

# Walk in the Forest

A Collaborative Approach to  
Sharing Your Passion for Forests



GROWING STEWARDSHIP FROM THE ROOTS

# Outline

- Overview of Project Learning Tree
- The Walk in the Forest Handbook
- Example of a “Walk” with Students
- Example of a “Walk” with Landowners



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# What is Project Learning Tree?



## A Comprehensive EE Program

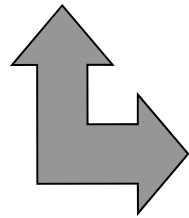
- High quality, PreK-12 environmental education curriculum materials, use forests as a “window on the world”
- Diverse, international network of partners
- Implementation via a professional development delivery system



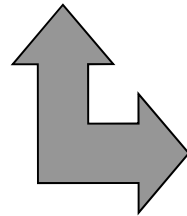
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# PLT's Environmental Education Goals

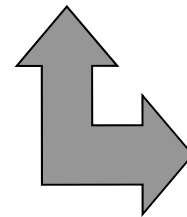
**Awareness**



**Knowledge**



**Challenge**



**Responsible  
Action**

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

*~Rudy Schafer, Founder PLT*



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# Implementation

- 50 State Network
- “Train the Trainer Model”
- Professional Development
  - Inservice
  - Preservice
  - Nonformal
- 30,000 trained annually across the U.S. in over 1,500 Workshops

During the average business day, a PLT workshop begins every hour.



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# PLT Curriculum

- PLT for PreK-8
  - PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide
  - Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood
  - Energy & Society
- PLT for Secondary
  - Forest Ecology
  - Focus on Forests
  - Municipal Solid Waste
  - Places We Live
  - Forests of the World
  - Biodiversity
  - Focus on Risk and Biotechnology Supplement



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# PLT Activity Pages

- Run in Tree Farmer Magazine
- 12 Activity Pages and Counting!
- Available at PLT Booth, Walk in the Forest Handbook, and online at [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org) > Resources > Family Activities
- State Forestry Magazines
  - Louisiana Forests & People
  - Ohio Woodland Journal
  - West Virginia Farm Bureau News
  - Connecticut Woodlands
  - Massachusetts Woodland Steward



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## Connecting Kids to Nature

*Try this activity in a forest—a natural place to learn!*

For over 30 years, Project Learning Tree® has used the forest as a “window” to help young people gain an awareness of the world around them and their place within it. Blending a walk in the forest with a fun and engaging PLT activity creates a powerful learning experience for children of all ages. Here’s one idea in a series from PLT that introduces the concept of forest cycles.

### Activity 79: Tree Lifecycle

In this activity, students will discover that trees have a lifecycle that is similar to that of other living things.

**Doing the Activity**  
Trees have a lifecycle that includes birth, growth, injury and disease, aging, and death. The next time you are in the presence of trees, ask children to identify the various stages of a tree’s life.

- Are trees alive? How do you know?
- How are trees born? Do they die?
- How does a tree’s life compare to the life of a person?
- Can you find a young tree? An adult tree? An elderly tree? A dead tree?

Have children match up the tree lifecycle images below with their correct name using the numbers provided.

A circular diagram showing six stages of a tree's life cycle, numbered 1 through 6. 1: A seed. 2: A sprout. 3: A sapling. 4: A mature tree. 5: A dead tree (snag). 6: A rotting log. Arrows connect the stages in a clockwise cycle.

- \_\_\_ Mature Tree
- \_\_\_ Seed
- \_\_\_ Snag (Dead Tree)
- \_\_\_ Sprout
- \_\_\_ Rotting Log
- \_\_\_ Sapling

**PLANT PERSONIFICATION**  
Have children act out the lifecycle of a tree. They can curl up as a seed, kneel to sprout, stick up arms to branches, wiggle fingers for leaves, stand up to grow tall, spread feet to show roots, and fall over to die.

Adapted from Activity 79: Tree Lifecycle from Project Learning Tree’s PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide.

Discover how PLT can help you teach... from nature!

- Attend, host, or sponsor a local PLT workshop where participants receive PLT activity guides, ideas, and materials.
- Contact your PLT State Coordinator. Visit [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org) or call 202-463-2475 for their contact information.

Project Learning Tree® and the American Tree Farm System® are programs of the American Forest Foundation.

Answers: 1. Seed, 2. Sprout, 3. Sapling, 4. Mature Tree, 5. Snag (Dead Tree), 6. Rotting Log

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The Project Learning Tree logo, featuring a stylized tree and the letters 'PLT'.



# Environmental Exchange Box

Activity  
**20**

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2011 as International Year of Forests. To celebrate, students prepare an environmental exchange box that will offer them a chance to learn more about their local forests, forests across the country, and forests around the globe.

## Exchange Box Form – 2011 Year of Forests

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (include area code) \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level/Age of Students \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred state or region with which you would like to exchange (not guaranteed) \_\_\_\_\_

*Return this form by mail,  
fax, or E-mail to:*  
Project Learning Tree  
American Forest Foundation  
111 19th Street, NW Suite 780  
Washington, DC 20036

Fax: 202-463-2461  
E-mail: [information@plt.org](mailto:information@plt.org)

Conduct a Forest Exchange  
to celebrate 2011 Year of Forests!



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# Forest Exchange Boxes



Forest Exchange Boxes created by PLT state programs to celebrate Year of Forests



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# 2011 International Year of Forests: What can you do?



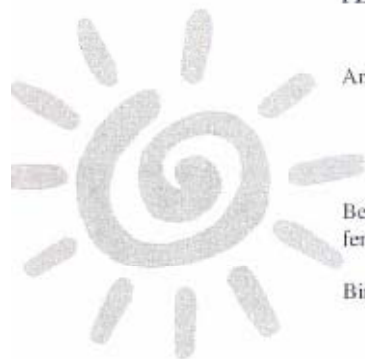
- Organize a Forest Walk in your community
- Participate in a Forest Walk in your community
- Organize a Friends of the Forest event
- Participate in a Friends of the Forest Event
- Use a forest-related educational activity every month with students
- Use a forest-related informal activity every month with your family and friends
- Visit a national forest
- Visit a national park
- Go camping in a forest
- Talk a walk in the woods
- Adopt a forest
- Help a school improve its forest, or plant trees on school grounds with students and teachers
- Become a fan of The Year of Forests 2011 on Facebook
- Hold a field day on your forest/woodland property for other woodland owners
- Hold a field day on your forest/woodland property for students and teachers at a nearby school.
- Attend a local field day in a forest



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## PLT ACTIVITY GUIDE REFERENCE

*Correlation of Project Learning Tree PreK-8 Guide Activities  
With Outdoor Classroom Features*



FEATURE	PLT ACTIVITY NUMBER AND TITLE
Animal tracking plot	46 Schoolyard Safari 2 Get In Touch With Trees 9 Planet Of Plenty 45 Web Of Life
Berry producing shrubs fence row, windbreaks	22 Trees As Habitat
Bird blind	22 Trees As Habitat 77 Trees in Trouble 5 Poet-tree
Compost pile	24 Planet Of Plenty
Creek	48 A Field, A Forest And A Stream 44 Water Wonders 70 Soil Stories
Erosion control demonstration	29 Rain Reasons 44 Water Wonders 96 Improve Your Place
Existing timber stand	33 Forest Consequences
Milled sawlog	67 How Big Is Your Tree? 12 Tree Treasures 14 Renewable Or Not? 82 Resource-Go-Round
Outdoor seating area, shelter	4 Sounds Around 62 To Be A Tree 63 Tree Factory 69 Forest For The Trees
Prairie plot, succession area, wildflower plot, grasses plot	48 A Field, A Forest And A Stream 81 Living With Fire
Soil studies	2 Get In Touch With Trees 70 Soil Stories
Tree cross section	76 Tree Cookies



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# DID YOU KNOW?

- Children ages 3-12 spend only 1% of their time outdoors.
- Contact with the natural world reduces symptoms of ADD in children as young as 5.
- Young people can recognize 1000 corporate brands, but cannot name 10 plants or animals where they live.
- Two-thirds of the U.S. public fail a basic environmental quiz.
- When integrated across core curricula, environmental education improves student achievement in science, reading, math, and social studies.



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# Tree Farms as Learning Sites

## Possible Audiences:

- Community Members
- Other (non-managing) Family Forest Owners
- Teachers and Students
- Youth Organizations
- Environmental Groups


## Lessons to Learn:

- How Forests are Nurtured and Sustained
- Where Wildlife Abounds
- Trees as Renewable Resources

Tree Farmers + Educators + Foresters =  
A learning experience not forgotten!







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**Walk in the Forest**  
Society of American Foresters  
American Forest Foundation

HANDBOOK



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# What is it?

- Guidelines for planning an event
- Goals and objectives
- Talking points
- Opportunity for partnership and funding
- Liability insurance rider
- Examples of successful programs
- Activities
- Promotion guidelines
- Evaluation
- Forest community identity



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# Who is it for?

- Students
- Teachers
- Opinion Leaders
- Landowners
- Others



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# Goals of the Walk in the Forest

- Inform the public of the many benefits of trees and forests.
- Increase public awareness of the dynamic nature of the forest.
- Help the public to understand that foresters are uniquely qualified to help maintain the integrity of forest environments while providing many benefits for society.
- Inform the public that private family forestland owners have multiple and diverse objectives and that their investment in forest management results in benefits that we all enjoy.



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# Planning a Walk Guidelines

- Before the Walk
  - Establish Objectives
  - Select Location
  - Insurance
  - Timing
  - Develop a Plan
  - Establish Your Itinerary
  - Transportation and Parking
  - Invitations
  - Handouts
  - Walk Through



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# Planning a Walk Guidelines

- Day of the Walk
  - Pre-Walk
  - Follow the Schedule
  - Wrap Up
- After the Walk
  - Clean Up
  - Evaluations
  - Thank you notes
  - Publicity
  - Begin Preparations for Next Year



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# Benefits of Trees and Forests

- Environmental benefits include soil stability, air and water quality and carbon storage.
- Ecological benefits include landscape diversity and habitat for plants and animals.
- Economic benefits include the forest products industry, outdoor recreation equipment, etc.
- Recreation includes activities in the forest such as hiking, camping and hunting.
- Aesthetics is the pleasure derived from the visual beauty of the forest.



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# Dynamic Forests

- Biotic influences on forests include animals, insects, diseases, and non-native invasive species.
- Abiotic influences include flooding, drought, fire and wind events such as hurricanes and tornadoes.
- Competition for resources (sun, water, nutrients) occurs between organisms of the same species and different species.
- Succession is the replacement of one community of plants by another.



## Foresters Maintain Integrity of Forests

- There is demand for products i.e. paper, wood & energy.
- Supplying these products through management does not necessarily compromise a forest's integrity.
- Foresters complete a multi-disciplinary curriculum that prepares them for their profession.
- Many states require licensing or registration criteria that may include a code of ethics.
- Foresters gather data in order to make prescriptions.
- Often these techniques may appear harmful in the short-term but have long term benefits.



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# Family Forestland Owners Benefit

- Individuals own forests for a variety of reasons, including environmental values, investment income, recreation.
- A landowner invests his time and money in management to accomplish his objectives.
- A landowner's investment in forest management also provides benefits to society.
- Other societal benefits from private forestland management include clean air and water.
- A landowner's participation in forest certification programs like Tree Farm is verification of sustainable forest management.



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## Example with Students

- 0-6, 38 – Egocentric
- 6-9 – Interested in Nature
- 9-12 – Gain Knowledge of Nature
- 13-17 – Develop a Sense of Conservation
- 30% Inherit Fear of Creepy Crawlies
- 70% Learn from Others



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# Example with Students

- Station 1 – Mammals, Heath Walls, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Station 2 – Snakes, Alabama Wildlife Federation
- Station 3 – Soils & Water, Milton Tuck, NRCS
- Station 4 – Birds, Marianne Murphy, Raptor Center
- Station 5 – Forestry Measurements, Sterling Brothers, Registered Forester
- Station 6 – Fishing, Jimmy Harris, Wildlife Federation
- Station 7 – Project Learning Tree, The Closer You Look Tom Carignan, Carignan Forestry Consultants
- Station 8 – Project Learning Tree, Birds and Worms, Rick Oates, Alabama Forestry Association



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# First Walk in the Forest



# Station 1 Mammals



The Commission for  
Environmental Education

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# Station 1 Mammals



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



# Station 2 Snakes and Reptiles



The Center for Environmental Education

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

# Station 3 Soils and Water



The Center for  
Environmental Education

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

# Station 4 Birds



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

# Station 5 Measurements





# Example with Students



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# Station 7 Project Learning Tree



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# Station 8 Project Learning Tree



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