

[View this email in your browser](#)

Rural Educator Network Newsletter

Connecting Educators and
Sharing Resources

NASA SciAct



Hello Educators!

This Newsletter is dedicated to providing:

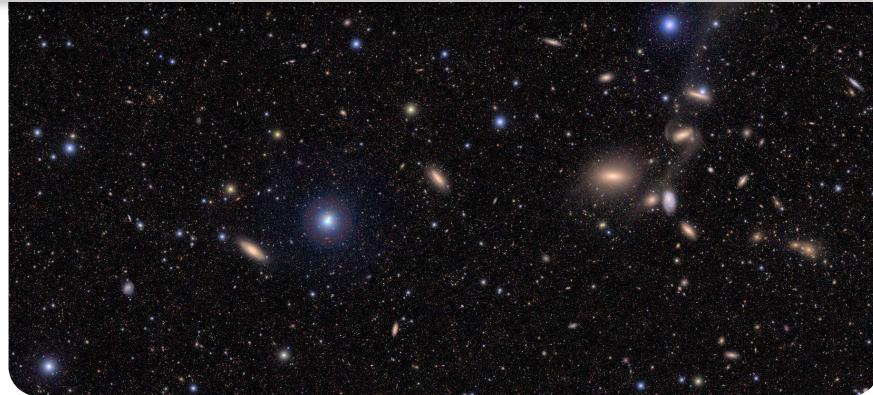
1. NASA resources modified to the needs of rural audiences
2. Upcoming NASA events, webinars, and opportunities
3. Partnership highlights
4. Expressing your current needs and successes

**You're invited to contribute content to a future
newsletter...**

Tell us a story, share an activity, photo, lesson plan, or resource.

Share with Us!

Help to Grow the Network: Share this sign-up link with
friends: <http://eepurl.com/h1xxQ9>



Vera C. Rubin Observatory First Look: The Cosmic Treasure Chest

The NSF-DOE Vera C. Rubin Observatory released the first images taken by the 8.4 meter telescope, and the universe has never looked better! One of Rubin's premier science initiatives is the Legacy Survey of Space and Time (LSST), where the telescope will take images of the Southern Hemisphere sky every night for 10 years. Rubin also uses the largest camera ever built for the night sky, so that we can see the universe in new and previously unimaginable ways. Learn more about Rubin and its future of science, along with free educational resources including exploring the Cosmic Treasure Chest through sound!

Credit: NSF-DOE Vera C. Rubin Observatory.

[Explore the Rubin Observatory](#)



August 20th is National Radio Day

Explore free and downloadable resources with the National Informal STEM Education Network (NISE Network) exploring the science behind radio! In one activity, Learners

[Explore Resources with the NISE Network](#)

Upcoming Events and Opportunities





planets-stem.org

Gain hands-on experience with three new PLANETS units that highlight NASA planetary science and engineering.

Grades 6-8

- Water in Extreme Environments
- Remote Sensing

Grades 3-5

- Space Hazards

Benefits

- Enhance your teaching skills!
- Prepare to facilitate PLANETS curriculum in your OST setting.
- Share experiences and collaboratively plan with colleagues.

Resources Provided

- \$400 stipend
- Free access to PLANETS curriculum.
- Support materials for getting started with PLANETS.

"I would highly recommend these lessons to my colleagues because they offer an engaging, hands-on approach to learning about planetary science that sparks curiosity in students. The activities are well-structured, inclusive, and adaptable for diverse learners, allowing every student to connect with the content in a meaningful way... These lessons not only teach science but also inspire students to explore the vast possibilities of space exploration."

—OST educator, after testing PLANETS curriculum

Out-of-School Time Educators

August 26th, 2025

Help us get the word out about new, FREE out-of-school-time NASA STEM curriculum and earn a \$400 stipend!

Tuesday, August 26th
8:30 AM - 2:30 PM
Includes lunch!

Location: TBD in Phoenix area

\$400 stipend for full participation

Seats are Limited. Apply Now!



<https://tinyurl.com/PLANETS-Aug26-Phoenix>

QUESTIONS?
Claire.Gibson@nau.edu

NAU NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Center for STEM Teaching and Learning



PLANETS Workshop in Phoenix, AZ: Gain Hands-on Experience with Free OST STEM Curriculum!

When: Tuesday, August 26th, 2025 from 8:30 AM - 2:00 PM.

Where: Location TBD in Phoenix.

Get paid \$400 to engage with new NASA STEM curriculum from PLANETS! We are looking for OST educators and leaders to come to a workshop and learn about brand new PLANETS curriculum. By the end of the workshop, you will be able to confidently implement PLANETS at your OST setting.

Register Now



National Rural STEM Learning Summit 2025

See you in Central Arizona at the 2025 Rural STEM Summit: We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort
Fort McDowell, AZ

STEM learning in rural communities shares many characteristics across vast geographies, yet it is also distinctly unique to each place. The National Rural STEM Learning Summit brings together STEM educators, administrators, STEM industry professionals, and community leaders to strengthen and elevate the quality of STEM education in rural communities through practice and dialogue.

[Register Now](#)



Connected Learning Ecosystems Gathering: Connect, Reflect & Plan

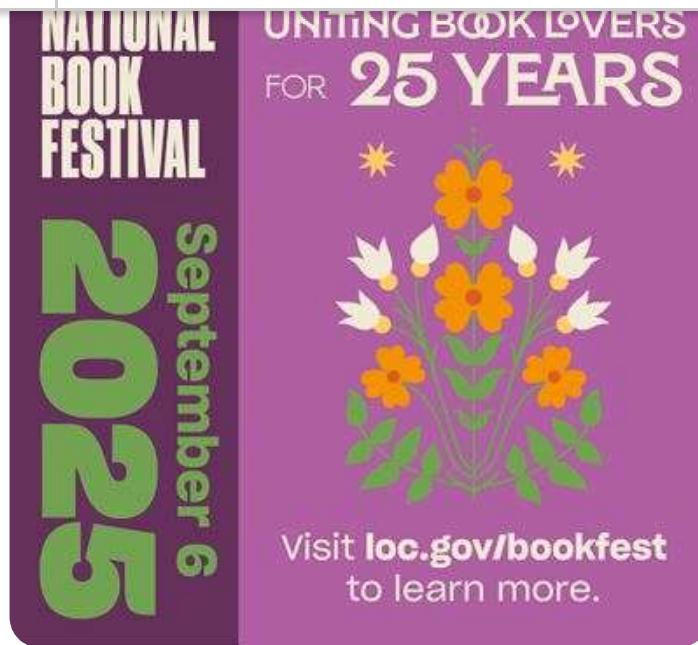
Join Learning Ecosystems Northeast Connected Learning Ecosystems (CLEs) for two days of learning, planning, reflection, and connection.

Learning Ecosystems Northeast (LENE), a partnership of teachers, librarians, in and out-of-school educators, 4-H staff & volunteers, museum/science center staff, and more invites you to join two days of learning, connection, reflection, and collaborative planning with peers at the University of Maine in Orono, ME.

The LENE network supports peer communities from across the Northeast called Connected Learning Ecosystems (CLEs). These communities are working together to increase opportunities for youth to engage in data-rich climate learning opportunities at multiple points along their learning pathway. CLEs and this gathering are open to all!

- **What:** Connected Learning Ecosystems Gathering: Connect, Reflect & Plan
- **Where:** University of Maine, Buchanan Alumni House, 160 College Ave. Orono, ME 04473
- **When:** 8:30 AM on Tuesday August 12 until 2:30 PM on Wednesday August 13
- **Who:** Librarians, teachers, in and out-of-school educators, 4-H staff & volunteers, museum/science center staff, learning experience designers; any adults who engage with youth as part of their learning pathway in the climate and data literacy space. This is for people interested in joining a CLE and for existing members. All food, travel, and lodging* costs are covered.

[Register Here](#)



Library of Congress National Book Festival: In-Person and Online Opportunities

The National Book Festival will take place on **Saturday, Sept. 6 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.** Doors will open at 8:30 a.m. The festival is free and open to everyone.

In addition to the vast array of author conversations, the festival offers a wide range of family-friendly activities, workshops and interactive programs for attendees of all ages that showcase the Library's rich resources. These include storytelling at the Story District; literary activities to spark a passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics at the STEM District; hands-on learning opportunities at the Workshop Space; hearing from experts about the hidden gems, historic treasures and innovative work happening at the nation's Library; and taking a literary trip around the country by visiting the Roadmap to Reading, featuring **reading options from all 50 states**, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Northern Marianas.

Learn more at <https://www.loc.gov/events/2025-national-book-festival/>



STEM Learning Ecosystem Community of Practice 10th Anniversary Convening October 20-22 Washington DC

As we mark ten years of the STEM Ecosystems Initiative, we invite you to a landmark convening that honors our journey and propels us into a future of boundless possibility. This pivotal event brings together champions of change—visionaries, educators, industry leaders, and community catalysts—to reflect on a decade of transformation and collaboratively design the next chapter of STEM innovation. In this era of rapid technological evolution and societal change, our work has never been more critical.

[Register Now](#)

Help JPL Improve their Educator Resources!

Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) is collecting information about how educators use and find content on the [JPL Education website](#). Your input will help JPL improve the usability of this website, making it easier to find what you need. Thank you for your help! This should take around 10 minutes of your time. **Please submit your responses by August 17, 2025.**

[Take the Survey](#)



International Observe the Moon Night 2025: Saturday, October 4th

International Observe the Moon Night is an annual event held in September or October near a first quarter Moon. A first quarter Moon offers excellent viewing opportunities along the terminator (the line between night and day), where shadows enhance the Moon's cratered landscape. **Everyone on Earth is invited to learn about lunar science and exploration, take part in celestial observations, and honor personal and cultural connections to the Moon.**

We interpret 'observe' broadly - listen to some Moon tunes, create lunar art, or make the Moon phases out of sandwich creme cookies. Need ideas? [Check out this list from NASA.](#)

Registration for International Observe the Moon Night 2025 is now open! You can participate from wherever you are: Attend or host a virtual or in-person event in your community, or observe with your family, friends, neighbors, or on your own. We invite you and your networks to register to add your event (or yourself!) to NASA's global map of lunar observers.

Learn more at <https://moon.nasa.gov/observe-the-moon-night/>

Register Your Participation



Hands-On Approach: Increasing 8th Grade Science Learning with STEMACES

Funded by the Department of Education, STEMACES puts hardware into the hands of 8th grade science students in rural communities who may not otherwise have access to it. We develop and implement teacher training specifically for the teachers who are doing their best to play five different roles (teacher, mediator, sports coach, administrator, elder) for their students while perhaps struggling with complex scientific concepts themselves. We create hands-on educational material that is fun, engaging, and unique to each student that shapes it. This way, students can come up with their own creative answers and methods of meeting criteria—strengthened and empowered by computational thinking skills they will continue to develop over the course of the rest of their lives.

We are recruiting 8th grade rural science teachers for a study, designed and implemented by WestEd, to measure the effectiveness of the kind of hands-on, computational thinking- and systems-based learning we have developed. If you are interested in joining this program and offering STEMACES material in your classroom or at your school in the Fall, please visit <https://ibym.sonoma.edu/stemaces/> and fill out the interest survey.

While we are primarily focusing recruitment efforts in schools in rural California and Texas, we are eager to work with schools in any state within the U.S.

I'm Interested!



ROADS from Earth to Venus Professional Development

The Northwest Earth and Space Science Pathways (NESSP) ROADS Professional Development is designed for both formal and informal educators in the United States who want to explore hands-on, standards-aligned, NASA-inspired lessons and activities. Whether you're new to ROADS or a returning participant, you're welcome to join!

This Professional Development is designed to be flexible. It includes three 2-hour live sessions (see the schedule linked above). Participants may choose from multiple session options but must complete Sessions 1, 2, and 3 in order. The course also includes asynchronous work on a Canvas platform, to be completed before, between, and after the live sessions. Educators who complete all components will earn approximately 13 clock hours. Stipends and supplies are available for qualifying educators.

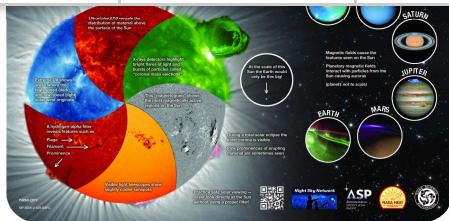
[Check out the PD flyer here.](#)

[Register Here](#)

Lesson Plans, Resources, and Materials

Our Dynamic Sun Toolkit

[Access these free tools](#) and resources to better understand Earth's closest star, and about current solar research at NASA. The toolkit includes



Summer of Planetary Science

Looking for something fun, educational, and out-of-this world to do this summer? We've got you covered! [NASA's Summer of Planetary Science](#) is where you can find hands-on activities and real opportunities to do science from home. Whether you're a student, a parent, an educator, or a lifelong space fan, this is your launch pad to explore and learn about planetary science – all you need is a little curiosity.



STEM Learning Ecosystems Educator Resources

This series of professional learning videos is designed to introduce educators to STEM Learning Ecosystems. Key aspects of place-based STEM Learning ecosystems include developing partnerships among local institutions, providing pathways for learners, and creating relevant experiences for local learners responding to cultural, societal, and geographic contexts.

<https://www.nisenet.org/stem-learning-ecosystems-videos>

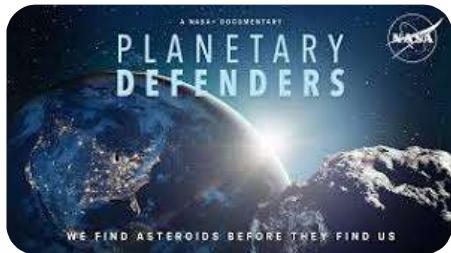
- What Are STEM Learning Ecosystems?
(1 minute, 45 seconds)
- Introduction to STEM Learning Ecosystems
(6 minutes, 9 seconds)

- Engaging Everyone in STEM Learning (5 minutes)

- Creating Authentic STEM Learning Experiences (6 minutes, 41 seconds)

You can find more resources here:

<https://www.nisenet.org/stem-learning-ecosystems>



NASA Planetary Defenders Documentary

How would humanity respond if we discovered an asteroid headed for Earth? NASA's Planetary Defenders is a gripping documentary that delves into the high-stakes world of asteroid detection and planetary defense. Journey alongside a dedicated team of astronomers and scientists working tirelessly to track and monitor near-Earth asteroids, aiming to protect our planet from potential impacts. [This documentary](#) captures the intricate and collaborative efforts of these unsung heroes, blending cutting-edge science with personal stories to reveal the human spirit behind this critical global endeavor. Witness the drama, the challenges and the triumphs of those on the front lines of planetary defense.



Explore the ISS with Virtual Reality On Your Phone or Computer!

Fellow educator Edward R. shared an amazing resource to learn about the components of the ISS and the purpose behind them. With this resource you can explore the ISS using

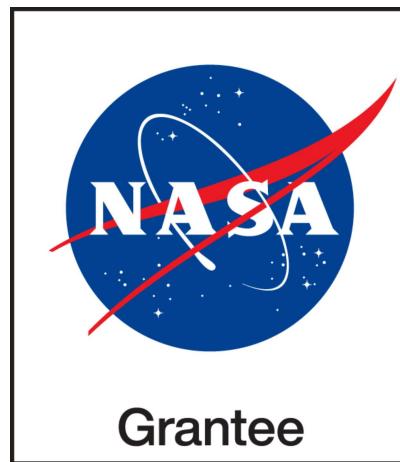
[Explore the ISS here.](#)



NASA CONNECTS

Registered community members will have the opportunity to sign up for engagement events, view and chat with other members who are interested in similar fields, read exclusive NextGen STEM content, and access resources such as activities, games, videos, educator guides, teacher toolkits, and much more.

[Join NASA CONNECTS](#)



views of NASA.”

The Rural Education Network team serves as volunteer representatives from NASA Partner projects funded through SciAct. We are aiming to amplify and elevate the voice of rural educators while providing access to resources that support educators in engaging youth in planetary science and STEM.

Copyright © 2025 Center for Science Teaching and Learning, NAU, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).