



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

# 4 UNIT

## Wisconsin K-12 Forestry Lesson Guide

LEAF is a partnership program between

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

and

**Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education**

College of Natural Resources

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point



Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education  
College of Natural Resources  
**University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point**

# LEAF - Learning, Experiences, & Activities in Forestry

## The Wisconsin K-12 Forestry Education Program

**LEAF** was created to help promote forestry education in Wisconsin schools.

In 2001, Wisconsin K-12 forestry education stakeholders evaluated the current status of and the needs for Wisconsin-based K-12 forestry education.

A variety of programs existed, but voids were identified in delivery and dissemination of educational materials and services. To offer a more unified effort, stakeholders supported the development of a comprehensive program that would enhance existing efforts.

During the spring of 2001, legislation was written to establish the LEAF Program as a partnership between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education at the College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Core funding for the program is provided through a surcharge on the sale of seedlings from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources nurseries.



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College of Natural Resources  
**University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point**

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**"Walk tall as the trees, live strong as the mountains,  
be gentle as the spring winds,  
keep the warmth of the summer sun in your heart and  
the great spirit will always be with you."**

★ *Native American Proverb* ★

# 2024 Acknowledgments

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**"The Earth sustains all of us. We belong to her."**

★ Chief Tatanka ★

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## NOTES

Lined area for notes, featuring a large green leaf graphic in the background.



# A Rationale for Forestry Education In Wisconsin

Wisconsin forests are ecologically, economically, culturally, and socially essential to our well-being. Forests are also great places to learn. Learning in, and about, Wisconsin's forests adds relevance to all subject areas and builds ecological literacy necessary to help sustain our forests.

Historically, Wisconsin's forests sustained life for Indigenous people and provided jobs for a growing immigrant workforce, building materials for a developing nation, and dollars for a fledgling state economy. Today, forests continue to be an important part of Wisconsin. Our forests cover 46 percent of the state. They provide habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, and a basis for a major part of Wisconsin's economy. Our forests benefit each of us through the protection of Wisconsin's air and water quality, their beauty, and the products they provide. Our forests are a basic human life support system, affecting the quality of life that we all enjoy.

Today, our forests face the greatest potential for change since 19th century logging. On the near horizon are changes in forest ecosystems, forest demands, and forest values. As our population continues to grow and the demands on our forests increase, Wisconsin's citizens will need to play an active role in sustaining our forests as ecosystems and human systems. To do this, our citizens need the knowledge and skills to make decisions and to understand the impact of their choices.

LEAF is a long-term program designed to bring together existing efforts and provide the resources necessary to help schools infuse forestry education into their current curriculum. This guide is a key component of the LEAF Program, helping to increase forestry literacy in Wisconsin schools.



**"It is not so much for its beauty  
that the forest makes  
a claim upon men's hearts,  
as for that subtle something,  
that quality of air  
that emanation from old trees,  
that so wonderfully changes  
and renews a weary spirit."**

★ Robert Louis Stevenson ★

## Introduction To the Guide

This LEAF Wisconsin K-12 forestry lesson guide provides educators with complete interdisciplinary units designed to present an overview of forestry in Wisconsin. With this unit-based approach, lessons build upon one another to provide connectivity in the students' educational experience. The lessons are also effective when taught individually and integrated with other classroom material. The units are divided by grade levels and include: K-1, 2-3, 4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12. Each unit contains classroom lessons, field enhancements, and a special careers exploration lesson.

The LEAF lesson guide is based on principles outlined in the *LEAF Conceptual Guide to K-12 Forestry Education in Wisconsin*. The *Conceptual Guide* outlines forestry education concepts appropriate for Wisconsin's K-12 students and the grade level at which they should be taught. Information in the *Conceptual Guide* is organized under four themes, posed as questions:

### What? is a forest...



Concepts in this theme provide students with a fundamental knowledge of Wisconsin's forests and help students appreciate forests as ecosystems.

### Why? are they important...



Concepts in this section help students investigate the connection between Wisconsin's forests and their own lives.

### How? do we sustain...



These concepts help students understand the role humans play in sustaining Wisconsin's forests.

### What? is the future...



Concepts in this theme help students identify ways to ensure Wisconsin's forests are sustained for future generations.

A copy of the complete *LEAF Conceptual Guide to K-12 Forestry Education in Wisconsin* may be downloaded from the LEAF website at [leafprogram.org](http://leafprogram.org).



## Lesson Guide Special Features

### CAREERS EXPLORATION

In each lesson, you will find career profiles of forestry professionals. Use these profiles to help students explore careers by reading them aloud, handing them out, or creating a bulletin board. A careers lesson in each unit uses all of the career profiles from that unit. Career profile job titles are defined in the Glossary.

### FIELD ENHANCEMENTS

Take your students outside for some hands-on learning and fun. Each unit contains field enhancements that can be done in your schoolyard or school forest.

### WEBSITE CONNECTION

Resources are available on the LEAF website that are required or will enhance lessons in the guides. The LEAF web pages will be updated over time, so visit the LEAF website often for the newest materials: [leafprogram.org](http://leafprogram.org).

**"Love the trees  
until their leaves fall off,  
then encourage them to try  
again next year."**

★ Chad Sugg ★

**"The creation of a thousand  
forests is in one acorn."**

★ Ralph Waldo Emerson ★



## Other LEAF Materials

### LEAF WISCONSIN K-12 WILDLAND FIRE LESSON GUIDE

This guide teaches about the positive and negative impacts of wildland fire in Wisconsin. Each grade-specific lesson focuses on a different fire-related topic.

### LEAF WISCONSIN K-12 URBAN FOREST LESSON GUIDE

The *LEAF Wisconsin K-12 Urban Forest Lesson Guide* uses the places we live to provide a context for understanding forests. Lessons are grouped into three grade levels (K-4, 5-8 and 9-12) with several classroom lessons in each.

### LEAF WEBSITE: [leafprogram.org](http://leafprogram.org)

The LEAF website is a great source for information and resources, such as:

- Professional development opportunities
- School forest information
- LEAF lesson enhancements
- Online tree identification key



[leafprogram.org](http://leafprogram.org)

# Lesson Number: Lesson Title

## NUTSHELL

*Brief summary of the lesson.*

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

The subconcepts covered in the lesson as defined by the *LEAF Conceptual Guide*.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Question(s) to frame learning.

## OBJECTIVES

Knowledge and skills students acquire as a result of doing the lesson.

## SUBJECT AREAS

List of subjects addressed in the lesson.

## LESSON/ACTIVITY TIME

Total time required to complete the lesson and breakdown of time required for each lesson component.

## STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

Link to standards connections.

## CLASSROOM LESSONS/FIELD ENHANCEMENT CONNECTIONS

Lists complimentary classroom lessons and field enhancements.

## MATERIALS LIST

Items needed to complete the lesson. Listed as per student, group of students, class, or teacher.

## TEACHER PREPARATION

Preparation needed before teaching the lesson.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Information that supports, accentuates, and expands on the information addressed in the Procedure.

## PROCEDURE

### Introduction

A short discussion or activity that sets the mood for the rest of the lesson.

### Activities

Step-by-step instructions for the process involved in teaching the concepts.

### Conclusion

A wrap-up and review of concepts of the lesson.

## CAREERS

A profile of a forestry professional working in Wisconsin that relates to the lesson.


## SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Culminating questions or activities that have students apply learned information or skills to new situations.

## SOURCES

List of materials used in creating the lesson.

## KEY TO SYMBOLS USED

 Teacher Page

 Teacher Key

 Student Page

## VOCABULARY TERMS

Key terms used or introduced in the lesson.



# LEAF K-1 2 Program Unit Overviews

This *LEAF Wisconsin K-12 Forestry Lesson Guide 7-8 Unit* is one of six grade-specific units. An overview of the lessons included in each unit is included here for your reference.

## K-1 UNIT

**5 Classroom Lessons, 1 Careers Lesson, 3 Field Enhancements**

*The K-1 Unit is an introduction to trees and forests. Students learn about the parts of a tree, what forests are, and why they are important.*

### Lesson 1 - Tree Hardware

Students are introduced to the parts of a tree and its life stages using songs, games, and role-playing.

### Lesson 2 - What's In a Forest?

Students learn about living and nonliving parts of a forest by playing a game and creating artwork.

### Lesson 3 - My Favorite Forest Use

Students discover the value of forests by studying Tree Spy collages and singing a song.

### Lesson 4 - Forest Products Time Machine

Students explore historical uses of forest resources and compare them to present-day goods by surveying pictures and creating drawings.

### Lesson 5 - Animals Need Forests Too

Students find out what forests do for animals and play a game to search for animals' basic needs.

### Careers Exploration

Students learn about forestry-related careers, participate in a matching exercise, and draw their favorite career.

## Field Enhancement 1 - All About My Tree

Students adopt a tree and record their observations to create a class scrapbook.

## Field Enhancement 2 - Sensing the Forest

Students use all their senses to discover the living and nonliving parts of a forest.

## Field Enhancement 3 - Searching for Basic Needs

Students examine the needs of animals and evaluate if their playground can support various critters.

## 2-3 UNIT

**6 Classroom Lessons, 1 Careers Lesson, 3 Field Enhancements**

*The 2-3 Unit expands on basic ideas about forests and helps students understand their connection to forests. Students learn about energy flow, basic tree identification skills, forest products, and what it means to be a forest steward.*

### Lesson 1 - To Be a Tree

Students use their knowledge of tree parts to learn basic tree identification skills. Basic needs and life stages of a tree are also emphasized through a game and drawing activity.

### Lesson 2 - What Makes a Forest?

Students discover how living things are influenced by nonliving things through a matching activity, song or skit, and creating a class mural of Wisconsin forests.

### Lesson 3 - Forest Energy Flow

Students learn about energy flow in the forest by role-playing producers, consumers, and decomposers.

### Lesson 4 - Forests Are Important To Me!

Students explore forest values and discover what forest products come from Wisconsin using a checklist. Creative writing and an art project help students examine why they value forests.

### Lesson 5 - Decisions, Decisions

Students are introduced to the concept of forest management by creating a plan for their schoolyard. A card game and song highlight some of the people involved in forest management.

### 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.

### Careers Exploration

Students learn about professionals in Wisconsin with forestry-related careers, match jobs and duties, and draw themselves in a career that interests them.

### Field Enhancement 1 - I Can Be a Forester

Students get a taste of what foresters do by collecting and discussing data.

### Field Enhancement 2 - Observing Forest Interactions

Students explore living and nonliving forest features on a hike and spend time observing and drawing parts of a forest.

### Field Enhancement 3 - Forest Habitat Scavenger Hunt

Students follow the flow of energy in a forest by going on a scavenger hunt.

## 4 UNIT

**7 Classroom Lessons, 1 Careers Lesson, 3 Field Enhancements**

*The 4 Unit focuses on Wisconsin's forest history. Students learn about the forests and people who lived in what is now Wisconsin before European settlement, the logging days, farming the cutover, events that led to modern forestry, and why forests are important today.*

### Lesson 1 - American Indians and the Forest

Students learn what Wisconsin's forests were like before European settlement and discover how American Indians living in what is now Wisconsin relied on forests and altered them to meet their basic needs.

### Lesson 2 - Forests Built Wisconsin

Students explore the importance of forests to early settlers and learn how forests played a role in settling Wisconsin through a mapping activity. Students examine the impact of settlement on Wisconsin's First Nations.

### Lesson 3 - Help Wanted - Lumberjacks

Students examine the steps and people involved in an 1800s logging process and the impact of logging on Wisconsin's First Nations.

### Lesson 4 - Broken Dreams

Students experience what it was like to farm in Wisconsin during the cutover by role-playing and studying letters, photographs, and documents.



## Lesson 5 - I Saw It on the News

Students learn about events in Wisconsin that have led to the forests of today by participating in a live newscast.

## Lesson 6 - Forests Are Important To You and Me

Students discover reasons why Wisconsin forests are important to our quality of life.

## Lesson 7 - Sustaining Our Forests

Students are introduced to the sustainability and stewardship of forests by listening to a fable, brainstorming, learning about the Menominee and Mohican Forests, and discussing situation cards.

## Careers Exploration

Students learn about professionals in Wisconsin with forestry-related careers and the skills used in each profession and create help wanted postings for those careers.

## Field Enhancement 1 - Unlocking a Forest's Past

Students uncover a forest's history by becoming detectives, collecting data, and making predictions about a forest.

## Field Enhancement 2 - Are Forests Important Today?

Students find out why forests are culturally, ecologically, economically, and socially valuable by searching in a forest and playing a scavenger hunt game.

## Field Enhancement 3 - Caring for the Future of Forests

Students learn what a tree needs to grow, how to choose an appropriate site, how to properly plant a tree, and care for it by planting one in their schoolyard or school forest.

## 5-6 UNIT

**8 Classroom Lessons, 1 Careers Lesson, 3 Field Enhancements**

*The 5-6 Unit connects the science of forests with human aspects. Students learn about forest layers, ecosystems, and energy flow. This information is related to the value of trees, forest ownership, and management.*

## Lesson 1 - Me As a Tree

Students learn about a tree's functions, basic needs, life stages, and role in the forest community by comparing trees and humans.

## Lesson 2 - What Makes a Forest?

Students explore parts of forest ecosystems and forest layers through an interactive game and discussion.

## Lesson 3 - Forests Are Always Changing

Students examine forest succession, disturbances, and renewability by completing a sustainability student page and role-playing.

## Lesson 4 - Ecosystem Extravaganza

Students are introduced to forest functions such as photosynthesis, energy flow, and the cycling of matter through reading and creating a diagram. The roles of producers, consumers, and decomposers in forests are also examined.

## Lesson 5 - We All Need Trees

Students learn about the values of forests and their impact on the environment by categorizing values and writing and producing a commercial.

## Lesson 6 - What Is Management?

Students discover what's happened in Wisconsin's history that led us to modern forestry and about management techniques by creating a timeline and reading a "choose your own adventure-type" story.

## Lesson 7 - Who Owns It?

Students observe how management goals of landowners impact forest ecosystems by studying a plat map and answering questions. They also learn about the roles individuals and groups play that affect forest management.

## 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.

## Careers Exploration

Students become aware of careers that are forestry-related by listening to descriptions of them and playing Charades.

## Field Enhancement 1 - Wood's Worth

Students make their own tree scale stick and use it to calculate the number of products that can be made from individual trees. They also go on a scavenger hunt to explore many ways that forests are valuable.

## Field Enhancement 2 - Studying Forest Layers

Students observe the structural layers of a forest and draw a color-coded picture. They also embark on two exploration activities to discover which animals can be found in each of the forest layers.

## Field Enhancement 3 - Competition In a Forest

Students learn how trees compete for their basic needs through observation and a simulation.

## 7-8 UNIT

**8 Classroom Lessons, 1 Careers Lesson, 3 Field Enhancements**

*The 7-8 Unit highlights a wide variety of topics related to Wisconsin's forests. Students learn about forest biomes, types of forests, biodiversity, forest management, forest trends, forest issues, forest products, and sustaining forests.*

## Lesson 1 - Discovering Wisconsin's Forests

Students are introduced to the types of forests in Wisconsin and factors that affect their distribution through data comparison, a mapping activity, and video research.

## Lesson 2 - Biodiversity and the Forest Connection

Students analyze three ecosystems to determine their interconnections and create a Venn diagram. They also discuss the value of Wisconsin's forests in terms of biodiversity.

## Lesson 3 - How Forests Are Managed

Students explore forest management plans, multiple use, and sustainability through a simulation, video, and game.

## Lesson 4 - Forest Management Issues

Students examine forest management, factors that influence decisions, effects, and conflicts through brainstorming, discussion, and issue analysis.



