



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
333 MARKET STREET
HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333

July 11, 2008

Kathy McGlaufin
Senior Vice President
Project Learning Tree
American Forest Foundation
1111 Nineteenth St. NW Suite 780
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ms. McGlaufin,

Please accept this letter of support for EarthSky's proposed K-12 education project, *INSTEP*, in cooperation with Project Learning Tree. As the Environment and Ecology Curriculum and Assessment Advisor for the Department of Education and State Director of Pennsylvania's Project Learning Tree program, we understand the importance of topics such as Earth and space science curriculum and their connection to literacy. In a day and age when topics of space exploration and discovery are at the forefront of scientific thought and innovation, it remains challenging to find curriculum and education materials on these subjects for our K-12 students. This project could not have come at a more relevant time, affording educators the tools they need to teach inquiry based learning, while also offering them materials that focus on Earth and planetary science.

We are also excited by this project's interactive multimedia presentation of the information and correlations this project will afford. We also want our students engaged in the learning while also working to improve their computer literacy. This project should help students identify informal learning tools outside the classroom to support their own learning style. We are encouraged by this proposal and look forward to using the education materials produced through the *INSTEP* project; improving our student's Earth and space science literacy while engaging them in their communities in order to foster the next generation of educated citizenry.

Through the collaborative partnership between Earth & Sky and Project Learning Tree, we, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Teaching and Learning are confident that this project represents an invaluable opportunity to bring innovative Earth and space science education materials to students, teachers and the general public. In this way we will be contributing to a more informed student body. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 717-783-6994 or via email at pvathis@state.pa.us.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Vathis".

Patricia Vathis, PhD
Environment and Ecology Curriculum Advisor
Division of Curriculum and Standards