




ForestryWorks
of North Carolina



 PROJECT
LEARNING
TREE®
NORTH CAROLINA

GROWING

Forestry Education in North Carolina

*By Jessica Ireland, Director of Education Programs and
Abigail Ridge, Education Programs Coordinator*

Education is a central component of the NCFA’s mission to ensure healthy, productive, and sustainable forests. The NCFA’s education programs increase knowledge and awareness of the importance of forests and forestland conservation as well as the contributions of the forest products industry to North Carolina’s economy and environment, bringing a myriad of benefits to our state’s communities and citizens.

High School Forestry Course & Credential

NCFA’s Education Committee is collaborating with the North Carolina FFA team to create a new semester-long high school forestry course. This course will be a part of the North Carolina

agricultural education curriculum through North Carolina’s Department of Public Instruction and will be implemented in the 2024-2025 school year.

In addition, the NCFA is pleased to be a state affiliate of the ForestryWorks® program and is bringing the Forest Worker Credential Program to North Carolina. This credential program prepares students for employment in forestry and was developed in collaboration with the forest industry. Teachers are required to attend a professional development workshop to offer the program and students are required to score 70% or higher on an exam to receive the credential. This program has achieved great success in other states, educating more than 7,500 students and training more than 230 educators since 2017.

Project Learning Tree (PLT)

Project Learning Tree® (PLT) 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 a program of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. PLT is coordinated by North Carolina State University Extension Forestry, in collaboration with the NCFA and the North Carolina Forest Service. Since PLT came to North Carolina in 1986, more than 11,500 educators have participated in PLT professional development. In 2022, 383 educators were trained in North Carolina, and more than 300 were trained in 2023.



North Carolina's PLT coordinator, Renee Strnad, leads an activity at A Time for Science Outdoor Classroom, teaching SFTE participants how to use a Biltmore stick.

The Sustainable Forestry Teachers Experience (SFTE)

SFTE is a professional development workshop for North Carolina educators with opportunities to explore sustainable forestry in our state. Educators tour forests and forestry facilities, learn about sustainable forestry practices in North Carolina, and gain knowledge and resources to bring back to their students. Each summer, the NCFA hosts a series of SFTE programs across North Carolina, providing exposure to the forest products industry in our state. In 2023, 64 educators from across North Carolina participated in the program. ■



2023 SFTE participants visit a logging job at Troy Lumber in Troy, NC.

NCFA EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS

SFTE

BEFORE ATTENDING THE 2023 SFTE:

- Only **3%** of participants stated they had significant knowledge of forestry. After attending, **67%** stated they had significant knowledge.
- Only **25%** of participants stated they were very confident that the forest products' industry in North Carolina operated responsibly. After attending, **61%** were very confident.

“ [I] loved the tours and connections made with other teachers. All [of] the resources gained are going to add to my ability to educate my students about sustainable forestry.” – SFTE Participant

“ Something I will share with friends, colleagues, and students is there are so many careers without needing four-year college degrees! Everyone seems to LOVE what they do and BELIEVE in what they do.” – SFTE Participant

Check our website for additional education resources and programs offered by the NCFA.



PLT

93% of PLT workshop participants who completed the online survey in 2022 stated they felt more confident or much more confident in incorporating topics about the environment into their teaching after attending a PLT workshop, and **97%** would recommend a PLT workshop to a colleague.

“ The [PLT] materials provided are wonderfully applicable to my students. I feel so much more prepared to teach the forestry objectives in my curriculum.” – Piedmont SFTE participant

“ I have been using your materials [throughout] the year and am very grateful for the resources you all provide!” – K-5 outdoor educator at Eno Valley Elementary

Find activities, training and the North Carolina PLT State Coordinator by scanning the QR code.

