

tree tips

Natural Resources Education News



Trees For Tomorrow®
Environmental Education Center

...sustaining the world we live in through the science of nature

Summer 2025



Pictured: Shawano Middle School students getting up close with aquatic critters during their SOLE for K-12 adventure! Over 100 students explored the great outdoors with activities like canoeing, night hikes, and hands-on science—connecting with nature, one muddy scoop at a time!

Summer Unplugged—Explore, Discover, Connect.

MUD, MAGIC AND MIND GROWTH page 3

THE IMPACT OF NIGHTTIME on our environment and health
page 6

EXPLORING CONNECTIONS that last beyond a week page 7



from the desk of
Cheryl Todea, Executive Director



A Season of Connection

At Trees For Tomorrow, we believe summer is a great time to unplug—to explore the outdoors, discover new things, and connect more deeply with the people and world around us. For me, nature has always been a grounding force—a place of inspiration, clarity, and joy. Whether it's the simple wonder of watching a butterfly land on my sleeve or seeing the spark in a student's eyes when they learn something by doing at TFT, the natural world offers endless opportunities to slow down and rediscover what truly matters.

This spring, I experienced one of those powerful moments of connection in my own life: I got engaged! And in a way that felt perfectly fitting, it happened right here on TFT's campus—surrounded by

nearly all the Trees For Tomorrow staff. It was more than just a personal milestone. It was a moment rooted in a place I consider my second home, shared with people I consider family.

That sense of family—of connection and shared purpose—is what inspires me every day in this role. Whether I'm leading our team or reaching out to donors who make our work possible, I'm constantly motivated by the relationships that form through our programs: between students and the natural world, between supporters and the mission, and between the people who show up every day to make it all happen.

This spring also brought another deeply meaningful moment: I was honored with the Mully Taylor Award for 25 years of service at TFT. Mully, our founding executive director, built the foundation of what TFT is today, and reconnecting with his family in the past few years made the recognition even more special. It reminded me how far we've come—and how strong our roots truly are. As we move into this unplugged season, I hope you'll find your own moments to explore, discover, and connect—just as I have, both personally and professionally. Thank you for being part of the TFT family.



Pictured: Trees For Tomorrow Executive Director Cheryl Todea receives the 2025 Mully Taylor Award from Board President Dan Kalupa—TFT's highest honor recognizing outstanding dedication to environmental education and leadership. Named after TFT co-founder and first director Melvin "Mully" Taylor, the award celebrates those who carry forward his legacy of conservation, sustainability, and transformative learning.

Trees For Tomorrow®
Environmental Education Center

Trees For Tomorrow, Inc. is a private 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible as permitted by law. Equal opportunity employer.



2025-2026 Board of Directors

- **President:** Daniel Kalupa, Bulkley Dunton
- **Vice President:** Tim Loehrke
- **Treasurer:** Joe Huber, Lyme Great Lakes Timberlands
- **Secretary:** Rebekah Luedtke, Wisconsin County Forests Association
- Ahlstrom, Brad Mischler
- Applied Materials Solutions, Inc., Dean Athans
- Asplundh, Jake Roelse
- ATC, Amy Lee
- Billerud, Tim Nordin
- The Boldt Company, Tony Meeuwsen
- BPM Inc., Dan Hietpas
- Domtar-Rothchild, Don Nelson
- Futurewood Corporation, Ben Hansen
- Georgia-Pacific Consumer Products, Tim Jadin,
- Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association, Henry Schienebeck
- Leader Paper, Steve Hipp
- Lignetics, Andrew Reinemann
- Louisiana-Pacific, Chris Weber
- MillTown Paper, Inc., Trent Duerr
- Packaging Corp of America, Jim Hoppe
- ProCon, Jeff Carew
- Procter & Gamble, Jessica Geurts
- Steigerwaldt Land Services, Josh Burling
- Warehouse Specialists, WSI, Scott Van Zeeland
- WEC Energy Group, Larry Axlen



Trees For Tomorrow's campus includes National Forest property under permit from the USDA Forest Service. Private property owned by Trees

For Tomorrow (TFT), the Wisconsin Newspaper Association and Tara Lila LLC are also utilized for education and outreach purposes.



Article by Amie Raynor,
Environmental Educator

MUD, MAGIC AND MIND GROWTH



New in 2025: Trees For Tomorrow summer day camps now offer full-day programs each week—giving families more flexibility and kids more time to learn, explore, and play outdoors.

Learning in Nature

Have you ever wondered what that “bug” is—or why it’s even there? Or asked, “What animal is that?” and “What happens to that animal in different seasons?”

Have you ever thought, they won’t understand, they’re too young? You’re not alone. We all think it at some point—even if we say we don’t.

Learning in nature is especially important for young children because the early years of life are the most critical for brain development. From birth to age 8, a child’s brain is like a sponge—this is when we can make the biggest impact. Young children learn quickly and are naturally curious.

That’s why hands-on experiences are the most effective way to teach them. Learning through nature not only engages their senses but also supports physical and mental wellbeing. It helps kids better understand the world—and their place in it.

At Trees For Tomorrow, we center our learning around the outdoors. Nature is always available to us, no matter where we live—and we’re fortunate to be surrounded by it.

In 2025, our summer day camps run June through August and offer engaging, nature-based programming for children ages 3 to 12

- **KinderWild** (ages 3–5)
- **Jr. S.E.E.K.** (ages 6–7)
- **S.E.E.K.** (ages 8–12)

New this year: Each program runs as a full-day experience one day per week, providing more time for deep exploration and fun, while giving families a more convenient and affordable option—all for just \$50 per child, per day.

In these programs, kids explore topics like animal homes, weather patterns, and yes—scat (poop)! They love it. This summer, we’ll explore canoing, archery, bogs, animal signs, raptors, reptiles, and much more.



TFT educator Amie introduces a KinderWild group to one of TFT’s ambassador animals—bringing learning to life through up-close nature experiences.

As an educator who works closely with our youngest learners, my goal is to help them dive into nature—messy, muddy, and full of hands-on experiences.

When children step outside to explore, their creativity comes alive. I recently attended a DPI (Department of Public Instruction) Early Education Conference

where we discussed new ways to teach and inspire. One book I’m currently reading, *When You Wonder, You’re Learning*, traces its roots back to Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood. It reminds us that kindness, curiosity, and connection—with neighbors, with nature, and with one another—are some of the most powerful tools we have to help children grow.

ON THE COVER: Spring/Summer = Critter Catching Season at Trees For Tomorrow!

Students gear up with dip nets and head to nearby waterways to collect aquatic critters from stream, lake, and pond substrates. What they’re really catching? Clues about water quality.

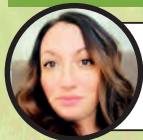
These macroinvertebrates—think dragonflies, mayflies, snails, and even leeches—play a key role in the aquatic food web and serve as “canaries in the coal mine” for environmental health. This means that the presence (or absence) and abundance of certain macroinvertebrate species can indicate issues within the stream or lake such as pollutants, dissolved oxygen levels, temperature, or other water quality indicators.

By identifying and tallying what they find, students use a dichotomous key and calculate a biotic index to assess water quality. It’s hands-on science that brings ecosystems to life—and shows students how even the smallest creatures can tell a big story.

We’re Social! Follow, like and share us on your favorite social media sites



TREE TIPS /3



from the Operations Manager
Mandy Gingerich

On Campus: SOLE is More Than a Field Trip; It's a Foundation

At Trees For Tomorrow, we believe summer is a time to unplug from devices and reconnect with what truly matters—nature, curiosity, and community. Our 2025 summer theme, Explore, Discover, Connect, captures the essence of what outdoor education should be: immersive, hands-on, and transformative.

During the first quarter of 2025, we proudly welcomed 1,192 participants across all our programs. Even more exciting, five new schools joined the Trees For Tomorrow experience—thanks to the persistent outreach of our internal School Engagement Committee. Our latest program mailings have sparked renewed interest in both our overnight and day programming, opening the door to broader educational impact across Wisconsin and beyond.

These numbers are more than just attendance—they represent lives enriched through meaningful, place-based learning. Our programming is rooted in the belief that direct experiences in nature

foster a deeper understanding of environmental stewardship, critical thinking, and personal growth. When students explore trails, discover ecosystems, and connect with their peers in the forest, they're not just gaining knowledge—they're building values that last a lifetime.

The growing interest in our offerings has even sparked early conversations about expanding outreach statewide.

While still in the planning stages, this potential growth speaks to the relevance and importance of what we do: creating space for young people to step away from screens and step into learning that's real, rooted, and lasting.

At Trees For Tomorrow, we're not just educating—we're cultivating curiosity, responsibility, and connection. That's why our work matters.



Paddles up! In SOLE for K12, that usually means someone needs help or has a question—but this time, it's just for fun (and the John Dewey photo op)!

New SOLE Materials: Making Every Footprint Count



Got SOLE? We do—and we're stepping up our game!



To help participants recognize and remember their experience in our SOLE (Student Outdoor Learning Experiences) for K-12 programming, we've launched a fresh wave of branded materials. From eye-catching t-shirts to SOLE and Alumni stickers, students now have tangible reminders of their time at Trees For Tomorrow. There are also large banners displayed in each classroom.

These materials aren't just souvenirs—they're conversation starters and lasting symbols of the importance of natural resource education. Our goal is that long after the trip ends, students continue to reflect on their experience and understand that every footprint in nature—and in life—truly matters.

A Day to Remember On the Green

On May 30th, we hosted our 23rd Annual Golf Outing Fundraiser—and it was one for the record books. We welcomed our **maximum capacity** of 132 golfers and raised more than **\$40,000** in net proceeds, setting a new fundraising record for this event! But beyond the numbers, it was a day filled with gratitude, camaraderie, and community.

I had the privilege of helping with registration first thing in the morning, which meant I got to greet each and every golfer as they arrived. It was such a joy to see familiar faces and new supporters alike, all ready to tee off for a great cause. Throughout the day, I walked the

course to check in, say thank you, and soak in the energy and generosity of our Trees For Tomorrow family.

From the early morning coffee to the final prize drawing, the day was a powerful reminder of what makes this event so special—not just a day on the course, but the shared commitment to outdoor education and the future of our natural world.

Thank you to every golfer, sponsor, volunteer, and staff member who made this day such a success. We truly couldn't do this without you.



~Cheryl Todea

Sneak Peek

Exciting Things in Store for 25/26!

Expanding SOLE: New Audiences, New Adventures!

We're excited to grow our SOLE (Student Outdoor Learning Experiences) programming to reach even our youngest learners! As part of TFT's 5-Year Strategic Plan, our educators are developing an early childhood curriculum tailored to spark curiosity and wonder in nature's youngest explorers. *Stay tuned—our littlest learners are about to get a big dose of outdoor discovery!*

Community Programs – Get Outside with Us for an Outdoor Adventure!

Our partnership with Tara Lila, LLC and the Aylward Family continues to bring free seasonal guided hikes to the public. Join us on the trails for unique educational experiences in the beauty of the Northwoods.

Teacher Retreat – August 2026

We're bringing back our Teacher Retreat after a successful launch in 2024! This immersive professional development

opportunity is designed to help teachers:

- Strengthen skills in scientific nature study
- Connect a TFT experience back to classroom learning
- Overcome challenges to attending SOLE programs

Best of all? It's completely FREE!

Teachers apply now to secure your spot: treesfortomorrow.com/Teacher-Retreat

And don't miss the return of FOREST FEST

Mark your calendars for:

- Saturday, July 25, 2026
- 9 AM - 3 PM
- Trees For Tomorrow Campus

It will be a day full of celebrating all things forest: visit our campus to learn about forest management, see forestry demos in action, and maybe even meet Smokey Bear! *Those interested in being an exhibitor or demonstrator can contact Mandy@treesfortomorrow.com.*



Who Didn't Make the Annual Report But Should Have

While this year's annual report highlighted many of our generous corporate and individual donors, a few were inadvertently left out. We've included them below to ensure they receive the recognition they deserve. Thank you to all of our supporters—your contributions make our work possible.

Corporations & Foundations 2024

BPM, Inc.
Bulkley Dunton
Domtar-Rothschild
Futurewood Corp.
Eagle Craft & Hobby
Grandma's Toybox
Incredible Bank
Klinner Insurance
Lyme Great Lakes
Timberlands
Packaging Corp.
of America
Peoples State Bank
Society of American
Foresters
Veritiv/Bulkley Dunton
Individuals
Valerie Abrams

Randy Bahr
Robert Bjork
Journeys Convention
Steve Dahl
Robert & Jean
Grafwallner
Dennis & Linda
Grignon
Chris Holperin
Robert Mikkelsen
Tom Obukowicz
Roger Pluedeman
Mark Puls
David & Kristine
Sexton
Jay & Dawn Spaulding
Jeremy VanCamp
Mary Beth Walton
Chris Westfall
Amy M. Willard

northbound

A Forum for Natural Resource Issues & Education

A Tree Tips supplement since 1984



Article by Jenny Sadak,
Education Manager

The Impact of Nighttime on our Environment and Health

Night hikes are one of my favorite activities we offer at TFT and are often a favorite of many participants too. We lead small groups through the forest at night while doing various sensory activities that connect to discussions about nocturnal animal adaptations. We begin at sunset and end in complete darkness...no lights allowed! During my night hikes, after participants have the opportunity to sit silently in the dark for several minutes, we gather together, and I talk to them about the importance of natural darkness and how darkness is a natural resource worth conserving.

We generally think of dark night skies as a scenic resource, valued by professional and amateur astronomers as well as casual stargazers. Often forgotten is the importance of natural darkness for ecological function and overall human health and wellness. A naturally dark sky is integral to many natural processes and since the invention of electric light, the night has been getting progressively brighter.

Light pollution is the human-made alteration of outdoor light levels from those occurring naturally. When we over-light, fail to use timers and sensors, or use the wrong color of light, we can negatively affect many parts of our world, including migratory birds, pollinators, sea turtles, and mammals, including humans. Light pollution can come from cities, outdoor

lighting, electronic advertising, parking lots, and many other sources. Fortunately, there's a growing awareness that the ways we stave off the dark can have harmful effects too.

Effects of Light Pollution

Wildlife and Ecosystems

Nocturnal animals sleep during the day and are active at night. Light pollution radically alters their nighttime environment by turning night into day. Predators use light to hunt, and prey species use darkness as cover. Glare from artificial lights can also impact wetland habitats that are home to amphibians such as frogs and toads, whose nighttime croaking is part of the breeding ritual. Birds that migrate or hunt at night navigate by moonlight and starlight. Artificial light can cause them to wander off course and toward the nighttime landscapes of cities. Every year millions of birds die colliding with illuminated buildings and towers. Migratory birds depend on cues from properly timed seasonal schedules. Artificial lights can cause them to migrate too early or too late and miss ideal climate conditions for nesting, foraging, and other behaviors.

Many insects are drawn to light, but artificial lights can create a fatal attraction. Light pollution directly interferes with multiple insect species' development, movement, foraging, and reproductive success. Declining insect populations negatively

impact all species that rely on insects for food or pollination.



Light pollution can dim the magic of fireflies—too much artificial light disrupts their ability to find mates and communicate.

Tree Health

Trees are just some plants that can be affected by light shining on them every hour of every day. Trees use sunlight for energy, but they also use it as a signal. This signal helps them regulate their growth and seasonal changes. A study conducted in Poland found that artificial light at night caused trees to develop their buds faster. Leaf development was also affected as that process was accelerated by 20 days due to the level of light pollution. They also concluded that exposing trees to light can affect their nutrient content. Trees are central to many insect and bird survival, but they also provide a necessary urban canopy to protect humans by mitigating heat and cleaning our air. Protecting them by lowering the light levels is just one way to ensure these pillars of our ecosystem can thrive in our neighborhoods and cities.

Crime and Safety

There is no clear scientific evidence that increased outdoor lighting deters crimes. It may make us feel safer, but it has not been shown to make us safer. Outdoor lighting is intended to enhance safety and security at night, but too much lighting can actually have the opposite effect. Visibility should always be the goal. Glare from bright, unshielded lights decreases safety because it shines into our eyes and constricts our pupils. This can not only be blinding, but it also makes it more difficult for our eyes to adjust to low-light conditions. Smart lighting that directs light where it is needed creates a balance between safety and minimizing our impact.

Human Health

Research suggests that artificial light at night can negatively affect human health. With increased light at night, our biological clock fails to do its job. This can have long-lasting effects and can lead to a lot of health consequences down the road, like cognitive decline, heart disease, and cancer. It has to do with how light inhibits the production of melatonin, an essential hormone regulating our sleep cycle. Further studies conducted by Harvard Medical School found that blue light (emitted from electronics or LED lights) at night is more potent at suppressing the secretion of melatonin, suppressing it twice as long as other forms of light.

Night Sky Heritage

The natural night sky is our common and

universal heritage, yet it's rapidly becoming unknown to the newest generations. More than 80 percent of the world's population lives under light-polluted skies, and more than one-third of all human beings can't see the famed Milky Way. On an existential level, we are disconnected from the night sky now more than ever. Dark skies give us more opportunities to connect with nature, for indigenous communities to reclaim their connections to the night sky, and for darkness and the stars to be accessible to all those that live under it.

Dark Sky Places

The International Dark Sky Places program was founded in 2001 with Flagstaff, Arizona as the first officially accredited Dark Sky Place. The program is designed to create physical spaces to encourage enjoyment of the night sky and to educate communities on best practices when it comes to lighting policies. There are five different designations for the possible types of dark places: communities, parks, reserves, sanctuaries, and urban night sky places. Each designation comes with its own criteria.

The process often starts with one individual who gathers a community around them and says, "look, we have something special here that we value: darkness. We value the night, and we don't want light pollution to grow here." As more communities rally to protect the night sky, more official dark places are created.

Wisconsin has a designated Dark Sky Place, Newport State Park on the tip of the Door Peninsula. Recognizing the value of its dark skies, for the past 25 years the Park has undertaken public outreach and education on astronomy and the importance of natural darkness to local wildlife. Newport was designated as a Dark Sky Park in 2017. See more about DarkSky International at <https://darksky.org/>



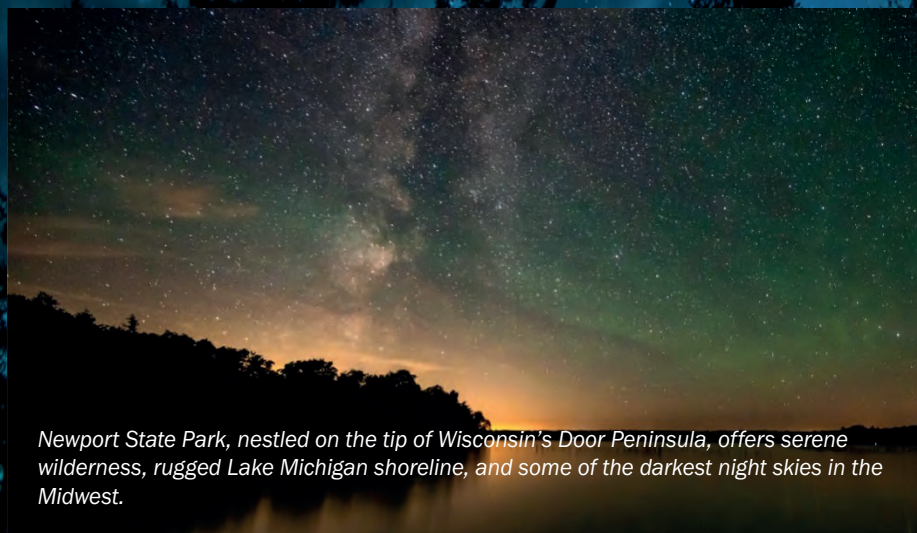
How We Can Reduce Light Pollution

Light pollution has a fairly obvious fix: just reduce the amount of light. We can continue the activities we want to do outside at night, while still protecting the planet and reducing light pollution overall. There are five principles for lighting, and if people follow those, we would make quick strides in reducing light pollution.

1. Only light necessary areas
2. Use shielded lights that face downward
3. Control brightness levels
4. Use warm-colored lights
5. Control how long lights stay on through dimmers, motion sensors and timers

By applying these principles, properly designed electric lighting at night can be beautiful, healthy, and functional. Projects that incorporate these principles will save energy and money, reduce light pollution, and minimize wildlife disruption.

I hope you better understand the significance of preserving the dark night sky for wildlife, plants, and human health and well-being. The night sky is a natural, cultural, and historic resource that closely intertwines humankind with the nocturnal environment. Get outside this summer and enjoy the night – no lights allowed.



Newport State Park, nestled on the tip of Wisconsin's Door Peninsula, offers serene wilderness, rugged Lake Michigan shoreline, and some of the darkest night skies in the Midwest.

Summer Unplugged: **Exploring Connections That Last Beyond the Week**

Each summer, students arrive at Trees For Tomorrow (TFT) for Natural Resource Careers Exploration Week (NRCEW) ready to unplug from their screens and immerse themselves in nature. What they leave with often goes far beyond knowledge of forest ecology or fish and wildlife management – it is a lasting connection to the natural world, to each other, and to a possible future career.

This spring, Trees For Tomorrow's Advisory Council reconnected with NRCEW alumni from 2017 to 2019 to better understand the long-term impact of their experiences. Through phone calls and email, Council members heard stories of students who still carry a deep appreciation for sustainability and who credit the program with broadening their awareness of natural resource careers. Many shared how meaningful it was to meet peers who share their interests—something that helped them feel seen and inspired.

As one alumnus put it, “TFT opened my eyes to paths I didn't know existed. It gave me a sense of direction and belonging.”

These conversations are more than nostalgic check-ins. They're shaping how TFT supports alumni, develops future program materials, and builds a vibrant community that extends well beyond the week on campus. Plans are in place to keep alumni engaged through volunteer opportunities and storytelling in TFT communications.

It's a reminder that when students take time to explore, discover, and connect, even for just one unplugged summer week, the impact can last for a lifetime.

From Eye-Opening Experience to a Life in the Outdoors

Claire, a 2019 alumna of TFT's Natural Resources Career Exploration Week (NRCEW), is a shining example of how just a few days immersed in the natural world can shape a young person's future. Her time at TFT was, in her words, “so well organized and had so many incredible speakers and field trips. I got my money's worth for certain.” She recalls that “the hands-on activities with people who work in, and are passionate about, their careers in a natural resources field made me realize all the opportunities to work in an outdoor-focused career.”

Following NRCEW, Claire attended the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, beginning in conservation law enforcement before switching to soil science—a path that aligned more closely with her growing interest in the natural world. After graduating, she hiked the entire Appalachian Trail, then went on to work



Claire and a fellow NRCEW alum making memories in Montana—bringing home their Christmas tree.

as a soil scientist with the federal government. Though she is no longer with the Forest Service due to recent federal staffing cuts, Claire continues to seek outdoor-focused work and adventures.

Her journey has been deeply influenced by the friendships she formed at TFT. One close friend she met that week, Lydia, became her roommate in Stevens Point. Together, they've shared countless camping trips, cross-country ski adventures in the Porcupine Mountains, and hiking trips across Montana—including one memorable trek to cut down a Christmas tree.

Claire first learned about TFT through her high school counselor, and her experience left a lasting impact—not just on her, but on her family as well. Her parents, inspired by the transformation they saw in her, became donors to Trees For Tomorrow, calling the program “incredibly affordable” given the value it delivered.

Claire continues to stay connected to the TFT community through Facebook, emails, and texts. Her story is a testament to the power of immersive, hands-on learning and the lifelong ripple effects a single week at Trees For Tomorrow can create.



Former NRCEW student Claire hikes the Appalachian Trail, proving that a love for the outdoors can take you anywhere.

Make a Lasting Impact

Sponsor a Local School's Trip to Trees For Tomorrow

Looking for a way to make a real, lasting difference in your community? Help bring your local school to Trees For Tomorrow—where learning leaps off the page and into the forest.

For 80 years, Trees For Tomorrow (TFT) has delivered transformative, science-based environmental education in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Our immersive, overnight and day programs take students out of the classroom and into the woods, where they build critical thinking skills, strengthen peer relationships, and connect with nature in ways that textbooks simply can't provide.

But the reality is: not every school can afford this opportunity. Rising costs and shrinking budgets are putting life-changing outdoor learning experiences out of reach for many students.

When you sponsor a school to attend TFT, you do more than fund a field trip—you open the door to:

- A deeper understanding of natural resources and sustainability.
- Increased self-confidence, independence, and teamwork.
- A spark of curiosity that can fuel a future career in science, conservation, or forestry.
- Unforgettable memories that stick with students for life.

Just ask Madi, a middle school student, who recently attended TFT thanks to a

generous sponsor. Madi says she loved getting to see the night sky, sitting around the campfire, and spending time outdoors.

But the biggest impact? She got to work alongside classmates she wouldn't normally talk to—learning how others think, collaborate, and contribute. That kind of personal growth doesn't come from a desk.

Why sponsor TFT—not somewhere else?

TFT isn't just another outdoor camp. It's a fully accredited, non-profit environmental education center with seasoned,

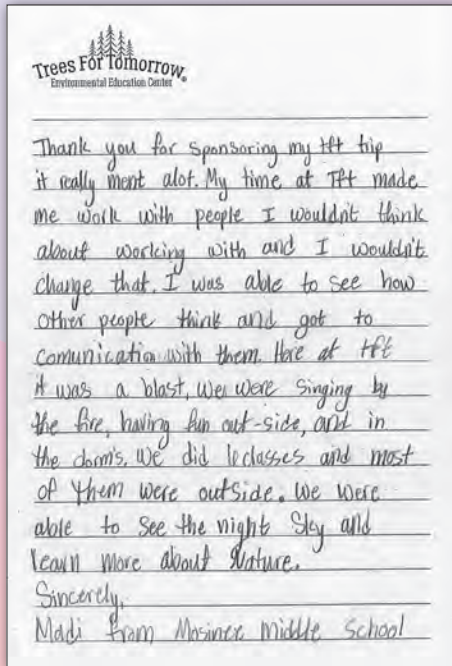
professional educators, a rich curriculum aligned with academic standards, and a legacy of excellence in hands-on learning. We host over 3,000 students annually, and surveys show our programs increase students' knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of the natural world.

When you give, you're investing in a proven program that's rooted in science, powered by nature, and made possible by people like you.

Ready to plant the seed?

Sponsor a full class, help cover travel expenses, or contribute to our TFT4All scholarship fund. You'll be recognized for your generosity—and even more importantly, you'll help students like Madi grow in confidence, curiosity, and connection.

Learn more at treesfortomorrow.com/sponsor or call 715-479-6456. Let's bring outdoor learning to life—together.



Margie and Olivia from our dining hall team surprised Executive Director Cheryl with a special sheet cake to celebrate her recent award—served with a side of smiles and sweetness!

Nourishing Minds and Bodies at TFT

At Trees For Tomorrow, learning happens outside—but the real fuel often comes from inside the kitchen! Our dedicated kitchen staff goes above and beyond to provide hearty, delicious meals that keep students, teachers, and visitors energized for full days of exploration.

Whether it's preparing breakfast for 60 students, accommodating allergies and dietary restrictions, or crafting a special menu for a private event, our team brings care, creativity, and flexibility to every plate they serve.

Have a special request for your upcoming program, rental, or event? Let us know! Our kitchen team is happy to work with you to create a meal experience that meets your needs.

fun fact We serve over 10,000 meals each year on campus—each one made with purpose and a whole lot of heart.

Financial Audit for TFT-No Fear Here!

Hold on to your hats as I take you on an exciting trip through the world of TFT finances!

TFT just completed an audit for our 2024 financials. What does this mean, how is this different than other years and why did we do this?

Financial Review vs. Financial Audit:

Financial Review: Our normal procedure is having our accountants do a year-end review. They request information from us and get access to our entire accounting program. Taking the information, they create a "Financial Review" which they present at the annual meeting. A financial review takes things as they are, and no opinion is expressed on procedures or content of the financials as they are presented.

Financial Audit: Per our TFT Fiscal Policies and Procedures, "TFT will undergo a full financial audit by an external CPA firm every five to seven years, or as required by state or federal regulation." Why would any organization go through the added expense, time and effort to do an audit? There are state and federal grants that

mat require an audit. And there can also be cause when there is suspected fraud or mishandling of an organization's finances.

For TFT, we agree it simply is good practice to have an audit. It ensures we are following best accounting practices and following our fiscal policies and procedures as approved by our board of directors. The audit was conducted over two days and myself as Office Manager, Cheryl Todea, Executive Director and Mandy Gingerich, Operations Manager, all had a part in providing information and answering questions.

During the audit, the audit team looked at the entire organization. Some of the documents asked for were By-laws, lease agreements, contracts, policies and procedures. They asked for the usual financial information and took an in-depth look at how financial tasks are performed, who has responsibility for authorizing purchases etc. and to check that our policies and procedures are followed.

Audit results and Why it's Important:

The results are all good! The audit team

complimented us on the timeliness and completeness of our responses. They did not see anything of note that was inconsistent with our established policies, or anything egregious with our reporting.

It's not just the Office Manager (bookkeeper) that is responsible for the results. It takes everyone following the policies and realizing the importance as a non-profit organization that finances are tracked and reported correctly.

As a donor, or someone who has attended a program or an alumni of TFT you can rest assured that as an organization, we take the tracking of our finances seriously, and are using established protocols. A successful audit reiterates our commitment to proper financial reporting. We are proud of this and you should be too!



Article by Juli Welnetz,
Office Manager



Explore, Learn, and Celebrate with TFT This Season!

There's still plenty of time to connect with nature and community before the year ends—check out the exciting programs happening at Trees For Tomorrow!

Sustainable Living Institute (SLI)



Our SLI series continues with hands-on learning experiences focused on sustainability and self-reliance. Whether you're curious about raising backyard chickens (June 21) or identifying and foraging wild mushrooms (August 28), there's a program for you! These Sustainable Living Institute workshops are perfect for lifelong learners and nature lovers looking to explore something new.

Outdoor Adventures at Tara Lila



Trees For Tomorrow teamed up with Tara Lila LLC to showcase the magic of nature on the trails! Join us for free outdoor programs at Tara Lila properties—each one offering a unique chance to explore the beauty of the Northwoods landscape.

- Geology Walk – July 19
- Summer Hike – August 23
- Fall Hike – September 13

Wreath Making Workshop November 8th

One of our most beloved traditions is back! Join us for our annual wreath-making workshop where you'll craft a

fresh, fragrant holiday wreath using natural materials. Bring your creativity, a friend, and your holiday spirit—this event fills up fast!

Candlelight Hike – December 31st

Ring in the new year, TFT-style! Say goodbye to 2025 and welcome 2026 with a candlelight hike, campfire and festive treats. It's a wonderful way to celebrate in the great outdoors.

Stay Connected

Space is limited, so be sure to register early! Visit treesfortomorrow.com/current-activities.



Exciting Progress on the Outdoor Classroom

Since our last newsletter update this past winter, we are thrilled to report progress on the John & Melissa Besse Outdoor Classroom. Thanks to strong community partnerships and general support, we continue to move steadily toward our goal of a 2025 groundbreaking.

Access to the construction site is now fully cleared, with tree removal and stump grinding completed by Asplundh, and a hardworking team of students from Blackwell Job Corps assisting with cleanup. This critical step paves the way for building to begin as resources come together.

We are also excited to share that in addition to the supporters who already have committed time, dollars, and product towards the project, we extend a warm welcome and sincere thanks to our new cash sponsors, We Energies Foundation, Pukall Lumber Foundation, and Karen Willman-Jung, for their generous support.

Behind the scenes, our partners at Boldt Construction, who are leading the build, continue to actively secure products—many of which are being donated and finalize the site plan. Their dedication and expertise are key to bringing this project to life.

This classroom and community pavilion will soon serve as a hub for outdoor learning, events, and connections with nature. We're grateful for every helping hand and look forward to keeping you updated as construction begins.

Stay tuned—more exciting milestones are just around the corner!

JOHN & MELISSA BESSE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

est. 2025

The new outdoor classroom at Trees For Tomorrow is being designed to complement the natural surroundings. From native plants to locally sourced materials, the space will feel like an extension of the forest itself.



Asplundh's skilled crew uses precision techniques to fell select trees while minimizing impact on the surrounding forest.



Thanks to Asplundh for helping to remove trees and grind stumps as we prepare the site for the new outdoor classroom!



Blackwell Job Corps students are brushing up on their skills—literally and figuratively—as they help clean up the outdoor classroom site.

Studies show that students who learn outside are more engaged and retain information better. TFT's outdoor classroom provides the perfect setting for hands-on exploration in forestry, wildlife, water science, and more—all under the canopy of the Northwoods.



Help Us Grow the Outdoor Classroom!
Scan the QR code to make a donation and support hands-on, nature-based learning for future generations. Every gift—big or small—makes a difference!



Trees For Tomorrow®

Environmental Education Center

519 E. Sheridan Street, PO Box 609
Eagle River, WI 54521

Nonprofit Org.
PRSRT STD
Permit No. 26
Eagle River, WI 54521

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



Our Mission

Trees For Tomorrow promotes sustainable natural resources management through transformative,, real-life educational experiences.



Please send editorial comments
& suggestions to:
TreeTips@TreesForTomorrow.com
(715) 479-6456



YES! I Want to Support Trees For Tomorrow

As a private, nonprofit residential environmental education center, we rely on donations from people like you to support our educational efforts. THANK YOU for making a difference.

☐ **YES! I want to have an important impact on Trees For Tomorrow's legacy of preparing today's youth to be tomorrow's stewards of our natural world!**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ \$250 | ☐ \$2,500 |
| ☐ \$500 | ☐ Other |
| ☐ \$1,000 | \$ _____ |



Every \$1 donated is 12 more minutes a student explores the science of nature at Trees For Tomorrow!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Payment Method: ☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Credit Card # _____ Expiration date: ____/____/____ CSC#: _____

Please complete this form and return it with your donation to:
Trees For Tomorrow, P.O. Box 609, Eagle River, WI 54521

OR donate online at:
www.TreesForTomorrow.com



Summer 2025