

Lesson Plan:

Town of North Hempstead Nature Poem Contest

Grade Level: Middle/High School (6-12)

Curriculum Connections: Language Arts

Class Time: One Class Period (this lesson can also be used as an extra credit assignment)

Components:

- 1) Lesson Plan
- 2) Contest Rules
- 3) Example Poems

Summary:

Earth Day is one of the Town's most cherished events of the year and residents of all ages and from all communities participate in this yearly celebration. The Town of North Hempstead is committed to environmental education and we thank you for joining us in celebrating Earth Day!

Earth Day reminds us that we have a responsibility to protect the Earth today and for future generations. This activity is meant to give students an opportunity to express their feelings about the environment through the composition of an original poem.

Objective:

To inspire students to think about how they are connected to nature and express themselves through poetry. By feeling a closer connection to nature we are more likely to care about environmental issues.

Teacher Guide for Student Activity:

- a) Read the example poems aloud to the class (or call on students to read them).
- b) Engage students in a dialogue. Ask students if they think that our modern way of life presents barriers which obstruct us from experiencing the natural world.
- c) Do they feel more comfortable inside or outdoors?
- d) Ask students to compose their own original poem.
- e) Submit student poems into contest.

Contest Rules:

1. The contest is open to all students in grade levels 6th-12th.
2. Poems may be hand written or typed.
3. Students may enter as many times as they would like.
4. All entries must be in by Friday, May 7, 2010.
5. Mail Entries to:

**Town of North Hempstead
ATTN: Outreach Team
1601 Marcus Avenue
New Hyde Park, NY 11040**

If you have questions about the contest please contact the Outreach Team by calling 311 or (516) 869-6311 or by email at OutreachTeam@NorthHempsteadNY.gov.

To make this event extra special, for each of you:

1. The teacher from each participating class will receive an Earth Day T-shirt
2. A Certificate of "Thanks" from Town Supervisor Jon Kaiman

Teachers who participate in this lesson should send in their student's entries together. We must receive all entries by no later than **Friday, May 7, 2010**. If you do not think you will make the deadline of **Friday, May 7, 2010** (by mailing the poems in), please call 311 or (516) 869- 6311 to schedule a pickup.

A winner will be chosen from each participating school. The winners will be chosen by the Earth Day Educational Outreach Committee. School winners will receive an Earth Day T-shirt, a certificate that will be presented to them at a special ceremony in front of Supervisor Jon Kaiman, the Town Board and their family and friends.

Thank you very much for your time and "Happy Earth Day" to you and your class!

Example Nature Poems:

Haiku poems with nature themes are a Japanese tradition. Students may wish to write their "Connecting with Nature" poem in this style. Haiku poems composed in English are usually written on three lines with seven syllables in the first line, followed by five syllables in the second line and seven syllables in the third line.

Matsuo Basho (1644-1694 C.E.)

The crescent lights
The misty ground.
Buckwheat flowers.
Spring departs.
Birds cry
Fishes' eyes are filled with tears

The old pond is still
a frog leaps right into it
splashing the water

Translated by Earl Miner & Hiroko Odagiri

Song of the Redwood-Tree (Lines 20-24) by **Walt Whitman**

Murmuring out of its myriad leaves,
Down from its lofty top, rising two hundred feet high
Out of its stalwart trunk and limbs—out of its foot-thick bark,
That chant of the seasons and time—chant, not of the past only, but the future.

Leaves of Grass published in 1900

The Cricket

By **Emily Dickinson**

The cricket sang,
And set the sun,
And workmen finished, one by one,
Their seam the day upon.

The low grass loaded with the dew,
The twilight stood as strangers do
With hat in hand, polite and new,
To stay as if, or go.

A vastness, as a neighbor, came,—
A wisdom without face or name,
A peace, as hemispheres at home,—
And so the night became.

XXXIV Daughter of the Sea

By **Pablo Neruda**

You are the daughter of the sea, oregano's first cousin.
Swimmer, your body is pure as the water;
cook, your blood is quick as the soil.
Everything you do is full of flowers, rich with the earth.

Your eyes go out toward the water, and the waves rise;
your hands go out to the earth and the seeds swell;
you know the deep essence of water and the earth,
conjoined in you like a formula for clay.

(Translated by Stephen Tapscott)

The History of Earth Day

This article submitted by Kim Moon

In 1963, former Senator Gaylord Nelson began to worry about our planet. (A senator is a person that the people of the United States have chosen to help make the laws.) Senator Nelson knew that our world was getting dirty and that many of our plants and animals were dying. He wondered why more people weren't trying to solve these problems. He talked to other lawmakers and to the President. They decided that the President would go around the country and tell people about these concerns. He did, but still not enough people were working on the problem.

Then, in 1969, Senator Nelson had another idea. He decided to have a special day to teach everyone about the things that needed changing in our environment. He wrote letters to all of the colleges and put a special article in Scholastic Magazine to tell them about the special day he had planned. (Most of the schools got this magazine and he knew that kids would help him.)

On April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day was held. People all over the country made promises to help the environment. Everyone got involved and since then, Earth Day has spread all over the planet. People all over the world know that there are problems we need to work on and this is our special day to look at the planet and see what needs changing. Isn't it great? One person had an idea and kept working until everyone began working together to solve it. See what happens when people care about our world?

MARGARET MURIE

August 18, 1902 – October 19, 2003

Tireless champion for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and for America's wilderness, Mardy Murie won the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998

Margaret (Mardy) Murie is fondly called the Grandmother of the Conservation Movement, but her love of the land began at a young age. Born August 18, 1902 in Seattle, Mardy moved to Fairbanks, Alaska while still a youth. She was the first woman to graduate from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks in 1924. That same year, she married naturalist Olaus Murie. Their honeymoon was a caribou research expedition that encompassed some 500 miles of Alaska's Brooks Range within the Arctic Wildlife Range, by dogsled.



That was just the first of her wilderness journeys with Olaus. Soon, it became second nature for Mardy to pack her babies along with her camping gear for several weeks or even months in the Alaska wilds, accompanying Olaus, a naturalist for the Biological Survey (later, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Mardy described the family's Alaska adventures in her book, *Two in the Far North*.

Mardy and Olaus moved to Wyoming to study elk in 1926. In Jackson Hole, they built a log cabin that Mardy lives in to this day. Both were tireless advocates for wilderness. Olaus was director of The Wilderness Society from 1945 to 1962 and he and Mardy wrote letters and articles, traveled and lectured, and spent most of their time promoting legislation that would protect the last of the wild places from the developers, the bulldozers and the oil rigs.

Mardy has often said that she only saw Olaus cry twice during their 39 years together, and one of those times was in 1960, when they got word that the Arctic Wildlife Range would be designated the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Olaus died in 1963, just months before passage of the Wilderness Act. But Mardy attended the signing, by President Lyndon Johnson, in the Rose Garden of the White House in 1964.

Mardy continued the work that she and Olaus had begun together, joining the Governing Council of The Wilderness Society and working for the protection of wild Alaska. In congressional testimony about the Alaska Lands Act, Mardy said:

"I am testifying as an emotional woman and I would like to ask you, gentlemen, what's wrong with emotion? Beauty is a resource in and of itself. Alaska must be allowed to be Alaska, that is her greatest economy. I hope the United States of America is not so rich that she can afford to let these wildernesses pass by, or so poor she cannot afford to keep them."

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed the Alaska Lands Act, which increased national park acreage from 7 million to 50 million acres; added 54 million acres to the National Wildlife Refuge System, and 56 million acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Four years later, Mardy Murie wrote in *Wilderness* magazine:

"The shining, comforting thought now is that the parks, the forests, the refuges, the wild rivers, are there ... and my feeling about it all is that when the oil and the minerals have all been found and taken away, the one hundred million acres of national parks and refuges and wild rivers and forests will be the most beneficent treasure in the whole state. I would plead with all administrators: 'Please allow Alaska to be different, to be herself, to nourish our souls.'"

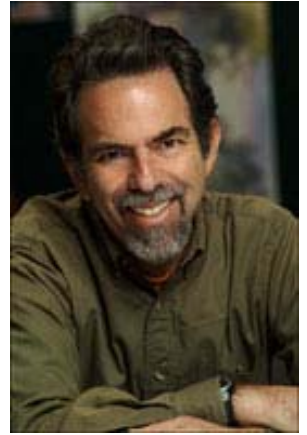
For her lifelong commitment to conservation, Margaret Murie was awarded the Medal of Freedom by President William Clinton in January 1998.

ANDY LIPKIS

TreePeople Founder and President

Before TreePeople founder Andy Lipkis was born, scientists had begun to note dieback in the forests surrounding Los Angeles. They gradually began attributing much of it to the notorious smog that crept up the mountainsides from the exploding megalopolis below.

By the time Lipkis reached summer camp, this phenomenon was common knowledge among foresters. Telling a 15-year-old idealist there was nothing he could do about it was a red rag to a bull. Lipkis mobilized fellow summer campers to pull up an old parking lot and plant a meadow. Undaunted, he went on to challenge the California Department of Forestry to hand over its surplus stock – 8,000 seedlings – and the California Conservation Project was born.



Mr. Lipkis has always been a guiding light for the community forestry movement. He has designed numerous programs that have increased citizen involvement in urban tree planting and care. With his wife and colleague, Kate Lipkis, he wrote *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree*, a step-by-step guide to organizing community planting and tree care events. Published in 1990, the book has sold more than 50,000 copies. Mr. and Mrs. Lipkis co-founded the Citizen Forestry Support System – a program that supports organizational effectiveness in citizen tree groups nationwide. Mr. Lipkis coined the term "citizen forester," referring to the thousands of volunteers TreePeople has trained to plant and maintain trees on urban streets. The term has been adopted by tree planting organizations throughout the United States. Across the country and around the world, Mr. Lipkis has addressed and assisted groups and agencies involved in the linked issues of environment, urban forestry, sustainability and water and energy use. These include the United Nations, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Global Tomorrow Coalition.

Mr. Lipkis's creative programs have included airlifting bare-root fruit trees to Africa, numerous disaster relief efforts during flood and fire, serving on the team that designed L.A.'s curbside recycling program and inspiring the planting of one million trees in Los Angeles before the 1984 Summer Olympics. After L.A.'s 1992 civil unrest, Andy co-created the Urban Greening Initiative of the USDA Forest Service, which brought \$2.5 million in jobs programs and urban forestry projects to the community. Mr. Lipkis identified the opportunity to convert a \$200-million schoolyard re-paving project into a program which promises to remove up to one-third of the asphalt from L.A.'s schools, replacing it with trees, gardens and permeable surfaces. Working with the school board's blue ribbon citizen oversight committee, Mr. Lipkis successfully demonstrated the energy savings and convinced the school board to change its paving policy and commit long-term maintenance funds for greening.

Sensing a need to broaden TreePeople's canopy and deepen its roots, Mr. Lipkis initiated the T.R.E.E.S. Project. Transagency Resources for Environmental and Economic Sustainability promotes agency cooperation and citizen involvement in solving urban environmental problems. Stormwater best-management practices and strategically planted trees are among the elements of its innovative approach to managing the city's infrastructure as a living watershed. The T.R.E.E.S. Project has published the handbook *Second Nature*, created a GIS-based cost/benefit model, built several demonstration projects and influenced the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works in its decision to fold several functions into a Watershed Management Division. Mr. Lipkis and the T.R.E.E.S. staff have been working with the new division on a \$100-million project to retrofit a 2,700-acre, 8,000-household watershed in L.A.'s San Fernando Valley. The Sun Valley Watershed Project will coordinate efforts and leverage the resources of agencies, nonprofits and citizens to solve a chronic flooding problem and bring other environmental and economic benefits to the community. The project is viewed by local, state and federal agencies as a promising model of sustainable urban watershed management.

Mr. and Mrs. Lipkis were named to the United Nations Environment Programme's Global 500 Roll of Honour. They also hold American Forests' Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1991, President Bush named TreePeople the 440th Point of Light. In 1998, Mr. Lipkis was honored as Founder of the Year at National Philanthropy Day.

The Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council honored TreePeople with its 2001 President's Award. The award described TreePeople as the outstanding nonprofit in the watershed and cited the T.R.E.E.S. Project for its leadership in developing a sustainable watershed management plan for Sun Valley. In 2001, Andy Lipkis and Dorothy Green shared the honor of receiving the Donald Hagman Award from the Southern California Association of Governments Advisory Council for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to improving the quality of life in the Southern California region.

TreePeople was among only 15 agencies worldwide to be honored by the Salt Lake City 2002 Olympic Committee, receiving the Spirit of the Land Environmental Education Award. Also in 2002, TreePeople received the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board award for Water Quality Conservation for advancing an integrated approach to urban watershed management.

The Sun Valley Watershed Project was highlighted in the United Nations World Forestry Organization's State of the World's Forests 2003 as an example of partnering to create a sustainable water supply. The same year, TreePeople broke ground on the new TreePeople Center for Community Forestry, a state-of-the-art environmental education campus and gathering place for local, national and international action to create healthy, sustainable cities.

Mr. Lipkis serves on the Board of Directors of the National Tree Trust, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and the Los Angeles/San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council. He sits on the Board of Advisors of the Natural Step and the Environmental Media Association and has served on the faculty of the Urban National Forest Academy.

RACHEL LOUISE CARSON

May 27, 1907 - April 14, 1964

Rachel Carson, writer, scientist, and ecologist, grew up simply in the rural river town of Springdale, Pennsylvania. Her mother bequeathed to her a life-long love of nature and the living world that Rachel expressed first as a writer and later as a student of marine biology. Carson graduated from Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham University) in 1929, studied at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory, and received her MA in zoology from Johns Hopkins University in 1932.



She was hired by the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries to write radio scripts during the Depression and supplemented her income writing feature articles on natural history for the *Baltimore Sun*. She began a fifteen-year career in the federal service as a scientist and editor in 1936 and rose to become chief of all publications for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She wrote pamphlets on conservation and natural resources and edited scientific articles, but in her free time turned her government research into lyric prose, first as an article "Undersea" (1937, for the *Atlantic Monthly*), and then in a book, *Under the Sea-Wind* (1941). In 1952 she published her prize-winning study of the ocean, *The Sea Around Us*, which was followed by *The Edge of the Sea* in 1955. These books constituted a biography of the ocean and made Carson famous as a naturalist and science writer for the public. Carson resigned from government service in 1952 to devote herself to her writing.

She wrote several other articles designed to teach people about the wonder and beauty of the living world, including "Help Your Child to Wonder," (1956) and "Our Ever-Changing Shore" (1957), and planned another book on the ecology of life. Embedded within all of Carson's writing was the view that human beings were but one part of nature distinguished primarily by their power to alter it, in some cases irreversibly.

Disturbed by the profligate use of synthetic chemical pesticides after World War II, Carson reluctantly changed her focus in order to warn the public about the long term effects of misusing pesticides. In *Silent Spring* (1962) she challenged the practices of agricultural scientists and the government, and called for a change in the way humankind viewed the natural world.

Carson was attacked by the chemical industry and some in government as an alarmist, but courageously spoke out to remind us that we are a vulnerable part of the natural world subject to the same damage as the rest of the ecosystem. Testifying before Congress in 1963, Carson called for new policies to protect human health and the environment.

Rachel Carson died in 1964 after a long battle against cancer. Her witness for the beauty and integrity of life continues to inspire new generations to protect the living world and all its creatures.

Biographical Essay by Linda Lear, c.2000 Rachelcarson.org.

WANGARI MAATHAI

Wangari Muta Maathai was born in Nyeri, Kenya, in 1940, the daughter of farmers in the highlands of Mount Kenya. The first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctoral degree, Professor Maathai obtained a degree in Biological Sciences from Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, Kansas (1964). She subsequently earned a Master of Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh (1966). She pursued doctoral studies in Germany and the University of Nairobi, obtaining a Ph.D. (1971) from the University of Nairobi, where she also taught veterinary anatomy. She became chair of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy and an associate professor in 1976 and 1977 respectively. She was the first woman in the region to attain those positions.



Wangari Maathai served in the National Council of Women of Kenya in 1976-87 and was its chairman from 1981-87. She introduced her tree-planting concept to ordinary citizens in 1976. Professor Maathai went on to develop it into the Green Belt Movement, a broad-based, grassroots organization whose main focus is helping women's groups plant trees to conserve the environment and improve quality of life. Through the Green Belt Movement, she now has helped women plant more than 30 million trees on their farms, on schools, and on church compounds.

In 1986 the Movement established a Pan African Green Belt Network, which has taught more than 40 people from other African countries the Green Belt Movement's approach to environmental conservation and community building. Some of these people have established similar tree-planting initiatives in their own countries. Others have gone on to use Green Belt Movement methods to improve their environmental conservation efforts. Several African countries have started similar successful initiatives, including Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe.

In 1998, Professor Maathai joined the campaign of the Jubilee 2000 Coalition. As co-chair of the Jubilee 2000 Africa Campaign, she has played a leading role in seeking the cancellation of the overwhelming and unpayable debts of poor countries in Africa. She also has campaigned tirelessly against land grabbing and the theft of public forests.

Wangari Maathai is internationally recognized for her persistent struggle for democracy, human rights, and environmental conservation. She has addressed the United Nations on several occasions, and she spoke on behalf of women at special sessions of the General Assembly for the five-year review of the 1992 Earth Summit. She has served on the U.N. Commission for Global Governance and the Commission on the Future. She and the Green Belt Movement have received many awards, most notably the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize.

Professor Maathai is listed in **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** Global 500 Hall of Fame and was named one of the 100 Heroines of the World. In June 1997, Professor Maathai was elected by *Earth Times* as one of 100 people in the world who have made a difference in the environmental arena. In 2005, Professor Maathai was named by *Time* magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world and by *Forbes* magazine as one of the 100 most powerful women in the world. She also has received honorary doctoral degrees from several institutions around the world, among them Williams College in Massachusetts (1990), Hobart and William Smith Colleges (1994), the University of Norway (1997) and Yale University (2004).

The Green Belt Movement, Professor Maathai, and their compelling stories are featured in several publications including *The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience* (Wangari Maathai, 2002), *Speak Truth to Power* (Kerry Kennedy Cuomo, 2000), *Women Pioneers for the Environment* (Mary Joy Breton, 1998), *Hopes Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet* (Frances Moore Lappé and Anna Lappé, 2002), *Una Sola Terra: Donna I Medi Ambient Despres de Rio* (Brice Lalonde et al., 1998), and *Land Ist Leben* (Bedrohte Volker, 1993).

Professor Maathai serves on the boards of several organizations, including the **UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament**, the **Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)**, **World Learning (USA)**, **Green Cross International**, **Environment Liaison Centre International**, the **WorldWIDE Network of Women in Environmental Work**, and the **National Council of Women of Kenya**.

In December 2002, Professor Maathai was elected to Kenya's Parliament and was subsequently appointed by Kenya's president as Assistant Minister for the Environment.

In 2005 Wangari Maathai was elected Presiding Officer of the **Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)** of the African Union, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Council will advise the African Union on issues related to African civil society. Eleven

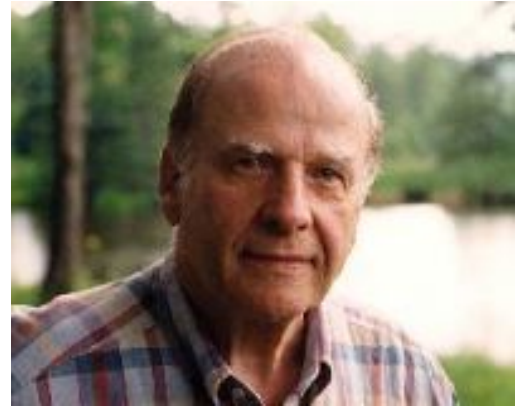
African heads of state whose countries are on the Congo Basin also appointed her a Goodwill Ambassador for the Congo Basin Forest Ecosystem, an advocacy role for the conservation and protection of this vital Ecosystem.

In 2006, French President Jacques Chirac awarded Wangari Maathai France's highest honor, the Legion d'Honneur. The decoration ceremony took place in Paris in April 2006 and was presided over by the French Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Nelly Olin.

GAYLORD NELSON

June 4, 1916 – July 3, 2005

Wisconsin's Governor and Senator; Founder of Earth Day; Counselor to The Wilderness Society -- Gaylord Nelson's passion for the environment led to America's fundamental laws that protect it.



In 1969, as a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson came up with one of the most powerful ideas of his time: Earth Day. Inspired by the teach-ins dealing with the Vietnam War, Earth Day was an instant success, drawing 20 million participants the first year (1970). American Heritage Magazine called the first Earth Day "one of the most remarkable happenings in the history of democracy."

Honors Received

Senator Nelson received hundreds of awards. Some of them include:

In 1995 he received the nation's highest civilian award: the Presidential Medal of Freedom. "As the father of Earth Day, he is the grandfather of all that grew out of that event: the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act," said the proclamation from President Clinton.

In 1992 the United Nations Environment Programme presented Gaylord Nelson with the Only One World Award.

In 1990 he received the Ansel Adams Conservation Award, bestowed upon a federal official who has shown exceptional commitment to the cause of conservation and the fostering of an American land ethic.

Government Service

Gaylord Nelson began his public service in 1948 as a state senator. He was reelected three times, holding his Dane County seat for ten years. In 1958 Nelson became only the second Democrat of this century to be elected Governor of Wisconsin. After serving two terms, he was elected to the U.S. Senate. Nelson was reelected in 1968 and 1974, serving a total of 18 years.

Major Achievements

The founder of Earth Day was ahead of his time on the environmental front. In 1961 Governor Nelson created the Outdoor Recreation Acquisition Program. The goal was to acquire one million acres of Wisconsin park land, wetlands, and other open space, and it was funded by a penny-a-pack tax on cigarettes. In the U.S. Senate, he was the author of legislation to preserve the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail corridor and to create a national hiking trails system. He sponsored or co-sponsored countless conservation bills, including the Wilderness Act and the Alaska Lands Act. In Wisconsin, his U.S. Senate legacy includes the St. Croix Wild and Scenic Riverway and the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Nelson also was a trailblazer in consumer protection, especially involving prescription medicines. He was one of only three Senators to vote against the \$700 million appropriation that signaled the start of the ground war in Vietnam.

Wilderness Society Years

After leaving the Senate in January, 1981, Nelson continued his fight for the planet's health as counselor of The Wilderness Society. He was involved with a wide range of land preservation issues, including elimination of logging subsidies, protection of national parks, and expansion of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Personal Background

Gaylord Nelson was born June 4, 1916, in Clear Lake, WI, and spent his childhood there. He received a BA from San Jose State College and a law degree from the University of Wisconsin. Nelson served in the U.S. Army during 46 months of World War II and was a first lieutenant during the Okinawa campaign. He and his wife Carrie Lee were featured in a chapter of Tom Brokaw's bestseller, *The Greatest Generation*. After the war, Nelson practiced law in Madison. He and his wife had three children and three grandchildren. He passed away on July 3, 2005.