

Teacher's Note

As teachers of science, one of your goals is to teach students the scientific method, no matter what your area of focus—life sciences, Earth sciences, etc. The scientific method can best be taught by focusing on hands-on and minds-on inquiry and investigation. This allows the learner to be independent and to seek answers to questions throughout the world we live in. As educators, you are constantly faced with engaging your students in scientific inquiry in new and different ways. Standard teaching strategies can become monotonous to today's learners in an age of abundant technology. The *Natural Inquirer* gives 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 in Grade 5 and up. The *Natural Inquirer* contains articles describing environmental and natural resource research conducted by Forest Service scientists and their cooperators. These are scientific journal articles that have been reformatted to meet the needs of an audience new to science. 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.

Past issues and articles from *The Natural Inquirer* are available by visiting the Web site at <http://www.naturalinquirer.usda.gov>.

Science Education Standards:

In the back of the journal, you will find a matrix which allows you to identify articles by the national science education standards that they address.

Questions or comments? Please contact:

Dr. Barbara McDonald
USDA Forest Service
320 Green St.
Athens, GA 30602-2044
706-559-4224
barmac@bigfoot.com

Teacher's Manual:

Please visit *The Natural Inquirer* Web site at <http://www.naturalinquirer.usda.gov>. From this site, you may read the teacher's manual online, download it, or request a hard copy.

Visit <http://www.naturalinquirer.usda.gov> for previous issues of the *Natural Inquirer*, sample lesson plans, word games, the teacher's manual, information about the Forest Service, and other resources.