

South Carolina Project Learning Tree



Guidelines and By-Laws

(Revised 2021)

Project Learning Tree® is the environmental education program of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc. and sponsored in South Carolina by the S.C. Forestry Commission, the State Department of Education, and the S.C. Forestry Foundation [a 509 (a) (3) non-profit organization].

CONTENTS

I.	ABOUT PROJECT LEARNING TREE	3
A.	MISSION	3
B.	VISION	3
C.	PROGRAM DETAILS	3
II.	PROJECT LEARNING TREE'S SPONSORS	4
A.	NATIONAL SPONSORS	4
B.	NATIONAL PARTNERS	4
C.	SOUTH CAROLINA SPONSORS	4
D.	SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATE SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS	4
III.	SOUTH CAROLINA PROJECT LEARNING TREE STEERING COMMITTEE	5
A.	MISSION	5
B.	ORGANIZATION	5
C.	DUTIES	5
D.	CHAIR'S DUTIES	6
E.	VICE CHAIR'S DUTIES	6
F.	SECRETARY'S DUTIES	6
G.	TREASURER'S DUTIES	6
H.	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S DUTIES	7
I.	SOUTH CAROLINA PROJECT LEARNING TREE COORDINATOR'S DUTIES	7
IV.	PROGRAM GOALS	8
V.	PROGRAM POLICIES AND GUIDELINES	8
VI.	FACILITATOR REWARD PROGRAM	9
VII.	PROGRAM EVALUATION AND REVIEW	10
VIII.	PROGRAM FUNDING, FINANCIAL OPERATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY	10
	APPENDIX A - South Carolina Sponsors, Associate Sponsors and Supporters	A-I
	APPENDIX B – Past SC PLT Steering Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and State Coordinators.	A-II
	APPENDIX C – Organizational Chart	A-III
	APPENDIX D – SC PLT Steering Committee's Budget Guidelines	A-IV

PROJECT LEARNING TREE
South Carolina State Program Guide

I. ABOUT PROJECT LEARNING TREE (PLT)

A. MISSION

PLT advances environmental literacy and promotes stewardship through excellence in environmental education, professional development, and curriculum resources that use trees and forests as windows on the world.

B. VISION

PLT is committed to creating a future where the next generation values the natural world and has the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions and take responsible actions to sustain forests and the broader environment.

C. PROGRAM DETAILS

PLT:

1. Is a national award-winning environmental education program designed for teachers, other educators, and youth leaders working with students in early childhood through grade 12.
2. Uses the forest as a “window” into natural and built environments, helping young people gain an awareness and knowledge of the environment and their place within it.
3. Is a source of interdisciplinary instructional activities and provides workshops and in-service programs for teachers, foresters, park and nature center staff, and youth group leaders.
4. Is people! It is an international network of students, teachers, parents, community leaders, educational administrators, and representatives from the forest and paper industry, resource agencies, and conservation groups.
5. Works in the city and the country, whether there is a forest or a single tree.
6. Helps prepare students to make wise decisions about conservation practices and resource use.
7. Has reached about 500,000 educators and more than 20 million students in all 50 states, several U. S. Territories, Canada, Sweden, Finland, Japan, Brazil, Germany, and Mexico.
8. Has reached 21,415 educators in over 1,018 workshops in South Carolina. (2018)
9. Is correlated to national curriculum standards in mathematics, language arts, science and social studies. Activities also support other national standards from the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), STEM Strategies, National Head Start Association (NHSA), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). PLT also connects directly to other non-formal education programs such as the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, The Private Eye, and Full Option Science System (FOSS).

10. Has been established since 1980 in South Carolina. (See appendices for past chairs and state coordinators).

II. PROJECT LEARNING TREE'S SPONSORS

(See Appendix A and WEBSITE: www.plt.org for list of sponsors and supporters.)

A. NATIONAL SPONSORS

Project Learning Tree® is the environmental education program of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. (SFI) – SFI provides organizational and operational guidelines, facilitator handbooks, activity guides, participation in leadership training, brochures, a national newsletter, THE BRANCH, and national publicity.

B. NATIONAL PARTNERS

11. National Association of Conservation Districts.
12. North American Association for Environmental Education
13. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
14. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
15. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
16. ee360
17. Green Schools Alliance
18. Wildlife Habitat Council

C. SOUTH CAROLINA SPONSORS

Primary SC PLT sponsors include:

1. The South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC)
2. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE).
3. The South Carolina Forestry Foundation (SCFF).

The role of primary sponsors is to provide support (financial and/or personnel) for the administration of PLT on a day-to-day basis. Each primary sponsor shall provide a voting representative on the State Steering Committee.

D. SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATE SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Others may support SC PLT as associate sponsors and supporters by providing the following: facilitators at the supporter's expense, resource personnel, financial support, endorsement of the program, steering and ad-hoc committee participation and workshop sponsorship.

SC PLT will recognize sponsors and supporters in a manner that affords the visibility they earn – while avoiding the perception that the SC PLT program might somehow become subordinated to donor interests. Although funders may be a source of new ideas, innovative methods and inspiration, they do not “pay” to control the content and administration of the SC PLT program.

III. SOUTH CAROLINA PROJECT LEARNING TREE STEERING COMMITTEE

(See Appendix B for past SC PLT Steering Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and State Coordinators and Appendix C for Organizational Chart)

A. MISSION

The mission of the SC PLT Steering Committee is to implement the PLT program statewide by supporting the PLT coordinator and assistant coordinator, providing guidance and support to PLT efforts, participating in PLT outreach events, and advocating for PLT.

B. ORGANIZATION

1. Steering Committee will be composed of representatives from the sponsors, associate sponsors, and supporters. A quorum must be present in order for the Committee to conduct business which requires a vote. A quorum is defined as one-half of the qualified voting members. Changes to By-laws and/or Committee Guidelines require a two-thirds majority of all qualified voting members.
2. New members shall be added to the Steering Committee by an official vote at a Steering Committee meeting. There are no term limits for Steering Committee membership; officer term limits are described below. Steering Committee members may retire from the Steering Committee at any time by providing written notice to the Chair.
3. Steering Committee members shall attend at least 50% of Steering Committee meetings within a 24-month period. The SC PLT Coordinator will review attendance records at the end of every other calendar year; any member not meeting the attendance standard for the previous 24 months will be asked to provide a written affirmation that they are still willing and able to serve. Those failing to provide an affirmation within 30 days of the request will be automatically removed from membership. Steering committee members who represent a state or national partner may designate a proxy from their organization if they are unable to attend a meeting.
4. Steering Committee's elected standing officers shall include: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.
5. The SC PLT Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator shall be voting members of the Steering Committee.
6. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Steering Committee's standing officers and the SC PLT Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator.
7. The SC PLT Outstanding Educator will be invited to serve as a voting member of the Steering Committee immediately following their selection.

C. STEERING COMMITTEE DUTIES

1. Elect a qualified Chair from its membership. A new Chair will be a facilitator and will have served on the Committee for at least two years. Length of term

shall be two years and the Chair may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

2. Elect a qualified Vice Chair from its membership. A new Vice Chair will be a facilitator and will have served on the Committee for at least one year. Length of term shall be two years and automatic advancement to Chair is not required.
3. Elect a qualified Secretary from its membership. Length of term shall be two years.
4. Elect a qualified Treasurer from its membership. Length of term shall be two years.
5. Meet two times a year and additionally as needed.
6. Review and approve program goals, operations, and budget.
7. Support and encourage Coordinator's participation within each member's sphere of influence.
8. Assist in securing public and private sector funding.
9. Assist Coordinator in securing facilitators for workshops.
10. Serve as a resource network for the Coordinator.
11. Appoint Standing and Ad Hoc committee members.
12. Serve on at least one Standing Committee.

D. CHAIR'S DUTIES

1. Chair Committee meetings, disseminate information to Committee members and stay in close communications with the Coordinator.
2. Develop meeting agenda and meeting notifications with PLT Coordinator and Secretary.
3. Provide advice in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order for correct and orderly Committee meetings.
4. Research and advise the Committee on situations not addressed in this Guide.

E. VICE CHAIR'S DUTIES

1. Chair Committee meetings in the absence of the Committee Chair.
2. Serve as primary contact person for Standing and Ad Hoc Committees.
3. Report to Executive Committee results of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees.

F. SECRETARY'S DUTIES

1. Take Committee meeting minutes and disseminate to Committee members.
2. Index key decisions made by the Committee for easy reference in the future.
3. Maintain a historical archive of Steering Committee documents and manage the records retention schedule.

G. TREASURER'S DUTIES

1. Maintain financial records and prepare financial reports for Committee meetings.
2. Receive funds and disburse funds for approved PLT expenses.

3. Serve as a member of the Finance and Resource Development Standing Committee.

H. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S DUTIES (membership defined in III B 6)

1. Review Standing and Ad-hoc Committee reports submitted by the Vice Chair or Committee Chairs and forward to full Committee for approval or action.
2. Take action on routine matters that are identified in the Strategic Plan or as directed by the Steering Committee.
3. Select outstanding facilitator(s) and educator(s) for state and national recognition.

I. SOUTH CAROLINA PROJECT LEARNING TREE COORDINATOR'S DUTIES

The Coordinator's primary responsibilities are to plan, implement, and administer PLT on a daily basis. The primary focus is to promote workshops that will enable educators to use PLT, resource personnel, and conservation materials. These responsibilities include:

1. Selecting, training, scheduling, assisting, and evaluating workshop facilitators.
2. Recommending outstanding educators and facilitators for state and national recognition.
3. Receiving, reviewing, and approving workshop proposals.
4. Providing advice in the development and implementation of statewide publicity campaigns.
5. Securing and providing workshop materials.
6. Developing and maintaining program records and making necessary reports to the National Director and the Steering Committee.
7. Making budget recommendations to the Finance and Resource Development Standing Committee.
8. Developing and administering program evaluations.

J. STANDING COMMITTEES AND DUTIES

1. Educator Training and Development

- a) Implement goals and objectives identified in the SC PLT strategic plan that promote and advance the quality and quantity of educator trainings.
- b) Implement goals and objectives identified in the SC PLT strategic plan that increase the use of the PLT curriculum and materials by educators.

2. Facilitator Training and Development

- a) Implement goals and objectives identified in the SC PLT strategic plan that promote and advance the quality and quantity of facilitator trainings.
- b) Implement goals and objectives identified in the SC PLT strategic plan that strengthen the facilitator network and increase facilitator engagement in SC PLT (including facilitator incentives).

- 3. Marketing and Publicity**
 - a) Implement goals and objectives identified in the SC PLT strategic plan that raise awareness about the PLT program, resources, and trainings.
- 4. Finance and Resource Development**
 - a) Develop and recommend an annual budget to the Steering Committee for approval.
 - b) Ensure finances and expenditures are audited annually.
 - c) Provide oversight to financial processes and procedures to ensure best financial practices are being followed.
 - d) Implement goals and objectives identified in the SC PLT strategic plan that contribute to the financial stability and proper resourcing of SC PLT.

IV. PROGRAM GOALS

The SC PLT program will be guided by the national PLT goals:

- A. Provide students with the awareness, appreciation, skills, and commitment to address environmental issues.
- B. Enable students to apply scientific processes and higher order thinking skills to resolve environmental problems.
- C. Help students acquire an appreciation for and tolerance of diverse viewpoints on environmental issues and develop attitudes and actions based on analysis and evaluation of the available information.
- D. Encourage creativity, originality, and flexibility to resolve environmental problems and issues.
- E. Inspire and empower students to become responsible, productive, and participatory members of society.

Every five years, the SC PLT Steering Committee will update the SC PLT strategic plan to establish local goals and strategies for implementation. The Steering Committee will review this plan at least once each year to evaluate progress and adjust goals as needed.

V. PROGRAM POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

National PLT allows discretion in program implementation at the state level. However, there are policies and guidelines required for participation. These are designed primarily for program continuity and consistency. Specific requirements include:

- A. Minutes of Committee meetings will be forwarded to both the National PLT Office and the SC PLT Steering Committee.
- B. Activity guides will be distributed only in conjunction with a workshop.
- C. Activity guides will not be sold, but shall be given free of charge to workshop participants. Secondary teachers who have completed training may purchase remaining or new modules at cost plus shipping.

D. PLT Facilitators - A PLT facilitator is someone who can lead professional development workshops for educators and train them in the curriculum. There are three ways that you can become a PLT facilitator in South Carolina.

1. In-person facilitator training - will consist of a minimum of two days of program orientation and facilitator skills training. (15 hour minimum)

2. Out-of-state facilitator training – must have been trained by the state PLT program

3. Mentoring program - The mentor is designated by the state coordinator.

- Must attend a PLT educator’s workshop before being considered into the facilitator program.

- Must submit an application to the coordinator to enter the SC PLT mentor program
- Meet with the state coordinator to:

- Discuss experiences and develop a plan for completing the mentoring program. A mentor will be assigned to the prospective facilitator.

- Receive and review the facilitator’s handbook and review the specific requirements for workshops in S.C., expectations and requirements of facilitators.

- Participate in two workshops - Working with the mentor on the planning, delivery, and follow-up of at least two workshops:

- FIRST WORKSHOP: The trainee is expected to lead approximately 30% of the workshop. This could include: conducting the ice breaker, hike through the guide, reviewing the history and goals of PLT, conducting an activity, guiding participants through curriculum planning session or other elements with which they are comfortable. During the remainder of the workshop they should remain involved, contribute to the discussions, assist other facilitators and assist workshop participants. Upon completion of the workshop they should submit a self-evaluation of their participation to the mentor, who will forward that along with the participant and facilitator survey to the coordinator.

- SECOND WORKSHOP: The trainee will lead approximately 60% of the workshop. The role may include any of the elements of the workshop but must include submitting the workshop proposal and agenda to the coordinator for approval, evaluating the workshop (facilitator evaluation) and submitting all workshop evaluation forms to the coordinator. The trainee must also submit a self-evaluation to be compared to the first workshop’s assessment

- Finally: Meet with the coordinator and discuss his/her readiness to serve as a full facilitator. This meeting may be to discuss the interest and availability of the trainee to conduct workshops, to identify additional training needs, and review other details.

The state coordinator will have the right to evaluate the readiness of the trainee and may require additional workshop participation and training as needed.

E. Ideally, a team of facilitators representing education and forestry should conduct workshops. The K-8, E-Unit, and Early Childhood module workshops require a minimum of **three** hours of program orientation and instruction. Secondary modules require a minimum of **four** hours for two modules. (Follow module guidelines.)

F. Recommended contents of K-8 educator workshops shall include a minimum of:

1. Three PLT activities experienced by each participant for a K-8 workshop. South Carolina recommends that at least one activity from each theme be used and that the Standards Correlations be emphasized for teachers.
 2. A variety of learning styles and media (inside, outside, hands on, research/study, inquiry based strategies, etc.).
 3. An overview of PLT mission, goals, curriculum features, themes, and SC PLT Curriculum Standards Correlation.
 4. Information about the national and local sponsors.
 5. An opportunity for participants to plan and implement activities. At least two activities must be led by trained facilitators and at least one activity planned and led by the participants.
- G. The State Coordinator will record participant information, review facilitator surveys, process facilitator reimbursements, and submit professional development event data to the National PLT Office, following review.

VI. Facilitator Reward Program

SC PLT recognizes the integral part active PLT Facilitators play in the success of the state program. Every PLT Facilitator who facilitates or co-facilitates at least one workshop will receive a gift at the end of the calendar year not to exceed \$20 per gift. In addition, SC PLT will award the top three active PLT Facilitators each calendar year. SC PLT will calculate the activity of a PLT Facilitator based upon the following formula:

- 5 points/workshop for being the lead Facilitator
- 3 points/workshop for being a SC PLT EE Center Coordinator, co-Facilitator or working a PLT exhibit table at a conference
- 2 points/ "teaser" PLT presentation (at least 50 minutes) at a conference or meeting

Rewards:

- 1st: All-expense paid opportunity to attend the Annual PLT International Coordinators' Conference the following calendar year (cannot be delayed to the following year) or \$150
- 2nd: All-expense paid opportunity to attend the Annual PLT International Coordinators' Conference the following calendar year (if 1st-place facilitator refuses) or \$125
- 3rd: All-expense paid opportunity to attend the Annual PLT International Coordinators' Conference the following calendar year (if 1st and 2nd-place facilitators refuse) or \$100

A Facilitator can only be awarded the all-expense paid opportunity to attend the Coordinators' Conference every 3rd year. In the event of a tie, the facilitator with the larger total number of participants trained will be the winner.

VII. PROGRAM EVALUTION AND REVIEW

- A. The Coordinator will maintain a record of participant and facilitator participation, which will be summarized in the annual report to the Steering Committee. Funds

permitting, the state program will also participate in any follow-up surveys or questionnaires that may be developed by the national program.

- B. The Coordinator and the Steering Committee shall review the program annually and make necessary changes concerning program goals and program management.
- C. Changes in national and state policies and guidelines will be recorded and attached as an appendix, page change, or pen change to this guide.
- D. Situations not addressed in the current Steering Committee Guide will be referred to the Executive and/or full Steering Committee.

VIII. PROGRAM FUNDING, FINANCIAL OPERATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

(See Appendix D for SC PLT Steering Committee's Budget Guidelines)

- A. The SC PLT program account shall be established within the South Carolina Forestry Foundation. Program funds will remain identified and separate from other activities.
- B. Sponsors and associate sponsors will share costs of program operations and will seek supplementary contributions from other supporters. Supplementary contributions may be direct funding or in-kind goods and services.
- C. Direct expenses incurred by the Coordinator, Committee Members, and facilitators shall be reimbursed according to guidelines established by the Finance and Resource Development Standing Committee. Receipts are required or vendors should be requested to bill SC PLT directly as appropriate.