Note to Educators

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

For more than 100 years, our motto has been caring for the land and serving people. The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), recognizes its responsibility to be engaged in efforts to connect youth to nature and to promote the development of science-based conservation education programs and materials nationwide.

The *Natural Inquirer* Student Scientist Edition was developed as a part of the Forest Service's **More Kids In the Woods** initiative. Using the *Natural Inquirer* in two high school classrooms, the journals were first used to teach students at the Henry Ford Academy in Dearborn, Michigan to read and write actual scientific papers. The students then developed, conducted, and wrote up their own research. Their research was conducted on a natural area near the school's campus. This area is known as the Oxbow (or the Oxbow Island) because it contains an oxbow lake which is connected on one end to the Rouge River.

The *Natural Inquirer* is a science education resource journal to be used with learners grade 5 and up. The *Natural Inquirer* contains articles describing environmental and natural resource research. The articles are easy to understand and aesthetically pleasing to the eye, contain glossaries, and include hands-on activities. The goal of the *Natural Inquirer* is to stimulate critical reading and thinking about scientific inquiry and investigation while learning about ecology, the natural environment, and natural resources. In this edition of the *Natural Inquirer*, you will find five articles researched and written by high school students.

The Format of a *Natural Inquirer* Article:
Each *Natural Inquirer* article follows the same format. The articles written by the students have been reviewed by US Forest Service scientists for accuracy. Each article contains the following sections, which you may introduce to your students as they read:

Glossary: Introduces possibly new scientific or other terms to students. The first occurrence of a glossary word is bold in the text.

Thinking About Science: Introduces something new about the scientific process, such as a scientific habit of mind or procedures used in scientific studies.

Thinking About the Environment: Introduces the environmental topic being addressed in the research.

Introduction: Introduces the problem or question being addressed by the research.

Method: Describes the method used by the scientists to collect and analyze their data.

Findings: Describes the results of the analysis.

Discussion: Discusses the findings and places them into the context of the original problem or question.

Citation: Gives information about where students located their information.

Science Education Standards and Evaluations
In the back of the journal, you will find a matrix that enables you to identify articles by the national science education standards that they address. Evaluation forms for both educators and students are available on our Web site. We welcome any feedback so please visit http://www.naturalinquirer.org and complete the online evaluation forms. Additionally, you may contact Dr. Barbara McDonald at the address below with any comments you have.

Dr. Barbara (Babs) McDonald
Forest Service
320 Green St.
Athens, GA 30602-2044
706.559.4224
bmcdonald@fs.fed.us
(Please put "Educator Feedback" in the subject line)

Educator Resources
Visit the updated *Natural Inquirer* Web site at http://www.naturalinquirer.org. From this site, you can read and download lesson plans, word games, and other resources to help you use the *Natural Inquirer* in your classroom. You can also view and download a yearlong lesson plan aimed at helping your students learn about the scientific process.

Visit the *Natural Inquirer* Web site at
http://www.naturalinquirer.org.