

# “Open Space” Break-out session – Disconnect Between Young People and Natural Resources

(David Pilla – group leader)

**1. Issue:** The disconnect between young people and the outdoors/natural resources.

## **2. Discussion:**

Project Learning Tree Related discussion:

- ❖ Is PLT being forced out of the schools as a result of pressures to meet standards?
- ❖ There is a need to show PLT as a way to meet standards.
- ❖ Are there opportunities to provide training to teachers toward their certification?
- ❖ “No child left behind” may actually provide an opportunity, as the move for sustained teacher continuing education gives an opening for forestry related training which they can then bring back to the classroom, eg. Efforts of UNH Cooperative Ext./PLT.
- ❖ We need to think of time spent with teachers as an opportunity and benefit to forestry, not a chore. In VT PLT activities are correlated with state educational standards.
- ❖ This year NH PLT focus is on urban schools (including Nashua).

Other classroom related issues:

- ❖ Textbook material being presented as “fact” which isn’t based on science... there is a need to know what curriculums look like.
- ❖ “Outlanders” without ties to the land are more and more the folks making decisions about our schools.
- ❖ More and more schools are not allowing students to leave campus, making a loss of opportunities to get groups out in the field to view management up close and personal.
- ❖ How do we get more foresters in front of students? Teacher tours?
- ❖ More foresters need to simply offer to speak to classes, most teacher will jump at the opportunity!

What’s causing the problem?

- ❖ Other things pulling kids away from the outdoors – video games etc.
- ❖ Fear of the forest! Fear of insect related disease like lyme, and mosquitoes borne illnesses.
- ❖ “Perception” issues, consumptive vs. non consumptive uses, fur vs. fin, etc. is growing.
- ❖ Loss of Tree Farms and their visibility to show good management.
- ❖ Are we losing students from the profession because the “management is the only way” message is pushed too much?

Other ongoing efforts:

- ❖ CT, DEP “No Child left Inside”, tie to state parks, “letter box” on web site.
- ❖ VT interactive c.d.
- ❖ “Managed Mile” at Baxter State Park
- ❖ Feeling there is a need to show what is going on in kids own back yard.
- ❖ Tap into Boyscouts/Girlscouts/Evirothon/FFA

## **3. Conclusion/Findings:**

- ❖ Get these discussion points on the NESAF website, keep the discussion going!
- ❖ Promote the possibility of licensing credits for PLT activities to encourage more forester involvement.
- ❖ Next NESAF meeting, have a track of sessions related to education issues, and bring in teachers.