



# Wheels to Woods:

## A School to Forest Bus Fund



## A few questions ...

- How many people in the room are Tree Farmers?
- How many Tree Farmers are Grandparents?
- Have your grandchildren visited your Tree Farm?
- Has your grandchild's *school* visited your Tree Farm?
- Do you know your state's PLT coordinator?
- How can we connect Project Learning Tree and the American Tree Farm System?

# The Simple Premise of Wheels to Woods

## Problems:

- Urban and rural students are disconnected from nature (*nature deficit disorder*)
- Schools do not have adequate transportation funding for field trips

## Solutions:

- Teachers want to take students outside to learn about forests and forest management
- Foresters, loggers, Tree Farmers, and the forest products community can pay for the bus





# Wheels to Woods Pays for the Bus



# Wheels to Woods Grants

- Up to \$350 per bus and \$1,000 per school
- PreK-12 schools and youth groups (Scouts, church, etc.)
- Transportation costs only
- Educational field trip in the forest
  - Forest or forest products company
- **EASY** for teachers to apply
  - Approved 111 of 114 applications





# Outdoor Education Curricula

- Project Learning Tree

- Project WILD

- Project WET



- Michigan Environmental Education Curriculum Support

# Wheels to Woods – 10 Objectives

- Promote the American Tree Farm System forest certification for family forest owners
- Promote Project Learning Tree as an outdoor education curriculum for teachers
- Connect the American Tree Farm System and Project Learning Tree with a bright yellow school bus
- Empower Tree Farmers to host a local school for a field trip to their certified Tree Farm
- Connect schools and teachers with the DNR and United States Forest Service





# Wheels to Woods – 10 Objectives

- Get urban and rural students outside into the forest to experience nature
- Educate students about forests, forest management and forest products
- Support teachers and schools for field trips to a forest or forest products company
- Inspire students to become foresters, loggers, truckers, and sawmill workers
- Connect foresters and loggers with teachers and outdoor educators at nature centers





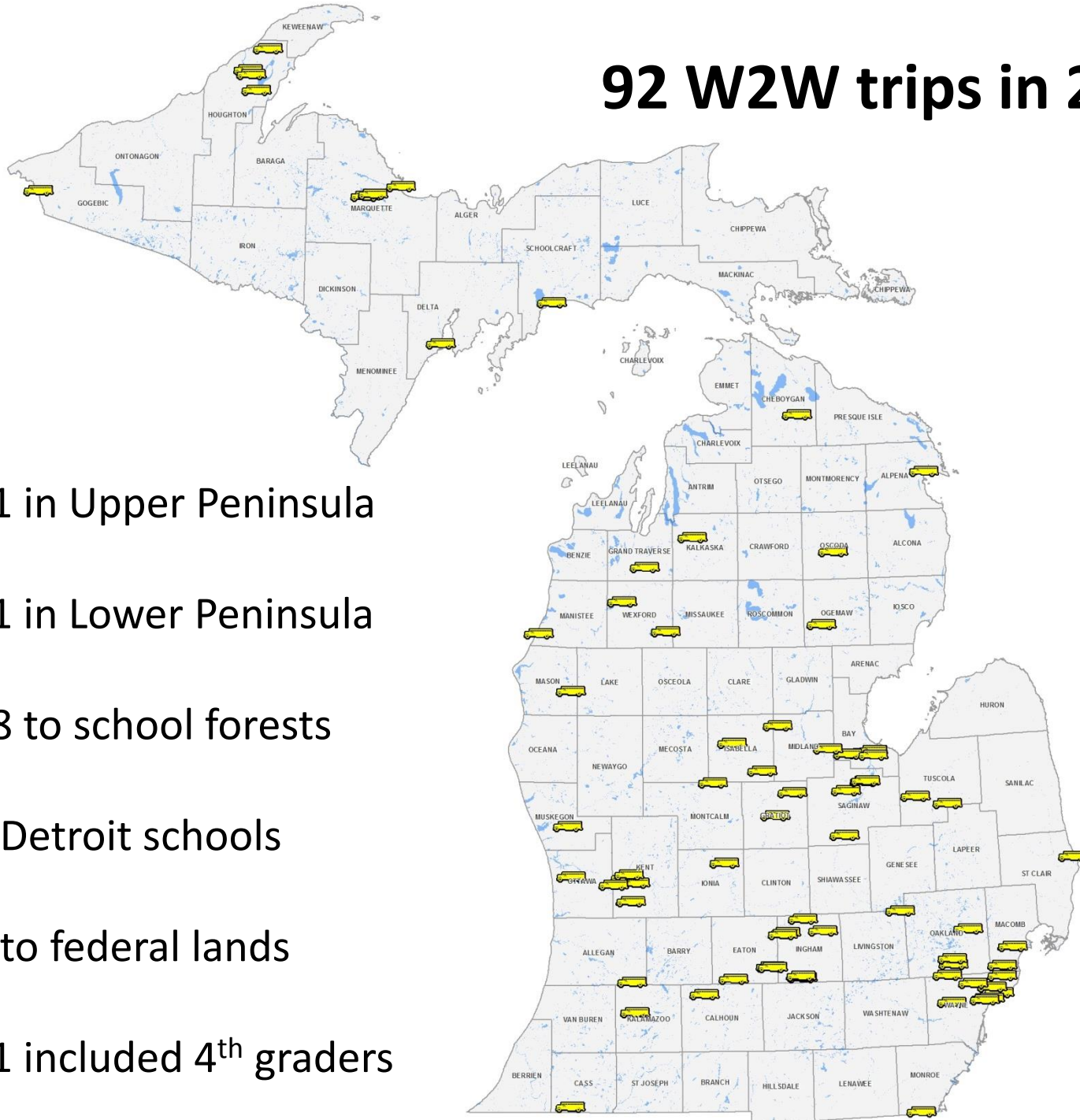
# W2W Accomplishments in 2016

## W2W impacted 8,279 people!

- 6,820 students
- 304 teachers
- 81 outdoor educators
- 1,074 parents
  
- **92 field trips**
  
- Awarded \$31,433
  
- Only \$4.61 per student



# 92 W2W trips in 2016



11 in Upper Peninsula

81 in Lower Peninsula

18 to school forests

9 Detroit schools

6 to federal lands

21 included 4<sup>th</sup> graders

# What Teachers are Saying

February 18, 2016

I would like to thank you for awarding Clippert Academy the Wheels to Woods Grant. *I always plan to take my students to a local forest during the school year because so many of them have not had that experience.* The forest is a perfect place to engage students in inquiry.

Tracy Ortiz, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher,  
[tracy.ortiz@detroitk12.org](mailto:tracy.ortiz@detroitk12.org)  
Clippert Academy, Detroit





# What Teachers are Saying

June 1, 2016

The students made a connection with nature. They were very inquisitive and asked a lot of questions regarding the maple tree and cattail wetlands.

*The students were very excited to see a woodpecker for the first time.*

There was positive statements regarding the beauty of the forest.

Richard Cross, 3<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher  
[richard.cross@detroitk12.org](mailto:richard.cross@detroitk12.org)  
Turning Point Academy, Detroit



# What Teachers are Saying

April 21, 2016

Thank you so much for approving our request! *We are so looking forward to this trip and it is nice to not have the stress and worry of coming up with the funding for transportation.* I will send you the report after the trip and we will definitely be taking some pictures to share with you!

Megan Hawes, Preschool Teacher, [mhawes@chesaning.k12.mi.us](mailto:mhawes@chesaning.k12.mi.us)  
Big Rock Elementary, Chesaning





# Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind

*Wheels to Woods funded 3 trips in 2016 for 41 blind students.*



Four day adventure camp canoeing the Manistee River



# Funding Wheels to Woods

- 55% public donations from USFS and DNR
- 45% private donations from foundations, foresters, loggers, and forest products companies
- Donations to “Michigan Tree Farm Committee” are tax deductible
- Only \$4.61 per student!
- \$175 per bus
- Raised \$32,250
- Awarded \$31,433



# Wheels to Woods Supporters

- **United States Forest Service**
- **American Forest Foundation**
- Michigan Tree Farm Committee
- Michigan Project Learning Tree
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Forest Products Council
- Pierce Foundation
- Society of American Foresters
- Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association
- Michigan Association of Timbermen
- Michigan Forest Foundation
- Additional donors in the forestry, logging and forest products community



# Wheels to Woods Team

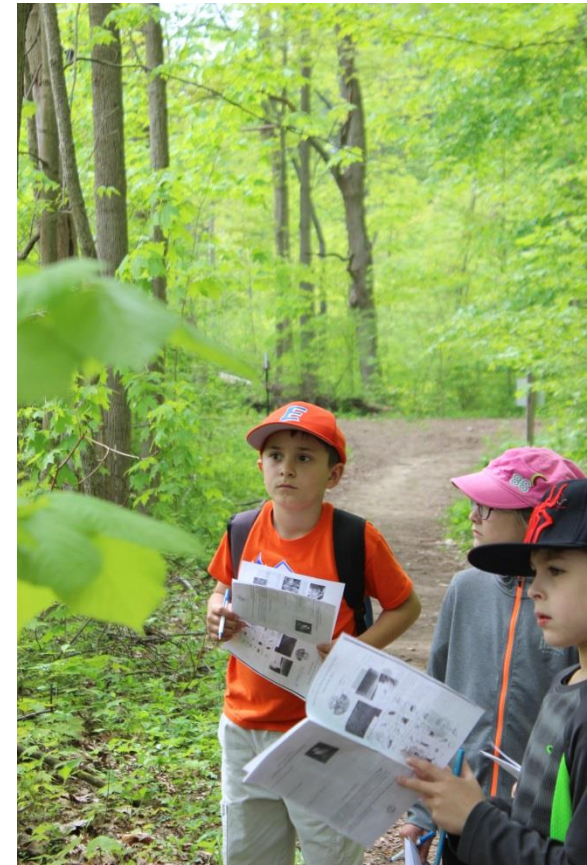
- Amanda Hattis, MFPC, [asumerix@michiganforest.com](mailto:asumerix@michiganforest.com)
  - Social media and application review
- Scott Robbins, MFPC, [srobbins@michiganforest.com](mailto:srobbins@michiganforest.com)
  - Application review and fundraising
- Karen Serfass, Tree Farm, [rkwinserf@yahoo.com](mailto:rkwinserf@yahoo.com)
  - Payments to schools
- Mike Smalligan, DNR, [smalliganm@michigan.gov](mailto:smalliganm@michigan.gov)
  - Fundraising, grant writing and promotion
- Ada Takacs, DNR & PLT, [TAKACSA@michigan.gov](mailto:TAKACSA@michigan.gov)
  - Fundraising, promotion to 3,000 PLT educators
- Britany VanderWall, Tree Farm, [brittany.vanderwall@macd.org](mailto:brittany.vanderwall@macd.org)
  - Increasing forester participation





# Wheels to Woods - 10 Step Process

1. Create guidelines and simple Application Form
  - [www.WheelstoWoods.org](http://www.WheelstoWoods.org)
2. Raise funds!
3. Distribute Application to teachers
  - Direct: Project Learning Tree network
  - Indirect: Tree Farmers & Inspectors
4. Accept Applications (any time)
5. Review and approve Applications



# Wheels to Woods - 10 Step Process

6. Field trip occurs

- Participate if possible

7. Review Reports and process payments

8. Track accomplishments and report to donors

9. Promote success stories

- [www.Facebook.com/MichiganTreeFarmSystem](http://www.Facebook.com/MichiganTreeFarmSystem)

10. Improve the model



# My Ideal W2W Trip

- Teacher is PLT trained
- Forest is a certified Tree Farm
- A forester participates on the trip
- Students learn about forests ecosystems
- A logger cuts down a tree and mills it into lumber
- Students also learn about water, wildlife & recreation
- Many parents are chaperones





# Nothing New Under the Sun

- Oregon Forest Resources Institute
  - [http://learnforests.org/resource\\_article/online-reimbursement-form](http://learnforests.org/resource_article/online-reimbursement-form)



Oregon Forest  
Resources Institute

- *Replicate Wheels to Woods in your state!*

# Questions?



**Mike Smalligan**

Forest Stewardship Coordinator

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Department of Natural Resources - Forest Resources Division