

Elmwood School Forest Education Plan

July 2009

“Produced under a 2008-2009 grant from the Wisconsin Environmental
Education Board.”

Table of Contents

Rationale	3
Value Statement.....	3
Target Messages	3
Needs Assessment Results.....	3
Site description and opportunities	4
Site Description and Location	4
Map	4
Site History	5
Site Management	6
Educational connections	8
Key Concepts.....	8
Site Connections	8
Classroom Curriculum Connections.....	8
Alignment with State Standards	8
Staff Development	11
Resources	12
Assessment	14
Sustaining the school forest program	15
Committee Members	15
Communication Plan	16
Long-Range Plan	16
Implementation Plan.....	17
District Commitment	18

Rationale

Value statement

The school forest is a unique education facility that provides the opportunity to enhance and expand student and teacher learning. We believe that integrating environmental education (EE) into the curriculum is an effective method to increase student achievement. In addition, the school forest program should play an integral role in developing environmentally and socially literate citizens by:

- Facilitating the development students' ecological and social sense of place
- Providing knowledge and skills that allows students to make informed choices and have life-styles that contribute to a healthy society and environment
- Facilitating student involvement in authentic, community-based efforts that improve the local human and natural community
- Providing an environment that actively engages students with varied learning styles

Target messages

1. Humans are part of the natural world.
2. Sustainability is an important goal to which our society should strive.
3. The natural world has inherent value.
4. Environmental health and human health are interrelated.
5. We have an obligation to contribute to the health of human and natural communities.

Needs assessment results

The School District of Elmwood teaching staff for grades PreK through 12 has a great interest in utilizing the school forest. The majority of teachers are aware that there is a school forest, and two thirds have used either the school forest or the nature trail for instruction in the past. Despite this past utilization, less than one third of respondents indicated that they planned to use the school forest during the current school year of 2008-09. However, an overwhelming 22 of 24 staff members is currently or would like to utilize the school forest for instruction.

Some barriers the staff faces in utilizing the school forest include:

- Teachers have a lack of knowledge of what is available
- Bussing is required to reach the school forest
- Middle and High school teachers face time constraints within the class periods
- The school forest does not have established trails
- The school forest does not have a shelter or bathroom facilities

The majority of teachers (22 of 24) indicated that they would utilize the school forest at least once a school year if adequate facilities were available (restrooms, shelter, teaching area, etc.). In addition, a bussing and transportation plan would need to be developed to most effectively utilize the school forest as an instructional site.

Roughly two thirds of teachers do not feel they have enough knowledge of natural resources and environmental education (forestry, soils, wildlife, water, etc.) to effectively utilize the school forest. The areas of professional development the teachers indicated would help them utilize the school forest are: plants, animals, tracks, water quality, insect study, leaf ID, and organizing community support of school forest development.

Site Description and Opportunities

Site description & location

The Elmwood School Forest is comprised one parcel of land containing two lots totaling 7.1 acres located in Elmwood, Wisconsin approximately one mile from campus. The district purchased the 7.1-acre school forest site from the Village of Elmwood for a cost of one dollar.

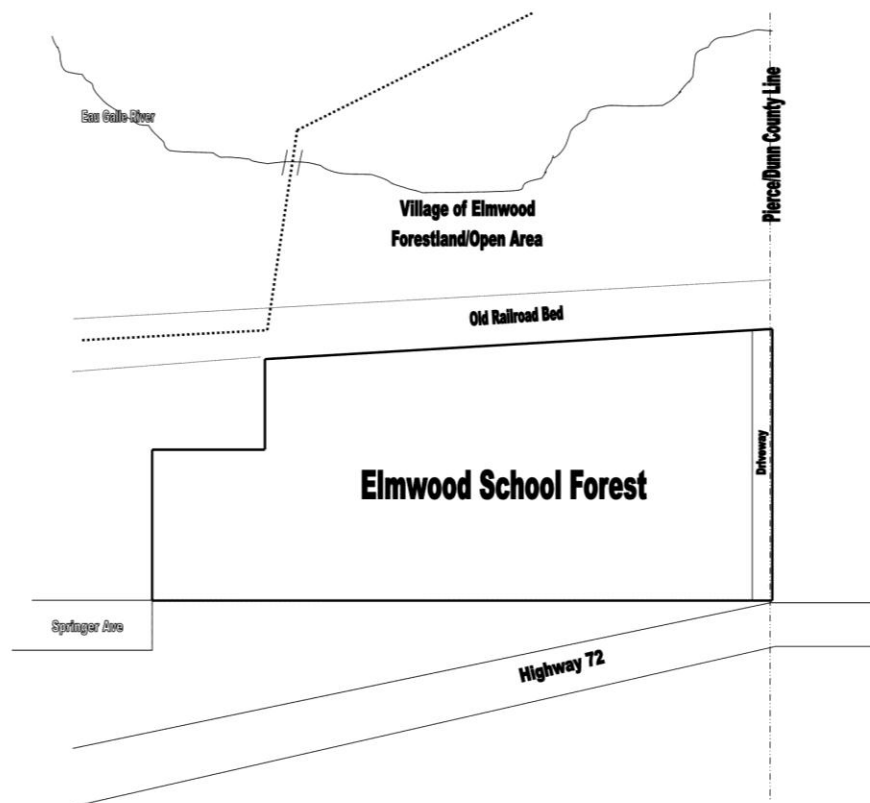
The land typifies a bottomland hardwood forest located in a floodplain along the Eau Galle River. The site is degraded by invasive species including honeysuckle, wild buckthorn and garlic mustard. These block the growth of native plants such as the dominant species like box elder, American elm, silver maple, basswood, black ash, green ash, hackberry and Chinese elm. The Village of Elmwood has approximately 80 acres of forestland and open area that lies adjacent to the Elmwood School Forest.

Legal Description:

Elmwood School Forest Lot A: SE of NE of Sec. 36 – T 27N R 15W Commencing at SE corner of Lot 2 block 4 of Nordrum addition E 396 feet then to RR R/W then W to W line of NE of NE then S to POB except N 175 feet of W 175 feet.

Elmwood School Forest Lot D: NE of NE of Sec. 36 – T 27N R 15W Part of E half of NE quarter beginning at intersection of RR R/W and E sec line then W 55 RDS then S 18 RDS to center of old Hwy 72 then E 55 RDS to Cty line then N 18 RDS to POB except E 4 RDS.

Directions: Begin at Elmwood Schools take Hwy 72 east of Elmwood to Cty line. Enter Elmwood Village driveway north on north side.



Facilities: None, at this time.

The educational opportunities provided by the site include:

- Air quality monitoring
- Art – photography, drawing, painting
- Data collection
- Descriptive writing
- Diversity calculations and comparisons
- Ecological disturbance
- Ecological restoration – prairie, forest, wetland
- Ecological succession
- Education material development
- Exotic species impact and control
- Food web analysis
- Forest management methods
- Forest measurements
- Forest products
- Forest regeneration
- Forest surveys
- Glacial geology
- Habitat surveys and classification
- Land use history
- Life-cycle investigations
- Management plan development
- Mapping
- Navigation skills
- Nutrient cycles
- Observation with a variety of senses
- Phenology
- Plant identification and classification
- Prairie management methods
- Prairie surveys
- Service learning
- Soil analysis
- Team building
- Trail hiking
- Water cycle
- Water quality analysis
- Watershed analysis
- Weather and climate measurements
- Wetland delineation and survey
- Wildlife identification and classification

Site History

Natural History:

The main school forest site is located on the eastern edge of the Village of Elmwood in the eastern part of Pierce County. The surface of the county is an upland plain; the main upland in the central and eastern part of the county has elevations ranging from 1200 feet at its highest points to approximately 900 feet in the lowest valley bottoms. Elevation of the Village is about 860 feet, with the school forest a bit lower at the northern and extreme eastern perimeters. The Village of Elmwood, including the school forest site, lies entirely within the Western Coulee and Ridges Ecological Landscape of Wisconsin, characterized by its highly eroded, driftless topography and extensive forested landscape. Soils are silt loams on the uplands; sandy loam and alluvial sand and gravel are present in the valley bottoms. Historical vegetation consisted of southern hardwood forests, oak savannah, scattered prairies, with floodplain forests and marshes along the Eau Galle River, which flows in a meandering west to east direction on the northern perimeter of the property. By 1905, when Elmwood was incorporated, the old growth timber had been stripped from the area and the original forest habitat had disappeared.

Today this site is degraded by exotic and invasive species including buckthorn, garlic mustard, and honeysuckle which damage the ecology, limit tree regeneration, displace natural vegetation, degrade wildlife habitat, endanger rare plants, and homogenize the landscape. The small pine woodlot along the eastern side of the site which was planted by FFA members is now mature and ready to be harvested.

Cultural History:

The main school forest site consists of two parcels of land with a total of 7.3 acres. The larger parcel, 5.73 acres, E1/2 of NE ¼ of Section 36, Town 27, Range 15, was patented to William H. Howard from the United States government in 1886. He and his wife mortgaged the property to Ephraim Bond in 1887 for \$300 and were foreclosed upon in May, 1890. In 1901, Mr. Bond's heirs conveyed a strip of land to the Minnesota & Wisconsin Railroad Co. for \$75.00. Fred Decker purchased the land, excepting the railroad right of way, in December, 1904. Mr. Decker and his wife Emelia sold 46/100 acre of this parcel to Miss M. C. Thomas of Menomonie in May, 1906 and 3.5 acres to S. A. Carpenter in June, 1906. F. A. Springer, E. J. McKernon, Maxime Branshaw, Gust Schutz, John Borchert, and Clarence Kitchner owned this land in succeeding years. The smaller parcel was sold to the school district in August, 1953.

Site management

Key Goals:

1. Provide a diverse and accessible site for educational use.
2. Provide a diverse and accessible site for school and community recreation.
3. Manage the land to maintain intact ecosystems.
4. Manage land to maximize learning opportunities.

Objectives:

Elmwood Public Schools began a revitalization process in 2008. A Wisconsin Environmental Education Board Grant was applied for and received to provide funding in support of establishing a School Forest Education Plan. A School Forest Committee was formed of faculty, administration and Wisconsin DNR Forester/Pierce County. The committee took part in a workshop titled "School Forest Programs and Administration" presented by Wisconsin School Forest Education Specialist, Jeremy Solin.

Elmwood faculty members completed a needs assessment to guide the committee during the development process. Data was collected and analyzed by the School Forest Committee to develop this School Forest Education Plan.

The objectives for site management in relation to the educational plan are to:

1. Involve students of all ages in the management of the site
2. Develop in students a sense of ownership and accomplishment through involvement in management
3. Manage the site to reach key goals as stated above

Specific activities that will utilize resource management activities:

Nature Trail Appendix

Agriscience and Ecology classes worked to develop a nature trail located within walking distance of the school building. Students cleared brush, removed weeds and laid down tree bark to make it a more inviting trail for people of all ages. Unlike the current school forest site, teachers can access this outdoor learning area without need for transportation. The district would like to classify the Nature Trail Area as a state-recognized school forest area to open new avenues of funding and improve learning opportunities. Working with the Wisconsin DNR Forester for our county we will work to control invasive non-native and native species as well as interplant a variety of native floodplain tree/shrub species.

School Forest Resource Management Team

The School Forest Committee will divide into two teams and expand membership. While the School Forest Curriculum Team will continue to revise and update the Education Plan, a Resource Management Team will be formed to enhance facilities and other site resources. The new committee will be comprised of faculty, administration, support staff, community and student members.

Harvest Management

Students will continue to monitor the area for and remove invasive species. Students will also work to maintain the pine plantation and mixed forest areas through continued thinning and pruning. The Wisconsin DNR Forester will help arrange bids for a contracted harvest within five years.

Village Relationship

The Village of Elmwood has a large grassy/wooded area adjacent to the initial School Forest property. We will partner with the Village of Elmwood. The village has a long term plan to develop the grassy/wooded area into a park and/or campground.

Educational Connections

Key Concepts

1. Sustainable natural resources management aims to provide essential resources for humans, enhance local communities, and protect the health of the land.
2. The natural world can provide opportunities to enhance our physical and emotional health.
3. The natural world can provide inspiration and creativity.
4. Diversity of species and ecosystems are important factors of land health.
5. Ecosystems change through time because of disturbance and succession.
6. Ecosystems contain both living (biotic) and abiotic (non-living) components.
7. We need to play an integral role in protecting and restoring the health of ecosystems.
8. Humans and environmental health are related.

Classroom Curriculum Connections, Site Connections, Key Concepts, and Standards

Subject	Curriculum Connections (Performance Objectives)	Site Connection (site specific learning objectives)	Site	Key Concepts	State Standard
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Pre-K – Grade 2

Art	Learning colors	Look at leaves to learn fall colors	Nature Trail	3	A. 4.1
	Light, perspective	Drawing and painting projects	Nature Trail	3	A. 4.2
Science	Animal identification	Hike trail and look for animals and insects	Nature Trail	4, 6	F. 4.1
	Exposure to outdoors	Spending time outside to get in touch with nature	Nature Trail	2	H. 4.3
	Tree Study	Learn to identify different kinds of trees	Nature Trail	4, 6	F. 4.2
	Food Chains	Learn about producers, consumers, and decomposers Learn about the water cycle by looking at the	Nature Trail	4, 6	F. 4.3

	Water Cycle	river	Nature Trail	8	E. 4.3
	Rocks	Identify rocks and learn about the rock cycle	Nature Trail	6	E. 4.1
Physical Education	Walking activities	Walk the trails for exercise	Nature Trail	2	A. 4.1
Math	Patterns and counting	Looking for patterns and counting trees, animals, ect.	Nature Trail	4	A. 4.1
Writing	Writing activities	Quiet space for reflection and observation to lead to writing activities	Nature Trail	2	B.4.1

Grades 3- 5

Science	Tree studies	Tree identification and leaf studies	Nature Trail	4, 6	F. 4.2
	Ecology	Look and different habitats	Nature Trail	5	F. 4.4
	Plants	Identify different types of plants and parts of plants	Nature Trail	4, 6	F. 4.2
	Astronomy	Camp outside and look at the stars, monitor phases of the moon	Nature Trail	2	E. 4.4
Social Studies	Wisconsin History	Learn about the logging industry in Wisconsin	Nature Trail	7	B. 4.7

Grades 6-8

Science	Life Sciences	Various projects based on interactions of living organisms	Nature Trail	4, 6	F. 8.8
	Outdoor learning	Outside, hands on learning activities of various types	Nature Trail	2	A.8.1
	Classroom concepts	Reinforcement of information learned in class	Nature Trail	4, 5, 6, 8	B.8.3
	Forestry	Look at different	Nature	6	F.8.8

		aspects of a forest environment including biotic and abiotic factors	Trail		
Music	Choir - Confidence Building Band	One day retreat camp	Nature Trail	2	A. 4.5
		Discussion of music in nature	Nature Trail	2	F. 4.3
Reading	Silent reading	A place to sit and read a book about nature	Nature Trail	2	A.8.1 A. 8.4

Grades 9-12

English	Poetry	Write nature poems via observing nature; writing in a peaceful, nature setting	Nature Trail	2, 8	B.12.1
Social Studies	Geography	Learn about environmental issues effecting our location	Nature Trail	7	A.12.6
Music	Choir - Confidence Building Band	One day retreat camp	Nature Trail	2	A.12.2
		Discussion of music in nature	Nature Trail	2	F.12.5
Reading	Silent Reading	A place to sit and read a book about nature	Nature Trail	2	A.12.2 A. 12.4
Science	Life Sciences	Various projects based on interactions of living organisms	Nature Trail	4, 6	F. 12.7
	Outdoor learning	Outside, hands on learning activities of various types	Nature Trail	1, 2	A.12.2
	Classroom concepts	Reinforcement of information learned in class	Nature Trail	4, 5, 6, 8	A.12.3
	Forestry	Look at different aspects of a forest environment including biotic and abiotic factors	Nature Trail	6	F.12.8
	Land Management			1, 7	G.12.5
	Water Cycle	Analyze the process	Nature	7, 8	C.12.5

	Microscopic Organisms	and purpose of proper land management techniques	Trail	4	F.12.1
	Chemistry	Learn the parts of the water cycle	Nature Trail		
		Sample the river for microscopic organisms and look at them under a microscope	Nature Trail	7, 8	C.12.3
		Dissolved oxygen testing	Nature Trail		

Staff development

A series of professional development opportunities will be provided for district staff. A timeline of the workshops and topics to be covered is:

Topic	Date	Location	Presenter
Intro to Educational Activities at the School Forest	Summer 2010	HS Computer Lab Conference Area & School Forest	LEAF Personnel
Intro to Outdoor Education Teaching Methods	Summer 2010	HS Computer Lab Conference Area & School Forest	LEAF Personnel
Skill-based Workshop	Summer 2011	HS Computer Lab Conference Area & School Forest	LEAF Personnel
Tying Your School Forest Experience to the Classroom Curriculum	Summer 2012	HS Computer Lab Conference Area & School Forest	LEAF Personnel
Snow Shoeing in School Forest	Winter 2013	School Forest	School Forest Committee

Teachers will also be encouraged to take advantage of other environmental education curriculum offerings provided by other organizations. The school forest coordinator will forward professional development opportunities to district staff.

Professional development will be approached in a collaborative manner to work with resource managers, organizations, and knowledgeable individuals to offer in-services/workshops.

Resources

Available

People:

School forest committee members
LEAF Program
UW-Stevens Point
UW-River Falls

Elmwood Rod & Gun
DNR resource specialist
Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Beaver Creek Reserve

Materials:

General

Maps of school forest
Clipboards or drawing boards (10)

Safety

Safety goggles
First aid kits in Nurse's Office (3)

Recording

Digital cameras in Office (2)

Basic Exploring

Microscopes in Science Room(15)
Pails Science Room
Magnifying lenses in HS Science (15)
100' measuring tape in HS Science (1)

Forestry Measurement

Tree keys in Ag Room(8)
Rulers
Biltmore Sticks in Ag Room (10)
Tree Cookies (6)

Timber Management

Pole saws in Ag Room(2)
Bow saws in Ag Room (2)
Hand Pruners in Ag Room (2)
Loppers in Ag Room (2)

Plant Studies

Weed guides_in Ag Room

Wildlife Management

Animal Tracks and Molds_in Ag Room
Skulls in Science Room
Dissection kits in Science Room (15)

Geology Studies

Soil samples in Ag Room
Soil sieves in Ag Room (5 sets)
Soil and Rock Reference specimens

Aquatic Studies

Pond nets (2)
Petri dishes in Science Room
Forceps in Science Room
Biotic index charts in Science Room
Water quality test kits (2 each of O₂, N)
Forceps in Science Room (2)
Thermometers in Science Room (2)
Waders in Science Room (2)
pH paper/pH test kits

Recreation

Archery equipment (set of 15)
Snowshoes rented from Menomonie
Compasses in Ag Room (10)
Generic topographic maps in Science (12)
Elmwood Topographic Map with Mr. Klink

Curriculum guides

PLT activity guide in Ag Room
Project WET activity guide in HS Science
Project WILD activity guide in HS Science

Multimedia Resources

Videos in Library, Science, & Ag Rooms

Available from CESA

GPS Receivers
Plant presses (5)
Tree, grass, shrub and flower ID books and field guides
Work Gloves
Safety Goggles
Nine lessons covering forest ecology, biodiversity, geographic information systems (GIS) and global positioning systems (GPS)

Facilities:

Land: 7 acres

Needed:

People:

Parent volunteers as chaperones

Community volunteers for site development

PreK-12 teacher involvement

Materials:

General

School forest user's guide/teacher's guide

Plastic storage containers

Recording

Digital Video Recorder

Basic Exploring

Bug boxes (15)

Insect nets (15)

Ice cube trays for sorting specimens (30)

Stop watches (10)

Garden tools (10 each of trowels, forks)

Forestry Measurement

Flagging tape

Diameter tapes

Increment borer

Ingle gauges

Clinometers

Wood samples (2 sets)

Board foot samples (15)

Biltmore sticks (30)

Prisms (5)

Aquatic Studies

Minnow traps (2)

Dishpans (10)

Microscopes (15)

Groundwater models (1)

Watershed model (1)

Wildlife Management

Binoculars

Echolocator

Study skins

Mounted specimens

Animal tracks and molds

Plaster of Paris

Small mammal box traps (5)

Geology/Soils

Soil test kits (5)

Soil thermometers (15)

Soil color charts (15)

Weather Studies

Weather station (1)

Heat index charts (15)

Sling psychrometers (5)

Rain gauge (1)

Cloud charts (15)

Wind chill charts (15)

Barometers (1)

Anemometers (1)

Light meters (5)

Air quality kits (1 each of CO₂, SO₂, NO_x, ozone, radon)

Recreation

Elmwood Topographic Maps

Fishing rods and reels (30)

Curriculum guides

Interchangeable, topical lesson guides

LEAF lesson guides (1 of each unit)

Facilities:

Restrooms

Education shelter

Trails

Trail signs

Trail kiosk

Assessment

The programmatic goal of the school forest program is to increase utilization of the school forest. However, the ultimate goal is to increase student learning and environmental literacy.

The on-going success of the school forest program will be assessed in a variety of ways, including:

- Annual surveys of teachers to determine student usage and perceived value of the school forest education experiences.
- Development of student surveys of environmental knowledge.
- In 2013, a summary of the 5 years of data will be reviewed and analyzed and recommendations for the program will be made.

Sustaining the School Forest Program

School forest committees

Management Team

1. Jeff Pickerign, Agri-Science Teacher, grades 6-12, Elmwood
pickerignj@elmwood.k12.wi.us
2. Adam Zenner, Superintendent/High School Principal, Elmwood
zennera@elmwood.k12.wi.us
3. Dave Smith, Head Custodian, Elmwood Schools
smithd@elmwood.k12.wi.us
4. Jerry Hannack, Technology Education Teacher, 6-12, Elmwood
hannackj@elmwood.k12.wi.us
5. Dave Hoffman, Math and Science Teacher, grades 9-12, Elmwood
hoffmand@elmwood.k12.wi.us
6. Gary Zielske, Forester
Wisconsin DNR
bernej@dnr.state.wi.us
7. Jeremy Solin, School Forest Coordinator
LEAF / UW-SP
jsolin@uwsp.edu
8. Don Blegen, Retired Science Teacher,
Community Member, Wildlife Photographer
715-772-4611
9. Bill Sylla, Community Member
715-639-5215
10. Brian Buck, Elmwood Village Board
Member
715-639-
11. Student Representatives
- Student from HS Forestry & Wildlife Class

Education Team

1. Kris Flesberg,
Science Teacher, grades 8-12, Elmwood
flesbergk@elmwood.k12.wi.us
2. Paula Haugle, School
Counselor, grades PreK-12, Elmwood
hauglep@elmwood.k12.wi.us
3. Diane Hurtgen, Title
I Teacher/Coordinator, Elmwood
hurtgend@elmwood.k12.wi.us
4. Brenda Kado, Grade
3 Teacher, Elmwood
kadob@elmwood.k12.wi.us
5. Paul Blanford,
Elementary & Middle School
Principal/Assistant High School Principal,
Elmwood
blanfordp@elmwood.k12.wi.us
6. Steve Renfree,
English Teacher, Grades 9-12, Elmwood
renfrees@elmwood.k12.wi.us
7. Student
Representatives
- Student from HS Ecology Class
- Student from Upper Elementary

Management Team Responsibilities:

- Financial aspects of restoration
- Site development and maintenance, e.g., facilities, trails, educational materials
- District personnel structure, e.g., school forest coordinator, responsibilities for grounds
- Annually review the management plan to ensure it's being followed and is relevant
- Identify threats to & opportunities for the school forest program

Education Team Responsibilities:

- Site development and maintenance planning, e.g., facility/trail suggestions, educational materials
- Education plan & personnel review every 3 – 5 years
- Incentives/support for on-going involvement/utilization of school forest, e.g. grant development

The Elmwood School students will be primarily responsible for site maintenance.

The district will provide basic support for the school forest program by providing transportation to the school forest and dedicating professional development time for environmental education topics.

Communication

- The School District of Elmwood will maintain a school forest website linked from the school homepage at: www.elmwood.k12.wi.us. Here, information will be provided on the school forest including history, location, updates and photos.
- Presentations about activities at the school forest will be made at least 1 time per year to the school board.
- Information will be shared with the media for all “milestones” at the school forest including community involvement, teacher training, and restoration project completions.
- The district will hold annual in-service training for teachers to become more familiar with the school forest site and curriculum.

Long-range plan

To fulfill our vision for the use of the school forest, we have identified the following goals for the school forest committees:

1. Train teachers and assistants to feel comfortable teaching students in the outdoors.
2. Create a plan for transportation to and from the school forest.
3. Create a plan for educational shelter/permanent bathroom facilities at the school forest.
4. Develop a school forest curriculum for students to maximize learning at the school forest.
5. Continue to manage the school forest to upkeep trails, control invasive species, and manage wildlife to optimize the diversity and health of the site.

Future Vision:

1. In every grade level, once per year, students will have the opportunity to visit the school forest for outdoor environmental education.
2. Community events will be held at the school forest annually, i.e. during UFO days, winter activities.
3. Develop an annual campout experience for students at a specific grade level.

Implementation plan

Event/Activity	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Formation of Committees (Management & Education)	X				
Forest upkeep by students (i.e. trails, invasive species, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X
In-service offered for teachers		X	X	X	X
Transportation plan completed		X			
PreK-12 education programs conducted		X	X	X	X
Every student visits the school forest annually			X	X	X
PreK-12 curriculum draft completed					X
Restroom facilities & educational shelter plan completed					X

Committee Formation

Primary Activities:

- Contact Potential Members
- Set Dates & Location for Meetings
- Establish Meeting Agendas
- Hold Initial Meetings

Resources:

- School Meeting Facilities

Forest Upkeep and Development

Primary Activities:

- Trail Maintenance
- Invasive Species Control
- Trail Sign Creation and Upkeep
- Management Team inventory current resources and needs
- Management team will develop plan to best utilize resources and meet needs

Resources:

- Tools and appropriate supplies
- Students
- Lumber and fasteners
- Paint

Staff Development

Primary Activities:

Arrange with district and LEAF for in-service dates and times

Refer to staff development plan for topics

Resources:

- Seek funding for tuition/stipends where possible
- Meeting location at school

Transportation Plan

Primary Activities:

- Education Committee members consult with school board, administration, and transportation director to establish plan for ongoing transportation to and from the school forest

Resources:

- Establish funding for bussing

Curriculum Development

Primary Activities:

- Teachers at all levels complete activities in school forest, including ideas generated from in-services
- Education Committee members collaborate with teachers utilizing existing activities, state standards, and future goals to develop comprehensive draft curriculum

Resources:

- Staff in-service time
- Tuition/Stipends where possible
- State curriculum standards

Facilities

Primary Activities:

- Management team will collaborate with Village of Elmwood to develop plan for permanent bathroom/educational shelter facilities

Resources:

- Collaboration with Village of Elmwood for funds

District commitment

In 2008, the School District of Elmwood School Board made a commitment to the Elmwood School Forest through supporting and endorsing a Wisconsin Environmental Education Board School Forest Grant for \$5,000 with a substantial match from the district. In addition, on February 16, 2009, the Elmwood School Board approved an additional 4 acres of district land to be designated as school forest.

The Elmwood School Forest Education Plan will be presented to the Elmwood School Board for approval in the fall of 2009, with the expectation that the plan will be the foundation for further development of the school forest and will be updated on a 3-5 year basis.