

A Forest Near You!

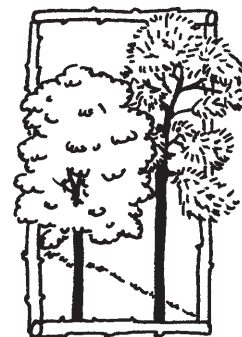
Sometimes we overlook the precious natural gems in our own backyards. Local forests can be valuable places to relax and have fun. Because they are close, people can enjoy them when time and money are limited. This activity encourages you and your students to investigate the forest resources right next door!

Getting Ready

1. Be sure the CD-ROM is installed and working properly.
2. Gather information about local forest/recreation areas. You can usually get information from your local Chamber of Commerce or Tourism Bureau. If these are not available locally, try getting county-wide information. Also, collect travel brochures featuring local attractions. You can find these at area motels, grocery stores, and other public places.

Doing the Activity

1. Be sure that each student or small group of students has a chance to use the CD-ROM. They should go to the main menu and select the *Recreation* section. They can search Wisconsin's State Parks and Forests by location and by recreational activity.
2. After everyone has had a chance to use the CD-ROM, lead a class discussion on recreation in Wisconsin. Refer to the results of the surveys students conducted in the activity "Recreation Use Survey." What were some favorite recreational activities? What local recreation areas were mentioned? Did you find any local forests on the CD-ROM that you didn't know about?
3. List on the board all of the nearby forest recreation lands. Be sure to include city, county, and national forests as well as other forested recreation areas. Students can use the CD-ROM, the resources you collected, and resources listed under **Finding Out More!** to help them. If you have a school forest, be sure to include it on the list. Explain that the list on the board is a working list and that it will probably grow as you explore the forests near you.
4. Ask groups of students to choose one of the forests listed on the board to investigate further. Using the resources you have gathered and the resources listed under **Finding Out**



Method

With the help of the CD-ROM, students "visit" forests around the state and then create a brochure to promote their favorite local forest.

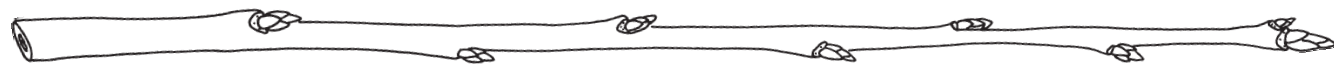
Key Concepts

Forests are one of our favorite places to recreate: hiking, camping, wildlife watching, skiing, boating, snowmobiling, swimming, biking, horseback riding, fishing, and hunting.

Wisconsin's 16 million acres of forested land provide many opportunities for recreation - some right outside your door.

Objectives

- realize that Wisconsin is endowed with many forest recreation opportunities
- research local forest resources
- create a marketing tool to promote a favorite local forest



Subjects & WI Academic Standards

Science:

A.4, B.4, C.4, H.4
A.8, C.8, F.8, G.8

Social Studies:

A.4, A.8

English/Language Arts:

A.4, B.4, C.4, E.4, F.4,
A.8, B.8, C.8, E.8, F.8

Environmental Education:

A.4, B.4, C.4
A.8, B.8, C.8

Materials

- CD-ROM
- information about forests/recreation areas in the area
- travel brochures featuring area attractions

Preparation Time

20 - 30 minutes

Activity Time

1 50-minute class period, homework time, and in-class presentation time

Setting

classroom

More!, ask them to gather as much information as possible.

5. Show students examples of some brochures that promote area attractions. Tell them they are going to produce a brochure to market a local forest. If you have a school forest, you might want everyone to create a brochure for this important resource. Talk about what they might want to include and how they will make the information useful and interesting. Here are some ideas:

- ✦ State clearly the main attractions and reasons for visiting.
- ✦ Design an attractive brochure.
- ✦ Be sure the information is easy to read.

✦ Include photos, drawings, and other graphics.

✦ Use grammar and punctuation thoughtfully.

✦ Include contact information so readers can find out more.

Note: Printed brochures aren't the only way to market an attraction. If you prefer, you can leave the assignment more open. Allow students to market the forest resource in any way they choose (e.g., radio spots, PowerPoint or HyperStudio presentations, web home pages, TV commercials, printed media, or music videos).

6. Allow students to present their final products to the rest of the class. If it seems appropriate, share your final products with the landowners of the forests.

Assessing Student Understanding

Monitor student involvement in class discussion.

Evaluate student projects based on the criteria that you established when giving the assignment. See step 5 for several suggestions. You might want to add:

Use at least 3 resources.

Use class time wisely.

Submit final project on time.

Present the final project in an organized way.

Extending the Learning

Get Out!

Plan a school trip to enjoy your own school forest or a nearby park. Think about the impacts of your recreation before you do it! How will you choose what to do and when to do it? How many

people will participate? Does the number of people make a difference? Talk about how sledding on a slushy hillside in early spring might cause more harm than sledding on the same hill on a cold January day. Which is more likely to damage plants and animal homes? How might mountain biking in spring on muddy trails differ from biking the same trail in late summer? What is the impact of an ice skating party with a big bonfire? Try to come up with a fun activity that doesn't do permanent harm to our beautiful forest resources. Check out the **Leave No Trace** website (www.lnt.org). Their mission is to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships.

Enter the Forest Appreciation Writing Contest

Each year the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources sponsors a writing contest for fourth grade students. Students can enter essays, poetry, or other types of creative writing that follow the theme for that year. Contest packets with rules and judging criteria are sent to fourth grade teachers in January. The deadline is usually the first week of March. For more information, contact: Forest Appreciation Week Writing Contest, Wisconsin DNR, Bureau of Forestry, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

Can We Overuse Our Forests?

The **Project Learning Tree** activity "Loving It too Much" looks at some of the problems caused by too many people in America's national parks. Grades 6-8.

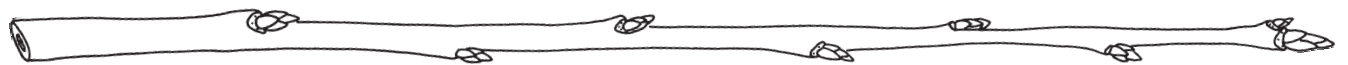
Be a Volunteer

Consider volunteering to help cleanup or maintain a recreation area near you. The **Project Learning Tree** activity "I'd Like to Visit a Place Where . . ." gives good background information and a plan for organizing a volunteer project.

You can also consider the **Adopt-A-Trail** program at a nearby state park, forest, or trail. Volunteers are needed to pick up litter, repair trail surfaces, control alien plant invaders, or help out in other ways as needed. Contact the superintendent for the park or trail you're interested in.

Design Your Ideal Forest

Every visitor to a forest has his/her own ideas about how to manage the land. Most public forests have a plan. Wildlife and fish managers, foresters, recreation specialists, local residents, and forest visitors have the opportunity to help write these master plans. It's not easy getting people with so many diverse opinions to agree on a plan. Master plans are compromises. What if it was



your class's job? What kind of forest would your students want? Encourage them to create it on paper and share it with several people. Don't be surprised if there is disagreement about the "look" of an ideal forest!

Read!

Read *My Father Doesn't Know About the Woods and Me* by Dennis Haseley. This fascinating picture book tells of the adventures of a boy and his dad in the forest.

Imagine a World Without Trees

The *Project Learning Tree* activity "Three Cheers for Trees" asks students to compare drawings of landscapes with and without trees to facilitate a discussion about the benefits of trees in public places. Grades 1 - 6.

Finding Out More!

Find a Forest on the Web

County Forests

www.wisconsincountyforests.com

Recreational Opportunities on Federal Lands

www.recreation.gov

State Forests

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/stateforests

Wisconsin Department of Tourism. This website includes links to travel destination websites that are searchable by region, county, and community.

www.travelwisconsin.com

Find a Forest in a Book

Wisconsin DNR's Public Wildlife Recreation Land published by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources—Bureau of Wildlife Management. Find public lands that are open for hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing, and wildlife watching.

Wisconsin Wildlife Viewing Guide by Mary K. Judd. This guide covers many of the state parks, natural areas, sanctuaries, nature centers, and wildlife areas around the state.

Learn About Recreational Planning

Wisconsin's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for 2000 - 2005. Read about the current uses of our state parks and forests and plans for their future in this Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources publication (PUB-PR-448-99).

