

K-4TH GRADE UNIT

LESSON 4 Urban Forest Stewardship

NUTSHELL

In this lesson, students learn about the meaning of the word “steward” and discuss choices they would make in given situations. They learn about the people who influence urban forests through an Old Maid-type card game. They also create their own knight’s shield that shows why urban forests are important and what they can do to help them.

BIG IDEAS

- Jobs related to urban forestry include arborists, planners, city foresters, nursery workers, landscapers, consultants, landscape architects, educators, researchers, public works employees, and park and recreation staff. (Subconcept 11)
- Individuals, neighborhood groups, volunteer groups, and elected officials can have a positive influence on others by increasing recognition of the value and importance of an urban forest. (Subconcept 23)
- All citizens have a responsibility to be stewards of the environment. Decisions they make affect urban forests as well as other forests. (Subconcept 24)

OBJECTIVES (GRADES 2-4)

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

- Identify some of the people who positively influence others about urban forests.
- Explain that citizens have a responsibility to be stewards of the environment.
- List choices they can make to be good stewards.
- Identify urban foresters as people who play key roles in maintaining the urban forest.

SUBJECT AREAS

Arts, Language Arts, Social Studies

LESSON/ACTIVITY TIME

- Total Lesson Time: 120 minutes
- Time Breakdown:
 - Introduction35 minutes
 - Activity 125 minutes
 - Activity 240 minutes
 - Conclusion20 minutes

TEACHING SITE

Classroom

BACKGROUND

Many different people are involved in managing urban forests. We often think of urban foresters, but arborists, planners, nursery workers, landscapers, landscape architects, educators, researchers, public works employees, and park and recreation staff all contribute. In addition to these paid positions, neighborhood groups, volunteer tree boards, and elected officials have a role in maintaining urban forests as well.

We all have a responsibility to be stewards of the environment. One way to accept that responsibility is to be a good steward of the urban environment you live in. Since urban ecosystems are connected to all other ecosystems, the good things we do there can help elsewhere too.

Helpful actions you can take are as simple as planting a tree, volunteering for a cleanup day, voting, or writing a letter to an elected official or to a company you’d like to influence. Some people choose to donate money to causes that support stewardship activities. You can educate others, attend public meetings, or run for office. The options to help are plentiful.

MATERIALS LIST

FOR EACH STUDENT

- 11" X 17" piece of paper
- Crayons or markers

FOR EACH GROUP OF THREE OR FOUR STUDENTS

- Copy of Teacher Pages 🌳 1A-C, *Forest Influencers Game Cards* (cut out)

FOR THE CLASS

- Copy of Student Pages ✍️ 1A-B, *Situation Cards* enough for one card per group of two or three students (cut out)

FOR THE TEACHER

- Teacher Page 🌳♂️ 2, *Forest Influencers Game Cards Key*

PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION (↑)

(Modified from Unit 4 Lesson 7 from the *LEAF K-12 Forestry Lesson Guide*.)

1. Ask students what decisions they have made today. (*What clothes to wear, what to eat for lunch, what to play at recess.*) Tell them that we try to make the best decisions we can about things in our life. Many different things influence our decisions. (*Temperature and fashion influence what we wear, what food is available influences what we eat for lunch, etc.*) Emphasize that many of our decisions impact other people and the environment, and it is important to think carefully before making a decision.

Define the word "steward." (*A person who takes responsibility to make decisions and take actions today that will allow resources to be maintained in a healthy manner.*)

Explain that they are going to talk about some different situations and make decisions about them. Making the best decision they can is being a good steward.

2. Divide the class into groups of two or three. Give each group a situation card from Student Pages ✍️ 1A-B, *Situation Cards*. Depending on the size of your class, situations may be used more than once. Ask the group to discuss the situation and the solutions listed. Have them decide which solution they would choose and why.

SUGGESTION: For younger students, you may want to choose a situation from Student Pages ✍️ 1A-B, *Situation Cards* and discuss it as a class.

3. After the groups are done discussing their situations, ask each group to share their situation and solution with the class. Tell the class that they are going to talk about more ways they can help the urban forest in the next activities.

VOCABULARY

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

Tree Board/Tree Group: A group of people in a community who work together to increase awareness, educate citizens, and promote urban forests in local government.

Urban Forester: A person who plants and takes care of the trees in cities, towns, and neighborhoods.

ACTIVITY 1 – FOREST INFLUENCERS (↑)

(Modified from Unit 2-3 Lesson 5 from the *LEAF K-12 Forestry Lesson Guide*.)

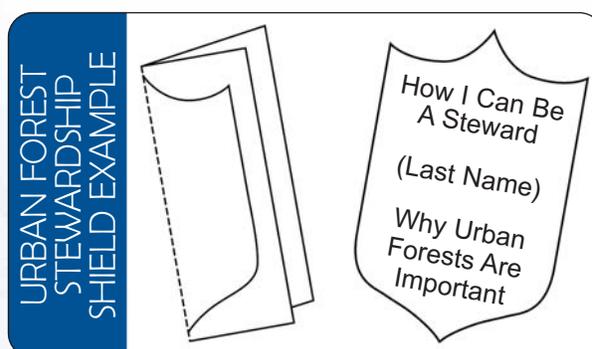
1. Tell students that there are many people who positively affect urban forests. While urban foresters work with the city to improve the forest, many others need to be involved for it to be successful. Often, urban foresters work with other people to get things done. Volunteer organizations, property owners, businesses, and elected officials all have a role to play.
2. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Hand out Teacher Pages 1A-C, *Forest Influencers Game Cards* that you have cut out. Use Teacher Page 2, *Forest Influencers Game Cards Key* to explain how each of the people on the cards can influence others in a positive way to benefit the urban forest. Have students play as they would for Old Maid.
 - Deal all the cards in one set of *Forest Influencers Game Cards* to students in each group of three or four.
 - Each student will try to create pairs using the cards in their hands.
 - They should match all the cards that they have been dealt first.
 - When everyone has taken all the pairs they can from their own hand and laid them face up in front of them, they will go around the circle and draw a card from their neighbor's hand.
 - When a card has been added to their own, they should match any pairs they can.
 - Play continues until all the pairs have been made and someone is left with the urban forester card.

Unlike in the game Old Maid, it is a good thing to have the urban forester at the end in this game!

ACTIVITY 2 – STEWARD SHIELD (↑)

(Modified from Unit 4 Lesson 7 from the *LEAF K-12 Forestry Lesson Guide*.)

1. Remind students what “steward” means and that each of them is a steward who has influence. Tell students that as stewards, they help defend urban forests so they can still provide benefits in the future. Tell them that just like medieval times, you are going to knight them as stewards of our urban forests. As a knight, they will need a shield.
2. Hand out a piece of 11" X 17" paper. Tell students that they should fold their paper in half, much like cutting out a valentine heart, and they should cut out a shield. You may want to draw an example on the board, or consider having a photocopy of the shield ready for students to cut out.
3. Once they have cut out their shield, tell them to decorate it by writing their last name across the center, and below that represent why they think urban forests are important. On the top half, represent ways that they, as stewards, can help take care of urban forests. If needed, brainstorm a few examples of why forests are important and what students can do.
4. Have students share their completed shields with the class, and place them on a classroom wall. (Spread out [if possible] for the conclusion activity.)



CONCLUSION – BEYOND THE URBAN FOREST (↑)

1. Discuss and define rural forests versus urban forests as needed. (See Conclusion sections of earlier lessons for suggestions.) **NOTE:** Pictures of urban and rural forests intended to aid in student discussion are available on the LEAF website. Go to www.uwsp.edu/leaf and navigate to the educator supplemental resources section.
2. Using the shields created in Activity 2, have students look at each shield that is hung around the room. Ask each student to take a piece of paper and pencil with them to make notes. They should write down the activities that their classmates identified to take care of urban forests.
3. When all students have had a chance to see each shield, ask them to return to their seats. Next to each different activity identified, they should give their opinion as to whether it applies to rural forests. Ask students to hand in their sheets and use them as a summative assessment tool.

LEAF LINKS

The lessons listed below, for the *LEAF Wisconsin K-12 Forestry Education Lesson Guide*, contain possible enhancements, extensions, or replacements for *Urban Forest Lesson Guide: K-4 Lesson 4*.

UNIT 2-3, LESSON 6: I CAN BE A FOREST STEWARD

Students find out what it means to be a forest steward and make decisions about good stewardship activities through an I Spy-like picture and board game.

Use 2-3 Lesson 6 as written for lower grade levels to replace Urban Forest Lesson Guide: K-4 Lesson 4. Note that Activity 1, Activity 2, and the Conclusion of Urban Forest Lesson Guide: K-4 Lesson 4 are designed for upper level students.

UNIT 4, LESSON 7: SUSTAINING OUR FORESTS

Students are introduced to the sustainability and stewardship of forests by listening to a fable, brainstorming, reading situation cards, and creating an art project.

The Introduction of Unit 4 Lesson 7 could also be used to introduce the Urban Forest Lesson Guide: K-4 Lesson 4. Some of the situation cards from this lesson could be added to the cards in the urban forest lesson as well.

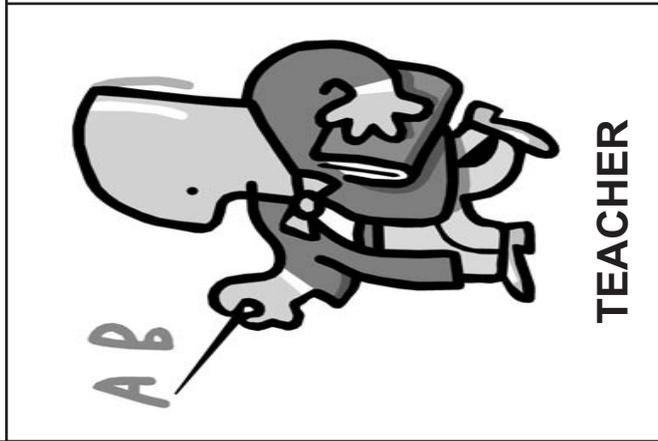
FOREST INFLUENCERS GAME CARDS

INSTRUCTIONS:

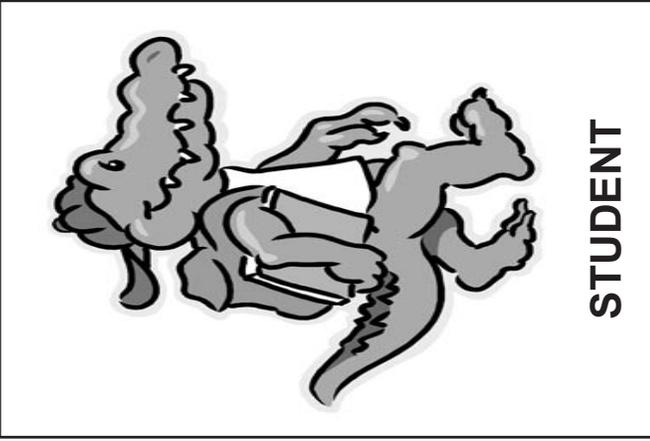
- Make one set of cards for each group of three to four students.
- You will need **two copies of each page** per set of cards (so there are pairs).
NOTE: There should only be **one urban forester card** in each set.
- Copy the cards onto cardstock or mount them on construction paper for durability and to prevent students from seeing through the back of each card. Different colored sets will help keep them organized.



POLITICIAN



TEACHER

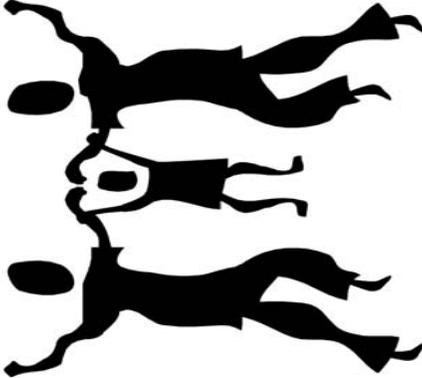


STUDENT

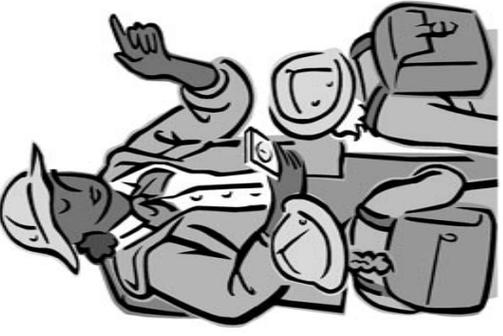
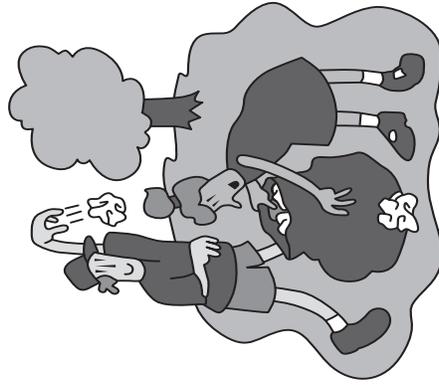


URBAN FORESTER

FOREST INFLUENCERS GAME CARDS

	<p style="text-align: center;">FAMILY</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">GARDENER</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">NEIGHBOR</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">HOMEOWNER</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">TREE GROUP</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">ARBORIST</p>

FOREST INFLUENCERS GAME CARDS

<p>ME!</p>	 <p>SCIENTIST</p>
 <p>PARK WORKER</p>	 <p>SCOUT</p>
 <p>VOLUNTEER</p>	<p>ME!</p>

FOREST INFLUENCERS GAME CARDS KEY

ARBORIST: An arborist takes care of trees by pruning off branches, planting new trees, and cutting down dead trees. Arborists also try to help trees that have a disease or have insects attacking them.

FAMILY: A family can take care of trees by volunteering together.

GARDENER: Gardeners know a lot about plants. Trees are plants! Gardeners can use their knowledge to take care of trees and can help other people understand trees too.

HOMEOWNER: Homeowners own part of urban forests. They can plant trees and encourage their neighbors to do it too.

ME: Everyone has a role they can play to help take care of trees and urban forests.

NEIGHBOR: A neighbor can be a positive influence on other people around them by being a good example and taking proper care of their trees.

PARK WORKER: Park workers help the urban forester and community members by doing good things to help trees and the urban forest in the parks they take care of.

POLITICIAN: Politicians make laws and decide how cities should spend money. A politician can help the urban forest by making sure there is enough money to take care of it.

SCIENTIST: Scientists research how trees and urban forests work. They come up with better ways to do things that can help the urban forest.

SCOUT: Scouts do projects that help the community. They could choose a project to help an urban forest.

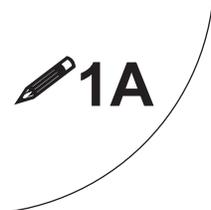
STUDENT: Students can do things such as volunteer to help plant trees, tell their families and other people how important trees and urban forests are, and get their friends to help too.

TEACHER: Teachers can educate students about the importance of urban forests and help them understand why they need to help urban forests.

TREE GROUP: Tree groups plant trees and help spread the word about how important trees are. They talk to city residents and try to get them to support the work the urban forester does.

URBAN FORESTER: Urban foresters plan for the health of urban forests. They work with other city employees and citizens to educate them about the best way to care for trees.

VOLUNTEER: Volunteers do a lot of jobs that the urban forester and other city workers don't have time to do.



SITUATION CARDS

FAST FOOD CHOICES

It's lunchtime and you are hungry. You go with your family to a fast food restaurant. You notice that they want to give you large plastic cups and to put your meal in a bag. You are concerned about the waste of paper and plastic used to make these items, especially when they will go in the trash as soon as you are done eating.

What could you do?

- Ask for a paper cup instead. A paper cup is made from a renewable resource.
- Take your food and hide in the corner where no one can see you.
- Don't eat there in the future.
- Ask to not have a bag.
- Take the bag and cup home and reuse them.
- Nothing; you are only one family, so what good will it do?
- What else could you do?

GREEN SPACE IN THE CITY

Someone recently donated a piece of land to the city. Some of the land is forest; some is just weeds. A group called Citizens for Green Space is asking the city to make the land into a park and nature center. You like this idea. *What could you do?*

- Find out more about the group, and if you agree with their ideas, join the group and help them.
- Write a letter to the local paper supporting the idea of a park.
- Nothing; you don't have the time.
- Call your city council member and tell them you would like the park.
- Nothing; someone else will do it.
- What else could you do?

SINGLE SERVING

You have gone to the grocery store with a parent. You are buying food and helping to pick out the items. You notice that everything seems to come in the single-serving size. You have concerns over the use of extra packaging. *What other kinds of items could you buy?*

- Even though those little cereal boxes look fun, hey, we've got bowls at home so let's buy the big box.
- Wow, that's a whole sack lunch in a box – it's got everything – juice, meat, cheese, crackers, and cookies.
- Buy whatever looks cool.
- Buy the big bag of potato chips and some reusable bags to put my chips in.
- Hey, I want juice boxes. In fact, I can drink three in one sitting.
- What else could you do?

SITUATION CARDS

LITTER BUG

You are on your way to school when you see a kid with food from a fast food restaurant drop an empty wrapper on the ground. *What do you do?*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave it; you didn't put it there. | <input type="checkbox"/> Leave it; who cares if there is trash there anyway? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave it; volunteer to pick up litter with a group of friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> Pick it up and take it to a trash receptacle. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pick it up and look for the person who dropped it and ask them to throw it away. | <input type="checkbox"/> What else could you do? |

JUNGLE GYM

You and your friends are playing in a playground in a park. One of your friends goes over to a tree that isn't very tall and starts to pull on its branches, seeing if they will break. *What do you do?*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Join in; two kids may be able to break it if one can't. | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep doing what you were doing. Your friend never listens anyway. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tell your friend to stop. Then you explain why the tree needs its branches to live. | <input type="checkbox"/> Tell an adult. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walk away and pretend you didn't see it. | <input type="checkbox"/> What else could you do? |

SHORT CUT

You are walking down a sidewalk and are in a hurry to get somewhere. You see a shortcut you could take through some shrubs and flower beds. *What do you do?*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take the shortcut. Time is important! | <input type="checkbox"/> Only take the shortcut if you are really late. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Look around to make sure the person who owns the property can't see you, and then take the shortcut. | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't take the shortcut; it could ruin the flowers and hurt the tree roots. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't take the shortcut; you'll get your shoes dirty. | <input type="checkbox"/> What else could you do? |

TAKE IT WITH YOU?

You just finished drinking some juice. You look at the bottom of the bottle and it is recyclable. You look around, but don't see any recycling containers. *What do you do?*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Throw it in a trash container nearby. | <input type="checkbox"/> Drop it on the ground. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carry it to the nearest recycling container. It's a few blocks away. | <input type="checkbox"/> Take it home with you and throw it in your recycling there. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask a nearby business to recycle it. | <input type="checkbox"/> What else could you do? |