



NUTSHELL

In this lesson, students learn what it means to be a steward, and participate in an exercise to illustrate the importance of teamwork in successful stewardship. They also work in groups to read and report on organizations and programs in Wisconsin that are working to help improve urban forests. Students brainstorm things they could do to be good stewards. To conclude, students create "I can be a forest steward" posters.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- 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)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What can people do to help others recognize the value and importance of an urban forest?
- What can I do to sustain urban forests, other forests and the natural world around me?

OBJECTIVES

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

- List different people who can have a positive influence on urban forests.
- Define environmental steward.
- Identify decisions they can make to be good stewards.

SUBJECT AREAS

Language Arts, Social Studies

LESSON/ACTIVITY TIME

Total Lesson Time: 90 minutes

Time Breakdown:

- [Introduction](#) 15 minutes
- [Activity 1](#) 45-60 minutes
- [Conclusion](#) 30 minutes

MATERIALS:

FOR STUDENTS

- One page from **Student Resources 1-10, Forest Stewardship Web Search** for each student
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/123IOhV3ZCGhr9u_pNkDZ1mTG-j5ryy1FqVUrMsGDuXI/edit?usp=sharing

FOR THE TEACHER: (none)

VOCABULARY

Greening: The process of adding plants (things that are green) to a community.

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



BACKGROUND

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 environment you live in. Since urban ecosystems are connected to all other ecosystems, the good things we do there can help elsewhere too. Actions taken can be as simple as planting a tree, volunteering for a cleanup day, voting, writing a letter to an elected official, or writing 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, and you don't have to do it alone. Groups exist to help urban forests in communities all over Wisconsin. Their missions may vary, but they all welcome support from others in their community and in Wisconsin.

PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION -

1. Explain what it means to be a steward of the environment to the class. (*A person who takes responsibility to make decisions and take actions today that will allow resources to be maintained in a healthy manner.*)
2. Show the class a ping-pong ball. Tell them that it will be their challenge to be good stewards of the ping-pong ball. They need to get the ping-pong ball from one end of the room to the other without letting it fall.
3. Divide the class into groups (number and size of the groups will depend on class size) and give the class parameters to follow in the task.
 - They must carry the ball in a spoon from one end of the room and place it in a container at the other end.
 - The ball cannot touch the ground or be held in their hands.
 - Each student can only take five steps from the place they start. (This number can vary depending on group and room size. The idea is to limit their movement so they need to work as a team.)
4. Demonstrate what happens when people don't work together by attempting to follow the same parameters to get the ping-pong ball to the container by yourself. (You will likely end up throwing the ball from a distance.)
5. Allow students to attempt the process. Afterward, discuss why it worked when they did it as a group, but didn't work when they did it alone.

ACTIVITY 1—FOREST STEWARDS

(Modified from Unit 7-8 Lesson 8 from the LEAF K-12 Forestry Lesson Guide.)

1. Using the Introduction as an example, remind students that working together is more effective than working alone to solve a problem. Tell students that the same applies to being good stewards of urban forests. Ask students if they are aware of any groups in their community, in Wisconsin, or in the nation that work to help urban forests. After accepting their suggestions and discussing the groups briefly, tell the class that next they will research different state or local groups in Wisconsin that take a stewardship role related to urban forests.
2. Give each student one page from **Student Resource 1-10, Forest Stewardship Web Search**. Tell students that they will be divided into groups. Each group will be assigned an organization (listed at the top of the sheet with a link to the organization's website) to learn about and share what they learn with the rest of the class. They need to examine the following about their organization/website:
 - The mission or goal of the group.



- Whom the group targets.
 - Whether or not students could be involved. If not, why not?
 - Actions or choices taken by the group to help urban forests.
 - Other actions or choices taken by the group that are examples of environmental stewardship.
 - If the organization provides any educational resources that help others learn about urban forests, forests in general, or environmental topics on their website.
 - If the organization addresses/mentions climate change
 - How other individuals can become involved.
3. Divide the class into ten groups. Give each group one of the Steward websites to research, tell student groups to assign specific research responsibilities to each student in the group. Provide groups with the appropriate website links (If you have local organizations that you know of that support urban forest/environmental stewardship, please swap out some of these or add them to the list. You may also want to see if your city, town, or village has a forestry department web page to add to the list.) Have students begin their research.
- **Tree City USA - Arbor Day Foundation**; National organization
<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/>
 - **Forest Exploration Center**; Milwaukee, WI
<https://www.forestexplorationcenter.org/>
 - **Friends of Havenwoods State Forest**; Milwaukee, WI
<https://www.friendsofhavenwoods.org/>
 - **Urban Tree Alliance**; Madison, WI
<https://www.urbantreealliance.org/>
 - **Fitchburg Wisconsin - Urban Forestry**; Fitchburg, WI
<https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/636/Urban-Forestry>
 - **City of Superior - Trees/Urban Forest**; Superior, WI
<https://www.ci.superior.wi.us/553/Trees-Urban-Forest>
 - **Branch Out Milwaukee**; Milwaukee, WI
<https://www.branchoutmilwaukee.org/>
 - **Wisconsin Arborist Association**; State level organization
<https://www.waa-isa.org/>
 - **Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council**; State level organization
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/urbanforests/members>
 - **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Program**; State level
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/UrbanForests>
4. Have each group report to the rest of the class what they learned about urban forest stewardship from their research.
5. Brainstorm a list of things that students think they could do to be good stewards.

CONCLUSION - BEYOND THE URBAN FOREST

1. Brainstorm a list of things that students think they could do to be good stewards of the urban forest.
2. Ask students if they think doing this thing could also help them be stewards of rural forests.
3. Have students create an "I can be a Forest Steward" poster to share one action they will commit to doing that will help them be a steward for an urban, rural, or any forest in Wisconsin. Their



posters should include: (You can share the examples below each statement to help students understand)

- Statement “I can be a Forest Steward by...”
 - *I can be a Forest Steward by participating in local events that help remove invasive buckthorn from forests near me.*
- Statement to explain HOW their action will help the forest. Encourage students to find evidence to support their action (and cite it) and link their action back to learning from other LEAF Urban Guide lessons.
 - *Removing buckthorn helps urban and rural forest by allowing tree seedlings to get enough sunlight, nutrients and water so they can grow. I know that removing buckthorn is a good way to be a forest steward because on the Common Buckthorn page of the Wisconsin DNR website it states that buckthorn leafs out early and keeps leaves late into the growing season which means it is able to outcompete tree seedlings for resources. If buckthorn is not removed, tree seedlings won't likely get the sun they need to grow which will cause the age of the forest to be more uniform and less diverse.*
- Statement explaining WHY it is important to be a steward of Wisconsin forests. Encourage students to include something related to climate change here.
 - *It is important to be a forest steward because forests provide us with many benefits. In addition to creating a more enjoyable, healthier environment for humans and animals to live in, urban forests also store carbon and decrease levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere - they are a climate solution.*
- At least one image related to the theme of the poster

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LEAF

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: 5-8 Lesson 2.

- **UNIT 5-6 LESSON 8: WHOSE JOB IS IT?** Students learn about stewardship and how their choices affect the future of forests by participating in a mock school board meeting. Use the Introduction of 5-6 Lesson 8 to enhance the Introduction in Urban Forest Lesson Guide: 5-8 Lesson 4. The Activity and Conclusion in 5-6 Lesson 8 could be used as is or modified as a follow-up to this lesson. The issue discussed and the interested groups could be modified to reflect urban forest related issues and groups.
<https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/leaf/SiteAssets/Pages/5-6-Wisconsin-Forestry-Lesson-Guide/5-6L8.pdf>
- **UNIT 7-8 LESSON 8: SUSTAINING OUR FORESTS – CITIZENS' ROLES** Students discover how people in Wisconsin practice good forest stewardship and debate their own choices through jigsaw readings and dilemma cards. 7-8 Lesson 8 Activity 1 was used as the basis for Urban Forest Lesson Guide: 5-8 Lesson 4. The Stewardship Statements in 7-8 Lesson 8 could be added to Urban Forest Lesson Guide: 5-8 Lesson 4 with explanation. The Conclusion could be added to Urban Forest Lesson Guide: 5-8 Lesson 4 prior to its Conclusion.
https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/leaf/SiteAssets/Pages/7-8-Wisconsin-Forestry-Lesson-Guide/U78_L8.pdf



LEAF-Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

LESSON 4 - STEWARDSHIP CLOSE TO HOME

LEAF URBAN FOREST LESSON GUIDE 5TH-8TH GRADE UNIT
