



# OUTDOOR EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

Niki Paganelli



# Niki Paganelli

5th Grade Teacher  
North Canton Elementary  
Haywood County Schools

[npaganelli@haywood.k12.nc.us](mailto:npaganelli@haywood.k12.nc.us)

# Sustainable Forestry Teachers Experience (SFTE)





# Goal Setting

Niki,

During your SFTE you set a goal to create a nature trail at North Canton. Where are you at in the process? Don't forget to apply for grant funding and work towards Kids in Parks! You can use the trail for a variety of purposes, including: weather station, salamander monitoring, water quality, population sampling, and tree identification.

Good luck,

Niki from 6 months ago

- What land is available?
- Is the land usable?
- Who will build it?
- How will we pay for it?
- Will administration support it?



# CAROLINA MOUNTAIN CLUB



Mouse 5.54694,-82.83631  
Center 5.54649,-82.83614

Google

[Link to this view](#)

Map created at [GPSVisualizer.com](https://www.gpsvisualizer.com)

10 m Terms Report a map error









# Project Learning Tree

- Hands on activities
- Interdisciplinary
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Local relevance
- Collaboration and communication
- Connection to nature
- Flexibility and adaptability

# Impact of Screen Time on Learning

- Difficulty with focus
- Sleep disruption
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Limited face-to-face interactions



# The Research

- Around 80% of children under the age of 8 have access to a tablet or smartphone.
- Nearly half of all children 8 and under have their *own* tablet device and spend an average of about 2.25 hours a day on digital screens.
- Children who spent more than two hours a day on screen-time activities scored lower on language and thinking tests.



# Embracing Outdoor Adventures



# PLT Activities

- Examine life stages of a tree
- Identify methods of seed dispersal
- Compare plant growth under different environmental conditions
- Investigate plant and wildlife diversity in an area
- Consider water usage
- Explore renewable energy sources
- Discover new jobs



# QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

