

So You Want To Be A Forester?

Standards Addressed

Environmental Education Standards:

B. Knowledge of Environmental Processes and Systems:
B.4.11.

Key Concepts/ Content

- ✳ To better understand the roles of a forester.
- ✳ To investigate the knowledge needed to be a forester.
- ✳ To know what one needs to do to pursue a career in forestry.

Teacher Background

To be a forester, you generally must have a college degree from a school offering professional forestry education. The University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point and Madison offer such a degree. There are many disciplines related to forestry also. These include specialty jobs such as forest entomologist, researcher, forest pathologist, or soil scientist.

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. Founded in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot, it is the largest professional society for foresters in the world. The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and, to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

The Society of American Foresters lists over 700 job categories and nearly 14,000 separate employers among its members. Most forestry positions in the federal government are with the U.S. Forest Service, but opportunities also exist with other agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Manage-

ment, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Soil Conservation Service, and the National Park Service. Other forestry positions can be found with state natural resource agencies, private industry, and as an independent consultant.

Beginning salaries in forestry are comparable with other resource-based professions. Advancement opportunities are readily available, depending largely upon individual initiative and capability.

Forestry is a dynamic occupation that is constantly changing. Therefore, foresters need to be aware of new techniques in forestry, products, and equipment that are constantly being developed.

Getting Ready

Ask a forester or forest technician to come into your classroom to discuss his/her career. The list of references contains information on how to contact a forester.

There are many aspects of forestry so your guest speaker's presentation might be geared to the interests of your students; some considerations include: 1) Industrial forester, unit manager for a pulp and paper company; 2) District ranger in a national forest; 3) DNR forester; 4) Consulting forester (provides specialized services to private landowners); 5) Urban forester (inventories street-side and park trees to aid the city forestry department in a systems approach to managing the urban forest and fire protection); 6) Forest geneticist (selects, tests, and develops new trees for better quality, faster growth, and resistance to insects and disease); or 7) Forestry technician (supports foresters in caring for the forest).

Safety Issues



- ◆ None specific to this activity.
- ◆ Elementary Science Safety Contract (see Appendix).

- Materials Needed**
- ✦ You may want to obtain *So You Want to be a Forester* (see the reference section in this activity).
 - ✦ Bulletin board or butcher paper; poster paper; magazines that contain pictures of forestry-related occupations; index cards with one forestry-related occupation listed on each card (for charades).

Procedures

Use a strategy such as the KWL (Know-Want to Know-Learned) strategy to find out what students know about forestry. Possible questions to use might include: What is forestry? What do foresters and forest technicians do? What does one need to do to pursue a career in forestry?

The KWL strategy is used throughout this procedure.

KWL Information

KWL asks students to record what they know and what they want to know about a topic at the beginning of a unit.

KWL sequence:

Divide a piece of chart paper into three columns: K W L

Ask the group to share what they already know about the topic and jot ideas in the K column. The group then categorizes the items under the K.

Next ask the group what they would like to know about the topic and jot their remarks down in the W column. The group then categorizes items under W.

After the activity, ask the group to reconsider what they have under the K.

1. Invite a forester to come to the classroom to discuss his/her career.

2. Using a graphic organizer, review key concepts. Then add additional information to the KWL chart. Did students discover that any of their initial ideas were inaccurate?
3. Research early foresters in Wisconsin and report on their lives, challenges, and achievements.

Extensions to the activity:

1. Working in teams, ask student groups to identify key individuals who are foresters and write about his or her career. One individual might be the Chief State Forester for the Department of Natural Resources.
2. Ask students to develop a timeline about the changes in the forest profession in Wisconsin.
3. Play charades with the class and act out forestry-related occupations for teams to guess.
4. Make a collage of people working in forestry-related jobs (forest ranger, sawmill worker, game warden, paper mill worker, nursery worker, etc.)
5. Ask students to draw or trace each other. Their life-sized figures should be traced or drawn on bulletin board or butcher paper. Then ask students to “dress” themselves in the clothing or uniform appropriate to their chosen forestry career.
6. Make posters representing forest-related jobs.

**Evidence of
Student
Understanding**

You can use the “Student Re-Teach” strategy to assess student learning. The strategy is done by having students teach newly learned concepts, skills, and processes to another student or group of students of the same or different grade level.

References/ Resources

- 📖 *So You Want to be a Forester....*, Society of American Foresters, 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814-2198.
- 📖 SAF website: <http://www.safnet.org/about/careers.htm>
Getting started in forestry and link to a list of accredited forestry schools in the U.S.
- 📖 Teachers may be interested in participating in a forest resource education workshop. Such workshops are offered by:
Wisconsin Forest Resources Education Alliance (WFREA);
6343 Highway 8 West, Rhineland, WI 54501. Call toll-free: 1-888-WFREA-64. Website: <http://www.wfrea.org>.
- 📖 *Trees for Tomorrow*, P.O. Box 609, Eagle River, WI 54521, phone: (800) 838-9472.

