

Lesson 6: I Can Be a Forest Steward

NUTSHELL

In this classroom lesson, students learn what it means to be a forest steward. Students suggest solutions to forest problems by using an I Spy-like picture. A board game illustrates various decisions people can make for forests. As a conclusion, students draw their impressions of what our forests will be like in the future based on stewardship decisions.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- All citizens have a responsibility to be stewards of the environment that sustains human life. This includes making informed decisions about forest resources.
- A citizen, acting individually or as part of a group, can make lifestyle decisions and take a variety of actions to ensure the sustainable use of our forests.
- Choices humans make today directly affect our ability to sustain forest ecosystems essential to meeting future needs.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How do the choices people make today change forests in the future?

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define the responsibilities of a forest steward.
- Name choices a steward could make for our forests' future.
- Identify how today's choices affect future forests.

SUBJECT AREAS

Arts, Social Studies

LESSON/ACTIVITY TIME

Total Lesson Time: 60 minutes

- Introduction15 minutes
- Activity25 minutes
- Conclusion20 minutes

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

Standards for this lesson can be viewed online at the LEAF website (www.leafprogram.org).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To be a **steward** of forests and other natural resources, citizens must accept responsibility to learn about the issues and problems that affect forests. They must make decisions about the things people do to and for forests, and they must be willing to take action to correct things that may cause harm.

The term “forest stewardship” is often used to describe the responsibility that people who own forests have to take care of the land. Although it is true that these individuals, government bodies, and companies do have that responsibility, they are not the only stewards our forests need. Individuals can be forest stewards even if they are not landowners. No matter the issue or action, decisions made today affect the future. It is important for students to understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens and consumers, so that they can make informed decisions and positively influence the way we use and care for our forests and other natural resources.

Recycling or choosing recycled products are acts of stewardship we can do within a household. It may be the decision to use wood products instead of nonrenewable products. People may be stewards by donating money to environmental organizations or planting a tree in your own yard. There are many ways that we can accept responsibility for the future of Wisconsin forests.

VOCABULARY TERMS

Steward: A person who takes responsibility to make decisions and take actions today that will allow resources to be maintained in a healthy manner.

Wildfire: A fire that is burning uncontrolled in a natural setting (e.g., a forest or grassland).

PROCEDURE

Introduction - Good Decision/ Bad Decision

1. Hand out Student Page , **Which Decision?** to each student.
2. Explain that there are good and bad decisions being made in the picture. Ask the students to find the decisions that are bad and circle them.
3. Discuss the bad decisions that the students found. (*Being careless with fire can hurt trees, littering is ugly, hitting trees with lawn mowers can injure them.*) Discuss that sometimes people do things that are bad for the future of forests because they don't know any better. It is very important to learn about how the things we do affect the forest in the future. (*Remember, these things can affect the forests today too!*)
4. Discuss the things the students saw in the picture that were good. (*Learning about trees, mulching around trees to protect them from lawn mowers, picking up trash, hanging a birdhouse, planting a tree.*) Tell the class that the people doing good things for the forest that will help it in the future are called stewards.

MATERIALS LIST

For Each Student

- Copy of Student Page , **Which Decision?**
- Copy of Student Page , **What If We...?**
- One square piece of paper (2" x 2")

For Every 4-5 Students

- Teacher Pages , **2A-B, Stewardship Game Board** copied and assembled
- Teacher Pages , **1A-B, Stewardship Game Cards** copied and cut out

Activity - Stewardship Game

1. Define and discuss what it means to be a steward of forests. (*A steward takes responsibility to learn about forests, makes smart decisions about forests, and takes action on the decisions.*) The things that a steward does are called stewardship.
2. Pass out the 2" squares of paper. Ask students to write their names on the paper and fold them in half. These will be used as game pieces.
3. Divide the class into groups of four or five. Give each group a game board made from Teacher Pages , **2A-B, Stewardship Game Board**, with the stewardship cards made from Teacher Pages , **1A-B, Stewardship Game Cards**, placed in the middle of it. All students place their game pieces on the Start. Each group chooses a student to go first, using the method of your choice.

**“Though leaves are many,
the root is one.”**

★ William Butler Yeats ★

4. The student chosen to go first draws a card and reads it aloud. Each card has an explanation of an action and instructions on what to do next. The instructions will be to move ahead or back a specific number of spaces. If the card a student draws while still on Start says to go back, the player remains on the Start space. If the card says to go back more spaces than there are between the game piece and the Start space, the player goes back to Start.
5. Each student thereafter draws one card for each turn, reads the card aloud, and follows the instructions on the card. Used cards should be placed in the discard pile marked on the game board. Play continues until all students reach the Finish. The Finish is the healthy forest of the future. It results from smart stewardship decisions.
6. Wrap up with a brief discussion of some of the things students read on their cards. Ask what good things they can do to be forest stewards. (*Plant a tree, stay on trails, reuse paper bags, teach others about forests, make safe fires, pick up litter.*) Can they think of others not mentioned in the game?

Conclusion - Future Forests

1. Hand out Student Page **2, What If We...?** Assign students a topic or allow them to choose a topic regarding forest stewardship. (*Recycle, plant trees, teach others, use fire safely, pick up litter.*)
2. Tell students to write their topic at the top of each box. In one of the boxes on the page, have them draw what they think Wisconsin forests will look like in the future if we do what is suggested. In the other box, have them draw what Wisconsin forests will look like if we don't do what is suggested. For instance, "What if we did recycle?" and "What if we did not recycle?" The drawings should address what the future of forests would be from both perspectives.
3. When the students have completed their worksheets, put them on a bulletin board for the class to see.

CAREERS

The career profile in this lesson is about Terrie Cooper, Land Trust Director, Door County Land Trust and is found on page 83. A careers lesson that uses this information begins on page 90.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Assign students to write a paragraph about what forest stewardship is. Ask them to list ways they think they could be a good forest steward and why it's important.

**"Autumn that year painted the countryside in vivid shades of
scarlet, saffron, and russet, and the days were
clear and crisp under harvest skies."**

★ Sharon Kay Penman ★

Career Profile

Terrie Cooper, Land Trust Director

This is Terrie Cooper. Terrie is the land trust director of the Door County Land Trust. Her specialty area is land protection and stewardship. That means Terrie helps people protect land in their community. When people work with Terrie to put property in a land trust, they know the special plants and animals that live there will be protected. Once the land is protected, Terrie might take pictures, count the plants and animals she sees, write articles for the newspaper, or take people out to visit these places. In a way, Terrie works for the plants and animals because she helps protect them.

Terrie went to college two different times: Once to be a teacher and study biology, and once to learn about natural resources and environmental education. Terrie has had lots of different experiences. She worked as a naturalist at many of the nature centers in Wisconsin — from Milwaukee to Green Bay to Eagle River.

Terrie says the best part of her job is “seeing the beautiful places I have helped to protect that will always be here for future generations of people and wildlife

to enjoy.” She says she likes to be able to combine her love for teaching about nature with her love of being outdoors.

If you would like a job like Terrie’s, she says you should learn about the plants, animals, and history of your community. She suggests that you go to meetings to learn about how your town makes decisions. Don’t forget to volunteer for a conservation organization in your area doing things like planting trees, building birdhouses, cleaning up litter, or helping raise money.



Sometimes the places Terrie helps to protect have rivers and lakes to explore.

STEWARDSHIP GAME CARDS

You made a campfire from wood that was on the ground, not wood that was still growing on trees.

Go ahead 2 spaces.

You helped your parents plant wildflowers in your yard.

Go ahead 3 spaces.

You taught your parents how the parts of a tree work.

Go ahead 2 spaces.

You carved your initials in a tree.

Go back 1 space.

You broke a tree branch.

Go back 2 spaces.

You played with matches.

Go back 1 space.

You put up a bird feeder.

Go ahead 3 spaces.

You kept your cat in the house so it wouldn't eat birds.

Go ahead 2 spaces.

You stayed on the trails when you were hiking.

Go ahead 3 spaces.

You found a gopher hole and tried to dig it up.

Go back 2 spaces.

You turned your radio up very loud in the woods.

Go back 1 space.

You dropped your candy wrapper in the forest.

Go back 2 spaces.

You colored paper bags and used them for wrapping paper.

Go ahead 2 spaces.

You put up a fence around the young tree in your yard to protect it from rabbits.

Go ahead 3 spaces.

You didn't pick wildflowers in the park but left them there for others to enjoy.

Go ahead 2 spaces.

You built a birdhouse.

Go ahead 3 spaces.

You were on a picnic and used a paper plate instead of a styrofoam one.

Go ahead 2 spaces.

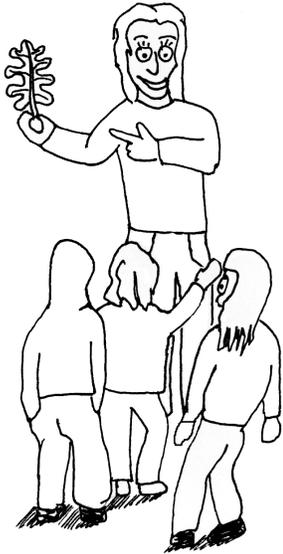
You made a safe campfire.

Go ahead 3 spaces.

STEWARDSHIP GAME CARDS

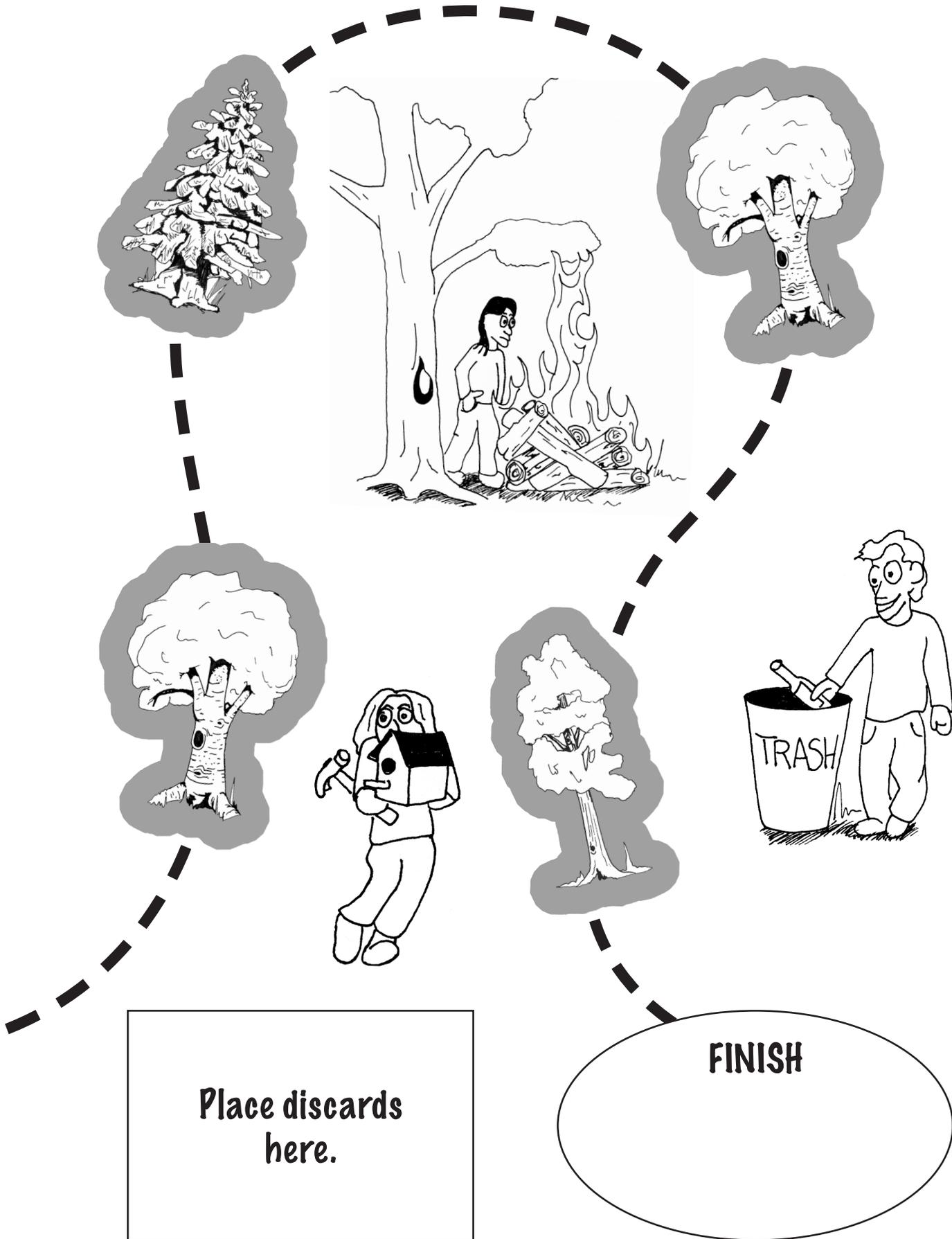
<p>You planted a tree.</p> <p>Go ahead 3 spaces.</p>	<p>You picked up litter.</p> <p>Go ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You recycled your paper.</p> <p>Go ahead 3 spaces.</p>
<p>You set off fireworks that started a wildfire.</p> <p>Go back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You threw rocks at a squirrel.</p> <p>Go back 1 space.</p>	<p>Your whole class walked on rare plants and killed them.</p> <p>Go back 2 spaces.</p>
<p>You read books to learn more about trees.</p> <p>Go ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>Your whole class went to a park and picked up litter.</p> <p>Go ahead 3 spaces.</p>	<p>You helped pull out plants that do not belong in a forest.</p> <p>Go ahead 2 spaces.</p>
<p>You ripped bark off a tree.</p> <p>Go back 1 space.</p>	<p>You stepped on a young tree.</p> <p>Go back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You pulled wildflowers out of the ground.</p> <p>Go back 1 space.</p>
<p>You saw a bird nest with eggs in it and left it alone.</p> <p>Go ahead 3 spaces.</p>	<p>You picked an old can out of the stream.</p> <p>Go ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You taught a friend how important forests are.</p> <p>Go ahead 3 spaces.</p>
<p>You threw your old notebook away instead of recycling it.</p> <p>Go back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>You chased a baby bird that couldn't fly to scare it.</p> <p>Go back 1 space.</p>	<p>You rode your bike where you weren't supposed to and hurt tree roots.</p> <p>Go back 3 spaces.</p>

START



Place stewardship cards here.





Place discards
here.

FINISH

WHICH DECISION?



WHAT IF WE...?

What if we **DID** _____ ?

What if we **DID NOT** _____ ?