

## Plan for Conference Attendance

If I were given the opportunity to attend the 2012 NSTA Conference, I would attend most of the sessions from the Pathways to a Sustainable Planet strand.

Here is a list of the sessions that I would have attended at the 2011 NSTA Conference:

- Grades 3–8 Environmental Science in the Field and the Classroom
- Playing with Ecosystem Science: Informal Modeling Games to Explore the Delicate Balance
- You Scream, I Scream, We All Scream for...Algae?
- There's a Whole Lot of Shakin' Goin' On!
- Your Ecological Footprint: Taking Steps to Link Earth Systems Concepts
- SC-12: Exploring Birds and Citizen Science at the California Academy of Sciences
- EarthKAM: Looking at Our Earth from Space
- NSTA Avenue Session: Project-Based Learning Through Disney's Planet Challenge
- The Outdoor Class Study Area—An Integrated Learning Experience
- On the Prairie: Ecological Approaches to Language and Mathematics
- Stream Ecology: Slimy Leaves for Clean Streams
- Plants—From Seed to Seed
- COSEE Session: Linking Our Ocean and Climate Through Innovative Learning Connections: Part 1
- Project Based Learning: A Showcase of Success
- Timing Is Everything! Getting Students Involved in Climate Change Research with Project BudBurst

I enjoy bringing the outdoors to my students. I feel that the classes I have chosen will help me to do that. This year I have signed my classes up to participate in Disney's Planet Challenge. The students came up with a lot of great ideas as they brainstormed for projects to work on. I would like to visit with other teachers about their projects and what it took to make them successful. Recently, I received an invitation to participate in a study of new curriculum regarding Climate Change and Project Budburst. I am excited to be a part of this study. In April, I will be taking an online course through NASA regarding Project Based Learning. This is an important step for me to help my students be more responsible for their learning and understanding. I have also taken part in past COSEE sessions.

I also try to get my students outdoors as much as I can. We have gone fishing, built blue bird houses and planted marsh plants at a state park, gone on a field trip to the Chicago Botanic Gardens (this was through an IDNR Field Trip grant), and on Earth Day we picked up trash on our local bike trail. The students love these experiences and enjoy getting close to nature. Many of them do not have these experiences with their families. We plant seeds, dissect owl pellets, and even hatched quail eggs to put in the wild.

I have been a Boy Scout and Cub Scout leader for the last 10 years. It was these outdoor experiences with the boys that lead me to teaching. We learned about Leave No Trace, cleaned

up trails and our camp with the Order of the Arrow, and learned to respect nature while enjoying all that she has to offer. I love to share stories of our outings with my students hoping to pass my love of the outdoors on to them.

I also teach math. I am trying to bring real world experiences and examples into my math class. Math also fits very well with science. Some of the NASA activities we do put science and math together nicely. I have completed several NASA ePD courses that meld science and math in unique ways. The students really enjoy these challenges.

I feel that attending the NSTA Conference and attending sessions regarding sustaining our planet will help me continue to teach these traits to my students and help them to respect their surroundings as they grow into responsible adults. It will also be helpful to be surrounded by other teachers that have this same mindset that I do. Experiences such as the NSTA conference and networking with my peers can only help me to be a better teacher and to continue to stretch my thinking on what I can do with my students to stretch their thinking.