

# Branching Out



An Update from New Hampshire Project Learning Tree

July 2009

## Fifth Grade Students Discover the Wonders of the Forest

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Linda Bettony knew her fifth graders needed more opportunities to learn outdoors, but she also knew she needed some help to make it work. Inspired by an article she read last year about a school group visiting HHP, Inc., a hardwood sawmill in Henniker, this teacher from the Gilford Middle School contacted NHPLT to see if she could arrange a similar trip for her class. Linda wanted her students to experience learning in the outdoors and to connect this learning with their curriculum.

With the help of Marcella Perry, Manager for the Middleton Mill in Middleton, and NHPLT Board Chair Sarah Smith, Forest Industry Specialist with UNH Cooperative Extension, a full day of fun forest education was organized. The day was split between a tour of the sawmill and a field day at Jennings Forest to give the students a wide range of experiences.



A student takes notes at the forest wildlife station.

Peggy Herbert, a retired teacher and NHPLT volunteer extraordinaire, visited the students during the prior week to prepare them for the mill tour. The tour was fascinating for students and teachers alike. NHPLT staff and volunteer

professionals including Tom Natale of the NH Division of Forests and Lands, UNH Cooperative Extension Foresters Andy Fast and Deb Goard, and logger Jack Bronnenberg provided learning opportunities at the forest site. Jack logged the property for the Society for the Protection of NH Forests a few years ago and was able to give the students a first-hand look at the responsible decisions he made as he approached the project. There were many signs of wildlife activity on the site to keep the students engaged.



Jack Bronnenberg explains pine cone development.

The day offered students a more intimate look at the forests in their own backyard, and insight into the forest industry and the many individuals whose work connects them to the forest. Linda Bettony summed up the day this way, "Everyone who attended absolutely loved the whole day. We were amazed by the amount of information learned by the children (and the adults!)." The success of the day was truly the result of the combined efforts and skills, talent, and knowledge of all of those involved.

*Dear forest people,*

*Thank you for teaching me everything about the forest and how to measure a tree from diameter to the height. I will never forget how to tell a white pine from a red pine. I never knew! Thank you so much, I had so much fun.*

*-Sincerely, Sarah, 5th grade student at Gilford Middle School*