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**Duval County Public School Science Specialist Wins  
National Award for Environmental Education**

**Jacksonville, Florida** – Janet Schnauss, Elementary Science Specialist at Duval County Public Schools, was recently selected to receive Project Learning Tree’s Leadership in Education award. [Project Learning Tree](#) (PLT), an initiative of the [Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#) (SFI), is an award-winning environmental education program that advances environmental literacy, stewardship, and career pathways using trees and forests as windows on the world. The award recognizes teachers and education professionals who make significant contributions in their state to PLT and youth environmental education. In Florida, PLT is coordinated by Elise Cassie, of the University of Florida’s School of Forest, Fisheries and Geomatics Sciences.

“For more than 19 years, Janet has been a leader in the science and environmental education fields in Florida, both as a classroom teacher and science specialist,” said Cassie. “She has contributed an incredible amount of energy and time to PLT in Florida, helping the program to grow and stay relevant during unprecedented and rapid changes in the education landscape. She is steadfastly committed to sharing the value and impact of PLT with teachers she works with as well as engaging students in hands-on learning about the environment through PLT activities.”

Schnauss has been a PLT facilitator since 2015, and from 2019-2021, she facilitated seven PLT professional development events for 133 educators in Florida. In Schnauss’s role as a K-5 Science Specialist with Duval County Public Schools, she supports classroom teachers, including providing PLT professional development opportunities and mentoring teachers in incorporating PLT into their curricula. For example, this year she provided ongoing support to an English-language learner (ELL) teacher and PLT educator in implementing “PLT Fridays” at his school. She is a member of the Florida PLT Steering Committee, the Florida Association of Science Teachers (FAST) and is FAST’s Region 4 Director, the Florida Association of Science Supervisors, the National Science Teachers Association, and the League of Environmental Educators of Florida. Schnauss also won the 2020 Florida PLT Educator of the Year Award.

“Janet demonstrates how environmental education and PLT activities can be adapted for state education standards, virtual setting, classrooms, and more,” said Jess Kaknevicus, Vice-President, Education, at SFI. “We are proud to recognize Janet for her leadership in environmental education in Florida.”

Since 1976, PLT has reached 145 million students and trained 765,000 educators to help students learn how to think, not what to think about complex environmental issues. PLT helps develop students’ awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of the environment, builds their skills and

ability to make informed decisions, and encourages them to take personal responsibility for sustaining the environment and our quality of life that depends on it.

Schnauss, along with two other awardees, will be honored at the 2022 SFI/PLT Annual Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, from June 14-17.

The recipients of PLT's Leadership in Education were selected from nominees across the US for their leadership in implementing PLT programs and initiatives within their state, provincial, and local communities. For more information about PLT in Florida, contact Elise Cassie at [ecassie@ufl.edu](mailto:ecassie@ufl.edu).

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### ***About Project Learning Tree***

Project Learning Tree uses trees and forests as windows on the world to increase students' understanding of the environment and actions they can take to conserve it. Since 1976, PLT has reached 138 million students and trained 765,000 educators to help students learn how to think, not what to think about complex environmental issues. Project Learning Tree helps develop students' awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of the environment, builds their skills and ability to make informed decisions, and encourages them to take personal responsibility for sustaining the environment and our quality of life that depends on it. From its beginnings in 1976, PLT has exemplified high-quality environmental education. PLT is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®, whose mission is to advance sustainability through forest-focused collaboration. For more information, visit [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org).