



Hello Science Education Colleagues,

Below are a few science education resources I've heard about. If you have announcements to share about science or STEM-related professional learning and resources, please send them my way for the next edition. A record of these emails can be found on my website: [dpi.wi.gov/science/social-media](http://dpi.wi.gov/science/social-media).

First, I was excited to hear about the Rib Lake School Forest Day that was held on October 8th. It's an outdoor learning event for elementary and middle school students that connected with lots of community partners, rotating through different areas. Taylor County Land Conservation supported a stream ecology activity. Ice Age Trail Alliance presented about the geology of the forest. A private forester and a DNR forester presented on forest ecology and Smokey Bear's 80th anniversary. Chequamegon Bird Club presented on the birds inhabiting the forest. Martha Danowski, Rib Lake HS science teacher, presented about amphibian animals and their biology. 4-H presented a tree identification talk. The area DNR game warden gave a presentation about predator animals. The Rib Lake Library provided a story time with a forest connection. And there were more! The students and presenters alike look forward to this event every year!



Cheers,

Kevin

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### Resources

- [Lab Safety Checklist](#) from NSTA and Ken Roy
  - [Free Graphics](#) for your science materials
  - [Wheels to Woods](#) - Grants to get students outdoors
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- [Tomatosphere](#) - Plant and research tomato seeds from the ISS
- [Biotech and Observatory Field Trips](#) - through BTC Institute
- [PETA Resources for Dissection Alternatives](#)
- [Nature of Science, Misinformation, and How We Think](#) - thinkingispower.com
- [Why we should grade less frequently and instead focus on feedback](#)

### Student Opportunities

- [Wisconsin Kid Wind Challenge](#) - 3rd-12th Grade - register by Jan 15th
- [Junior Science and Humanities Symposium](#) - register by Jan 31st
- [Engineer Girl Writing Contest](#) - for grades 3-12, due Feb 1

### Details

#### Resources

- Lab Safety Checklist from NSTA and Ken Roy

<https://www.nsta.org/blog/laboratory-instructional-space-safety-checklist> - useful reminders for reviewing your current lab and material practices.

- Free graphics for your science materials

<https://ian.umces.edu/media-library/symbols/> - The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science has a wide range of science vector graphics that you can use for free, only requires attribution.

- Wheels to Woods - Grants to get students outdoors

<https://www.wisaf.org/w2w/> - Wheels to Woods (W2W) provides grants up to \$350 to cover transportation costs to and from a forest or forestry industry field tour for Wisconsin K-12 classrooms. Priority funding goes to underrepresented students. W2W seeks to inspire a more diverse workforce by offering opportunities for students to learn in and about the forests and forest products of Wisconsin. Applications are always open, however there are two review periods each year: Spring and summer trips: Due Dec 31, notified Feb 1, field trips Feb through Sept. Fall and winter trips: Due Sept 15, notified Oct 1, field trips Oct through Jan.

- Tomatosphere - Plant and research tomato seeds from the ISS

<https://www.firsttheseedfoundation.org/program/tomatosphere/> - Tomatosphere is a program that launches tomato seeds into space to the ISS and then sends the seeds to schools. The curriculum has students grow tomatoes (one packet of seeds from space, one not) and compare how they grow and other variables. It's designed for K-8 but could be scaled up.

- Biotech and Observatory Field Trips through BTC Institute

<https://www.btc.org/k-12-programs/biotechnology-field-trips/> - Biotech field trips can take place at Promega in Madison, or they can come to your school. They book fast! There are also new field trips to their observatory - <https://www.btc.org/bell-burnell-observatory/observatory-field-trips/>

- PETA Resources for Dissection Alternatives

<https://www.peta.org/teachkind/humane-classroom/dissection/free-virtual-dissection/> - PETA has a new free, virtual dissection program, TeachKind, that currently has open enrollment to pilot it. It can be useful to give some students a dissection alternative. It includes cats, fetal pigs, frogs, sea life, and more, along with instructional support materials.

- Nature of Science, Misinformation, and How We Think - [thinkingspower.com](http://thinkingspower.com)

[thinkingspower.com](http://thinkingspower.com) – This site includes articles, videos, and solid ideas to support student learning about the nature of science, misinformation, and why people tend to distrust science that doesn't fit their world framework. It includes articles on things like there being [no evidence that the full moon has any affect on behavior](#) and no evidence for astrology (but perhaps you choose to believe these things anyway without any scientific evidence because they fit your worldview?). There are also [specific tools for educators](#). Similarly, I found [this other article on why people deny science](#) (hint - it's psychology, not evidence).

- Why we should grade less frequently and instead focus on feedback

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/why-teachers-should-grade-less-frequently> - useful article from Edutopia to reflect on your own feedback and grading practices!

### Student Opportunities

- Wisconsin Kid Wind Challenge - 3rd-12th Grade - register by Jan 15th

<https://energy.wisc.edu/education/kidwind-challenge> - Register by Jan 15th to bring a team of students to the 2025 KidWind Challenge on March 1, 2025! The KidWind Challenge is a hands-on renewable energy competition that engages students in STEM. Student teams bring small-scale wind turbines or solar devices that they've designed to the Challenge where they will be tested for power output. Teams will meet with a panel of expert judges to present their design process, learn about clean energy careers, and tackle challenge activities at the event. Participation is free. Read this [story](#) and visit the KidWind Challenge [website](#) for more resources and to register. There are also educator webinars noted on the website.

- Junior Science and Humanities Symposium - register by Jan 31st

<https://www.carthage.edu/community/junior-science-and-humanities-symposium/> - The Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JSHS) is a prestigious STEM scholarship competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense. High school students in grades 9-12 from Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula are invited to present their original research in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and the humanistic aspects of science on Sat, Mar 1, 2025. There are fabulous prizes! They don't get a lot of

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students from Wisconsin, unfortunately, but that does mean your students would have a greater likelihood of being awarded. Some ideas here: <https://dpi.wi.gov/science/science-fairs>.

- Engineer Girl Writing Contest for grades 3-12 - due Feb 1

<https://www.engineergirl.org/154382/2025-Writing-Contest-Innovating-Smarter> - Students are asked to write a piece describing a common object that they would make "smart". They describe what it would do, how it would help people, and what could go wrong. There are different guidelines for grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Students of all genders can enter.

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“Science is not a body of facts, [it] is a method for deciding whether what we choose to believe has a basis in the laws of nature or not.” – Marcia McNutt