



Business / Corporate Responsibility

Project Learning Tree takes teaching outdoors



Sustainable Forestry Initiative
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Remember staring out the window in math class as a kid? Or counting the minutes until spelling was over so you could go to recess? Project Learning Tree (PLT) embraces the fact that students would rather be outside than in and takes the teaching where they want to be.

PLT is an environmental education initiative for students from preschool through grade 12. Each year, 20,000 teachers attend PLT workshops around the nation to learn how to integrate PLT into lesson plans for all grades and subject areas and how to make outdoor experiences part of their students’ learning experience. Educators soon find out that teaching with PLT is fun and hands-on.



PLT was developed for teachers by teachers with the help of natural resource professionals. It teaches youth about forests and the environment through hands-on, interdisciplinary learning experiences that are correlated to classroom standards and get children outside.

According to Gail Westcot, PLT facilitator and outreach educator for the University of Georgia, “PLT gives teachers all the information they need to effectively teach an environmental education topic, and it helps natural resource professionals be better teachers.”



PLT isn’t limited to science. Interdisciplinary lesson plans integrate all subjects, including math and language arts. Materials are available to parents and community leaders, as well as teachers.

Youth from Bleckley County schools in Georgia participated in a field trip to Gully Branch tree farm to learn about trees and forestry using Project Learning Tree activities like Every Tree for Itself, Tree Cookies, Renewable or Not, and Web of Life.

PLT became an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) in 2017. SFI is an independent, non-profit organization that provides supply chain assurances, delivers conservation leadership, and supports environmental education and community engagement.

“Having a relationship with Project Learning Tree and an organization like SFI is tremendous,” Earl Barrs, Gully Branch tree farm manager said. “There’s a synergy there that’s going to reach more kids and more people and inform them of the benefits of the forest and all the things that we depend on and take for granted.”

Watch the PLT video to see what teaching and learning against a forest backdrop is like. To find out more about environmental education and PLT, visit <https://www.plt.org/>. To find out more about sustainable forestry and SFI, visit <http://www.sfiprogram.org/>.



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