

Florida Project Learning Tree Annual Report 2005

Partnership in Youth Education

Schools • Industry • Nonprofits • Government • 4H • Universities



Photo credits l-r: Jenny Seitz, Forrest Watson, Jenny Seitz, Jenny Seitz

PLT uses the forest as a "window on the world" to increase students' understanding of our complex environment, to stimulate critical and creative thinking, to develop the ability to make informed decisions on environmental issues, and to instill the confidence and commitment to take responsible action on behalf of the environment.



2006 Steering Committee

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Florida Forestry Association



UF/IFAS 4-H Youth Program

Greetings from PLT Central

Florida PLT is pleased to report that 2005 was another successful year. Over 1,050 educators were trained in 43 workshops to use PLT materials with youth. They are joining thousands of other educators who use PLT activities in classrooms, at club meetings, on field trips and at camps. We also contacted over an additional 7,297 youth and adults at events like AgVentures, Arbor Day, and the 4-H Forest Ecology Contest. Facilitators reached thirty percent more teachers and natural resource professionals and led forty percent more workshops than last year. It is with gratitude I say thanks to our marvelous volunteers and sponsors who make these programs possible.

We launched two major initiatives this year. The state of Florida places a strong emphasis on reading and writing at all grade levels, but especially elementary school. We partnered with the St. Johns River Water Management District, Northeast Florida Education Consortium, the University of Florida College of Education, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District to develop an educational tool to connect environmental education activities to reading and writing skills. We invited third through fifth grade educators to our series of workshops. A small but intrepid group helped provide insights and suggestions as we worked together to refine our strategies. We look forward to the continued development of this tool with support from International Paper in 2006.

The second initiative was to create a stronger PLT School Program. Understanding that youth are the future to conserving our forests, we surveyed faculty at our existing PLT Schools to find out how we can further assist them. A desire for community partners, grant opportunities, classroom resources, and advanced educator workshops were common responses. PLT Central will work in the coming year to see how we can best meet these requests.

The new PLT Pre K-8 Activity Guide supports educators working toward increased accountability and stronger school programs to address goals in the No Child Left Behind Act. Modifications include reading connections to all activities, technology connections, and new assessments. This moves PLT into a strong position to be more useful in the classroom.

To better understand the needs of South Florida educators and opportunities for PLT we began a needs assessment focusing on professional development and motivation to use environmental education. This process will be completed in the spring of 2006. We look forward to taking this information and expanding our program in South Florida.

The PLT Steering Committee participated in a program assessment module developed by National PLT to strengthen each state's individual program. This spring, the Steering Committee will review the analysis of the responses and adapt our 5-year plan.

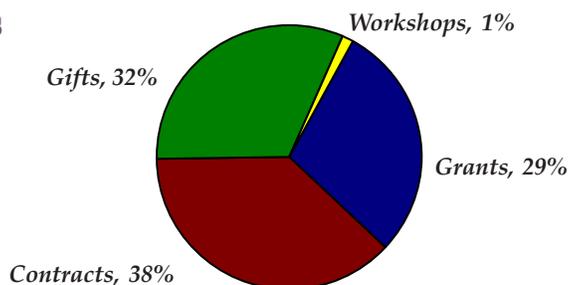
Thank you for your continued support of PLT!

Jenny Seitz
Florida PLT Coordinator
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2005 Income Sources

Total Income

Florida PLT depends on support from private and public funding sources.



Celebrating Educators

PLT applauds all educators, facilitators, and partners whose efforts make our Florida PLT program successful. Jack Vogel, FFA President-Elect, presented our annual awards at the Florida Forestry Association annual meeting. The 2005 award winners are:

Educators of the Year: Amanda Betz and Michelle Hunter

Amanda and Michelle worked collaboratively at Shadeville Elementary School in Wakulla County, to ensure PLT implementation at all grade levels. Together they chaired the Shadeville PLT Committee, supporting teachers and planning the annual PLT Week.

The recent "Feel the Energy" week included a hot air balloon demonstration and members of the community leading demonstrations and activities with all the students. We are pleased to bestow PLT's Educators of the Year award upon Amanda and Michelle.



l-r Amanda Betz, Jack Vogel, and Michelle Hunter.

Facilitator of the Year: Marcia Bisnett

Marcia is a science teacher at Miami Norland Senior High School in Miami-Dade County. Her passion for the environment compels her to offer educator workshops each year. Her popularity is evident by the waiting list of teachers anxious to attend. We thank Marcia for her thirteen year commitment to keeping Florida's PLT alive and well.



l-r Marcia Bisnett and Jack Vogel.

Business Partner of the Year: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

A constant supporter at the state level since PLT's inception, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge contributes to Project Learning Tree at the community

level by leading workshops and providing support for teachers. The refuge conducts workshops for college students studying to become teachers attending three universities in Leon County, as well as supports PLT Schools in Wakulla County. SMNWR encourages its rangers to get involved in PLT as active facilitators and leaders on the Steering Committee. We honor St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge's commitment to supporting Project Learning Tree.



l-r David Moody, Ranger at St. Marks and Jack Vogel.

Outstanding Educator of the Year: Leon Mays

A.D. Harris High School educator, Leon Mays, was selected by National PLT to receive the National Educator Award. Leon uses PLT to work with Panama City troubled youth to find ways to excite them about learning. Past projects include beautifying their school grounds with native plants and building a meditation garden. In addition to working with the students, he has been the catalyst for the last eight years, encouraging his colleagues to incorporate PLT in their lesson plans. Each year Leon and staff take students to their outdoor classroom to encourage hands-on application of forest management and techniques, introducing forestry as a potential career.



l-r Jenny Seitz, State Coordinator and Leon Mays.

This award marks the fifth time that a Florida PLT Educator has been recognized at the national level.

Congratulations to all!

Photos courtesy of Florida Forestry Association and National PLT.

PLT Schools' Conference



Our biannual schools' conference in October brought together 26 educators from 7 schools and 2 PLT Environmental Education Centers (see page 4). This year's theme "H₂O--Watch it Flow!" focused on the interaction between forests and water. Educators spent two-and-a-half days at the Florida Division of Forestry's Florida Center for Wildfire and Forest Resources Management Training in the Withlacoochee State Forest. Participants experienced a variety of hands-on presentations such as forest best management practices and water quality testing with Jeff Vowel (DOF), tree identification tips with Shaun Stewart (DOF), and groundwater modeling with Jane Eggleston (USGS). In addition, VieVie Baird (Florida Department of Education) encouraged connecting reading to science activities by demonstrating how to add literature to a PLT activity. Dr. Florie Babcock and graduate students from Florida Southern College, demonstrated ways to adapt a PLT activity, *Watch on Wetlands*, for pre-K students. Educators had the opportunity to share methods for incorporating PLT into their school lessons and center programs.

PLT Memorial and Recognition Giving Program

Florida PLT has established the PLT Memorial and Recognition Giving Program to celebrate those who share a passion for conservation education. The program will provide critical support for environmental education programs that will have a lasting positive impact on the youth of Florida and the future of our natural resources and the environment.

These tax deductible donations are a means to remember and recognize educators and natural resource professionals who have a deep passion for conservation education and natural resources. A personalized notification of your gift (without indicating the amount) will be sent to the person honored or to the family of the one remembered.

In Florida, the PLT Memorial and Recognition Giving Program will provide support for educator workshops, materials for PLT Schools, and classroom resources.

For more information or to make a contribution to the Florida PLT Memorial and Recognition Program, please contact Jenny Seitz at 352.846.2329.

PLT at Education Centers

The PLT Environmental Education Center designation provides a link between teachers and these important community environmental education resources. Since each center fits a niche within the education arena, we hope that educators will turn to them for field trips, hands-on presentations, science knowledge, and workshops.

Approved PLT Centers have at least one staff member or volunteer who has attended a PLT Facilitator Training Workshop. Centers demonstrate their commitment to education through existing educational programs and host at least one PLT educator workshop a year.



Our first twelve centers include: Bear Creek Educational Forest (Quincy), Brevard Zoo (Melbourne), Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center (Tarpon Springs), Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium (Ft. Myers), Chinsegut Nature Center (Brooksville), Environmental Center at Miami-Dade College (Miami), Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (Titusville), Nature's Classroom (Thonotosassa), St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (St. Marks), Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science (Tallahassee), Tree Hill Nature Center (Jacksonville), Weedon Island Preserve & Natural History Center (St. Petersburg).

We thank Florida Ag in the Classroom for providing the support to launch this program.

The Steering Committee extends their most sincere thanks to the following organizations who generously support educating our youth about the environment.

Florida Dept of Education
Florida DEP
Florida Division of Forestry
Florida Forestry Association
Georgia-Pacific Corp

International Paper Company
Packaging Corporation of America
Plum Creek Timber Company
Rayonier Inc.
UF/IFAS School of Forest Res. and Con.
Smurfit-Stone Container Corp

St. Joe Company
St. Johns River Water Mgmt District
Southwest FL Water Mgmt District
UF/IFAS 4-H Youth Program
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA Forest Service

A special thank you to the following facilitators who have volunteered their time engaging youth and adults with PLT.

Christine Allen, Kate Anderson, Dale Armstrong, Florie Babcock, A.E. Balthazor, Marcia Bisnett, Marcus Boston, Heather Callahan, Colan Coody, Nancy Corona, Vicki Crisp, Jenny Dambek, Deirdre Irwin, Donnie Flemming, David Fogler, April Frederick, Cheryl George, Lisa Good, Lori Haynes, Mayfair Head, Michelle Hunter, Simone Fidy, Karen Johnson Folsom, Scott Kinsey, Michella Kippes, Bill Kleinhans, Glen Harris, Jamie Hayes, Becky Jordi, Ed Lewis, Joan Hourican, Peggy Hill, Lora Lindsey, Joe MacKenzie, Nonie Maines, Mark Miller, Brooke Mohr, Martha Monroe, David Moody, Teresa Mullinax, Mike Renwick, Stan Rosenthal, Royanne Reusch, Jean Rogalsky, Debbie Sapp, Joel Smith, Lorraine Smith-Williams, Shaun Stewart, Tim Stuhr, Audrey Swindal, Amy Taylor, Sid Taylor, Eileen Tramontanna, Kim Ward, Forrest Watson, Brenda Weeks, Don Weeks, Kelley Weitzel, Fred Wiechmann, Robin Will, Kelliann Whitney, Willie Wood.