

TEACHING THE ENVIRONMENT



curriculum resources for
teachers linked to
state standards and assessments



The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) sponsors four nationally recognized, award-winning environmental education curriculum supplements in New Jersey. They are **Project WILD**, **Project WILD Aquatic**, **Project WET** (Water Education for Teachers) and **Project Learning Tree** (PLT).

Each Project uses a natural resource - (PLT: **forest and land**, WILD: **wildlife and habitats**, WILD Aquatic: **aquatic wildlife and aquatic ecosystems** and WET: **water resources and water quality**) as a foundation for exploring scientific concepts and processes, ecology, pollution, natural resource management and the relationships between human and natural systems. Each features one primary activity guide which contains dozens of lessons and content information that can be adapted for students in pre-school through the secondary grades.

Offering over 300 lessons combined, the learner outcomes from these lessons have been correlated with the 2009 New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, as well as with the state science assessments (NJ ASK, GEPA and HSPA). Educators using the guides can go online and see which progress indicators and test questions are supported by each Project lesson.

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PLT, WET and WILD are effective ways to promote environmental education through a multidisciplinary approach. Teachers find these programs to be valuable resources and students love the activities.

- John Lysko, Superintendent of Schools, Ocean Township Public Schools

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the benefits of
**PROJECTS LEARNING TREE,
WET, WILD AND WILD AQUATIC**

- Project activity guides are available to attendees that participate in professional development seminars. These interactive workshops have flexible agenda's and are conducted as part of school in-service programs, pre-service education courses, conferences and conventions, summer institutes, specialized workshops and after-school programs. They are offered year-round and their fees are minimal. These programs are also registered professional development providers with the New Jersey Department of Education.
- Project lessons are correlated with New Jersey's 2009 core curriculum content standards and state science assessment instruments. They are field tested and evaluated regularly by teachers, curriculum specialists, scientists and natural resource experts throughout the United States.
- Project activity guides are supplemented with New Jersey-based content information about natural resources and related environmental topics and additional instructional materials are available at cost.
- Lessons are interdisciplinary and utilize a multidisciplinary approach for delivery. They address various learning styles and can be adopted to various grades. They also incorporate instructional strategies such as cooperative learning, student-based inquiry and thematic instruction.
- Lessons strengthen critical and creative thinking, inquiry and research, and planning and problem-solving skills. Many feature assessment strategies and incorporate the use of community resources and service projects.
- Most lessons require minimal preparation, have low or no-cost supply and material needs, and can be used in all types of learning environments.
- The activity guides can be used to create extended classrooms by linking school curriculum with the use of buildings and outdoor properties, outdoor classrooms, gardens, and other green sustainable school features.

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New Jersey's Projects workshops are being conducted in response to a growing concern at state and national levels: that teachers and students are receiving limited instruction on how to think about, teach about, learn about, and interact with, their local environments. Education without environmental awareness and connectedness risks abandonment of vital life-skill realities, applications and relevance for both teachers AND their learners.

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~ Jerry Schierloh,
Environmental Education Consultant,
Earth Circle of Learning
Chair, Curriculum and Training Committee,
Alliance for New Jersey
Environmental Education



specifics about

PROJECT LEARNING TREE (PLT)

- **PLT** resources use the forest as a window for exploring local and global environments. The **Project Learning Tree** activity guide for pre-K - 8 includes interactive lessons and projects on forest ecology and management, wood products, recycling and solid waste, land use and development, air quality and water pollution.
- **PLT** offers modules for secondary grades that explore solid waste, environmental and health risks, the places we live, and forests. Each module provides background information as well as community-based action projects.
- **PLT** offers a kit for grades 4 - 8 called **Energy and Society**, which uses science, music, dance, and other activities to focus on renewable and non-renewable natural resources, energy use and energy conservation.
- Free-to-use **PLT** "trunks" are located throughout the state and can be signed out for three-week periods. The trunks contain compasses, magnifying glasses, audiovisual resources, field guides, and over 20 hands-on activities in a convenient, portable container.
- **PLT's** GreenSchools! Program provides students and faculty with educational tools, training and resources for student-led Green Teams that help create healthy school environments and can help schools save money. Find out more at www.plt.org/about-plt-greenschools.

To learn more about **Project Learning Tree** contact:
New Jersey PLT Coordinator
NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry
(732) 833-9816 / newjerseyplt@gmail.com

specifics about

PROJECT WILD AQUATIC

- New Jersey includes a coastal shoreline, miles of waterways and acres of wetlands. The study of aquatic areas, including the exploration of their ecological and physical features and flora and fauna, provides educators and students with an understanding of water's roles within nature and society and the importance of protecting and managing these natural places.
- **Project WILD Aquatic** activity guide for grades K - 12 introduces students to fresh and saltwater habitats, wildlife, biology and ecology, carrying capacity, pollution and development, through interactive lessons and projects. Simulations, games and debates are included in the lessons and provide exercises for using inquiry-based decision making, planning and problem solving skills.
- The activity guide has been updated for 2013 and includes new investigations and resources, activities on fish conservation and angling, STEM extensions and wildlife career connections.

To learn more about **Project WILD Aquatic** contact:
Karen Leskie, New Jersey Project WILD Aquatic Coordinator
NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife
(609) 748-4347 / Karen.Leskie@dep.state.nj.us

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Projects Learning Tree, WET, WILD and WILD Aquatic open the eyes of my students to the world around us, while at the same time give me great ways to develop crucial scientific concepts. In even my youngest student's minds. The text not only gives me ideas to use with my students but also provides background knowledge that makes me comfortable with the science content.

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~ Linda Smith,
Elementary Teacher,
Paulsboro Public Schools
President, New Jersey Council of
Elementary Science

specifics about

PROJECT WILD

- The **Project WILD** activity guide for grades K - 12 introduces students to wildlife ecology, habitat, biodiversity, carrying capacity and wildlife management. The guide is based on the premise that students and teachers have a vital interest in learning about how wildlife and humans interact. **Project WILD** materials adhere to strict standards of objectivity and are backed by sound educational practices and theory.
- **WILD School Sites** workshops extend student learning about wildlife beyond classroom walls by providing resources, strategies and activities to involve students in projects that create or enhance local habitat on school property or within the community.
- **Growing Up WILD** is an early childhood education program that builds on children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to the world around them. Using a wide range of activities and experiences, **Growing Up WILD** provides an early foundation for developing positive impressions about the natural world, as well as lifelong social and academic skills.
- **Flying WILD** is a program that promotes learning about birds by bringing students, teachers, and communities together to celebrate Migratory Bird Day.

To learn more about **Project WILD** contact:

Liz Jackson, New Jersey Project WILD Coordinator
NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife
(908) 637-4125 / Liz.Jackson@dep.state.nj.us

specifics about

PROJECT WET

- The most critical element for human life on Earth is water, which people often take for granted. The **Project WET** (Water Education for Teachers) activity guide provides teachers of grades K - 12 with over 60 science-based, interdisciplinary lessons that focus on water quality, water pollution and water supply concepts as well as related scientific and ecological processes.
- Additional curriculum supplements available from **Project WET** (through workshops and at cost) include **WOW! The Wonders of Wetlands** (grades K - 12), **Conserve Water Educator's Guide** (grades 6 - 12), and **Healthy Water, Healthy People** (grades 6 - 12).
- **Project WET** offers mini-grants to schools for the coordination of school-based **Make a SPLASH Water Festivals** that incorporate interactive exhibits, stations and activities to introduce participants to related water concepts, processes and issues.

To learn more about **Project WET** resources and workshops contact:

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Chris Christie
Governor,
State of New Jersey

Bob Martin
Commissioner,
New Jersey Department of
Environmental Protection

To learn more visit the DEP's web site for the Projects at:

WWW.TEACHNJENVY.ORG