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FORESTS OF THE FIRST STEWARDS

3rd - 5th Grade Discussion Guide

Main Episode - Into the Outdoors on the Menominee Forests (Grades 3-5)

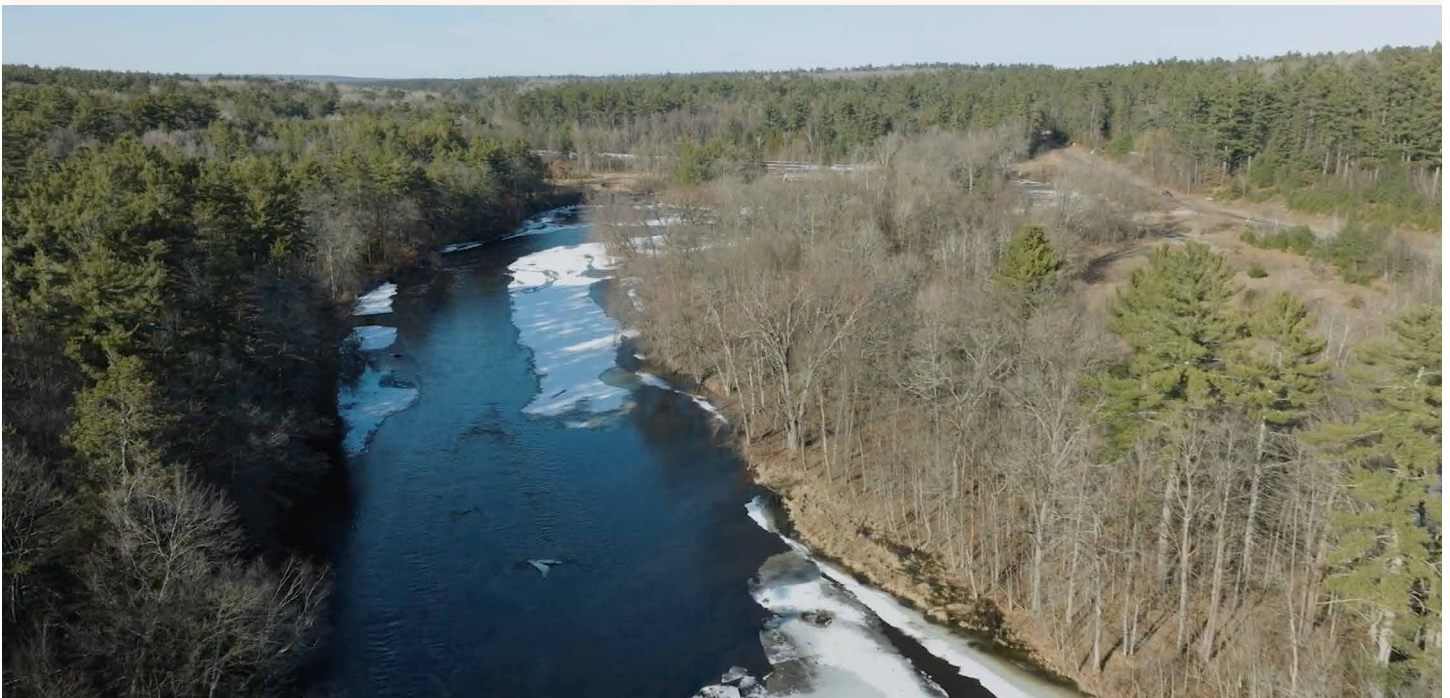
INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to the Menominee Forest! Today, we are going to watch a special episode that brings together everything we've learned so far. We'll explore the history of the Menominee people, sustainable forestry practices, how forests provide materials for tools, art, and buildings, and how education helps train the next generation of forest stewards.

As you watch, pay attention to:

- How the Menominee care for the forest using both traditional knowledge and modern practices.
- The many ways forests are used to make products and support communities.
- How scientists and students study the forest to keep it healthy.
- How culture, science, and stewardship work together to protect the land.

Think about what you notice and what you might try or create yourself in the activities after the episode!





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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Show the journey from forest to finished products and stewardship.
- Explore decision-making and cause/effect in forest stewardship.
- Connect learning to personal experience and storytelling.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

1. NGSS (Science)

- 3-LS4-3: Construct arguments with evidence that some organisms and environments change over time.
- 4-ESS3-1: Obtain and combine information to describe how humans use natural resources responsibly.
- 4-PS3-4 (optional): Apply ideas about energy use in processes like timber processing.

2. Common Core (ELA)

- RI.3.3 / RI.4.3: Describe the relationship between a series of events, concepts, or steps in a process.
- RI.3.7 / RI.4.7: Use information from illustrations and text to demonstrate understanding.
- SL.3.1 / SL.4.1: Engage in collaborative discussions, expressing ideas clearly and providing evidence.

LESSON TIME ESTIMATE AND SUMMARY

(Approximately 30-45 minutes total)

Learning Objective	Activity	How Students Show They Learned	Time Estimate
Show the journey from forest to finished products and stewardship	Students create a flow chart or map showing a tree's path: forest care - harvesting - product (syrup, baskets, flooring)	Students present their map to a partner or the class, explaining each step and how humans and nature interact	12-15 min
Explore decision-making and cause/effect in forest stewardship	Students take on roles (forester, wildlife, tree) and make decisions in a scenario about forest management	Students discuss how their choices affected the forest, animals, and humans, demonstrating understanding of stewardship	10-12 min
Connect learning to personal experience and storytelling	Students write or draw a story from the perspective of a tree, basket, scientist, or future forest helper, integrating forest care and cultural knowledge.	Students share their story with a partner or the class, highlighting lessons about stewardship, innovation, and tradition..	15-18min



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BEGINNER VOCABULARY

1. **Silviculture:** The art and science of taking care of forests to keep them healthy, productive, and resilient. Think of it like taking care of the forest like a gardener takes care of their garden, planning, planting, and caring for trees so the forest thrives.
2. **Forest stand:** A section of forest where the trees are similar and grow together, often managed as one group. Think of it like a neighborhood of trees, all living together in the same area.
3. **Natural regeneration:** When a forest grows back on its own, without human intervention, from seeds, sprouts, or roots. It's nature doing the work, letting new trees grow where they naturally want to. Think of it as forest self-repair.
4. **Selection harvest:** A harvest method where selected trees are removed, usually the older or less healthy ones, while leaving the rest of the forest standing. This helps to create a balance in tree age classes in a forest stand, and helps new seedlings grow in the small gaps, keeping the forest healthy and diverse. Think of it like thinning out a garden so the healthiest plants have space to thrive.
5. **Maple Syrup Tapping:** The process of collecting sap from maple trees to make syrup. Small holes are carefully made in the tree so the sap can flow out, and then the sap is boiled down into sweet syrup. Think of it like gently squeezing juice from an orange, then cooking it to make something yummy.
6. **Felling:** Felling is the process of safely cutting down a tree. It's an important step in forest management and helps make space for new trees to grow. Think of it as preparing the stage for the next act of the forest, giving younger trees room to thrive.
7. **Allowable Cut:** The amount of timber that can be harvested during a certain time (like one year) while keeping the forest healthy. Think of it as a spending limit for the forest, you only take what can grow back.
8. **Weaving:** The process of crossing materials over and under each other to create something like a basket or fabric. Think of it like building a pattern by going over, under, over, under.
9. **Natural Materials:** Materials that come from nature, like wood, plants, or fibers. Think of it like using what the forest gives you to make useful things.
10. **Tradition:** A way of doing something that is passed down from generation to generation. Think of it like a family recipe or skill that is shared over time.



11. **Innovation:** Creating new ideas or new ways of doing things. Think of it like using old knowledge in new and creative ways.
12. **Stewardship:** Taking care of something responsibly so it stays healthy for the future. Think of it like being a caretaker for the forest.
13. **Board Foot:** A board foot is a way to measure wood. It equals a piece of wood that is 1 inch thick, 12 inches long, and 12 inches wide. Think of it as a measuring cup for lumber, helping people keep track of how much wood they have.
14. **Cellulose:** Cellulose is what gives plants and trees their strength and structure. It helps them stand tall and grow strong. Think of it like the framework inside a building that holds everything up.
15. **Hardwood:** Hardwood refers to certain types of trees like oak and maple. These trees usually have wide leaves and produce seeds inside fruits or nuts. Think of it as a group of trees with similar characteristics, not just wood that feels hard.
16. **Sawmill:** A sawmill is a place where logs are cut into usable wood like boards and planks. Think of it as a workshop where trees are turned into building materials.





17. **Phenology:** The study of how nature changes over time, like leaves changing colors or birds migrating. Think of it as a nature calendar.
18. **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.
19. **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.
20. **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.
21. **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

The Menominee Nation and Their Forests

The Menominee Nation is located in northeastern Wisconsin, with their tribal government in the Village of Keshena. The Tribe has lived here for thousands of years and has a long history of managing forests responsibly. Their five clans - Bear, Eagle, Wolf, Moose, and Crane - are part of their cultural foundation.

The Menominee continue to manage their forests to meet ecological, economic, and cultural needs while teaching future generations to care for the land.

Forest Description and Products

The Menominee Forest is a living example of a northern Lake States forest. It includes trees like maple, pine, birch, hemlock, ash, basswood, red oak, and white pine. These trees provide raw materials for timber, maple syrup, baskets, canoes, and other products.

The forest also serves as a habitat for wildlife and a place of cultural and spiritual significance. Products like Menominee maple floors and handcrafted baskets connect people to the forest and the Tribe's traditions.





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Sustainable Forest Practices

The Menominee use a mix of traditional knowledge and modern science to manage their forest. Practices include:

- Sustained-yield harvesting: Cutting only what the forest can naturally regrow.
- Selection harvest: Choosing specific trees to cut while leaving others to mature.
- Natural regeneration: Allowing new growth from seeds or roots.
- Cultural and ecological protection: Sacred sites, wetlands, and wildlife habitats are preserved.

Cultural Knowledge and Education

- Basket weaving demonstrates the Tribe's innovation, resourcefulness, and cultural heritage.
- The College of Menominee Nation teaches sustainable forestry and scientific research, blending traditional knowledge with modern technology.
- Partnerships with UW-Stevens Point expand educational opportunities for Tribal youth, preparing them for careers in forestry and related fields.

Interesting Fact for Teachers

The Menominee Forest has been continuously managed for over 150 years, making it one of the oldest sustainably managed forests in the United States. It provides a living example of how culture, science, and innovation can work together to preserve natural resources.

LEARNING PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

- Show the beginning of the main episode.
- Briefly introduce the Menominee Nation, their forest, and the blend of cultural knowledge and modern science used to manage it.
- Discuss: What can we learn from Tribes about forest stewardship?

2. Activity 1: Forest Journey Map

- Students show the journey of a tree into a wood product.

3. Activity 2: Forest Steward Role-Play

- Students explore how they could be in a role that would steward the forest.

4. Activity 3: Forest Reflection Story

- Students reflect on the series from the perspective of a tree, forester, or wood product.

5. Conclusion

- Facilitate a discussion about what students learned from this series and how humans can care for forests.

6. Teacher Tips

- Use simple analogies (forests as neighborhoods or gardens).
- Encourage discussion, movement, drawing, and storytelling.
- Adjust timing based on engagement.





ACTIVITIES

1. Activity 1: Forest Journey Map

- Objective: Show the journey from forest to finished products and stewardship.
Materials: Main episode, paper, markers, crayons, pencils.
- Steps:
 - Watch episode clips demonstrating: forest care, harvesting, product creation (maple syrup, baskets, flooring), and ongoing stewardship.
 - Discuss each stage with the class: How do humans care for the forest? How do products come from trees?
 - Students create a flow chart or map showing a tree's journey from the forest to finished products, including how humans and nature interact at each stage.
 - Encourage using arrows, labels, or symbols to show cause and effect.
 - Students present their maps to a partner or the class, explaining each step.
- Tips:
 - Younger students can draw simple pictures instead of writing full labels.
 - Encourage creativity; students can add wildlife, people, or seasonal changes in the forest.

1. Activity 2: Forest Steward Role-Play

- Objective: Explore decision-making and cause/effect in forest care.
Materials: Role cards (forester, wildlife, tree), scenario descriptions, and optional props.
- Steps:
 - Explain the roles and the scenario: The forest needs care, and each of you has a role. Make decisions that help the forest and those who call it home.
 - Students take turns acting out their roles, making decisions like: which tree to harvest, where to plant new seedlings, or how to protect wildlife.
 - After completing the scenario, discuss as a class:
 - How did their decisions affect the forest, animals, and humans?
 - What worked well?
 - What could have been done differently?
- Tips:
 - Keep the scenario simple and age-appropriate.
 - Encourage students to reflect on cause and effect. How one decision can impact multiple parts of the forest.

2. Activity 3: Forest Reflection Story

- Objective: Connect learning to personal experience and storytelling.
Materials: Paper, pencils, crayons, or markers; optional props for imagination.
- Steps:
 - Ask students to imagine themselves as a tree, basket, forest scientist, or future forest helper.
 - Students write or draw a short story integrating lessons about stewardship, innovation, and cultural knowledge.
 - Encourage them to include what they learned about forest care, the journey of products, and the Menominee cultural connection.
 - Students share their story with a partner or the class, highlighting the key lesson they want others to take away.
- Tips:
 - Younger students can focus on drawing with captions instead of full text.
 - Encourage creativity and connections to their own experiences with nature or local forests.



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](#)