Activity Guides and Education Projects

**A Teachers Guide to Arbor Month**

**Audience:** Grades K-9

**Description:** This publication is designed to easily integrate learning about trees into the regular K-8 school curriculum. This cross-curricular thematic guide offers activities in: language art, math, music, art, social studies, science, health, and physical education. It is also an ideal enhancement to your environmental education programs, and can help you meet Minnesota graduation standards for environmental education.

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**A Thousand Friends of Frogs**

**Audience:** Grades K-6

**Description:** This Minnesota based project was developed by the Center for Global Environmental Education at Hamline University. Its purpose is to connect children, parents, educators, and scientists to study and celebrate frogs and their habitats. Classroom resources and activities, as well as pages connecting students first hand to the project can be accessed at their website.

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**Alien Invasion - Plants on the Move**

**Audience:** Grades 6 & Up

**Description:** This Web site contains several activities on invasive species. Also provided are PowerPoint presentations and ArcExplorer software. Correlated to National science standards.

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**Agriculture in Classroom**

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** Agriculture in the Classroom is a national grassroots program coordinated locally by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Its goal is to help students gain a greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society, so that they may become citizens who support wise agricultural policies. [Minnesota](#) program.
**Arbor Month Program- Minnesota**

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** Arbor Day in Minnesota is the last Friday in April. May is Arbor Month. The Arbor Month Program provides an annual Arbor Month poster and educational materials.

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**Best Practices for Field Days** [EXT]

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** A Program Planning Guidebook for Organizers, Presenters, Teachers and Volunteers. This comprehensive guide includes everything you need to know about field days, including: how to plan for large crowds, bad weather, age-appropriate activities and more. This guide can take the worry out of putting on a field day. Guidelines and Planning Worksheets are included. The guidebook, as well as "Best Practices for Field Days" workshops, is available from the [University of Minnesota Extension Service](EXT).

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**Big Tree Registry**

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** Minnesota's collection of the largest 52 native trees are listed in this publication. It includes information about them, how to measure them, and has registration forms to submit trees for consideration as the "biggest tree" of its species in Minnesota. Getting kids outside to compete for Minnesota's biggest tree is a great way to engage their sense of curiosity, while teaching math skills!

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**EEK! Environmental Education for Kids!** [EXT]

**Audience:** Grades 4-8

**Description:** This Web site, produced by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, includes educational resources and teaching pages for kids in grades 4-8. There are instructional materials, action projects, multimedia pieces and resource materials on a wide variety of natural resource topics.
**Facing the Future**

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** Download a free curriculum on sustainability and global issues. Aligned with national and state academic standards. Two curriculum guides: Grade K-4, and Grade 5-up.

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**Family Activities**

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** A collection of activities from Project Learning Tree (PLT) for families to use while taking walks through your neighborhood, at the cabin or on a camping trip.

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**Firewise**

**Audience:** Grades 9-12

**Description:** MN DNR has adopted the national Firewise program and offers workshops for high school educators to learn about the wildfire risk to homes in the wildland/urban interface. "Firewise Communities: Reducing the Risk of Wildfire is a standards-based, collaborative school project in which students use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to identify local wildfire risk and educate their community about wildfire risk reduction. Schools can collaborate with the program to become a "Firewise School" and participate in field activities to monitor forests and to prevent fires.

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**GEMS: Great Explorations in Math and Science**

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** The Lawrence Hall of Science created GEMS – Great Explorations in Math and Science, OBIS – Outdoor Biology Instructional Strategies, and other natural resource education materials which utilize high quality inquiry-based science activities.
Great Lakes Information Network

Audience: All grades

Description: The GLIN is an online clearinghouse for people to find information relating to the bi-national Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region of North America. GLIN offers a wealth of data and information about the region's environment, economy, tourism, history, and education. Lesson plans, maps, resources and more can be found on the GLIN website.

Great Lakes Worm Watch

Audience: Grades 3 & Up

Description: Did you know that Minnesota has no native earthworms? Invasive earthworms can damage forest ecology. This interactive curriculum helps students capture, identify and study earthworms and their effects in the forest. Developed by the University of Minnesota and the Natural Resources Research Institute.

Leopold Education Project

Audience: Grades 5-12

Description: The Leopold Education Project is an innovative, interdisciplinary, critical thinking, conservation, and environmental education curriculum based on the classic writings of the renowned conservationist, Aldo Leopold. The Leopold Education Project teaches the public about humanity's ties to the natural environment in the effort to conserve and protect the earth's natural resources. Educator workshops and lesson plans are available.

MinnAqua

Audience: Grades 3-8

Description: This is a program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources designed to introduce students to lake and stream ecology by teaching them how to fish. The curriculum guide looks at habitats and ecosystems, Minnesota fish, water stewardship, managing Minnesota resources, and fishing equipment and techniques. A variety of games, activities, and simulations are used to promote stewardship of Minnesota's aquatic habitats.
Minnesota Conservation Volunteer Magazine

Audience: All grades

Description: This unique bi-monthly publication is written to engage, entertain, and educate its readers with a lively mix of photographs and stories about Minnesota's woods, water and wildlife. A special section is designed with the Young Naturalist in mind. The Young Naturalist stories can be downloaded in PDF and taught using the accompanying teacher's guide.

Minnesota Forestry Association

Audience: All grades

Description: The MFA is Minnesota's oldest conservation organization, founded in 1876 to promote wise stewardship of forest lands. They sponsor the Woodland Advisor Program, which provides education opportunities to learn more about Minnesota's forests and forestry.

Minnesota Minerals Education

Audience: Grades 5-12

Description: The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources sponsors an intensive annual three-day workshop for educators wishing to learn more about the state's geology. Materials, such as Geology of Minnesota and Digging Into Minnesota's Minerals are provided at the workshop.

Monarchs in the Classroom

Audience: All grades

Description: This project was developed by scientists and educators at the University of Minnesota to provide a solid background for understanding the ecology, behavior, and evolution of monarch butterflies. Educator workshops, curriculum, and support materials are available.
**National Arbor Day Foundation**

Audience: All grades

**Description:** The Foundation has a section of their website dedicated to "teaching the next generation to value of trees." For fifth grade students, find information about the annual poster contest. Tree posters and lots of lesson plans for all ages are available.

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**Project Bluestem**

Audience: All grades

**Description:** Project Bluestem is a series of activities focused on the tallgrass prairie and oak savanna. This curriculum is patterned after [Project Learning Tree](https://www.plt.org). Educator workshops are available or the curriculum can be purchased without a training.

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**Project Learning Tree**

Audience: All grades

**Description:** This project uses the forest as a "window" on the world to increase students' understanding of our environment, stimulate critical and creative thinking, develop the ability to make informed decisions on environmental issues, and foster a commitment to take responsible action on behalf of the environment. Since 1976, PLT has been helping students learn how to think, not what to think, about the environment. PLT materials are only available to workshop participants. Minnesota PLT materials include an early childhood supplement, a PreK-8 activity guide, five secondary guides, and focused materials on fire, energy, and teaching techniques.

[National Web site](https://www.plt.org)
Project WET

Audience: All grades

Description: The mission of Project Wet is to reach children, parents, educators, and communities of the world with water education. This goal is accomplished through the use of resource guides that promote awareness, appreciation, knowledge, and stewardship of water resources. Project WET materials are only available to workshop participants. Minnesota Project WET materials include a K-12 guide, water quality guides and test kits, and focused materials on wetlands, watersheds, and water conservation.

National Web site

Project WILD

Audience: All grades

Description: The mission of Project WILD is to provide wildlife-based conservation and environmental education that fosters responsible actions toward wildlife and related natural resources. Since 1983, Project WILD has helped students expand their knowledge of wildlife populations and animal management issues. Project WILD offers activities for teachers of early childhood through high school students. Project WILD materials are only available to workshop participants. Minnesota Project WILD materials include an early childhood supplement, a K-12 activity guide, high school guides, and focused materials on aquatic animals, elk, and birds.

National Web site

SEEK: Sharing Environmental Education Knowledge

Audience: All grades

Description: SEEK is Minnesota's online environmental education clearinghouse. Find information on all environmental education curriculum, nature centers, and resources available in Minnesota. It is a Web site to bookmark and use often! SEEK also contains the environmental Scope & Sequence, A Green Print for Minnesota, and information on the graduation standards. A calendar of events lists items of interest to naturalists and classroom teachers.
Schoolyard Habitat

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** Schoolyard Habitat is an extension of the Backyard Wildlife Habitat program sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation. The Schoolyard Habitat Program was developed "to bring the natural world to kids and kids out into nature!" Curricula includes *Schoolyard Habitats How-to Guide, Access Nature, and Habitats Naturescope Kit.* Free on-line components include *Ranger Rick Educator's Guide, Happenin Habitats,* and activity guides on *Butterflies, Bats, Grasslands,* and the *Arctic.*

Smokey Bear

**Audience:** K-5

**Description:** Smokey says, "Only you can prevent wildfires." Visit the Smokey Bear Web site to find the Smokey Bear Teacher's Guide, Activity Book, Kid's poster and other resources.

Tree Trust

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** Tree Trust helps elementary and middle schools enhance school grounds. Teachers, students, administrators, and parents all receive training and support to use the improved areas to meet the schools education and environmental goals.

Tropical Deforestation: Uncovering the Story

**Audience:** All grades

**Description:** This thought provoking video examines tropical deforestation and how its ripple effects are felt around the world and in Minnesota. This is a great way to connect tropical rainforests to Minnesota woods! The video and companion teacher's guide were produced by the University of Minnesota Extension Service.
**True North**

**Audience:** Grades 4-12

**Description:** The Minnesota Historical Society developed this Web site full of mapping and GIS activities. Trace Minnesota's geography, in terms of natural resources, landforms, ethnic communities, precipitation, roads and railways, and more. Activities are correlated to Minnesota Academic Standards in social studies.