



November 8, 2011

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Mrs. Cheryl Steinbach, Granton, Presented Wisconsin School Forest Award**

Mrs. Cheryl Steinbach has been recognized with a School Forest Award by the LEAF Program for her contribution as an outstanding school forest educator at the Granton School Forest. The award was presented at the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education fall conference on Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup> in Rosholt, Wisconsin.

Cheryl is the driving force in registering and developing Granton School Forest #2, since Granton School Forest #1 is too far from school. Cheryl organized students, staff, and community members in the Granton Area School District to work together to make the school forest into a first-class outdoor educational facility. She spent summer days guiding students in preparing school forest trails so they were ready for others to use at the beginning of the school year. Together they have cleared, mapped and mulched trails, created education stations, organized volunteers to help build the outdoor classroom, and built a bridge, signs, and benches for the forest. Earlier this fall, the Francis Steiner Environmental Education Nature Preserve was dedicated. Cheryl gives her all. Having the school forest accessible out the back door has made outdoor learning for students in Granton a reality. The Granton Area School District is very proud and fortunate to have Cheryl's leadership, energy, and hard work which provide students with great learning opportunities at the school forest.

Wisconsin's school forest program was created more than 75 years ago to allow schools to own property for forestry programs. The primary focus was to engage students in replanting our forests. Since those early days, the program has grown and evolved considerably due to the efforts of many individuals and organizations. Today over 380 school forests are available to:

- Integrate environmental education into schools' curriculum
- Provide experiential learning for students, teachers, and the public
- Meet state-mandated education standards
- Demonstrate sustainable natural resources management
- Strengthen school-community relations
- Provide income for education activities

The current strength of the school forest program would not have been possible without contributions from educators, like Cheryl Steinbach, and organizations that help their school forests "reach new heights."

For more information about the School Forest Awards or the statewide school forest program, contact Gretchen Marshall, Forestry & Outdoor Education Specialist, at (715) 346-2633 or [Gretchen.Marshall@uwsp.edu](mailto:Gretchen.Marshall@uwsp.edu) or visit [www.leafprogram.org](http://www.leafprogram.org).

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