

Montana PLT Newsletter



February, 2012



This issue sponsored by:



PLT Success in the Flathead

Special points of interest:

- * Greenworks! Grants offer opportunity
- * Hamilton and Condon Students contribute to MT forest exchange box
- * MT PLT has grown!
- * Plum Creek Foundation contributions help create PLT PreK-8 educational trunks
- * Forest for Every Classroom Starts its third round

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by Holly McKenzie, local forester and PLT facilitator

In the Flathead Valley of Montana, we have suffered some terrible blows in the way of job losses these past few years! Our unemployment rate is 11%. We have had two sawmills close down with the worst lumber market since the 1980s and we've also lost an aluminum plant and all the trucking and contractor infrastructure that goes along with these recently closed mills. Ours is not a unique story as the whole nation seems to be dealing with a similar situation. But in this heavily forested community, we have hope that the economy will recover and our logs will once again regain some value so that forest management can continue to play a roll in our ability to keep our forests healthy and thinned to offset wildfires and insect infestation. Many of our youth are no strangers to hunting, fishing, burning firewood for heat, gathering berries, and enjoying an outdoor lifestyle. Unfortunately, there are just as many who spend excessive amounts of time on the computer and in front of televisions and indoors where they are kept safe by well meaning adults.

Being able to offer PLT workshops in this community gives me hope that one day, all of our teachers will be able to encourage children to learn more about their natural world through the lesson plans they are learning at PLT workshops. Local Greenworks Grants have been acquired by several teachers in Montana and that makes me hopeful about the coming Spring when we can involve our kids in a variety of projects that range from tree planting to butterfly gardens and edible vegetable gardens to enjoy. As the word gets out, more teachers contact us about future workshops and ways to plant butterfly gardens and native planters.

Given the current economic situation in our community, our students would not have this opportunity to grow plants if not for the PLT Green works grant. I hope more teachers will get involved and I hope our federal government will someday endorse the concept of requiring a certain amount of outdoor activities and natural environment learning so that funding and time won't always be such an issue in getting our kids outdoors.

A Message from the State Coordinator

2011 marked Project Learning Tree's third year since being reintroduced to Montana and my third year as Coordinator. There are four key points I would like to reflect on about the MT PLT program.

Educators, students, and PLT Resources

Tomorrow's decision makers are in classrooms (and outdoors) today. Our educators are on the front lines of giving our future leaders the tools, knowledge, and resources they will need to make decisions that affect the future of our beautiful and resource rich state as well as the world. Among other wonderful resources available, PLT materials contain background information and activities to help



every educator succeed in teaching about our environment. As time progresses it will be interesting to see how many educators are using PLT as a part of their curriculum and how they are using it. It's a delight to see youth become excited about learning that those aren't just evergreen or pine trees, but that there are actually many species and they can find the differences in the needles, buds, cones, and even the odors. Then, to further that discovery, each species has its own habitat, and function that interacts with other plant and animal life. It doesn't take a lot to show a group of Boy Scouts how to measure and observe the growth patterns of individual and groups of trees. You would be amazed at what you can find in a wood shed; tree rings, heartwood, sapwood, fire resistance or non resistance bark, bark beetles, hardwood, softwood...

Facilitators and Professionals We have a great core group of facilitators who have knowledge in forestry and education. They are a self motivated group of individuals who take a PLT workshop and give it their own special twist by bringing in guest speakers like professional foresters, entomologists, and even waste managers! These professionals and facilitators are also a resource to teachers and can be invited for guest appearances in classrooms and field trips. Montana is a big state and the next step will be to find more great people willing to train as active Facilitators in all the regions of our state.



P.L.T. Educator Workshop Calendar 2012

****Additional PLT workshops to be announced. Please make requests and check our website for updates.*

February 11	Helena	PLT PreK-8
May	Helena	PLT Early Childhood
April	Helena	PLT PreK - 8 & Early Childhood
April 14	Flathead Valley	PLT Secondary Ed - Focus on Forests & Forests of the World
April 28	Bozeman	PLT PreK - 8 th
April 28	Troy	PLT PreK - 8 th & Early Childhood
Spring	Condon	PLT PreK - 8 th & Early Childhood
Spring	Seeley Lake	PLT PreK - 8 th & Early Childhood
June or Aug	Thompson Falls	PLT PreK - 8 th
TBA	Conrad	PLT PreK - 8 th
TBA	Billings	PLT PreK - 8 th
Aug 6 or 13	Helena	PLT PreK - 8 th
TBA	NW Montana	PLT PreK - 8 th
TBA	SE Montana	PLT PreK - 8 th
TBA	Trego / Fortine	PLT PreK - 8 th
Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp (14 - 18 Years)		
July 15 - 20	Greenough	Lubrecht Experimental Forest

Workshops and seminar updates are posted on our website at www.msuxextension.org/forestry/calendar.htm

MSU Extension Forestry (406) 243-2773

The Branch: PLT's newsletter is one resource we provide educators to help students learn how to think, not what to think, about complex environmental issues, and acquire the skills they need to make sound choices about forests and the broader environment. In conjunction with a re-design, we will soon be switching our distribution service. **If you are already a subscriber, you will need to re-subscribe to continue receiving PLT's quarterly e-newsletter in the future.**

<http://www.plt.org/spreading-a-new-branch->



Steering Committee The Steering Committee is a core group of leaders from MSU Extension, Women in Timber, Tree Farm, The Natural History Center, UM College of Conservation and Forestry, MT DNRC, USFS, and FWP. This committee's resourcefulness and ideas helped bring together a sound foundation for MT PLT and continue to drive the motivation of the program. In order to allow statewide participation, the committee meets in Missoula with a conference call open to those around the state. The committee meets 3-4 times a year and is currently looking to bring in new members, please consider joining and give me a call for more information.

Local and National Support Our National PLT is under the American Forest Foundation. The national team is a great support to our state program as well as to educators who apply for the GreenWorks! and Green Schools! grants. Our program runs on a small budget, and with the support of National and our many local sponsors we have been able to develop educational trunks (to be completed this year), make workshops available, send Facilitators to National PLT sponsored guide specific training, and provide some support toward the Coordinator's salary and operating costs.



TOOLS FOR EDUCATORS

Hamilton and Condon Kids Bring Global Attention to Montana Forests

United Nations International Year of Forests

Thanks to students across the country, people, took a walk through the woods in locations from New York City to Honolulu, HI. Montana students shared our state's unique forest heritage on the world stage, as our "forest box" created and decorated by students from Daly Elementary (in the Bitterroot) and Swan Ecosystem Center (in Condon) went on display across the nation during the United Nations designated International Year of Forests, 2011.

Environmental educators and students compiled and decorated a forest box from each state to showcase the unique characteristics of America's woodlands. Montana's forest box is the result of contributions from across the state. Sonia York's fifth grade class at Daly Elementary in the Bitterroot contributed a special poem and information about the water cycle. Diann Ericson's youth groups at the Swan Ecosystem Center in Condon included beautiful artwork. Sportsmen and foresters from across the state contributed antlers, tree cookies, maps and pine cones and Montana wood samples. A high-quality photo of the Montana forest box is available at: <http://www.forestfoundation.org/pltsforestexchangeboxes>

Montana's forest box was displayed at the United Nations Forum on Forests meeting in New York City at the US Mission to the UN along with boxes from Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, New Hampshire, and New Mexico. After that, it traveled in March to a Congressional briefing and reception in Washington, D.C., together with forest boxes from every state. The MT box went to the AFF Women's Group meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, International Year of the Forest celebration and the Celebration for Earth Day in Washington, DC. The last stop was in Honolulu, HI and the Society of American Foresters national convention.

Montana has more than 6.8 million acres of forests managed by private owners, and more than 14.5 million acres of public forests. More than 14,000 jobs are created thanks to Montana's private forests, and an economic impact of more than \$3.9 million is added to the GDP. Nationally, more than 2.5 million jobs are created thanks to America's private forests, and an economic impact of almost \$115 billion is added to the GDP.

"Forests are an important teaching tool, and the Bitterroot and Condon students are helping world leaders understand America's natural heritage," said Tom Martin, President of the American Forest Foundation. "Their forest box shows the benefits we all get from Montana's forests - clean air, clean water, habitat for wildlife, wood for sustainable building and other products, and nature for hiking, hunting and fishing."

To create your own **Environmental Exchange Box** and join a network of exchange with classrooms around the world check out Activity 20 in the Pre K-8 guide or apply on line.



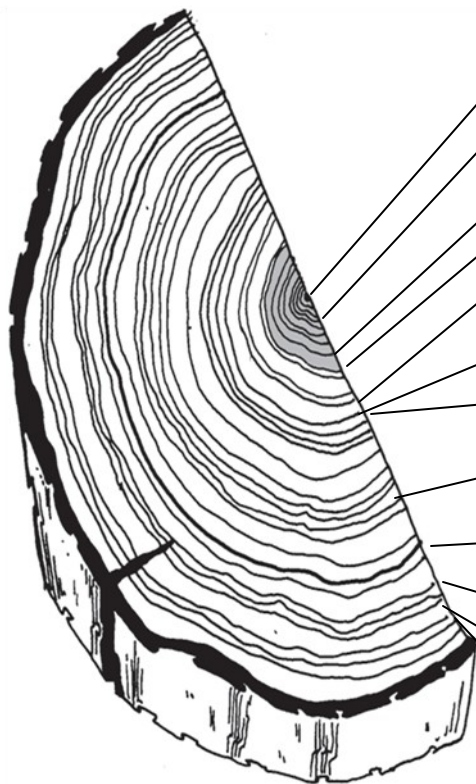
The **American Forest Foundation** works to keep forests healthy and our children well-prepared for the future. AFF's sustainable woodland system helps family forest owners manage more than 26 million acres of forest land. AFF's Project Learning Tree program works with tens of thousands of teachers each year, giving them a peer-reviewed, award-winning environmental education curriculum that opens a door to America's outdoor heritage and has reached more than 75 million students.

In 2011 PLT People Made a Difference!!!

In 2011 year we had 131 educators trained at 9 workshops in Montana. Participants have a sum of 952 years of experience and reach 4,142 youth per year. 96% approval ratings on our workshop evaluations, 92% of attendees say they plan to use PLT materials daily, weekly, or monthly.

Since 2008, when PLT was revitalized in Montana, we have trained 53 facilitators and 334 educators in 28 workshops. Student contacts expected by participants in one year: Over 20,300! Montana should be proud of our commitment to outdoor education! Thanks everyone for your support!

PLT History in a Tree Cookie



- 1976 PLT began in 13 Western states
- 1980 PLT went International with Canada becoming a partner
- 1989 PLT reaches 49 states
- 1990 PLT begins a multi-year curriculum revision
- 1993 PLT releases its new revised PreK-8 Activity Guide and Greenworks! service learning grant program
- 1994 National Field Study of PLT by the Research Commission of the NAAEE
- 1995 First Secondary Modules released
- 2002 PLT releases Energy & Society and Burning Issues curriculum materials
- 2006 PLT releases newly revised PreK-8 Activity Guide
- 2008 PLT revitalized in Montana (MSU Extension Forestry Coordinating)
- 2008 New "Forests of the World" secondary guide released
- 2010 New "Early Childhood Exploring Nature"

Plum Creek Foundation Grant and Donation Opportunity

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the **Plum Creek Foundation** for offering a grant that allowed us to update you with our first two newsletters, supplies guides and materials for the 2011 and 2012 workshops, and to purchase books, materials, and samples for four, soon to be available, Project Learning Tree PreK-8 Trunks.

Project Learning Tree is a non-profit program that is funded with private donations, agency grants, and in kind support from our sponsors (listed below). We rely on donations and volunteers to make a difference! If you or your business is able to contribute time or money to Project Learning, Please fill out the enclosed form and mail it MSU Extension Forestry.

SUPPORT LEVELS FOR PROJECT LEARNING TREE (WATCH US GROW!)

Seedling	\$25	Pays for a set of teacher workbooks or spon-
Sapling / pole size timber	\$25 - \$100	Help sponsor a facilitator stipend or purchase helpful materials and books for the workshop trunks!
Mature saw log timber	\$100 - \$500	Sponsor a workshop, newsletter printing, or
Old Growth Relics	\$500 +	Assure continuation of facilitator trainings and a high quality PLT program coordinator in Montana.

Past Sponsors:

Plum Creek Timber Co, U.S. Forest Service,
 Montana Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation
 Montana Women in Timber
 Montana Logging Association
 Montana Wood Products Association
 Montana Tree Farm Program
 American Forest Foundation
 Montana Society of American Foresters
 U.S. Forest Service
 US EPA and the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

In Kind Support:

MSU Extension
 U.S. Forest Service
 Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation
 Montana Natural History Center
 MT Office of Public Instruction
 UM College of Conservation and Forestry
 MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
 Private Educators

Please send Contributions to:

MSU Extension Forestry

Project Learning Tree Coordinator, Cindy Bertek

32 Campus Drive MS 0606

Missoula, MT 59812-006



For questions or other information about workshops, or to request a workshop near you, contact MSU Extension Forestry office: 406-243-4706, cindy.bertek@cfc.umt.edu or log onto their website:

www.msuextension.org/forestry

Name _____

Yes, I want more students to learn outdoors. I am investing in Project Learning Tree today!

Donation Amount: _____

Affiliation/Agency/ School _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____

E-mail _____ County _____

	<p>Early Childhood Guide</p> <p><i>"What a perfect way to engage our young learners - through song, dance, exploration, and play! Project Learning Tree's Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood is a valuable resource for every early childhood environment."</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michele Bitters, Preschool Coordinator Loudoun County, Parks, Recreation, and Community Services • http://www.plt.org/environmental-experiences-for-early-childhood-ages-3-6 	<p>GreenWorks! is a service-learning, community action grant program for partners educators, students, and communities to undertake environmental neighborhood improvement projects. Taking environmental education from the classroom to action strengthens students' understanding of complex environmental issues. Since 1992, PLT has distributed nearly \$1 million to fund 1,000 environmental projects in communities across the country.</p> <p>www.plt.org/greenworks</p>	



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Project Learning Tree The cornerstone for Environmental Education

Project Learning Tree

At PLT, we grow stewardship student by student, and we've been doing so for 35 years. Our award-winning curriculum resources help over half a million educators teach complex environmental issues. They can be integrated into lesson plans for all grades and subject areas to help students learn how to make sound choices about the environment. Our classroom curriculum resources help educators teach tomorrow's decision makers *how* to think, not *what* to think about the environment.

We're on the
web: plt.org

A Forest for Every Classroom

by Lisa Bickell, MT Natural History Center

A partnership between the US Forest Service and the Montana Natural History Center with support from Montana DNRC, Watershed Education Network, Montana Environmental Education Association, Missoula County Public Schools, Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, Montana Forest Restoration Committee, MSU Extension Forestry & Montana Project Learning Tree, Bitterroot RC&D, and the University of Montana, will launch the Forest for Every Classroom program in the lower Clark Fork watershed this spring.



This unique and successful teacher training program has its roots in the northeastern part of the United States. After 3 successful programs in the Helena and Elkhorn Mountains region, the partners will welcome the first class of teachers in the lower Clark Fork watershed area spring of 2012. The program seeks to connect teachers with their place, both the natural elements as well as the human aspects. The ultimate goal of the program is to encourage teachers to include more place-based and outdoor teaching during their school day.