



Kentucky's Outdoor Classroom Newsletter

Volume 1, No. 2

March, 1999

Welcome

to the second issue of the newsletter. Our topic for this newsletter is “**Taking the next step: Putting our school yard to use as an outdoor classroom**”.

Again we have gone to the *Teacher's Guide to Developing, Using and Maintaining Outdoor Classrooms in Kentucky* (a publication of: Kentucky Environmental Education Council) for information on this issues topic.

A common question - “**Can our school yard be an outdoor classroom?**”

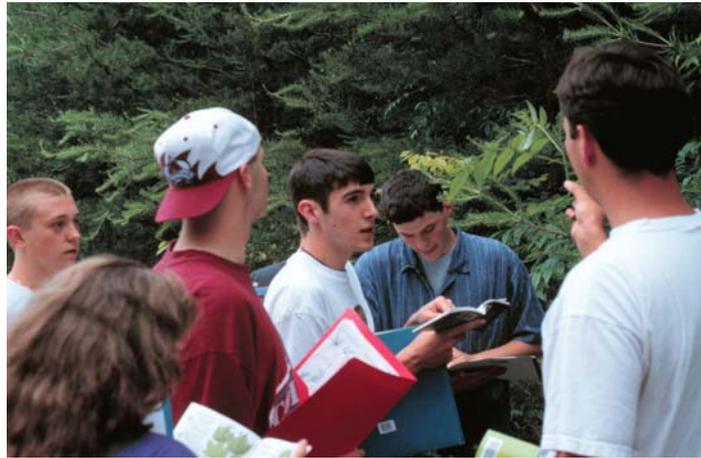
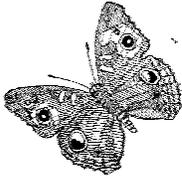
YES!

Anytime you use the school yard for discovery and learning it has become an outdoor classroom

- they have features that can be measured, recorded and compared such as flag poles, trees, sunshine, temperature, sidewalks or driveways, and even shadows
- they contain living organisms that can be observed, described and documented
- they contain history and change such as who lived there before and how the land was used before the school existed
- they contain plenty of subject matter for students to ask questions and research answers through the process of scientific inquiry
- they can be a great place for you and your students to learn more about the environment in which we live, how it changes and what other creatures call it home

Yes our school yard can be used as an outdoor classroom!

IDEAS TO GET STARTED



Identifying Your Outdoor Classroom

- U have the students make a picture of the outdoor classroom by mapping your school yard
- U have the students conduct an inventory of the features and creatures in your outdoor classroom
- U have the students locate your outdoor classroom on a county, state and national map

Now that you and the students have identified your outdoor classroom its time to put it to use! Here are a few simple activities, from *Project Learning Tree*, that students can use to begin exploring the outdoor classroom. All of these can be incorporated into your current curriculum. The activities give the students an opportunity to better understand and experience “real world” experiences.

' Have students find things that can measured, recorded and compared (*PLT - How Big Is Your Tree?*, *School Yard Safari*, *Germinating Giants*)

' Have students find things that can be organized into a classification system (*PLT - Looking At Leaves*, *Tree Treasures*)

' Have students find one example of a system and one example of a pattern (*PLT - How Plants Grow*, *Are Vacant Lots Vacant?*, *Did You Notice?*)

' Have students identify as many different habitats for wildlife or other creatures (*PLT - Fallen Log*, *400-acre Forest*, *Nature Recyclers*, *Rain Reasons*)

' Ask students about the connections between environment and organisms they find, include where they live (*PLT - The Forest of S. T. Shrew*, *Can It Be Real?*, *Birds and Worms*, *Web of Life*)

' Research the history of the land and people before the school was built (*PLT - Then and Now*, *The Good Old Days*, *The Native Way*, *Tree Cookies*)

Environmental Education Resources

The list of resources for environmental education is endless, but sometimes it is necessary to find the beginning of the "loop". So here are a few "resources" that you may not be familiar with:

Kentucky Division of Forestry

Kentucky Division of Forestry's county Forest Ranger Technicians are frequently utilized as resource professionals in the classroom. The Ranger Technicians are available for programs focused on forest fires and fire prevention, forest conservation and management, forest products and uses, careers in forestry and tree identification. They can also offer assistance and advice with outdoor classrooms.

"Smokey Bear" is a very popular program that is identified with the Division. Another very valuable educational "tool" is the "Tree Trunk". The "Tree Trunk" is a wooden chest that contains different types of wood and wood products. There are many exercises contained in the "Tree Trunk" that will help everyone better understand their dependence on forest products. The "Tree Trunk" may be borrowed for up to two weeks.

If you are interested in scheduling a school program or to find out who the Ranger Technician is in your area call one of the following Kentucky Division of Forestry offices.

Betsy Layne 1-800-866-0048

Hazard 1-800-866-0503

Morehead 1-800-866-0052

Pineville 1-800-866-0504

Kentucky Association For Environmental Education (KAEE)

www.louisville.edu/org/kiweed/kaee

The Environmental Education Network K-12 Environmental Resources on the Internet for Teachers

www.envirolink.org/enviroed/envirokk12.html

Kentucky Water Watch Program

www.state.ky.us/nrepc/water/wwhomepg.htm

East Kentucky Center for Science, Mathematics and Technology

Through Outreach Education, the Center will place interactive science, mathematics and technology materials and technical support and training in the hands of students and teachers.

Phone toll free: 877-889-0303

email: neeley@se-tel.com

Arbor Day is Approaching!

Kentucky's Arbor Day Celebration is April 2nd this

year. Arbor Day is a special day when people learn about the planting and caring of trees. For more information concerning facts and celebrations focusing on Arbor Day, check out the following websites. Also contact your local Cooperative Extension Office or the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

The "I Never Knew These Came From Trees" list

www.utahlinx.com/users/wwilsonk/woodlst.html

TreeWeb: The Natural History of Trees

<http://quercus.ca.uky.edu/TreeWeb>

The Arbor Day Website

www.arborday.org



Upcoming Meetings / Workshops

Kentucky Association of Environmental Educators (KAEE) Conference will be held in Frankfort October 8-10, 1999. The title of the conference is "Environmental Learning - Real Life Learning". This will be a great opportunity to gain access to new resources and meet resource people.

Mailing List

Know someone who would like to be on the mailing list or we need to make an address correction?

Please fill out and return to Laurie Taylor at address below:

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