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1. "SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES" GRANTS

Application Deadline: August 31, 2006

The Patagonia Save America's Treasures Grants fund innovative groups overlooked or rejected by other corporate donors who take strategic steps to protect habitat, wilderness, and biodiversity.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/treasures/application.htm#funded#funded>

2. MAY 11 IS ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY

Sponsor an Endangered Species Day event, field trip, or educational program in your town. The goal of Endangered Species Day is "to educate people about the importance of protecting our rare, threatened, and endangered animal and plant species." Get involved!

http://www.stopextinction.org/site/c.epIQKXOBJSg/b.1539473/k.4A37/Endangered_Species_Day.htm?aid=1585270

3. PISGAH FOREST INSTITUTE (PFI)--Summer 2006 in Brevard, North Carolina
PFI workshops are FREE to educators and include meals, lodging, and materials.

- June 18 - 23: Earth Environmental Science for Elementary School Teachers
- June 25 - 29: Sustainability: Teaching For Tomorrow
- July 9 - 14: Elements of Nature
- July 16 - 18: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly
- July 19 - 21: What Goes Around Comes Around: The Art and Science of Recycling and Composting in the Classroom
- July 23 - 28: Earth/Environmental Science for Middle/High School Teachers

Participants receive a certificate of achievement which can be used to gain CEUs. Workshops are eligible for Criteria 1, 2, or 3 credit in

the NC Environmental Educators Program. Several workshops offer college credit in conjunction with Brevard College.

<http://www.brevard.edu/pfi/>

4. DESIGNING A COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN: THE 4-P WORKSHOP

This World Conservation Union publication is the first in a series called "Lessons from the Field: Conservation Awareness" and provides a practical guide for conservation practitioners. The 112-page book focuses on the creative process for strategic planning -- a critical component to design effective conservation awareness initiatives.

<http://www.conservation.org/xp/CIWEB/programs/awareness>

5. EDUCATIONATLAS.COM

Site provides vast educational resources for K-12 teachers, students, higher education, homeschoolers, bilingual education, and more. Includes links to free, downloadable lesson plans.

<http://www.educationatlas.com/>

6. GREEN LANDSCAPING

FloridaYards.org Web site offers environmentally sound landscaping advice and includes a database of Florida-friendly and Florida native plants.

<http://www.floridayards.org/>

7. LEARNINGSOURCE.ORG

The LearningScience.org Web site provides free, high quality, newer and emerging Web interactive learning tools of science education based on National Science Education Standards (NAS, 1996).

<http://www.learningscience.org/index.htm>

8. NEW ALDO LEOPOLD POSTER

The Aldo Leopold Foundation and the Leopold Education Project have produced a new Aldo Leopold Poster. Suitable for framing this beautiful 24" x 36" poster provides a wealth of interesting information regarding Aldo Leopold's life and land ethic philosophy.

<http://www.lep.org/merchandise.htm>

9. ONLINE ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE COURSEWARE

Heartland WebScience provides online environmental science education (high school and college level) courseware designed by science educators.

<http://www.heartlandwebscience.com/about.html>

10. PLT'S NEW PREK-8 GUIDE - SPECIAL OFFER

Educators who have attended a Project Learning Tree (PLT) workshop in the past can now order PLT's new PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide

directly from PLT. The guide's newest features -- reading connections, technology connections, differentiated instruction, and assessment strategies -- help educators bring the environment into the classroom and still meet today's standards.

http://www.plt.org/cms/pages/21_21_10.html

11. RAISING YOUR WATER IQ

Fun learning resources from Texas Water Development Board designed to help K-6 students become more water wise. Includes a series of interactive website modules, a 6th grade curriculum, and a K-3 coloring book with original Texas-centric characters.

<http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/kids/>

12. EXPLORING THE NATURAL WORLD WITH CHILDREN

Parents can nourish a child's love and appreciation of the natural world. Answers to the following questions are provided by Elaine Andrews, Extension Specialist from Wisconsin:

Q: How can I keep my two-year-old safe while her being surrounded by nature? It seems to me that the outdoors brings a special set of dangers, particularly water, falling, etc. Any tips?

A: The first rule for encouraging children of any age to enjoy the outdoors is to assure their safety. With older children, this means checking out a location and improving the child's familiarity with potential concerns and ways to handle them. With very young children, parents are the eyes and ears, and we don't expect our children to act with wisdom.

Our youngest child was an intrepid wanderer and was joyful about everything she did. At the shore, she would crawl head-first and laughing into oncoming waves. She would walk off the end of a dock without hesitation in order to look at baby ducks. For vacations near the water, we made sure that our daughter lived in a toddler life jacket that came equipped with a crotch snap, just in case she ran too fast for us. We learned to remind her every time to close her mouth before going into water. Watching over her outdoors was a constant effort, but she loved being outdoors as a toddler and still does as an adult.

When our very young children are outdoors, they need to be supervised or in a very limited and familiar environment. So, as long as you are going to be outdoors with them, you might as well both enjoy it. Take advantage of your child's curiosity (or help alleviate their fears) by drawing their attention to the tiny details of nature: smells, textures, shapes, colors, patterns. They can sift sand or build things with rocks, sticks, and pebbles. Make towers, put small things inside of big things, or see what floats and what Look for animal footprints

or follow mouse trails under the bent grasses. Help your child to choose several objects (without harming any live things) and group them or sort them. They can group things by color, by shape or even by smell. They can begin to talk about any differences they notice. Make a treasure hunt - can you find anything red? Can you see anything that has wings?

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Q: I want my children to learn about nature. But more importantly, I want them to cherish and respect it. Do you have any advice on how to pursue this with younger children?

A: Aren't we really asking our children to "fall in love" with nature and natural phenomena? In our family, nature was and is a part of everyday life. We read adventures that took place in natural areas; we sang songs about nature; we explored things and built things. Talk with local naturalists and educators to get ideas about specific fun things to do that relate to unique natural features in your area. Check the PBS Parents Bookfinder at <http://www.pbs.org/parents/bookfinder/index.html> for stories that will appeal to your children. Don't expect that every activity will lead to a "successful" outcome, at least not at first.

When my oldest child was six, I took him on a naturalist-led night walk in a marsh with a small group of six-year-olds and their parents. The naturalist called attention to all kinds of interesting sounds and smells. After a while, she asked each child to name one thing they saw or heard on the walk. When it was his turn, my son (now a composer and sound engineer) commented about the power-lines that arched over the area and the plane flying by. I wondered what I did wrong! But years later he spent hours trying to figure out the source of a natural sound in an outdoor area near where he was studying, and lately he's been incorporating natural sounds into his music.

After my children graduated from college, I asked them why neither had chosen an environmental career. They were both surprised! Since behaving respectfully towards the environment is so much a part of their lives, they didn't think of it in terms of a career. Enjoying the natural world with your children is the key to their cherishing it. The gift of love lasts a long time.

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Q: Our daughter is about to turn seven. What specific activities do you recommend for a child of her age to get her involved with and interested in her environment, treasuring it for what it can give us?

A: Look for parent/child opportunities to learn together. Learn how to make a bird house with your child or how to make a basket out of local grasses. Introduce your child to people who are passionate about their work. Watch an

arborist or a fish biologist at work. Listen to a story teller tell tales about the night sky or watch an artist make a collage out of natural objects. Encourage your child to tell her own nature stories or make her own nature art. Check with teachers, the school librarian and educators at the local nature center or museum to help identify organized events appropriate for your child's age. You might also volunteer to help in your child's class.

There are many experts who are willing to bring things to show children. You can offer to help organize special opportunities. If there is a wildlife rehabilitation center near your community, professionals may be willing to bring a recovering owl or bird of prey, for example. There may be unexpected resources in the school too.

One year a school district in Wisconsin contacted me for help in promoting a water theme throughout the second grade. Each teacher was willing to provide about 40 minutes for this activity. Here's what we did. We began by asking students to talk about what lived in water, and especially what lived in water near their home and school. Answers were neither right nor wrong (but teachers were invited to follow up later). We talked briefly about why we need water and how much we need (referring to a life-size drawing of a kid filled up to the ears). Then we visited the school's water meter. With the help of the custodian, we figured out how you could tell if someone was using water or not. When the meter moved, we asked the students to suggest how someone might be using water. Finally, we used stop watches and measuring cups to find out how much water ran out of the classroom faucet in one minute. We asked students to predict the answer first, then ended by discussing what they could do in their class to use less water (wash paint brushes out in a tub, rather than let the water run down the drain, for example). This is an example of a hands-on science lesson that you could organize yourself, or volunteer to help a local educator put an event together.

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Q: I teach Ecology to high school juniors and seniors. They are genuinely interested in helping to improve the environment, but seem reluctant to show overt enthusiasm because of peer pressure. Any suggestions?

A: The secret to working with kids (of any age up to 100), is to convert whatever needs to be done into something they especially like to do. Link your idea to one or more teenager life goals: figuring out the meaning of life, getting decent grades in school, getting along with family members, socializing with peers, earning money, doing something that makes a difference.

Using funds from a grant, a Texas high school organized a support network for high ability students who had low grades. Students were paid a small fee to attend after-school sessions several times a week. During the sessions, students

spent an hour on homework and tutoring and an hour or so monitoring a local stream. We interviewed these students and learned that their grades improved, and that they were genuinely excited about their local water quality discoveries. They told us about talking with community leaders regarding local water problems and solutions. ut just as important, the students were able to articulate constructive ideas about their future education and lives.

In our service-learning work, we ask high school students to serve as mentors for middle school students, a status position that puts them in a leadership role - an answer to peer pressure - while doing something that makes a difference. The middle school students make a list of skills they have or enjoy (use computers, draw posters, etc.), and then match that list with specific environmental needs they've identified through asking questions about their home, school, farm or community. When teenagers guide these students, they are often more flexible and imaginative than adult leaders. Teenager energy is just the right ingredient to motivate middle school students to explore, conduct interviews, and decide what to do. (See Give Water A Hand at <http://www.uwex.edu/erc/gwah/for> an example of how to carry out this type of project). Over and over, we see that high school students who recognize that they know what to do and how to do it are enthusiastic about taking action.

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Q: My son is 5 years old, and my husband and I are having a difficult time making the park or bird watching something that's as entertaining to him as a video game and a good movie. I want my child to choose to go for a hike or go outside and play with bugs instead of sitting in front of the TV all day. What should we do?

A: When natural things are a part of a child's everyday life, loving nature will come naturally. Depending on your situation, here are some things to try:

--Do a favorite family activity outdoors as often as possible. This can be anything you like to do anyway - listen to music, play cards, fool around with the dog, play catch, or cook dinner.

--Be curious with your child. Even if you live in an urban area with small patches of grass and an occasional flower or bush as the only spots of nature, you can ask questions that get your child thinking: "I wonder, why is that ant going that direction? What happens if we drop this leaf into this trickle of water - where does it go? Why is this tree bark so rough, and that bark so smooth?"

--Make up stories about what you see. Does a fairy live under this mushroom? Where is the fairy's bed? Where do the fairy's parents go to work?

--Whatever your child enjoys doing - do it outside, with a friend. They can use whatever nature has provided or any of their own favorite games. Take their action figures or doll houses outdoors. Make airplanes or boats out of leaves or bark that have fallen on the ground - how far will they fly, or float? Which goes

the farthest? Go "bowling" with a wiffle ball and pins made of twigs stuck in the dirt.

--Watch something grow and change. If possible, plant something outdoors with your child - a pea, bean or pumpkin seed can be very satisfying. Watch the plant daily to see what happens. How can you tell when a leaf will be "born?" What does a baby leaf look like? Do any insects visit the flowers? What kinds? What does the insect do when it gets there? Where are the seeds? What do they look like?

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Q: How can one explain the effects of global warming and its potential dangers without scaring children?

A: Many things about our world are scary or sad; still, parents want their children to become knowledgeable and responsible citizens. It's important to introduce your child to the world's dilemmas while keeping the child's focus on the "work" of being a child: learning how to play, to have fun and be curious; how to love and how to help others; and how to be respectful of themselves and other living things. Helping children develop qualities that will support them through a lifetime of difficulties may not sound like an "environmental" answer, but flexibility and resilience are part of environmental solutions. Try these ideas:

--Encourage curiosity about how plants, animals and people stay alive. Where does the plant or animal get its water? Where does it sleep at night? How does an animal protect its babies? What happens if these conditions change?

--Talk about connections and what might happen if the connection is broken. Can a polar bear live in a warm place? Can it still catch food? What happens when the polar bear is no longer camouflaged by ice and snow?

--Help solve a problem. The percentage of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere appears to be increasing. One source is fuel combustion. Younger children can help set up a shopping list so the family can reduce the number of trips to the grocery store. Older children can be encouraged to think up questions, then read or talk with adults to learn about solutions. Where do the gases in the air come from? How much carbon dioxide do plants really need? What happens to people or plants if there is extra carbon dioxide?

13. EAGLE CAM NOW ON-LINE

A unique partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Training facility in Shepherdstown, West Virginia and the technology center of The Wheeling Jesuit University is bringing real-time online views of the growth and development of three energetic American bald eagle chicks. The camera is strategically placed directly above their nest on the grounds of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center, a Federal center providing education and training for natural resource managers. The center was conceived by West Virginia Senator Robert C. Byrd and opened in 1997, about 85

miles west of Washington, D.C. near Shepherdstown, WV. A link to the eagle cam and instructions for viewing is at <http://www.fws.gov/nctc/cam/videoinstr.html> .

Video is available for viewing Monday through Friday between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. EDT through mid-June. The duration of the video feed will be determined, in part, by the dates on which the young eagles fledge from their nest and begin to disperse from the area, to hunt and live on their own, independent of their parents. Still photos from the bald eagle cam and a running Web log of their daily activities are available at <http://www.fws.gov/nctc/cam/>.

An educational broadcast and Web cast to schools, "Eagles of the Potomac - View of a Nesting Nursery" was presented by the National Conservation Training Center on April 20. The first egg was laid in the nest on February 9, with the first hatching documented on March 18.

Source: David Klinger, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

14. 4-H TEEN WINS 2005 PRESIDENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH AWARD

A relatively simple but cutting-edge environmental technology known as a "rain garden" became a labor of love for high school senior Kacy Hermans of Midland, Mich. Starting as a 4-H project, the rain garden idea blossomed under Kacy, becoming a full-blown environmental demonstration that will educate thousands of people who visit the Chippewa Nature Center in Midland every year.

Selected as one of the top 10 annual President's Environmental Youth Awards, 18-year-old Kacy always has been involved in environmental stewardship projects since she first joined 4-H. The rain garden she created is the first in her area. "It took a few months to get the gardens completed and operational. I never thought it would go as far as it did. One day I was going to school, and the next day I was meeting the most powerful man in the world," Kacy said.

Environmentalists from around the country are beginning to experiment with rain gardens, which in their simplest form are plots of soil planted with native vegetation that absorb storm water runoff from manmade structures. Some large urban areas have planted rain gardens as a way to limit sewer overflows caused by excess runoff after heavy rains and to modify the urban heat island effect.

Kacy, a senior at H.H. Dow High School, proved that rain gardens can help the environment anywhere buildings interrupt the natural flow of rainwater. Searching for ideas for a 4-H project, Kacy was led to the Chippewa Nature Center, where a 1960s-style, flat-roofed building served as the visitor area. All storm water from the expansive roof and parking lot flushed directly into the nearby Pine River. Nature center officials were concerned about the runoff because the water was warm and raised the river temperature, depleting oxygen.

When Kacy sought a place to build a rain garden, the Chippewa Nature Center readily volunteered. Kacy marshaled local donations of money, labor, equipment and supplies. Local landscaping and excavating companies supported the ground work because they wanted to learn about the rain garden to serve their customers.

First, they dug a 20- by 10-foot plot, three feet deep, along the sidewalk that leads to the visitor's center, then filled it with a mix of sand, topsoil and compost. Then, they planted with Michigan wild flowers and plants such as Joe Pye weed, swamp milkweed and strawberries. Finally, they dug a rock-lined trench from the building's downspout to the garden and installed glass sidewalk panels so that visitors could view the water flow from above. In addition to cooling the runoff from the roof, the rain garden filters out pollutants and percolates water into groundwater.

Kacy's rain garden has become a centerpiece of the nature center's environmental education. Visitors learn about the concept and shown how they can set up simple rain gardens at home. To find out more about the award and the awardees, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/peya2005.html>.

Emily B. Kling, Ed.D.
Extension Specialist, 4-H & Youth Development
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
210 Duncan Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849-5620
PH: (334) 844-2226
FX: (334) 844-2252
CELL: (334) 750-3540
klungeb@auburn.edu

"Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable to the child, as it is to the caterpillar."

--Bradley Miller