Educational Partners:

Into the Outdoors

FORESTS OF THE FIRST STEWARDS

3rd - 5th Grade Discussion Guide

Episode/Lesson Plan #4 – End Use Products and Education (Grades 3-5)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to the Menominee Forest! In our last lessons, we explored the history of the Menominee people, how they care for their forest, and how forest products are used in everyday life and culture.

In this final episode, we'll learn how people continue to study and care for forests today - and how you can be part of that future. We'll visit a university where students are learning about forests and careers in forestry.

In this lesson, you'll learn how education and stewardship all work together to keep forests healthy for generations to come.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (GRADES 3–5)

i. Explore forest anatomy and silviculture basics.
ii. Identify cultural and ecological reasons forests are preserved.
iii. Describe how people study and manage forests for sustainability.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

This lesson aligns with the following standards:

1. **NGSS (Science)**

a. 3-LS3-2: Use evidence to explain traits and adaptation in organisms.
b. 4-ESS3-1: Describe human impacts and ways to protect ecosystems.

1. **Common Core (ELA)**

a. RI.3.1 / RI.4.1: Cite evidence from text or video to answer questions.
b. SL.3.4 / SL.4.4: Report on a topic using facts and visual aids.

LESSON TIME ESTIMATE AND SUMMARY

(Approximately 30-45 minutes total)

Learning Objective	Activity	How Students Show They Learned	Time Estimate
Explore forest anatomy and silviculture basics	Watch UW–Stevens Point segment; discuss tree parts, forest layers, and silviculture	Students label a simple tree diagram or create a "forest anatomy chart"	10-12 min
Identify cultural and ecological reasons forests are preserved	Discuss Menominee cultural practices, sacred sites, and wildlife habitats	Students create a "forest protection pledge" or short story showing why a forest is important	8–10 min
Describe how people study and manage forests for sustainability	Mini scavenger hunt (indoor or outdoor) to find natural materials or wood-based items	Students share one item they found and describe how it could be used or turned into a product	15-20 min

BEGINNER VOCABULARY

Stewardship: Taking care of the forest responsibly so it stays healthy for future generations. Think of it as being a caretaker for the trees and animals.

Crown: The top part of a tree with branches and leaves that collect sunlight. Think of it like the tree's umbrella that soaks up sunshine.

Roots: The part of the tree underground that holds it in place and absorbs water and nutrients. Think of it like a tree's straw and anchor combined.

Tree Rings: The circles inside a tree trunk that show how the tree has grown over time. Think of it like a tree's timeline or growth story.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Forest Anatomy and Silviculture

- Trees have roots, trunks, branches, and leaves that all work together to help them grow.
- Silviculture is the science of caring for forests, including planting, thinning, and protecting trees.

Studying Forests

- Scientists and students observe forests to understand how they grow, how wildlife uses them, and how people impact them.
- Observation helps guide decisions on when and how to harvest or protect forests sustainably.

Cultural and Ecological Preservation

- The Menominee protect sacred sites, wetlands, and wildlife habitats.
- Preserving forests ensures forests remain healthy for people, animals, and future generations.

LEARNING PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

- Facilitate a discussion: Why do you think people study forests?
- Show an image of students examining trees or forest plots.
- Introduce the idea that forests are studied to understand how they grow, change, and stay healthy.

2. Activity 1: Explore Forest Anatomy and Silviculture

- Students explore the parts of a tree and how forests are cared for through basic silviculture practices.

3. Activity 2: Cultural and Ecological Preservation

- Students examine why forests are protected for cultural, ecological, and community reasons.

4. Activity 3: Forest Scavenger Hunt / Exploration

- Students learn how scientists observe natural elements in forests to better understand ecosystem health.

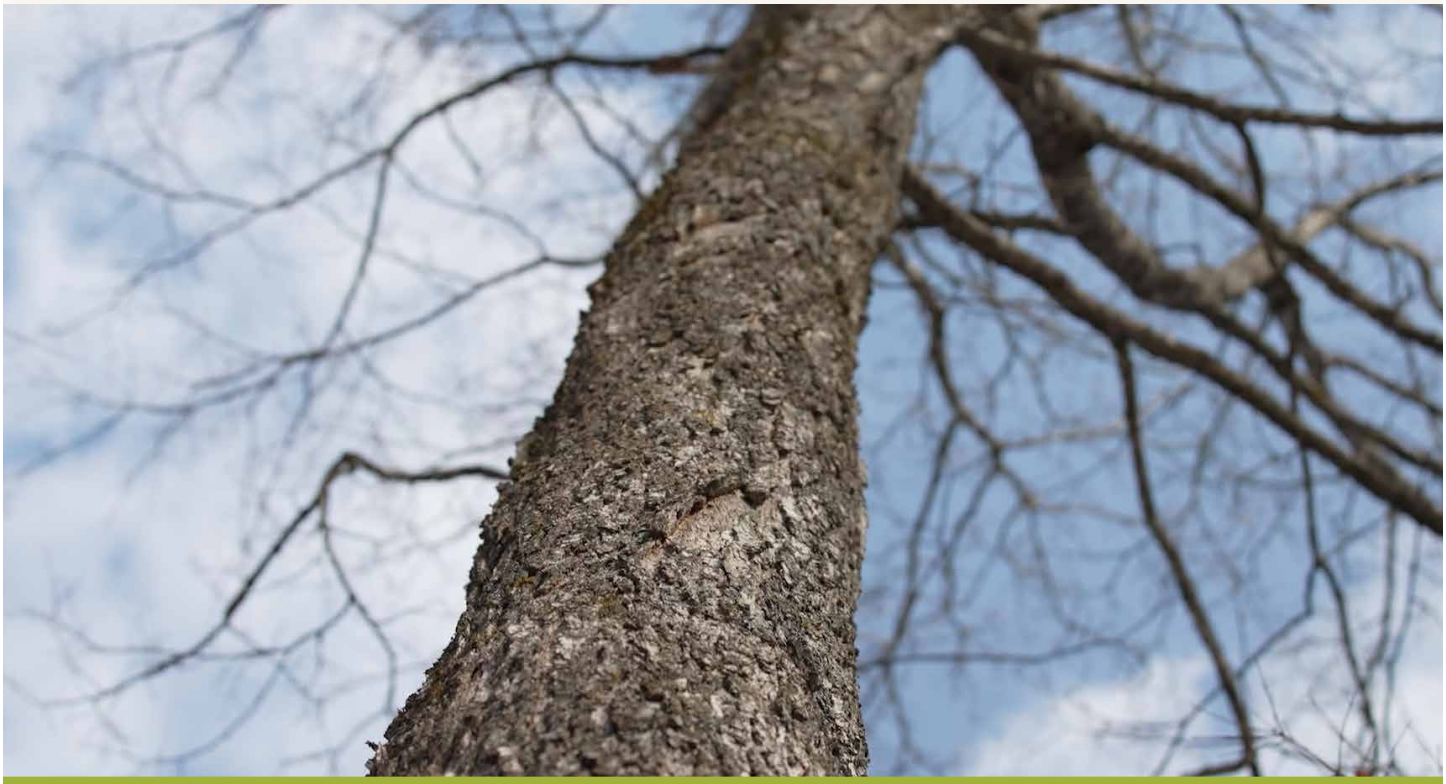
5. Conclusion

- Facilitate a discussion:
  - What's one thing you learned about forests today?
  - How can you help take care of a forest?

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Explore Forest Anatomy and Silviculture

- Objective: Understand tree anatomy and the basics of caring for forests.
- Materials: UW–Stevens Point video segment, printed tree diagrams or paper, crayons/colored pencils/markers.
- Steps:
  - Watch the UW–Stevens Point segment showing forest anatomy and silviculture practices.
  - Discuss the main parts of a tree (roots, trunk, branches, leaves) and why each part matters.
  - Students label a tree diagram or create a simple "forest anatomy chart," adding notes about what each part does.
    - Optional: Students add a small drawing or symbol showing how humans care for that part (watering, thinning, planting, protecting).
  - Students share their diagrams with a partner or the class and explain one way humans help the forest.
- Tips:
  - Younger students can simply color and label parts instead of adding notes.
  - Use real leaves, twigs, or pinecones if available to make it hands-on.



Activity 2: Cultural and Ecological Preservation

- Objective: Identify cultural and ecological reasons forests are preserved.
- Materials: Video/images of Menominee sacred sites, wetlands, and wildlife habitats, paper, crayons/colored pencils/markers.
- Steps:
  - Discuss how the Menominee protect forests for cultural, spiritual, and ecological reasons.
  - Students create a “forest protection pledge” or short story showing why a forest is important.
    - Example prompts: If I were a forest steward, what would I protect and why?
  - Students share their pledge/story with a partner or the class.
  - Students demonstrate understanding by explaining one cultural or ecological reason forests need protection.
- Tips:
  - Younger students can draw a “protected forest” scene instead of writing.
  - Encourage use of beginner vocabulary learned in the past four lessons.

Activity 3: Forest Scavenger Hunt / Exploration

- Objective: Describe how people study and manage forests for sustainability.
- Materials: None required (optional: collection bags, clipboards).
- Steps:
  - Have students search for items made from wood or natural materials (indoors or outdoors).
  - Students identify or collect items like paper, wood objects, leaves, or bark.
  - Discussion:
    - What could this be used for?
    - How does this connect to the forest?
  - Students share one item and explain how it could be used or turned into a product.
- Tips:
  - Indoor option: find items in the classroom.
  - Outdoor option: focus on textures, shapes, and natural materials.
  - Keep it simple and exploratory, not a strict checklist.

References

For additional information:

- https://menominee-nsn.gov/CulturePages/BriefHistory
- https://www.menominee.edu/sustainable-development-institute
- https://www.mtewood.com/

Additional Resources from LEAF: Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program:

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

- Lesson 1: American Indians and the Forest
- Lesson 7: Sustaining Our Forests
- Career Profile - McKaylee Duquain
- Wisconsin Forest Tales
- K-1st Grade Field Enhancement - Sensing the Forest
- 2nd-3rd Grade Field Enhancement - Observing Forest Interactions
- 4th Grade Field Enhancement - Unlocking a Forest's Past
- 5th-6th Grade Field Enhancement - Studying Forest Layers
- 5th-6th Grade Field Enhancement - Woods Worth
- 5th-6th Grade Field Enhancement - Competition in the Forest