

Teacher's Note

As teachers of science, you want your students to acquire abilities that will enable them to conduct scientific inquiry, and you want them to gain an understanding of the scientific inquiry process. Scientific inquiry can best be taught by integrating minds-on and hands-on experiences. Over time, such experiences encourage students to independently formulate and seek answers to questions about the world we live in. As educators, you are constantly faced with engaging your students in scientific inquiry in new and different ways. In an age of abundant technology, standard teaching strategies can become monotonous to today's learners. The *Natural Inquirer* provides a fresh approach to science and a view of the outside world bigger than the classroom that can be used while still in the school setting.

The *Natural Inquirer* is a science education resource journal to be used with learners from Grade 5 and up. The

Natural Inquirer contains articles describing environmental and natural resource research conducted by USDA Forest Service scientists and their cooperators. These are scientific journal articles that have been reformatted to meet the needs of middle school and higher students. The articles are easy to understand, are 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.

Science Education Standards and Evaluations:

In the back of the journal, you will find a matrix that allows you to identify articles by the national science education standards that they address. You will also find evaluation forms in the back of the journal. Please make copies of these evaluation forms and have your students complete them after they complete an article. Please note the form for teachers to complete

also. Please send the evaluation forms to the address listed at the end of the forms. You and your students may also complete the forms online by visiting www.naturalinquirer.usda.gov.

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Teacher's Manual:

To read the teacher's manual online, download it, or request a hard copy, visit the *Natural Inquirer* Web site at www.naturalinquirer.usda.gov.

At this Web site, you will also find previous issues of the *Natural Inquirer*, sample lesson plans, word games, the teacher's manual, information about the USDA Forest Service, and other resources.

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