

April 9, 2014

Notes from Environmental Workforce Professional Learning Community (PLC)—Cycle 10, Session 7

This was the sixth PLC session in this cycle of ten 30-minute conference calls every other Wednesday.

Topics: Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of April 9, 2014

Using Tablets to Deliver Instruction

Opportunities

Job Openings

Current Happenings / Updates from Washington as of April 9, 2014

Partnership for the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC)

Submit your good work. Receive national recognition for your EWDJT program. Our EWDJT programs qualify for recognition.

100 Outstanding Projects for the 21CSC in 2014

For each of the 10 weeks between April and early June, the Partnership for the 21CSC will feature an outstanding 21CSC project. In early June, the P-21CSC will announce the full “100 Outstanding Projects for the 21CSC in 2014.” Projects can occur anytime in 2014 and can be with any type of land/water agency partners—federal, tribal, state, local, non-profit, etc.

To add your program to the list, go to the URL below, fill out the short form, and submit.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1P2dFGYTB8tAH-Wxem0qmYh7AkluNUFMXvl7BGflpHHI/viewform?edit_requested=true.

More about the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC):

The National Council is requesting letters of interest from all conservation and youth corps programs that would like to be identified as a 21CSC member organization. USDA is initiating this outreach in order to catalyze the establishment of a 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to engage young Americans and returning veterans in public lands and water restoration. For more information, contact:

USDA Forest Service

ATT: Merlene Mazyck

1620 Kent Street, RPC, 4th Floor

Arlington, VA 22209

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2015 EPA Budget & EPA Strategic Plan for Next Four Years

Gina McCarthy, EPA Administrator, has been presenting the EPA budget and Strategic Plan to Congress in the last few weeks. Last week she testified in front of the Senate Committees.

The EPA Strategic Plan prioritizes environmental justice, continuing to focus on urban, rural, and economically disadvantaged communities, to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, race, economic status, or ethnicity, has access to clean water, clean air, and the opportunity to live, work, and play in healthy communities. The five strategic goals in EPA’s plan include:

- Addressing climate change and improving air quality;
- Protecting America’s waters;

- Cleaning up communities and advancing sustainable development;
- Ensuring the safety of chemicals and preventing pollution; and
- Protecting human health and the environment by enforcing laws and assuring compliance.

Again, this is what we do. Note the emphasis on water/wastewater infrastructure, environmental justice, and chemical awareness.

Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant status

The EPA review of the EWDJT proposals is on track. The announcement of those selected for award is anticipated to take place in May. Unsuccessful proposals will also be notified at that time. Successful programs will receive funds later this summer.

Using Tablets to Deliver Instruction

Many thanks to Sarah Ashbrook and Pamela Scherer with Florida State College at Jacksonville for their presentation. Their program received workforce development grants in 2009, 2011, and again in 2013. Florida State College at Jacksonville has trained over 230 participants with placement rates in the 80-84% range and a 100% retention rate.

Below is an overview of the Florida State College at Jacksonville EWDJT program.

Targeted Community

- Unemployed or severely underemployed veterans
- Displaced workers
- Ex-offenders
- Single mothers
- Recovering substance abusers
- Homeless, low-income, and minority residents of Jacksonville

Twenty-one (21) state and federal certifications are offered. Students receive notebooks with all certifications displayed.

Core Training Program (Florida State College at Jacksonville simulates working schedules with 3 months of training at 40 hours per week with regular business hours.)

- 40-hour HAZWOPER
- Leaking underground storage tank corrective action (e.g., site assessment and remediation) awareness, including procedures for tank removal when necessary to perform corrective action
- Solid waste deconstruction and recycling
- Green remediation technologies
- Environmental math and chemical awareness training
- Florida stormwater, erosion, and sedimentation control inspector
- Collections and wastewater training
- Two emergency response classes
- Eleven enhanced environmental health and safety training classes

Below are examples of the topics developed or downloaded in a PDF format:

- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120—Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER)
- Florida DEP Stormwater, Erosion, Sedimentation Control Inspector

- OSHA Disaster Site Worker Environmental Sampling and Analysis
- OSHA Construction Safety
- OSHA General Industry Certification
- OSHA Maritime Industry
- FEMA: National Incident Management System (NIMS) IS-00700 certificate
- FEMA: Introduction to Incident Command System IS100 certificate
- EPA 24 Hr. Hazardous Material Technician
- Collections and Wastewater Training
- Asbestos Worker Certification
- EPA Lead Renovator, Repair, and Paint (RRP)
- American Red Cross First Aid, CPR, and AED
- OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens

Awareness Training

- Environmental Justice Overview
- Solid Waste: Deconstruction, recycling, green remediation technologies
- Environmental math and chemical safety
- OSHA confined space entry
- Green technology industry: Urban Agriculture
- Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST)

Training Delivery and Curriculum

Florida State College at Jacksonville was the first EWDJT program to replace printed textbooks with tablets. After researching tablet use, costs, tradeoffs, and benefits, the Barnes & Noble refurbished Nook Tablet was chosen to replace 16 textbooks.

A full-featured, refurbished Nook Tablet can be purchased for around \$80-\$90. It has a USB port, memory slot, reads multiple formats, and has a 2-month battery life. These devices are Wi-Fi enabled and have expandable memory. They have an Android operating system with many available apps, email, and Web surfing capability.

Content and reference materials are provided to each student via PDF format. Tablets issued to each student replaced 16 printed textbooks that resulted in an immediate cost savings and provided the ability to update materials “on the fly.”

How the program works

1. Each participant is issued a refurbished Nook (approx. \$89) upon signing an agreement of responsibility.
2. Each Nook has been preloaded with curriculum and reference materials. This requires that the tablet be plugged into a USB port. It will show up as an external hard drive, and curriculum can be dragged and dropped into the memory of the tablet from a master computer. USB splitters allow this process to be done quickly (4 or 8 at a time).
3. Students must register their Nooks with Barnes & Noble, but are not required to provide a credit card (extremely important).
4. Each student sets up an email account.
5. Supplements and revisions can be emailed to students as required.
6. Upon graduation, students keep their Nooks.

7. Emails, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter can be used for the following:
 - a. Job placement and advancement opportunities
 - b. Graduate tracking, applicant referrals, and potential job openings
 - c. Alumni events, graduations, and recertification training
 - d. Certification updates and new curriculum useful to graduates
 - e. Networking among graduates
 - f. Program announcements and information
8. Devices are not insured. The program keeps about five extra tablets that are used by staff. Loss rates have not been excessive to justify insurance. (2-year service agreements are available for around \$28).

In the case of Florida State at Jacksonville, Barnes & Nobel stores are easily accessible for Wi-Fi, additional apps, and technical assistance. The refurbished Nooks have proven an excellent choice.

Other brands may also work such as Hisense, Dragon Touch Venturer, RCA, or Nextbook. Most of these use 1.2 ghz processors with Android operating systems and can be purchased refurbished for under \$100. Check out Amazon tablets for options. Service contracts are available at SquareTrade.

Keep in mind the following issues:

1. Curriculum must be in PDF format and "copyright cleared."
2. Memory needs to be a minimum of 8 gig with option to expand with extra flash memory cards.
3. Must have a USB port with the ability to connect to a host computer for initial curriculum downloads.
4. Wi-Fi and email enabled with compatible formats with available curriculum.
5. Android compatible to download additional apps.
6. Protective case (preferably with charger pocket).
7. Students must be willing to sign a responsibility contract.
8. Limited training is required for proper care and use of the tablets.

On completion of the program, students keep their Nook for future reference, networking, and updates.

Thanks, Pam and Sarah, for your progressive approach, research, and justification to EPA for replacing printed curriculum with tablets.

Pam and Sarah would be happy to discuss their program including the use of Nooks for training delivery.

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Opportunities

Summer can be a quiet time for federal grant opportunities. Those interested in leveraging resources need to focus on available private sector, state, and local funding opportunities. It is also a time to look forward and plan for the next federal funding cycle beginning October 1.

Below are a few available federal funding opportunities. While these grants are not directly involved in environmental training, those interested in environmental justice, community education, and public health can find involvement a synergistic addition to ongoing environmental training activities.

FY14 Brownfields Training, Research, and Technical Assistance Grants

Closing date: April 18, 2014

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notice announces the availability of funds and solicits proposals from eligible entities, including nonprofit organizations, to conduct research, or provide technical assistance to communities facing Brownfields cleanup and revitalization challenges. Focus areas of this announcement include: 1) technical assistance to environmental workforce development and job training grantees, 2) technical assistance on the integration of environmental justice and equitable development for brownfields-impacted communities, 3) research on the benefits of Brownfields redevelopment, and 4) technical assistance on Brownfields financing and economic development strategies.

The GreatEST Institute is full but you may be able to get on a waiting list

The Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE) is accepting applications for enrollment in the Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training (CCCHST). Annually, nineteen instructors are accepted to attend a no-cost, ten-day Great Environmental Safety Training (GreatEST) Institute that provides standards, curriculum, and hands-on methods for delivering Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response training. Your participation in the GreatEST Institute will provide you with:

- An annual CCCHST trainer certificate
- A license to use and duplicate CCCHST curriculum
- CCCHST technical assistance
- CCCHST instructor support materials
- National marketing for your program

The GreatEST Institute will be held at the Eastern Iowa Community Colleges in Davenport, Iowa on June 2–13, 2014. To apply, please contact Patti Thompson at pattijthompson@gmail.com.

Job Openings

Check out Brownfield Renewal for press releases and articles at www.brownfieldrenewal.com. Below is a new job opportunity that may be of interest.

ASTI Environmental is currently seeking entry level staff, to assist with completion of Phase I ESAs, due diligence documentation, due care assessments, site closure, and limited soil investigations. Go to www.brownfieldrenewal.com for more information.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: April 23, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. EDT

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at msenew@aol.com.

Visit our *Brownfields Toolbox* Web site at <http://www.brownfields-toolbox.org> for more information on Brownfields Job Training programs. All PLC session notes and recordings are also located on the *Brownfields Toolbox* Web site at <http://brownfields-toolbox.org/plc-corner/>.

NOTE: The PLC brings together ideas and opinions of individuals interested in environmental workforce development and training. Ideas and opinions are not those of EPA, its policy or opinions and should not be taken as official guidance.