



Planting trees at the Cedric A Vig Outdoor Classroom

Wisconsin School Forest News

Tools for School Forest Success

The following tools have been created to help you track progress at the school forest. You can find these tools on the [LEAF School Forest Website](#).

[School Forest Use Tracking Tool](#): use this worksheet to track the details of your school forest field trips. You can record the number of students, grade levels, lessons, and parent volunteers for each year. Use this data to complete the annual school forest survey in May.

[School Forest Field Trip Evaluation Form](#): this form can be completed by the teacher(s) who participated in a field trip to the forest. It allows for each lesson to be evaluated and an assessment of the trip overall.

[School Forest Handbook](#): the handbook contains great information about setting-up and sustaining your school forest program.

[Examples of WI School Forests](#) The websites, photos, and descriptions showcase school forests that exist in Wisconsin. Browse through here if you are looking for shelter, trail, teaching area, and sign ideas.

Educational Resources

[School Forest Science Lessons](#) Curriculum connections and lessons are available to support content in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Human Anatomy & Physiology. If you have lessons that you currently do with students at the school forests in these content areas, please submit them so that the online resource can continue to grow!

[LEAF Curriculum](#) is online in PDF form and can easily be downloaded at NO COST. We want you to use it!

[LEAF Supplemental Kits](#) are available for FREE check-out throughout the state. A series of different kits have been compiled to help you incorporate forestry education into your curriculum. The **[K-8 Lesson Guide Kits](#)** were created to supplement the K-1, 2-3, 4, 5-6, and 7-8th grade lesson guides. **[Forest Health Kits](#)** focus on learning about invasive species, disease, and insect collection. **[Forestry Education Kits](#)** contain equipment and materials for teaching tree measurement, identification, and orienteering. They also contain 10 GPS units.

[LEAF Tree Identification Tools](#) include a Winter Tree identification key, online dichotomous key, printable tree key, and full-color printable tree cards.

The **[Wisconsin Environmental Education \(EE\) Resources Library](#)** collection contains over 6,000 environmental and sustainability education materials including curriculum guides, children's books, puppets, posters, dvds, reference books, and **[educational kits](#)**. Most items can be shipped through interlibrary loan to you. Check it out today!

Citizen Science projects are an excellent way to incorporate scientific inquiry, math, language arts, real world research, and Next Gen Science Standards. Check out the diverse list of opportunities on the **[School Forest Environmental Monitoring](#)** webpage. All of these projects are relevant for K-12 students (however some are more appropriate at specific grade levels). There is something of interest for everyone!

Wisconsin Worm Watch: Survey your school forest for the impacts of invasive earth worms. The data collected through the **[Wisconsin Worm Watch survey](#)** is very valuable to Forest Health Specialists in the WDNR. Information provided in the surveys helps them understand the distribution of invasive earthworms across Wisconsin and their impact on local forests. In this lesson, students will use language arts, science, critical thinking, and math skills to participate in a citizen science project and determine if invasive earthworms are present in a forest.



Grants!

WEEB Grants The 2015-2017 Biennial Budget eliminated WEEB effective July 1, 2017. What does this mean for school forest grants? There is one more quick cycle of forestry education money left. WEEB will continue to work to secure future funding for grants, but there is no guarantee.

Here are the details you need to know about this last cycle....

- The grant timeline has been drastically altered. Grant applications are **due October 31, 2015** (not the usual February deadline). The project's scope must fall within a start date of January 1, 2016 and end by December 31, 2016 (a calendar year instead of the previous 18 month July to the following December).
- You must submit both electronic and paper copies this time.
- The grant categories include School Forest Education Plan Grants which allow up to \$5,000 for a team to write the plan and School Forest (Implementation) Grants which provide up to \$10,000 to allow your district to execute your education plan by providing professional development, purchasing equipment or supplies, creating trails, and upgrading facilities.
- Contact Gretchen at 715-346-2633 if you have any questions. I can help explain and navigate you through the process.

The Environmental Education in Wisconsin Grant Portal

There are numerous grants available to help fund education and improvements at your forests. Hurry! Some good ones are due in Sept. The grants section of the eeinwisconsin.org is organized by the month in which the grant is due.

School Forest Survey Highlights



"THANK YOU!" to all who completed the school forest survey at the end of the school year. We had 81 surveys submitted and you provided a great snap-shot of how school forests are being used in WI. Please keep your eyes open for the next survey in May 2016. Here are a few highlights from the survey:

- The greatest school forest accomplishments identified by school forests include: an increased or maintained use of the school forest or that new curriculum or lessons were implemented at the forest
- The most commonly listed goals for school forests in the next 1-3 years are: maintain current utilization levels or increasing use, develop or improve facilities and trails, and develop or implement curriculum at the school forest.
- A total of 8,800 community members used 71% of the school forests that responded.
- Sustainable forest management activities took place at 62% of the responding forests. The most frequently listed management activities were invasive species control, trail additions and improvements, and tree planting.
- All subjects were covered by a lesson at a school forest somewhere in the state! This includes core subjects, foreign language, and the arts. The most frequently covered subject areas at school forests are science, physical education, English/Language arts, and math.
- Greater than 60% of the school forests that responded were used by students in 6th-8th grade and more than 70% of the school forests were used by students in PreK-5th grade and 9th-12th grades.

You may see some similarities in the overall results with the answers you provided. Click on the hyperlink to see full results of the [2014-2015 Wisconsin School Forest Survey](#). Congrats to the Niagara and Oakfield School Forests, which were the lucky winners randomly chosen to receive an Acorn Naturalist gift certificate for completing the survey.

School Forest Site Visits



Please let me know if and when you have student field trips or if you are harvesting timber from the forest. This allows me to observe the diversity of our school forest programs and student learning opportunities. In turn, I share this information with other educators that have questions or are looking for ideas. You are a wonderful network of school forest educators and I appreciate the ability to share how you operate your forests with others.

Upcoming Fall LEAF Workshops and Courses—scholarships available Registration deadlines approaching!

More information about each can be found on [LEAF's Professional Development calendar](#).



NRES 620- Forestry Education in the Wisconsin K-12 Classroom: The class teaches you key forestry principles, demonstrates teaching techniques, and gives you great interdisciplinary activities so you can easily integrate forestry education into your indoor or outdoor classroom. LEAF activities help you meet standards for natural resources, science, math, and social studies, as well as Common Core State Standards for Literacy in All Subjects. The hybrid class includes online discussion and assignments and one Saturday face-to-face meeting. A limited number of scholarships are available, bringing the cost of one graduate credit to \$100.

*Meet online Sept. 25th to Oct. 25th : meeting in **Madison** on Saturday, October 10th from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

Project Learning Tree Early Childhood Workshop: Get trained in the use of PLT's "Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood" curriculum. Receive the activity guide and a "music and movement" CD by Billy B. Thanks to a WEEB grant, the cost is only \$5 per person. Registry credit is available for the workshop. Contact wcee-plt@uwsp.edu by October 7th to register.

* Oct. 17th from 9:30am—noon at UW-Eau Claire Children's Nature Academy

Project Learning Tree PreK-8 Workshop NEW ONLINE FORMAT: Have you always wanted a copy of PLT's award-winning curriculum, but have been too far away or time-constrained to attend a typical workshop? You're in luck...now you have an online option! This online workshop is specifically designed to help you engage your students in learning about the environment--both outside and indoors--while meeting your PD requirements on your own time, at your convenience. Participants receive an online copy of PLT's Environmental Education Activity Guide after completing the 4 hour self-paced workshop. Cost: \$40

* Scheduled by request from your own computer!

Other Professional Development Opportunities

Methods of Field Biology for Educators: Natural History and Biology of Lake Michigan Salmon (UW-Green Bay)

You will be directly involved in the practices of scientists through both classroom and hands-on field investigations while exploring ways these experiences can be translated into instructional practices. The study of salmon ecology will serve as a framework for a deeper understanding of general ecological principals, processes, and inquiry. Experience what it is like to be a biologist by participating in data collection and field method techniques on adult spawning salmon. One (1) Graduate Credit (\$325) ~or~ Noncredit (\$249). Location: Kewaunee -- C.D. "Buzz" Besadny Anadromous Fisheries Facility. Click here for [course information](#).

* Saturdays, October 3 & 10, 2015 (8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.)

Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program Courses

All courses are worth 1 graduate credit from UW-Stevens Point (some are available as Audit). Course Fee: \$100 unless otherwise noted (assumes scholarship granted). Visit KEEP's [Professional Development Calendar](#) for date, location, and registration information for each course.

- * NRES 630 Energy Education in the Classroom
- * NRES 631 Wind Energy Education
- * NRES 632 Doable Renewables: Renewable Energy Education in the Classroom
- * NRES 633 Energy Education: Concepts and Practices
- * NRES 634 School Building Energy Efficiency Education. NRES 634 is only open to faculty, staff, and building & grounds personnel in the school district(s) being targeted because it is specific to each district's energy goals. If you are interested in an NRES 634 course in your district please complete the NRES 634 Course Request Form found online.

Invasive Species Monitoring Opportunity



WI First Detector Network (WIFDN) is a program run through UW Extension that looks to identify the distribution of invasive species in our state. WIFDN is looking to for 4 classrooms in which the coordinator could provide both a classroom and outdoor field session about invasive species for your students. The outdoor session will focus on teaching students how to map invasive plants with smartphones and tablets. Please contact Tony Summers for more information at asummers2@wisc.edu if you are interested in participating in this great opportunity.

Smartphone Apps that may interest you...

[Merlin Bird ID](#) : Instant bird identification help for 400 North American birds from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

[Fifty Trees of the Midwest](#) from Purdue University Extension. Visit this news article to learn more about the app and how to purchase it.

[Key to Woody Plants of Wisconsin Forests](#) provides an easy-to-use tool for identifying Wisconsin trees, shrubs and vines. The key includes 85 species of trees and 57 species of shrubs and vines that are native to Wisconsin or exotic and invasive.

[River on the Web](#) is used by students, teachers, and citizen scientists to collect chemical and biological data from rivers, lakes and streams.

Green & Healthy Schools Wisconsin

Schools across Wisconsin are demonstrating their commitment to a more sustainable Earth, stronger communities and healthier, more productive learning environments for students by choosing to become [Green & Healthy Schools](#). If you are not a Green & Healthy School, [apply now!](#) There are nine focus areas of this program and school forests are located within the [School Site](#) section. If you have answers to the following questions, you will be able to complete this section....

- * Describe how your school encourages educational use of the school grounds, school forests, and outdoor teaching sites. (Examples: field trips, education plans, etc.)
- * Describe professional development offered to staff regarding use of school grounds school forest, and/or outdoor teaching sites. (Examples: In-services, LEAF courses, PLT courses, etc)
- * Describe additional progress your school has made to encourage educational use of the school grounds, school forests, and outdoor teaching sites.

Celebrate Excellence in Environmental Education

Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education's Awards Ceremony

Please join the LEAF Program, Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education, the Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation, the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to recognize outstanding leaders of environmental education in our schools, school forests, and communities. Click on the hyperlink to [REGISTER](#) for the event.



Contact me with any school forest related questions!

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