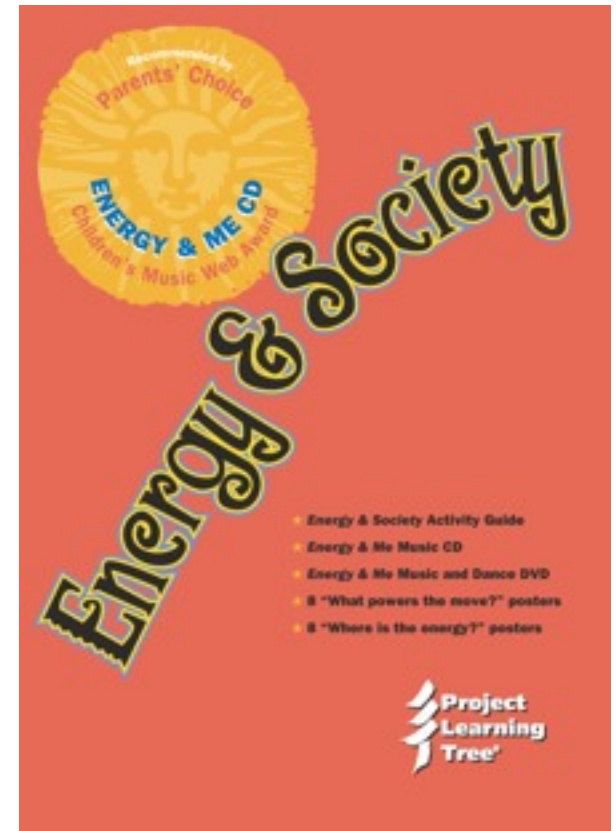
## Activity Guide

### Music & Dance by Billy B

- Energy & Me CD
- Energy & Me music and dance DVD

### Poster Set

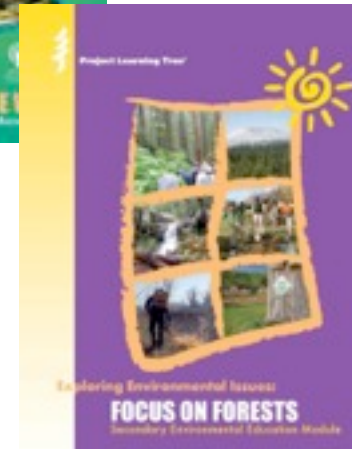
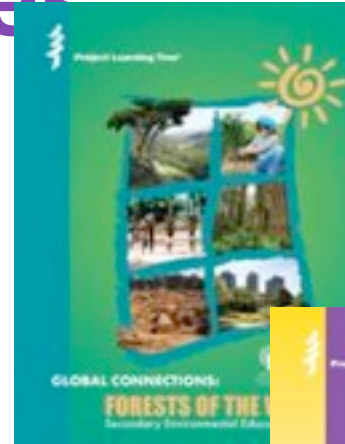
- Where is the energy?
- What powers the move?





# Secondary Modules

- Focus on Forests
- Forests of the World
- Places We Live
- Municipal Solid Waste
- Focus on Risk
- Biotechnology (Online)
- Biodiversity (Online)





# Climate Change Activities

## Elementary & Middle School

### PreK-8 Guide

- Air Plants
- Rain Reasons
- Field, Forest, and Stream
- Tropical Treehouse
- Soil Stories
- Waste Watchers
- The Global Climate
- In the Driver's Seat
- Our Changing World

### Energy & Society Kit

- May the Source Be with You
- What Powers the Move?

### Partner Program

- Rainforest Alliance:  
Guatemala Climate  
Education Project





# Climate Change Activities

## Secondary Modules

- Focus on Forests
  - Climate Change and Forests
- Forests of the World
  - Analyzing Patterns of Forest Change
- Climate Change & Southeastern Forests (In Development)
  - Focuses on forests in the southeastern states, from Virginia to Texas and south to Florida
  - You can view the draft activities at this website <http://sfrc.ufl.edu/extension/ee/climate/>.



# PLT Programs

- GreenWorks!
- GreenSchools!
- Educator Support





# PLT GreenWorks!

Grants available for environmental service-learning projects.



Integrates community service with the academic curriculum.

Combines the environmental knowledge and resources of PLT with community action initiatives.





# ClimateChangeLIVE

- Distance learning program
- Partners include: U.S. Forest Service, PLT, Prince William Network, and other federal agencies and NGOs.
- The program offers learning about climate change through a series of webcasts, webinars, and online climate education resources.
- PLT will offer GreenWorks! climate change grants in 2014





# PLT GreenSchools!

The GreenSchools! initiative encourages teachers and students to:

- incorporate PLT into curriculum
- conduct environmental investigations
- take action to create sustainable school environments



*Over 2,000 schools registered*





# PLT GreenSchools!

- Investigations
  - School Site
  - Energy
  - Waste & Recycling
  - Water
  - Environmental Quality
- Webinar Series
- Grant Opportunities

[www.greenschools.org](http://www.greenschools.org)





# Educator Support Materials:

***The Branch***, PLT's quarterly online newsletter

- Information on PLT's programs and resources
- Latest in environmental education news

**The PLT website, [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org)**

- Supplemental resources for each activity
- Downloadable curriculum and student pages
- Standards correlations and more!



# Recognizing Excellence

PLT's National Outstanding Educator Program



Recognizes educators  
for their commitment  
to EE, teaching skills,  
and use of PLT

**Five winners chosen each year from state nominations**





# Highlights

- 30,000 educators trained a year
- 60% of workshop participants are referred to PLT by another educator
- Implementation of new Strategic Plan
- Recognition by DOE Green Ribbon Schools
- Coverage of PLT in national, local and social media
- 20 Years of GreenWorks! Over \$1 million to over 1000 schools
- Washington, DC “Fly-in” on EE



# Thank you!

Visit [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org)  
[www.greenschools.org](http://www.greenschools.org)

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