



I. About PLT

1. What is PLT?

Project Learning Tree (PLT) is an award-winning environmental education program designed for educators working with students from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade. Through hands-on, interdisciplinary activities, PLT helps young people learn *how* to think – not *what* to think – about complex environmental issues. PLT can help address state and national standards. It provides the tools educators need to bring the environment into their classrooms and the students into the environment.

PLT helps students learn about the world around them, their place within that world, and their responsibility for it. Through its many hands-on activities, PLT helps students become:

- personally aware of their presence in the environment;
- personally aware of the multiple values of natural resources, including ecological, economic, cultural, and societal;
- better able to understand their impact on and responsibility to the environment;
- equipped with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions regarding the management and use of the environment; and
- increasingly confident in their ability to take action on their decisions.

PLT is designed to work in rural, suburban, and urban areas, and in formal and nonformal educational settings. PLT activities work both indoors and outdoors. The PLT activities emphasize conceptual learning and skill building and use effective, student-centered, instructional strategies, such as hands-on and cooperative learning.

At the heart of PLT is a set of activity guides for educators to use with their students. (Please see section 4. *The PLT Materials* for a list and description of each of PLT's materials.) For those working with elementary students, the *PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide* and *Energy & Society* program kit offer exciting and challenging activities. For those working with ninth through twelfth graders, there is a series of topic specific secondary modules. The PLT activity guides are not for sale, but are provided to educators when they participate in a PLT workshop. An exception is the Energy & Society kit. While Energy & Society workshops are provided, the kit can be purchased through PLT's website as well.

PLT promotes the *process* of education and advocates sound principles of teaching. The PLT materials encourage educators to provide students with opportunities to gather information, communicate, cooperate, access values, solve problems, and use critical thinking. Because many PLT activities are hands-on and invite students to apply their knowledge and skills, educators can use them as evidence of students' learning and practice for "performance-based" assessments, especially pertaining to thinking in terms of systems, civic participation, inquiry, and the arts.

PLT models quality environmental education and thus is balanced on values-sensitive topics. The activities and materials are designed to treat issues fairly and do not advocate any one particular point of view. PLT recognizes that people need information from a variety of sources in order to make their own informed decisions. **Hence, it is critical that workshop facilitators keep this in mind and practice this balanced perspective.**

2. PLT's Mission and Goals

PLT's Mission:

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.

PLT's goals are to:

- Provide students with the awareness, appreciation, understanding, skills, and commitment to address environmental issues.
- Enable students to apply scientific processes and higher order thinking skills to resolve environmental problems.
- Help students acquire an appreciation and tolerance of diverse viewpoints on environmental issues, and develop attitudes and actions based on analysis and evaluation of the available information.
- Encourage creativity, originality, and flexibility to resolve environmental problems and issues.
- Inspire and empower students to become responsible, productive, and participatory members of society.

3. A Brief History of PLT

The PLT program began in the mid-1970s as a collaboration between the American Forest Institute (AFI), a forest products industry trade association dedicated to improving the management of America's forests, and the Western Regional Environmental Education Council (WREEC), a non-profit organization comprised of representatives from state departments of education and natural resources agencies from 13 western states.

The founders of PLT developed an effective environmental education program based on three goals. The first goal was to design an environmental education program that would gain the confidence of the education community—educators would have to like it, trust it, and use it. The second goal was to develop partnerships between public and private sectors that ensured the curriculum was balanced, fair, and accurate—and that the curriculum encouraged students to consider all sides and factors when making decisions about the environment. The third goal was to design a system of implementation for the program. By making the materials only available through workshops, the founders were helping to ensure that the curriculum would be used effectively. Educators participate in workshops to learn how to use the materials effectively with their students and make them locally relevant.

The PLT materials were developed by a team of writers and were thoroughly tested and evaluated. Two activity guides were produced, one for K-6 grade educators and one for 7-12 grade educators. The first editions of these supplementary curriculum guides were published in 1976.

In 1982, AFI executed a licensing arrangement with the American Forest Foundation (AFF), which thereby became the co-sponsor with WREEC of PLT. In 1986, AFI was realigned with other industry associations and became the American Forest Council (AFC). AFC continued to administer PLT for AFF and WREEC. In 1993, AFC was realigned with other forest and paper industry associations. At that time, AFF became a wholly independent, publicly supported, 501(c)(3) non-profit education organization and took over all administration for PLT. Also in 1993, the PLT materials were extensively revised into a PreK-8 Activity Guide and topic-specific secondary modules. PLT's PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide underwent its most major revision in late 2005 to address education reform and today's most pressing environmental issues. For example, new features include reading connections, technology connections, and differentiated instruction; new activities focus on invasive species and climate change. Secondary modules tailored to high school students have continued to be developed and include topics such as Forest Ecology, Forest Issues, Places We Live, Risk Assessment, Solid Waste, and Biodiversity.

Building on the successful model of PLT, WREEC formed a partnership in 1980 with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to develop Project WILD, a program similar to PLT which uses wildlife as a focus for teaching environmental principles. Using the successful PLT development and implementation model, Project WILD published a K-6 guide and a 7-12 guide in 1983, and subsequently combined the guides into one volume in 1992. In 1989, WREEC partnered with Montana State University to form Project WET that in 1995 published a K-12 guide, a water and wetlands-based environmental education curriculum designed to promote the stewardship of water resources. Then, in 1996, in order to reflect a broader nationwide interest, WREEC changed its name to the Council for Environmental Educational (CEE) and restructured its board of directors and membership. CEE has primary responsibility for Project WILD. Project WET Foundation is now its own 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Today, Project Learning Tree is one of the most widely used preK-12 environmental education programs in the United States and abroad. PLT is available in all 50 states and the District of Columbia; several U.S. territories; and eleven other countries (Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Finland, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, the Philippines, Slovakia, and Sweden.) PLT curriculum has been translated into seven languages. For ten years now, Peace Corps volunteers worldwide have received training in PLT.

In each of the 50 states, PLT is implemented by sponsoring organizations through steering committees with representatives from state education, resource, and environmental agencies; business groups; universities; other non-profits; and preK-12 schools. In other countries, PLT partners with a non-governmental organization or government agency that shares PLT's mission, goals, and instructional strategies. International partners adapt, translate, and deliver a version of PLT for use in their country. At the national level, PLT's partners include Federal agencies (ranging from BLM, to EPA, to NOAA, to the USDA Forest Service), industry, environmental organizations, educators, and academics.

Thousands of people work together under the PLT umbrella to help young people learn the skills they will need to become responsible environmental decision makers. PLT has a nationwide network of nearly 70 PLT State Coordinators and more than 3,000 volunteer workshop facilitators. About 25,000 educators attend PLT professional development workshops each year. More than 500,000 educators have received training in how to use PLT. Although the exact figure is not known, literally millions of children have, as a PLT saying goes, "learned how to think, not what to think" about complex environmental issues through exposure to PLT.

4. The PLT Materials

At the heart of PLT are the supplementary elementary and secondary curriculum materials, which offer exciting and challenging activities that focus on the total environment. Below are descriptions of the materials PLT offers to educators.

PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide

PLT's *PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide* contains 96 hands-on interdisciplinary activities on such topics as water and air quality, ecology, climate change, urban environments, and recycling. The guide is designed so that an educator can use a single activity or many activities over the course of a quarter or year.

Secondary Modules

PLT's interdisciplinary secondary modules are intended for grades 9-12, but can be adapted for other audiences such as middle school students, entry level college classes or adult community groups. They encompass key concepts from social science, sciences, humanities, and math. Modules currently available are:

- *The Introductory Handbook to the Secondary Modules* (available online at www.plt.org)
- *The Changing Forest: Forest Ecology*
- *Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Forests*

- *Exploring Environmental Issues: Municipal Solid Waste*
- *Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Risk* (biotechnology supplement under development)
- *Exploring Environmental Issues: Places We Live*
- *Exploring Environmental Issues: Biodiversity* (available online at www.plt.org)
- *Global Connections: Forests of the World* (under development)

Energy & Society

PLT's Energy & Society program kit helps students in grades PreK-8 learn about their relationship with energy and investigate the environmental issues related to energy's role in society. The kit includes:

- *Energy & Society Activity Guide*
- *Energy & Me* Music CD (with Billy B)
- *Energy & Me* Music and Dance DVD
- *Energy & Society* Posters

The *Energy & Society* kit can be obtained at a PLT workshop or purchased directly from the national PLT program. Information on current costs is on the PLT website.

GreenWorks!

This environmental service-learning grant program of PLT blends service activities with academic curriculum. PLT provides grant guidelines and a guidebook on-line. The guidebook shares practical tips for getting a *Greenworks!* project up and running. By participating in a PLT workshop, educators meet one of the criteria to apply for a *GreenWorks!* grant. This competitive grant program accepts proposals twice a year—in April and September. See the PLT website for more information.

Earth & Sky Correlations

PLT teamed up with the Earth & Sky Radio Program to combine the power of radio, the internet, and PLT. Earth & Sky is a successful short format science radio program heard by millions of listeners throughout the U.S. and abroad that highlights the wonders of science and nature through daily radio shows.

The *Earth & Sky* radio shows have been correlated directly to PLT activities to help enhance teachers' use of the radio shows and PLT materials. Shows and topics that correlate to PLT PreK-12 activities can be identified on the *Earth & Sky* website by the PLT logo. Along with PLT correlations, these Earth & Sky radio shows contain a list of additional resources that have been compiled by PLT, including background materials, supplementary resources, related web links, suggested speakers, and field tour sites. Use of the *Earth & Sky* shows can enhance the teaching of PLT activities by connecting educators with this integrated multimedia educational experience that provides access to accurate, reliable, and understandable scientific research and data. Some ways that educators might use the radio shows include: An engager to a PLT activity; a homework assignment to introduce concepts and provoke questions; or a follow-up piece to reinforce or build upon concepts covered in a PLT activity.

For more information, go to www.plt.org and click on Special Initiatives/Earth & Sky or go to www.earthsky.org and click on Teachers.

Urban and Community Forestry Education Web Resources

The Urban Forestry section of the PLT website provides an annotated bibliography and links to websites of urban and community forestry organizations and similar organizations to help enhance the teaching of the PLT activities that are related to urban and community forestry. For more information, go to www.plt.org and click on Special Initiatives/Urban Forestry.

Reproduction of PLT Materials

Please note that all PLT curriculum materials are **protected under copyright laws**. The Student Pages may be copied for educational use in conjunction with a PLT activity. No other reproduction of PLT materials is allowed without written permission. All requests for permission must be submitted to the American Forest Foundation. See the inside front cover of each guide for more information. For reprint or adaptation guidelines, see the PLT website under “Curriculum.”

Copyright rules specific to the online *Exploring Environmental Issues: Biodiversity Secondary Module* can be viewed at the PLT website by clicking on “Curriculum/Biodiversity.”

5. PLT’s Conceptual Framework

PLT’s curriculum materials are developed with a conceptual framework serving as its foundation. The conceptual framework is arranged around five major themes:

Diversity — demonstrating the wide array of habitats, societies, technologies, and cultures.

Interrelationships — highlighting ecological, technological, and social-cultural systems as interactive and interdependent.

Systems — teaching how environmental, technological, and social systems are interconnected.

Structure and Scale — demonstrating how technologies, societal institutions, and components of natural and human-built environments vary.

Patterns of Change — showing how structures and systems change over time.

Each theme includes the areas of Environment, Resource Management & Technology, and Society & Culture. PLT activities integrate the five themes within science, language arts, social studies, math, art, music, and physical education.

PLT’s conceptual framework can be found in Appendix 2 of the PreK-8 Guide and in each of the secondary modules. Also, see Appendix F of this handbook.

The conceptual framework lets the users of this program know what kinds of knowledge students can expect to acquire while participating in PLT activities. Without a conceptual framework, the activities in the PreK-8 Guide and secondary modules have no specific direction. The framework provides the structure, direction, and purpose for the activities. Though a conceptual framework is provided, formal educators, in particular, may want to develop their own frameworks based on their school’s

curricula. Use the PLT Lesson Planning Worksheet in Appendix D to help educators connect their curricula to PLT activities and local resources.

Each PLT activity lists concepts from the framework that are emphasized. Activities can be grouped as thematic, conceptual, or storyline units. (Suggested storylines are provided in Appendix 3 of the PreK-8 Guide.) Activities can also be used individually to teach a particular topic or to reinforce a concept listed. Educators may choose to add other concepts to an activity by using variations or by providing a different emphasis.

Although the PLT curriculum contains in-depth information on specific topics, it is not designed to be an all-inclusive or comprehensive curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to fill in the gaps with content that relates to their community, expertise, or interests, and/or that addresses specific state standards.

6. PLT Teaching Strategies

PLT activities reflect a variety of “best practice” teaching strategies. They emphasize constructivist learning theory, the whole language approach, inquiry-based teaching, and cooperative learning strategies.

The **constructivist theory of learning** is based on the principle that students construct new understandings by combining previous understandings with new discoveries. PLT activities are designed using a constructivist approach. Each activity guides the student through a process that begins with awareness, moves students toward understanding, enables them to challenge preconceived notions, and motivates them to seek constructive avenues for environmental action. For example, step one in the activity is designed to create student awareness and find out what students already know about the topic. It serves as the “hook” to develop their interest. Step two develops their knowledge and skills. Step three challenges their preconceived notions about the topic, helps them come to consensus, or builds new knowledge. Finally, step four encourages them and provides ideas on how they can take positive action regarding the new information and knowledge they have gained on this topic. The final step may also show how they can apply this new learning to other situations.

Using this technique, PLT teachers can guide their students toward new discovery and scientific understanding while helping them develop critical thinking and creative problem solving skills. See Section IV, part 2 for more information on Constructivist Teaching.

The Biological Science Curriculum Study (BSCS) developed an instructional model for constructivism, called the “**Five Es**”. The five Es are: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. This model for learning is now being used in some textbooks and by educators to support learners’ need to construct their own understanding of new ideas.

PLT also incorporates the **whole language** approach. Whole language is a method of teaching reading and writing that emphasizes learning whole words and phrases by encountering them in everyday contexts and books. Students frequently engage in writing and oral language activities related to experiential learning. PLT supports whole language instruction by engaging students in meaningful reading, writing, and communication experiences within a relevant and meaningful

context. In addition, relevant literature books (both fiction and nonfiction) are listed in each PLT activity in the PreK-8 Guide.

An **inquiry-based approach** to learning promotes the development of such skills as identifying problems, developing relevant questions, determining desired outcomes, selecting possible solutions, testing solutions, and evaluating outcomes. PLT activities encourage this type of skill building.

PLT also emphasizes **cooperative learning**, a strategy in which students work together in small groups to achieve common goals. While helping students develop collaboration and communication skills, cooperative learning also promotes the equality of all students by encouraging them to work with each other to complete projects.

Using those approaches, teachers will find that PLT activities encourage learners through the process of awareness, understanding, challenge, motivation, and action using active involvement and hands-on experiences.

7. Curriculum Development and Revision Process

To ensure that PLT supports the needs of educators, PLT uses an extensive multi-layered curriculum development and evaluation process to guide the creation and revision of its materials. The process includes research, surveys, writing workshops, and reviews with educators and resource professionals; revisions based on pilot testing and field testing in the classroom; and formal evaluation by independent consultants.

The 1993 edition of the PreK-8 Guide began with a survey of more than 50,000 teachers, environmental educators, teams of scientists, natural resource managers and technical specialists. More than 300 educators participated in writing workshops and editing sessions. Another 300 educators participated in formative and summative evaluations.

Beginning in 2003, PLT again embarked on a revision process to improve its curriculum materials. During the three-year process, focus groups of classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, nonformal educators, natural resource managers, and university faculty reviewed and revised PLT activities. Writing teams gathered the information and integrated the new materials into the guide. The new PreK-8 Guide, first published in 2006, includes the following:

- strengthened teacher support for differentiated instruction
- strengthened reading connections
- improved assessments
- technology connections
- new activities on invasive species and climate change

Please see “*Cutting-Edge Environmental Education*” in the introduction of the PreK-8 Guide for a detailed description of each of these improvements.

8. Evaluation of PLT Materials

The PLT materials have undergone extensive evaluation to determine their effectiveness with students. The Research Commission of the North American Association for Environmental Education conducted a summative evaluation in 1994 of Project Learning Tree. The evaluation consisted of both traditional pre-test/intervention/post-test procedures and alternative assessment techniques. All activities in the *PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide* were evaluated. A total of 240 teachers and 5,000 students in the U.S. and Canada who used PLT over a period of 12 months participated in the research.

The evaluation confirmed increased knowledge and positive attitudinal growths among students exposed to PLT. In addition, teachers who had completed at least one PLT teacher workshop, and who implemented the PLT activities as intended, were more likely to observe knowledge gains and attitudinal change in their students. This appeared to be particularly true when students were exposed to a series of PLT activities over a relatively short period of time.

The study also showed that short-term exposure to PLT produced positive, long-term effects when it comes to improving environmental knowledge and attitudes. Researchers further concluded that PLT increased knowledge in surprisingly little time. In fact, the average knowledge growth for students in grades 2-8 who were exposed to PLT for two to three weeks was no less than the equivalent of seven months of (normal, regular, traditional) teaching.

The secondary modules have also undergone formal evaluations with similar results. Dr. Louis Iozzi, at Rutgers University-Cook College, evaluated the *Focus on Forests*, *Forest Ecology*, and *Municipal Solid Waste* modules. Christina Gomez-Schmidt and Dr. Michaela Zint at the University of Michigan evaluated the *Risk* module.

In addition to the PLT-directed evaluations, the NAAEE and the California Department of Education each reviewed the PLT materials through their respective curriculum/materials evaluation projects. PLT was given excellent evaluations by both organizations.

Please visit the PLT website at www.plt.org for more information on PLT evaluations.

Sources:

California Department of Education. *Communities: A Review of Curricula on Natural and Built Environments*. Environmental Education Compendia Series. 2002

North American Association for Environmental Education. *Project Learning Tree National Field Study*. Dr. Tom Marcinkowski, Florida Institute of Technology and Dr. Lou Iozzi, Rutgers University. December 1994. (An executive summary of this research can be found at www.plt.org under "About PLT – Evaluation.")

North American Association for Environmental Education. *The Environmental Education Collection: A Review of Resources for Educators – Volume One*. 1997.

North American Association for Environmental Education Resource Review. <http://www.naaee.org/programs-and-initiatives/resource-review>. 2007.

9. PLT's Administration and Partners

Project Learning Tree is nationally administered by the American Forest Foundation (AFF). AFF was chartered in 1982 to develop and administer programs that encourage the long-term stewardship of the environment and natural resources. AFF is a non-profit organization supported by grants from individuals, foundations, government agencies, and corporations. PLT's partners include the Bureau of Land Management, Council for Environmental Education (CEE), Earth & Sky, National Association of Conservation Districts, National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges, National Association of State Foresters, National Audubon Society, North American Association for Environmental Education, Peace Corps, Rainforest Alliance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Society of American Foresters, World Forestry Center, and World Wildlife Fund.

From the beginning, PLT has been administered under the direction of a broad-based national Education Operating Committee that brings together all the PLT partners. The committee includes representatives from state coordinators, national PLT sponsors, education, industry, and other partners. A list of PLT Education Operating Committee members is provided in the "Acknowledgments" section of the PreK-8 Guide and on the PLT website at www.plt.org.

The Project Learning Tree national staff is responsible for the "behind the scenes" component of the PLT program. This includes the development and implementation of all curriculum materials, supporting materials, communication materials, and special projects. The PLT national office is located in AFF headquarters at 1111 19th Street, NW, Suite 780, Washington, DC 20036. The PLT website provides a list of current national staff and their contact information.

10. Related Programs

Building on the success of PLT, the Council for Environmental Education (CEE) – formerly known as the Western Regional Environmental Education Council (WREEC) – developed a similar program in 1980 that uses wildlife as a focus for teaching environmental principles. This program, Project WILD, has also been successful in the United States and abroad. In 1989, CEE partnered with the The Watercourse at University of Montana to co-sponsor the development of Project WET, an environmental education program designed to promote the stewardship of water resources.

11. Awards and Endorsements

In 1985, the prestigious President’s Citation Program “Crystal Award” was presented to the American Forest Foundation by President Ronald Reagan. This award recognized PLT as an outstanding private sector initiative.

PLT has also received other awards and recognition from the:

- USDA Forest Service
- North American Association for Environmental Education
- National Arbor Day Foundation
- Conservation Education Association
- National Wildlife Federation
- National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation
- American Society of Association Executives
- Keep America Beautiful
- Renew America
- Solid Waste Association of America
- Parents’ Choice
- Children’s Music Web Awards

For an up-to-date list of awards presented to the National PLT program, check the PLT website under About PLT/Awards.

12. Correlations to State and National Standards

Project Learning Tree’s PreK-8 Guide and secondary module activities have been correlated to many state and national standards. These correlations can be found on PLT’s website at www.plt.org. The national correlations include:

- National Science Standards
- National Social Studies Standards
- Girl Scouts
- Boy Scouts
- NAAEE’s *Excellence in EE Guidelines for Learning* (PreK–12)

Go to <http://tennessee.gov/education/projectcents/index.shtml> and click on **Project Learning Tree** to access correlations of the activities in the PreK-8 Guide to the TN Teaching Standards in Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, and Language Arts.



II. What is a PLT Workshop?

1. Workshop Goals

The main goals of any PLT Professional Development Workshop are:

- To encourage educators to approach learning and teaching from an ecological and multi-disciplinary perspective.
- To prepare educators to use PLT materials by modeling a sample of PLT activities and teaching strategies.
- To show educators how they can incorporate PLT into their current and future lesson plans and curriculum.
- To increase educators' confidence in teaching environmental education concepts.
- To enrich educators' knowledge of content included in PLT lessons.
- To create a setting in which educators can meet other professionals in their region interested in environmental education.
- To provide a fun and motivating forum that encourages educators to enjoy their own learning process.

The workshop protocol has been used throughout PLT's history because it has been proven that educators will more readily use the materials if they see for themselves how PLT will enhance what they are already teaching. In the workshop setting, educators experience the modeling of various activities, and consider how to adapt activities to fit their own curricula and styles. In some workshops, participants select activities to present to each other in small groups. During the activity wrap-ups, where attendees are encouraged to share ideas, participants learn from each other. Participants also get to observe different teaching styles and exchange creative ideas.

2. Workshop Design

The workshop should show participants how to use PLT to teach science, math, language arts, social sciences, art, health, and even physical education. Nonformal educators – such as environmental educators, outdoor school teachers, interpreters, docents, homeschoolers, or youth organization leaders – should be shown how PLT can be used as a resource of activities to enhance their work with both students and adults.

In addition to introducing the PLT materials, the workshop should model effective teaching strategies and encourage educators to explore new ways of teaching. Wherever possible, use hands-on instructional methods and help participants work out any problems they foresee using these methods with their students.

The entire workshop structure should follow the “AKCA” (Awareness, Knowledge, Challenge and Consensus, Action) model, which is the model that individual PLT activities are structured around. The AKCA model leads students from awareness, to knowledge, to challenge, and finally to action. When applied to the workshop setting, the model will lead the educators from an awareness of PLT, to adding to what they know about PLT, to challenging them to experience PLT, and finally to them actively leading activities and exploring ways to use the activities with their students. See Section IV for ideas on additional educational topics to model and discuss.

When designing your workshop, include information on PLT’s initiative, “Every Student Learns Outside.” For more information on this topic, see Appendix G in this handbook and visit www.learnoutside.org.

The following chart provides possible PreK-8 workshop formats, with a description and benefits and challenges of each.

See Section III for information regarding planning and conducting secondary workshops.

Possible PreK-8 Workshop Formats

Format	Description	Benefits	Challenges
<p>One-Day Inservice Workshop</p> <p>(See Appendix C for sample agendas)</p>	<p>One day-long session, 6-8 hours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on needs of classroom teachers • Can hold workshop during scheduled school district inservice days • Allows teachers to work in grade level teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition with other inservice trainings
<p>One-Day General Workshop</p> <p>(See Appendix C for sample agendas)</p>	<p>One day-long session, 6–8 hours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws educators from diverse settings – school teachers and Scout and 4-H leaders, museum staff, after-school program leaders • Agenda can be flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many other competing activities if on weekends • Educators may not want to use weekend for professional development • Difficult for educators to get off work if on a weekday (unless it is an inservice training for formal educators)
<p>Two or more After-School or Evening Workshops</p> <p>(See Appendix C for sample agendas)</p>	<p>Two or more sessions scheduled a week or more apart, 3–4 hours each.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can focus on one school or organization • Time between sessions allows participants to try out activities and reflect on experiences • Participants are more likely to use materials immediately with students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators are often tired after a full day of work
<p>Preservice Workshop – at a University/College</p> <p>(See Appendix C for sample syllabus)</p>	<p>Professor is a PLT facilitator and integrates PLT into course, or a PLT facilitator is invited to the class on specific days</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professors who are PLT facilitators reach new students each year • Guest facilitator provides ease of workshop implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition with other course requirements

<p>Preservice Workshop – in the Community</p> <p>(See Appendix C for sample agendas)</p>	<p>Usually at a nature center or community EE location. Can be for all preservice educators or a combo of preservice and other formal or non-formal educators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a combination audience, allows preservice educators to participate in a workshop with experienced educators • Enables preservice educators to visit a community EE site off campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may have difficulty traveling off campus • Diverse backgrounds of participants creates a challenge in preparing the agenda
<p>Early Childhood Workshop</p> <p>(with emphasis on “make & take”, ie., making the materials needed to do the activity)</p> <p>(See Appendix C for sample agendas)</p>	<p>Single or multi-session, totaling 6 hours. Participants receive PreK-8 Guide & do several “make & take” activities. Is highly interactive with connections to music & movement, visual & performing arts, use of senses, outdoor observations, & Reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants leave with materials to do several activities • Targeted audience makes prep easier • Very interactive format with music, arts, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities require more time to complete when making the materials • Participants do not typically have strong science backgrounds and require more content
<p>Summer Institute</p> <p>(See Appendix C for sample agendas)</p>	<p>Typically two or more days long. An institute explores one or more topics in-depth, such as fire ecology, urban forestry, children’s literature, and technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More in-depth look at the content and teaching strategies covered in PLT activities • Can offer field trips and hands-on sessions with content specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires longer time commitment by participants • Requires more planning and preparation

3. Time Requirements

When planning your workshop, keep in mind that educators must attend a workshop that is at least **six hours** long to receive the *Project Learning Tree PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide*, and at least **two hours** long to receive a secondary module.

If you are also a Project WILD or Project WET facilitator, you may wish to combine one of these two programs with PLT into one workshop. If so, the workshop must be at least **eight hours** long. If you are combining PLT, Project WILD, and Project WET, each program should be allocated 4 hours each – making the workshop 12 contact hours in length.

4. Workshop Fees

PLT workshops should be conducted at no charge to participants or for a nominal fee. Fees vary from state to state and generally cover the costs of snacks, special materials provided, meeting room fees, and any other direct costs you or the sponsoring organization incur. If academic credit is provided, the college or university may require additional fees or tuition.

5. PLT Facilitator Responsibilities

As a facilitator, you set the stage for learning and encourage participants to explore and develop as professionals. A facilitator serves as a guide, helping workshop participants gain a better understanding about the PLT program, its use, and potential impacts on students' environmental awareness and understanding. Your job is to help people feel comfortable in the group, to listen as much or more than you talk, and to help others understand what they have learned.

The PLT facilitator is responsible for:

- Structuring a positive, hands-on experience that allows each member of the group to participate in activities, and so far as possible, achieve his or her reason for being at the workshop.
- Modeling the PLT philosophy of “awareness” (what is PLT, and what does it contain) to “action” (participants make plans for use of PLT, then go home and use it). See the previous Workshop Design section for more information on “Awareness to Action.”
- Motivating (through an enthusiastic presentation) and assisting the participants in understanding how they can integrate PLT into their teaching.

A PLT workshop facilitator also must put his or her biases and interests aside. This is particularly difficult since many of the issues we talk about and many of the PLT activities we work with touch important aspects in our own lives. For more ideas on this topic, see “**Two Hats**” in Appendix 13 of the PreK-8 Guide.

The role of the Project Learning Tree workshop leader is to help the participants make their own observations, interpretations, and conclusions about PLT, and to assist the group in discovering and realizing the potential PLT holds for them.

Workshops

Once you are certified as a PLT facilitator, we hope that you will be willing to plan and conduct at least one six-hour workshop each year. We encourage you to team up with other facilitators and resource specialists and we welcome alternative workshop styles.

See Appendix C for sample agendas that illustrate the wide variety of workshop styles.

Other Ways to Become Involved

In addition to conducting workshops, consider becoming involved in PLT in other areas such as promotion, networking, and recognition. For example, you might:

- Promote PLT at conferences, fairs, and other gatherings.
- Provide 1-2 hour sessions to introduce participants to PLT. This can be done at a conference, local school board or teachers' meeting, or for a service-learning group or after-school program.
- Serve as a PLT resource in your region.
- Help find participants for workshops and promote media coverage of PLT events.
- Serve as a mentor and help other new leaders become certified as PLT facilitators. Contact the State Coordinator for more information.
- Enrich your state PLT program by sharing your ideas, techniques, resources, and other information in your facilitator newsletter, and in the national PLT newsletter, *the Branch*. Send your ideas to your State Coordinator.
- Share your recommendations to your State Coordinator for nomination of individuals and organizations for annual PLT recognition/awards.
- Follow-up with a team of teachers in a particular school or district, about integrating PLT activities across grade levels.
- Support a particular teacher in writing a GreenWorks! Grant proposal, by offering feedback or a letter of support.
- As a certified PLT facilitator, you may be asked to make a presentation to a local school board, teachers' meeting, or other informal gathering. Please see the sample agenda below. Feel free to alter the agenda to meet your needs.

Sample Agenda for 1–2 Hour Presentation

1. Introduction
You might have people introduce themselves (if necessary), and have each person name one thing that an environmental education program, like PLT, could provide for them. Make a list of their needs (you may want to refer to this later).
2. Distribute PLT's promotional brochure, and briefly describe the referenced guides, programs, and resources. Alternatively, you might show a PowerPoint on PLT. (Check with your State Coordinator for PLT PowerPoints.)
3. Do a carefully selected PLT activity that targets the group you are working with.
4. Give an overview of other selected PLT activities.
5. Refer to the needs they expressed earlier and discuss how PLT may fit their particular needs.
6. If time permits, you may want to do another PLT activity.
7. Explain how they can participate in or schedule a PLT workshop.