



# CASE STUDIES

## *EDUCATION: OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS & LEARNING*

STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A MORE RESILIENT, CARING, INCLUSIVE ECONOMY THAT CAN WITHSTAND, ADAPT, INNOVATE, AND TRANSFORM IN THE FACE OF NATURAL AND HUMAN DISASTERS.

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THESE CASE STUDIES

This is a collection of project-based learning and outdoor classroom activities for education. During focus group conversations with the education industry in the North Country, participants expressed an interest in learning more about innovative education models that provided hands-on experiential learning for students and utilized our natural capital for learning purposes. This Case Study has six examples of outdoor learning programs and spaces that can inspire innovation in education in the North Country.

Examples Of

Outdoor Education & Afterschool Programs

Outdoor Initiatives & Developed Classroom Work



# The Outdoor Classroom Project



TO LEARN MORE...



## MISSION & VISION

**DREAM IT:** IN THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM, CHILDREN CONNECT TO THE NATURAL WORLD AND LEARN FROM WHAT NATURE HAS TO TEACH US. WE ENVISION A WORLD WHERE ALL CHILDREN IN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SETTINGS HAVE ACCESS TO THE RICH DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME FROM ENGAGING WITH THE NATURAL WORLD.

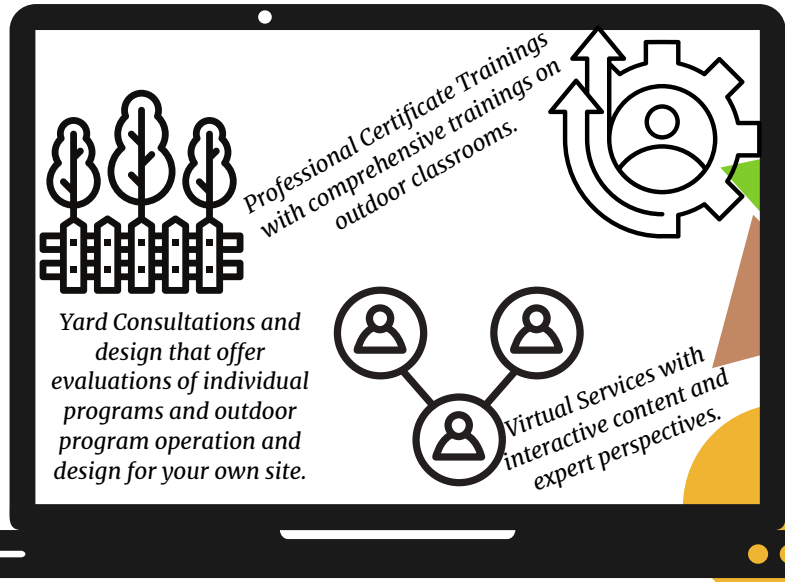
**BUILD IT:** THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM IS DEDICATED TO INCREASING THE QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND BENEFIT OF OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS THROUGH PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL AND CONSULTING SERVICES ON THE VALUE AND DESIGN OF ENGAGING OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.

**GROW IT:** THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM WANTS TO HELP YOU TRANSFORM OUTDOOR LEARNING AT CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS. WHETHER THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CUSTOM CONSULTATION AND DESIGN SERVICES, OR CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Derived from modern child development research findings, the outdoor classroom project builds upon the premise that children are complex beings. The Outdoor Classroom aims to nurture the whole child; childhood education needs to follow the fundamental principle that children are learning everywhere and all the time, instead of developmentally inappropriate early academics. Children need a broad variety of learning experiences and opportunities to grow in areas such as science, mathematics, executive function, gross and fine motor development, social-emotional development, language development, and creative expression. The Outdoor Classroom evolves from the real needs of children, and offers activates that are personally meaningful to them, and fully embrace developmentally appropriate practices in early care.

## HOW IT WORKS:





TO LEARN  
MORE...



SCAN ME

# MISSION & VISION

*EMBRACE THE ADVENTURE IS THE SUN VALLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL – THROUGH CHALLENGING AND INSPIRING OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES, THE SUN VALLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL OUTDOOR PROGRAM SUPPORTS THE SCHOOL'S MISSION BY FOSTERING PERSONAL GROWTH, TEAMWORK, AND LEADERSHIP; STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE UNIQUE TO OUR SCHOOL; PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO DEVELOP A LOVE FOR A WILD PLACE; AND TEACHING WILDERNESS SKILLS.*

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

The Sun Valley Community school is a group of curious minds, adventurous spirits, compassionate hearts, and critical thinkers who engage in learning and connect as people in the thriving mountain community of Sun Valley, Idaho. Sun Valley Community School consists of two different campuses in the valley and there are six different programs for this outdoor program, elementary, middle, and upper school programs, outdoor program for staff and outdoor leadership academy, and onboarding programs. The Sun Valley Community school is a group of curious minds, adventurous spirits, compassionate hearts, and critical thinkers who engage in learning and connect as people in the thriving mountain community. Sun Valley Community School students come to know themselves and one another campus and in the wilderness, finding joy and growth through academic challenge, outdoor experiences, artistic endeavors, and athletic passions.

## HOW IT WORKS:



### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OUTDOOR PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Encourage a lifelong love of wild places
- Teach leadership skills, self-reliance, and self-care
- Instill a respect for the outdoors
- Foster Independence
- Promote teamwork and cooperation
- Learn to step outside of comfort zones
- Build strong relationships with classmates.



### MIDDLE SCHOOL OUTDOOR PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Building strong relationships with classmates and faculty
- Provide opportunities for personal growth
- Develop relationships with wild places
- Teach outdoor skills
- Build new skills; rock climbing, whitewater, backcountry skiing, and long backpacking and camping adventures.
- Tie curricular elements to outdoor trips

# PBLworks



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## MISSION & VISION

AT PBL WORKS, WE BELIEVE THAT ALL STUDENTS- NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE OR WHAT THEIR BACKGROUND THEY SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TO DEEPEN THEIR LEARNING AND ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN COLLEGE, CAREER, AND LIFE.

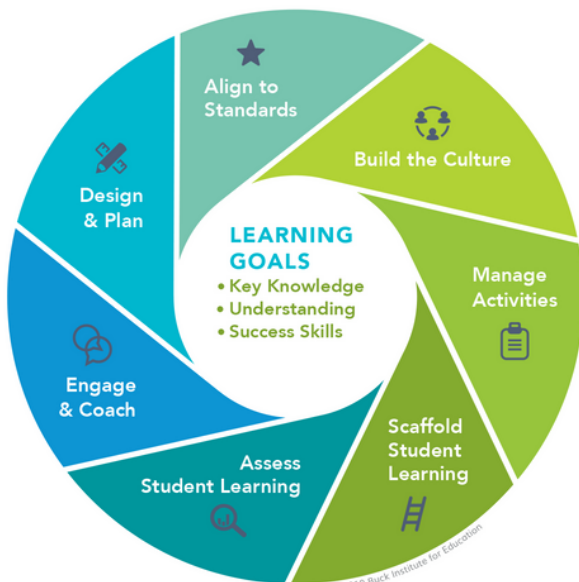
### ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Project Based Learning is a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects. Students work on project over an extended period of time - from a week up to a semester - that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex questions they demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for a real audience. As a result. Students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. PBL unleashes a contagious, creative energy among students and teaches.

"PROJECT BASED LEARNING IS A TEACHING METHOD IN WHICH STUDENTS GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS BY WORKING FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME TO INVESTIGATE AND RESPOND TO AN AUTHENTIC, ENGAGING, AND COMPLEX QUESTION, PROBLEM, OR CHALLENGE."

### Gold Standard PBL

Seven Project Based Teaching Practices

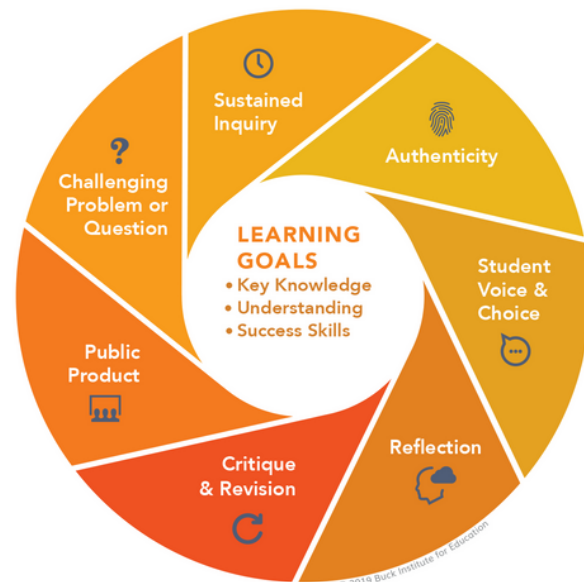


### HOW IT WORKS:

Students work on projects over an extended period of time- from a week up to a semester- that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for a real audience. As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. PBL unleashes a contagious, creative energy among students and teachers.

### Gold Standard PBL

Seven Essential Project Design Elements





# adventures

For young nature-lovers

TO LEARN MORE...



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## MISSION & VISION

AUDUBON ENVISIONS A FUTURE WITH A COMMUNITY OF ENLIGHTENED AND INFORMED CITIZENS AWARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES. IT IS A COMMUNITY WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND RESOURCES TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICES AMONG ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION THAT RESULT IN MINIMIZING NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON OUR SHARED ENVIRONMENT.

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Audubon Adventures created in 1984 and has helped over 7 million youngsters that have participated in the program. Audubon Adventures is an environmental education curriculum product created by the National Audubon society for grades 3-5. Developed by professional environmental educators, Audubon Adventures presents standards-based science content about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. Audubon Adventures introduces young people, their families, and their teachers to the fundamental principles by which the natural world functions. Our print publications and website offer an exciting, science-based exploration of those principles at work anchored in nonfiction reading and outdoor and classroom activities that help kids to care for our planet by helping birds and other wildlife.

### HOW IT WORKS:

CLICK HERE TO SEE THE RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

Quizzes!

Puzzles!

Games!

...And other resources!





TO LEARN  
MORE...



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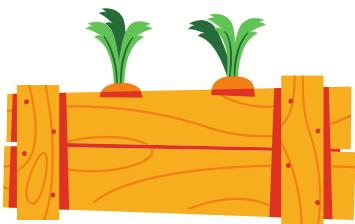
# | MISSION & VISION

OUR MISSION IS TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR KIDS TO PLAY LEARN, AND GROW THROUGH GARDENING, ENGAGING THEIR NATURAL CURIOSITY AND WONDER.

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Kids Gardening improves kids' lives, their communities, and the planet. Since 1982, they have been supporting a community of educators and caregivers to bring the life-changing benefits of gardening to kids through our grant programs, contests, curriculum, and educational activities. Those grants and partnership consist of the Youth Garden Grant, which has supported school and youth educational garden projects that enhance the quality of life for students and their communities. Kids Gardening also partnered with budding botanists to offer a grant in 2020 to support garde-based initiatives that encourage our youngest citizens to learn about biodiversity and explore their local ecosystems. This past year, thirty programs were chosen from nearly 800 applicants to receive award packages intended to help start new garden programs or expand existing ones.

## HOW IT WORKS:



### Subscription-Based Programs

Lessons to Grow By is a program created by Kids Gardening that includes 15 weeks of lesson plans focused on three foundational science themes. It includes background information for the educator along with three hands on activities that rely as much as possible on common household supplies.



### Partnerships & Grants

These partnerships and grants are awarded to local and regional high schools that are creating green space for learning within their teaching space already.

#### Examples:

- Carton 2 Garden
- GROMOREGOOD
- Budding Botanist
- Youth Garden Grant
- Exploring Hydroponics



### STATS

- 2.6 Million+ Kids reached in 2020
- 160K awarded to 227 programs
- 87k reached through curriculum publications
- 1.6 Million reached through lesson plans
- 920k reached through activities
- 88k reached through grants and contests
- 90% of educators saw increased environmental stewardship in their students.



# PROJECT LEARNING TREE

TO LEARN  
MORE...



## | MISSION & VISION

*THE SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE*

*MISSION: TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH FOREST FOCUS*

*VISION: A WORLD THAT VALUES AND BENEFITS FROM SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FORESTS*

*GOAL: TO ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY, STEWARDSHIP, AND CAREER PATHWAYS USING TREES AND FORESTS AS WINDOWS ON THE WORLD.*

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

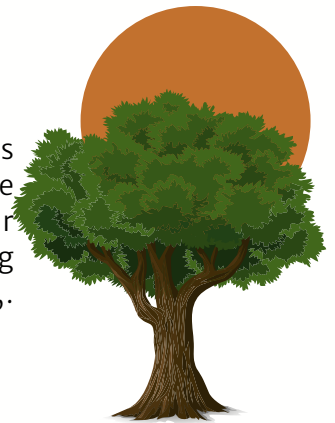
Project Learning Tree is an award-winning environmental education program designed for teachers and other educators, parents, and community leaders working with youth from preschool through grade 12. PLT is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. In the Mid-1970's PLT launched as a collaboration between the American Forest Institute. **This program was founded upon 3 goals...**

- Design an environmental education community—educators would have to like it, trust it, and use it.
- Develop a partnership between public and private sectors that ensured the curriculum was balanced, fair, and accurate; as well as encouraged students to consider all sides and factors when making decisions about the environment.
- Design a system of implementation for the program with materials that could be made available through workshops and ensure that the curriculum would be used effectively.

## HOW IT WORKS:

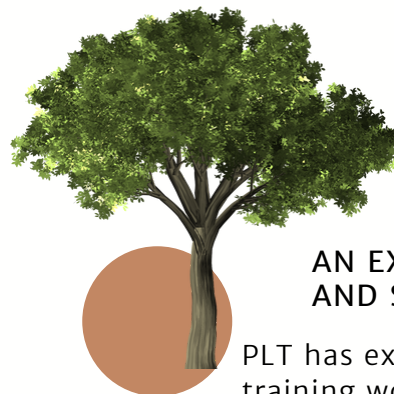
### CAREFULLY DESIGNED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The professional development helps educators learn how to integrate environmental education into their teaching to become comfortable teaching outdoor curriculum,.



### HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR GRADES PREK-12

These help to supplement existing curriculum in schools and enhance educational programming in non-formal settings. These activities are practical, hands-on, and fun, and aligned with state and national academic standards.



### AN EXTENSIVE DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPORT NETWORK

PLT has extensive resources and training workshops.