A GUIDE FOR PROMOTING FORESTS & FOREST MANAGEMENT

Share and print out this manual of ideas and make notes as you plan your walk in the forest!
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The Walk in the Forest program is a wonderful opportunity for the public to experience forests and forestry hands-on.

This guide will help you plan an event—for adults, families, students or teachers. A Walk in the Forest helps audiences of all ages unplug from their busy lives and witness the wonder of nature. It provides a great opportunity for people to appreciate forests, and to teach others about the benefits forests provide and how forest management can enhance those benefits.

This guide was developed and produced by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and the American Forest Foundation (AFF). SAF is the scientific and educational association representing nearly 17,000 professional foresters and natural resource professionals in the United States. The Society’s primary objective is to advance the science, technology, education, and practice of professional forestry for the benefit of all society. AFF works on-the-ground with families, teachers and elected officials to promote stewardship and protect our nation’s forest heritage. A commitment to the next generation unites our nationwide network of forest owners and teachers working to keep our forests healthy and our children well-prepared for the future they will inherit.

There are many opportunities throughout the year to plan a Walk in the Forest. Each season brings with it something new to show and tell about trees and the forest. The third Saturday in May is National Walk in the Woods Day™, and on that day the American Forest Foundation invites its network of family forest owners and American Tree Farm System® Certified Tree Farmers to offer tours of their properties, or simply take their own families and friends for a walk in the woods. On the third Friday in October, SAF local units and state chapters join with local educators and landowners to hold a Walk in the Forest Day. If you can’t participate in, or plan an event for National Walk in the Woods Day™ or National Walk in the Forest Day, consider another spring date to tie in with Arbor Day or Earth Day, or another fall date to take advantage of colorful foliage. National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, but many states observe it on different dates according to their best tree-planting times.

The guidelines in this kit will help you plan your event. A planned project is a successful project! The length and detail of the walk will depend on your audience. If your walk involves teachers and their students, or families and their children, AFF’s Project Learning Tree program can provide some engaging and fun activities for youth. Use this guide to plan your walk, and for more guidance, contact Louise Murgia, Director of Field Services at the Society of American Foresters or Vanessa Bullwinkle, Director of Communications at the American Forest Foundation.

GOALS OF WALK IN THE FOREST

> Inform the public of the many benefits of trees and forests.
> Increase public awareness of the dynamic nature of the forest.
> Help the public to understand that foresters are uniquely qualified to help maintain the integrity of forest environments while providing many benefits for society.
> Inform the public that private family forestland owners have multiple and diverse objectives and that their investment in forest management results in benefits that we all enjoy.
KEY FOREST AND FOREST MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

**Trees and forests have many benefits.**
- Environmental benefits include soil stability, air and water quality and carbon storage.
- Ecological benefits include landscape diversity and habitat for plants and animals.
- Economic benefits include the forest products industry, outdoor recreation equipment, etc.
- Recreation includes activities in the forest such as hiking, camping and hunting.
- Aesthetics is the pleasure derived from the visual beauty of the forest.

**Forests are dynamic and change composition over time.**
- Biotic influences on forests include animals, insects, diseases, and non-native invasive species.
- Abiotic influences include flooding, drought, fire and wind events such as hurricanes and tornadoes.
- Competition for resources (sun, water, nutrients) occurs between organisms of the same species and different species.
- Succession is the replacement of one community of plants by another.

**Foresters maintain the integrity of the forest while providing benefits for society.**
- There is demand for forest products including paper, solid wood and energy.
- Supplying these products through management does not necessarily compromise a forest's integrity.
- Foresters complete a multi-disciplinary curriculum including ecology, silviculture, forest health, economics, and policy that prepares them for their profession.
- Many states require licensing or registration criteria that may include a code of ethics.
- Foresters use equipment such as diameter tape, clinometer and increment borer to gather data in order to make prescriptions.
- Forest management techniques such as herbicide application, prescribed fire, thinning, or final harvests are used to deliver a desired outcome.
- Often these techniques mimic natural events, and may appear harmful in the short-term but have long term benefits.

**Private family forestland owners have multiple and diverse objectives and their investment benefits the public.**
- Individuals and families own forests for a variety of reasons, including quality of life, environmental values, investment income, and/or recreation.
- A landowner invests his or her time and money in forest management activities to accomplish his/her objective[s].
- A landowner’s investment in forest management also provides benefits to society for example, a prescribed fire lowers the risk of uncontrolled wildfire.
- Other societal benefits from private forestland management include clean air and clean water, soil creation and stabilization, and protection of biological diversity.
- A landowner’s participation in forest certification programs like the American Tree Farm System is verification of sustainable forest management.
Additional Talking Points

- Focus on current issues, such as biodiversity, biomass, wildland-urban interface, or forests with high conservation value.
- Explain the history of forestry in the United States and your state and discuss trends using the U.S. Forest Service’s Forest Inventory Analysis.
- Explain residential tree and landscape care, including species selection and planting, impacts on energy use, root damage and proper pruning.
- Observe a harvest operation in progress, explain what is happening, and point out measures being taken to avoid harming the surrounding environment.
- Showcase an example of ecosystem restoration such as a longleaf pine forest in the Southeastern U.S. Coastal Plain.
- Show the use of good silvicultural practices in a wetland environment.
- Discuss the current health of local forests, and tell guests how they can help keep forests healthy such as eradication and prevention of non-native invasive species.
- Discuss the history of the Society of American Foresters and the American Forest Foundation’s Tree Farm or Project Learning Tree programs.
- Discuss the Society of American Foresters’ mission to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and, to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.
Discuss the importance of **private forest owners** to protecting America’s forest legacy and point out the value of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS)—the largest and oldest sustainable woodland system in America. ATFS is a network of family forest owners protecting 26 million acres of forest land.

Discuss the importance of **environmental education** and how it is vital that the next generation have an understanding and appreciation for the natural world. Describe how Project Learning Tree (PLT), uses forests as a window on the world to engage students of all ages in outdoor learning. PLT has a 50-state network and trains more than 30,000 educators a year.

Gather local and national **forest facts** to share.

- 56% of America’s forests are privately owned and of this private forest land, most (62%) is owned by families and individuals. The remaining private forest land is owned by corporations, conservation organizations, clubs, Native American tribes, and others.
- 25% percent of America’s fresh water comes from private forests
- 60% of at-risk wildlife depends on private forests for habitat.
- More than 90% of our wood products in America come from private forests.
Before the Walk

Establish Objectives
☐ Set your objectives, taking into consideration the goals of the walk.
☐ Determine your target audience. Examples include students, teachers, landowners, elected leaders, government officials, conservation groups, clergy, scouts, civic groups, media, or the general public. [See examples for specific groups in later pages.]
☐ Consider audiences that may have different viewpoints or values about the forest. Consider whether these groups should attend the same walk or if the walks need to be separate.
☐ What do you want participants to learn? Do you want to address a current “hot” issue or provide a general overview?
☐ What two or three major points do you want visitors to know or understand? See key concepts.
☐ Partnering with an SAF Chapter or an AFF state Tree Farm committee or Project Learning Tree state program can ensure that your walk becomes an annual program.
☐ Inviting local, state, and federal agencies, forest industry, loggers, consultants and conservation groups to volunteer may help develop valuable partnerships.

Select a Location
☐ Will the site support your objectives? Is it easily accessible? Do you need permission or a permit to use the site? Is there adequate parking? Will you need restroom facilities?
☐ Consider a certified Tree Farm, U.S. National Forest or National Park, urban forest, planting or harvesting operation, seed orchard or nursery.

Insurance
☐ SAF state societies, divisions, and chapters are covered by the SAF National Office’s liability insurance. For details contact SAF Finance and Administration Department at (301) 897-8720, ext. 103.
☐ Walk in the Forest programs sponsored by either the state Tree Farm or Project Learning Tree committees can also be covered by the American Forest Foundation’s liability insurance. Contact the Tree Farm program coordinator at 202-463-2462 at least one month before your project and request the liability rider application. Follow up with the program coordinator to ensure coverage.

Consider the Timing
☐ A common date facilitates national event publicity. SAF selected the third Friday in October based on school schedules, weather, and fall foliage in many areas of the country. AFF selected the third Saturday in May. If you can’t participate in the national Walk in the Forest Day or National Walk in the Woods Day™, consider another date.
Spring dates tie in well with Arbor Day or Earth Day. A weekday event in May is a good time for teachers. For the most part, school tests are over and teachers are looking for field day opportunities for their students.

Summer may be difficult with students but teachers need professional development hours just like foresters and are more available in the summer.

Autumn is the time to appreciate the aesthetics of the forest and can be used to engage curiosities of the fall colors.

Make provisions for a rain date.

Develop a Plan

- Designate one person as the coordinator to direct planning and to have primary responsibility for the program.
- Solicit support from SAF members, Project Learning Tree facilitators, American Tree Farm System members.
- Decide what you will show. Don’t try to do too much. Keep it simple and not too technical.
- Decide whether to direct guests to learning stations staffed by experts or keep the entire group together with one or more leaders talking.
- Designate someone to promote the event to your desired audience.
- Develop a program flyer, see sample, and distribute SAF, Tree Farm, or PLT brochures with the program flyer.
- Designate someone responsible to attract media to your event, develop press releases and speak to the media during the event. This person should be free to move about the event with the media.
- Consider your audience may not want media attention.
- Assign someone to be responsible for taking photos and/or video of the event.
- Designate someone responsible for securing local sponsors and apply for grant funds to offset costs.
- Establish a budget.

Establish Itinerary

- Determine if your walk will include a meal. Consider a picnic lunch during a break or at the end of the walk or guests can bring bag lunches. Provide water.
- Layout the location of each information point.
- Identify the station presenters and determine what their needs are for materials.
- Remember to include rest stops, briefing periods, and refreshments in the agenda.
- Coordinate refreshment and lunch details as well as trash disposal.
- Send reminders to presenters on times, what is expected, final schedules, etc.

Arrange Parking and Transportation if Necessary (bus, van, other)

- Consult and respect the wishes of the landowner.
- Reserve transportation. Vans are in high demand during the summer and should be reserved well in advance.
- Consider accessibility of buses on forest roads.
- Avoid caravans of automobiles due to the risk of accident and their effects on forest roads.
Invite Guests

☐ For school groups, make contact at the beginning of the school year before field trip plans are set.
☐ For specific guest lists, request an RSVP and make reminder phone calls.
☐ For landowners or the general public, designate someone to handle registration.
☐ Send press releases about your event to local media. Include the date, time, location, length, why your audience should participate, dress requirements, etc.
☐ For landowners only, promote it in state Tree Farm committee newsletters, state forestry agency publications, and trade association publications.
☐ For the general public, list the event in community calendars, hang signs in libraries and stores.

Prepare Information Packet to Give to Walk Participants

Consider including these items:
☐ Walk schedule and map of walk area
☐ Briefing paper with key forestry terms, issues to be discussed, etc.
☐ Photographs (for example harvesting methods)
☐ Names and contact information of the walk’s facilitators for follow-up
☐ State forest facts (available from state agencies or associations)
☐ SAF, PLT and Tree Farm brochures
☐ Seedlings or seed packets with planting instructions for participants
☐ Sample activities for families to lead with children while out for a walk in the woods. Download these one-pagers from PLT’s “Connecting Kids to Nature” series from www.forestfoundation.org/family-activities.
☐ Make nametags. Consider tree cookie name tags. With a dab of hot glue and a pin, they make excellent name tags. Use color-coded name tags to distinguish leaders from guests.
☐ Collect giveaways from donors.

Walk through Planned Itinerary

☐ Rehearse!
☐ Calculate travel time needed between stops.
☐ On remote forest roads, flagging turns and stops can be helpful.
☐ Be comfortable with your location and material; do trail maintenance if necessary.
☐ Watch for potential obstacles, distractions, safety hazards, or illegal activities.
☐ Observe: will the walk be interesting? Does it meet your objectives?
☐ Revise itinerary as needed.
☐ Collect helpful items: air horn to rotate stations, sunscreen, bug spray, toilet paper, hand wipes, first aid kit, and camera.
DAY OF WALK

Pre-Walk

☐ Arrive early.
☐ Review the site for any potential hazards and flag the boundaries.
☐ Welcome guests and have them sign in with name, address, and emergency contact information.
☐ Distribute name tags and walk information packet.
☐ Give brief introduction with information about the walk sponsors and an explanation of the site.
☐ Give an overview of the day’s activities.
☐ Review a map that shows the project boundaries and facilities.
☐ Describe the plan for bad weather. In hot weather, tell guests to make sure they drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
☐ Allow time for a brief question and answer session.

Proceed with Walk in Accordance with Schedule

☐ Stick to the schedule while respecting individual needs.
☐ Avoid technical jargon; answer all questions candidly.
☐ Be sure to listen carefully and avoid doing all the talking.
☐ Remember safety precautions.
☐ Involve the audience, for example ask open-ended questions about the topic rather than a question that could be answered with a yes or no.
☐ Be animated. Have good eye contact with your audience.
☐ Most importantly, remember to make the walk fun!

Conclusion

☐ Give a summary or a fun quiz covering the tour, highlights, etc.
☐ Allow time for a final question and answer session.
☐ Distribute and collect evaluation forms.
☐ Encourage additional contact with SAF, Tree Farm or PLT volunteers.
  Offer to schedule a Project Learning Tree workshop for educators, Tree Farm certification for landowners or follow-up visit by an SAF member.
☐ Thank guests for attending and make sure all guests have transportation.
☐ Collect trash and dispose of it properly.
☐ Notify the landowner that the event has concluded and the site is in order.

AFTER THE WALK

☐ Clean up the site—leave no trace.
☐ Send thank you letters to all participants, volunteers, sponsors and the landowner.
☐ Answer unresolved questions immediately.
☐ Summarize the participant evaluations and distribute to partners.
☐ Evaluate guests’ attitudes: did the tour have a positive effect? What worked and what didn’t?
☐ Distribute a post-event press release (include a quote if you can from a student, teacher, or other guest about the event and what they learned or experienced), and photographs, to the local media, Society of American Foresters’ communications department and the American Forest Foundation’s communications department.
☐ Begin preparations for the next Walk in the Forest!
Example #1
WALK IN THE FOREST FOR CHILDREN

This outline supplements the Planning a Walk in the Forest guidelines on page 8. These guidelines are well suited for the elementary grade level, but can also be adapted for other grade levels.

Benefits of a Children’s Walk in the Forest

> Teach children about forests, forestry, and foresters. Parents and educators also benefit from exposure to the information presented to the children.
> Provide children with a positive outdoor, hands-on learning experience about forests, natural resources, forestry, and foresters.
> Increase children’s awareness, appreciation of, and respect for, nature, forests, and foresters.
> Expose children to the many benefits of forests—biological, aesthetic, recreational, educational, environmental, and economic.
> Expose children to the many aspects of forestry, such as, forest management, fire prevention, forest health, forest products, forest ecology, and wildlife management.

BEFORE THE WALK

Determine Your Audience and Objectives

☐ Decide how the walk can best support your goals and the goals of the school or youth organization.
☐ Decide which grade levels you wish to target and how many students can attend.
☐ Contact an educator, school administrator or youth leader to suggest a walk.
☐ Contact your state’s Project Learning Tree Coordinator for assistance.
Visit www.plt.org for contact information.

Meet with Educator or Youth Leader

☐ Be prepared to discuss the goals and show how they correlate with state learning standards.
☐ Decide when and where to hold the walk—on or near school grounds is best to avoid excessive travel.
☐ Set your agenda according to your goals. See attached sample.
☐ Provide teachers with materials they can use to prepare students for the walk, such as books, posters or hands-on items.
☐ Encourage educators or youth leaders to provide questions they would like answered at each station.

Pre-Walk Introduction

☐ Visit the school or youth group one to two weeks before the walk so volunteers can meet the students and vice versa.
Gear Up

☐ Provide teachers with sample activities that differ from activities that will be conducted on the day of the walk. See attached Connecting Kids to Nature activities. You can download these and others from www.forestfoundation.org/family-activities. These are more simple versions of activities from Project Learning Tree's curriculum guides.

☐ Read a forestry-related book or show a video or slide show.

☐ Have children brainstorm on how many items come from trees and then show samples and discuss some of the products.

☐ Briefly explain what a forester does and demonstrate some tools.

☐ Have each student write answers to the following on an index card along with his or her name: “What do I want to know about forests or foresters?”

☐ Conduct a pre- and post-walk test of knowledge/attitudes about forests.

Define the Responsibility of the School

☐ Provide at least two adults per group (for example one teacher and one parent).

☐ Encourage students to dress properly (long pants and closed-toe shoes).

☐ Have lunches divided into groups.

☐ Bring a school nurse or someone else to distribute medication and first aid if this becomes necessary.

DAY OF THE WALK

Focus the Children’s Attention without Delay:

☐ Set the tone of the walk immediately.

☐ Consider giving instructions about the walk and other logistics while children are still seated on the bus.

☐ Set clear and simple rules. Sample rules include the following:
  - Stay on paths whenever possible.
  - Watch where you are walking so you avoid crushing plants and animals.
  - Do not pick flowers and leaves unless directed.
  - Walk quietly to focus on observation.
  - Do not litter.

Possible Topics and Associated PLT Activities during the Walk:

☐ Count tree age using growth rings and/or an increment borer.

☐ Show how to measure trees, determine board feet, etc.; relate this to how many trees it takes to build a house.

☐ Show how dead trees are home to a lot of living creatures.

☐ Explain how seeds are carried (by wind, water, squirrels, etc.).

☐ Explain the types of food that come from trees (maple syrup, etc.).

☐ Show a recently planted area with seedlings sprouting and explain the life cycle of trees.

☐ Identify the living creatures in the woods.

☐ Do leaf rubbings with crayons and explain the parts of a leaf.

☐ Show the parts of a tree and compare them to vital human functions.

  Explain that trees essentially use their leaves for breathing and then ask what else a tree needs to live. Someone will probably mention eating and you can explain how trees “eat” through their roots.
Show the kids an insect gall and explain how the tree has encased encroaching insect eggs.

Find a hole or pruned branch and show how the tree covers the wound.

Consider using these Project Learning Tree activities on your walk:
- Measurements: PLT PreK-8 #67 “How Big is Your Tree”
- Forest products: PLT PreK-8 #13 “We All Need Trees”
- Habitats: PLT PreK-8 #23 “The Fallen Log”
- Seed dispersal: PLT PreK-8 #43 “Have Seeds Will Travel”
- Tree ID: PLT PreK-8 #64 “Looking at Leaves”

Conclusion
- Allow time for a question and answer session.
- Ask children what they learned and liked best about the walk.
- If time does not permit, ask the teacher to have the students write a thank you with their answer to what they liked best.
- Children love souvenirs! Give away SAF and AFF items like pencils or magnifying lenses, etc.
- Give educators or youth leaders an evaluation form to complete.
- Schedule a follow-up classroom session.

AFTER THE WALK

Suggestions for a Follow-Up Visit to the Class:
- Ask questions and get feedback.
- Use the index cards to make sure the children can answer the questions they originally asked about forests.
- Have the kids draw pictures or collaborate on a class mural depicting what they learned on the walk.
- Conduct a post-walk test to see if knowledge/attitude has changed.
- Help the children plant trees on school grounds.
- Show the SAF video, “Foresters: Growing Forests for Our Future.”
- Leave worksheets or PLT activities for an educator or youth leader’s future use.
- Encourage educators or youth leaders to contact SAF or their state PLT coordinator for assistance in the future.
- Have the children write thank you notes to the landowner whose property they toured, or SAF/AFF and other volunteers who helped organize the walk.

NOTE: If you cannot do a follow-up visit, research projects could be assigned by the educator or youth leader based on what the students learned from the walk. Have educator or youth leaders give children a follow-up quiz.
HELPFUL TIPS FOR WORKING WITH KIDS

Think

☐ It is better to interpret and aid in their exploration rather than just give information.
☐ If a child comes up with a wrong answer help guide them to correct results.
☐ Be aware of teachable moments. If attention strays to follow a woodpecker or other animal, incorporate it into the walk—why is the woodpecker hammering that tree? Why that tree?
☐ Use superlatives: that tree has the biggest cones, the most colorful flowers, or the most interesting trunk. Everyone reacts enthusiastically to superlatives.
☐ Satisfy the child’s need to touch, smell, and taste (with a disclaimer of danger) where these senses present themselves. The smell of sassafras or juniper, the taste of maple syrup, or the fact that it took 12 of us to hug that tree all are ways for children to code their memories with positive associations to trees.
☐ Project Learning Tree offers plenty more suggestions in its activity guides.
☐ Many books are available to help teach about trees and forests. Try Sharing Nature with Children, Parents/Teachers/Nature Awareness Guidebook by Joseph B. Cornell.

Touch

Sample questions asked by 4th and 5th graders:
> How many acres are in the forest? How many trees? Have you counted the trees?
> What tree is the biggest in the forest? Can we plant a tree?
> Are there animal tracks in the forest? How does wildlife use trees?
> Are deer living in the forest? Can we feed the deer our lunch?
> I want to walk in the mud. Can we get dirty?
# Agenda

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<th>Class C</th>
<th>Class D</th>
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<td>HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME!</td>
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Station 1 – Mammals, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Station 2 – Reptiles, Alabama Wildlife Federation
Station 3 – Soils & Water, Natural Resource Conservation Service
Station 4 – Raptors, Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center
Station 5 – Project Learning Tree—“How Big is Your Tree,” Registered Forester
Station 6 – Freshwater Fishing, Alabama Wildlife Federation
Station 7 – Project Learning Tree—“Looking at Leaves,” Carignan Forestry Consultants
Station 8 – Project Learning Tree—“Birds and Worms,” Alabama Department of Ag and Industries
Try this activity in a forest—a natural place to learn!

For over 35 years, Project Learning Tree® has used the forest as a “window” to help young people gain an awareness of the world around them and their place within it. Blending a walk in the forest with a fun and engaging PLT activity creates a powerful learning experience for children of all ages. Here’s one idea in a series from PLT that introduces the concepts of structure and scale.

Activity 70: Soil Stories

In this activity, students explore differences in soil types and composition.

Doing the Activity

Who doesn’t like getting their hands a little dirty? The next time a child in your care decides to dig a hole in the ground, turn it into an educational opportunity. Describe to children that you will conduct an experiment to analyze the soil sample they have just collected. As you dig and collect soil samples, ask:

- What do trees and other plants get from soil? If so, why?
- Do different plants have different soil needs?
- Describe the soil: What color is it? How does it smell? How does it feel?

Have children make a “soil shake” by placing one half cup of soil into a jar with a lid and adding two cups of water. Ask them to predict what will happen if they shake the closed jar and let it settle for a few hours. Then, try it. Over time, soil layers will become visible. Gravel will fall first; then sand, silt, and clay; organic matter (leaves, twigs, stems) will remain floating in the water. Have children draw a picture of the layers formed by their soil shake, or collect and test soil samples from other areas (forest, field, yard) for comparison.

Safety! Get permission before taking soil samples. Use plastic jars, if possible.

Challenge students to complete the “Soil Composition” diagram, reminding them that the largest particles fall to the bottom first.

Soil Composition

Fill in the missing vowels to label the soil layers.

Match the measurements with the appropriate soil layer. All measurements are in millimeters (mm).

- CL_Y
- S_LT
- S_ND
- GR_V_L

- a) 2.0 - 0.06 mm
- b) greater than 2.0 mm
- c) less than 0.002 mm
- d) 0.06 - 0.002 mm

Adapted from Activity 70: Soil Stories from Project Learning Tree’s PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide.

Discover how PLT can help you teach... from nature!
- Attend a workshop near you to receive PLT activity guides, ideas, and materials.
- To contact your local PLT State Coordinator, visit www.plt.org or call 202-463-2475.

Answers: C) Class d) Soil e) Sand f) Gravel g) Water h) Organic matter.
Try this activity in a forest—a natural place to learn!

For over 30 years, Project Learning Tree® has used the forest as a "window" to help young people gain an awareness of the world around them and their place within it. Blending a walk in the forest with a fun and engaging PLT activity creates a powerful learning experience for children of all ages. Here's one idea from PLT that introduces the concept of forest cycles.

Activity 78: Signs of Fall

In this activity, children look for signs of autumn. They observe the annual change of seasons, and investigate why leaves of deciduous trees change color in the fall.

Doing the Activity
As autumn approaches, take children on a walk through a wooded area, schoolyard, local park, or neighborhood sidewalk to look for signs of fall. Point out the differences between deciduous and evergreen trees. Have children find at least five of each and collect sample leaves. Create leaf rubbings by covering a leaf with a piece of paper and rubbing a crayon over it. The leaf’s margin and veins will appear. Use crayons to match the fall colors found in the leaves. Encourage critical thinking by asking:

- What signs of fall can you see in the trees and on the ground?
- How many different leaf colors can you find?
- What will happen to the leaves?

Deciduous

Deciduous trees lose their leaves annually. Example: Oak

Evergreen

Evergreen trees keep their leaves (needles) year-round. Example: Pine

Have children use the colorful fall leaves to create a picture. For ideas, see Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert, published by Harcourt Children's Books, 2005, ISBN: 0152053042.

Adapted from Activity 78: Signs of Fall from Project Learning Tree’s PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide.

WHY DO LEAVES CHANGE COLOR?

With fall’s colder temperatures and shorter days, the cells of deciduous tree leaves begin to die. The dead cells block water and nutrients from the leaf. Chlorophyll, the green pigment in the leaves, breaks down and the yellow and red pigments begin to show through.

Native Americans had legends to explain the fall colors. Invite children to create their own imaginative stories.

Discover how PLT can help you teach... from nature!

- Attend, host, or sponsor a local PLT workshop where participants receive PLT activity guides, ideas, and materials.
- Contact your PLT State Coordinator. Visit www.plt.org or call 202-463-2475 for their contact information.
Connecting Kids to Nature

Try this activity in a forest—a natural place to learn!

For over 30 years, Project Learning Tree® has used the forest as a “window” to help young people gain an awareness of the world around them and their place within it. Blending a walk in the forest with a fun and engaging PLT activity creates a powerful learning experience for children of all ages. Here’s one idea from PLT that introduces the concept of measurement.

Activity 67: How Big Is Your Tree?
Trees come in various shapes and sizes. In this activity, children will measure trees in different ways and become familiar with tree scale and structure. They will also learn the importance of standard units of measure and measuring techniques.

Doing the Activity
Any time you are outside, select a tree for children to measure. Begin by asking youth how they might measure something without the proper tools. Then challenge children to measure small outdoor objects (leaves, branches, rocks) using their own body parts: a foot, hand, arm, or finger. Guide children to your selected tree and ask them to estimate the following:

- Height
- Circumference
- Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)
- Width of Canopy (or Crown Spread)

Depending on the age and ability of the children, you may want to provide a six inch ruler or five foot piece of string for assistance. You can request that calculations be estimated in body measurements (hand spans, arm lengths, etc.) or accepted units of measure (feet, meters, etc.) Ask: why might it be useful to measure trees?

On a sunny day, show students how to measure shadows and use a ratio comparison to determine tree height. The mathematical proportions are outlined in the box below. Invite children to practice using the illustrated example.

\[
\text{Tree's Height} = x \\
\text{Tree's Shadow} = 63 \text{ feet} \\
\text{Child's Height} = 4 \text{ feet} \\
\text{Child's Shadow} = 6 \text{ feet}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Tree's Height} & = \frac{\text{Child's Height}}{\text{Child's Shadow}} \\
\text{Tree's Shadow} & = \frac{\text{Child's Height} \times \text{Tree's Shadow}}{\text{Child's Shadow}}
\end{align*}
\]

Adapted from Activity 67: How Big Is Your Tree? from Project Learning Tree's PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide.

Discover how PLT can help you teach... from nature!
- Attend a workshop near you to receive PLT activity guides, ideas, and materials.
- To contact your local PLT State Coordinator, visit www.plt.org or call 202-463-2475.
Example #2:
WALK IN THE FOREST FOR TEACHERS

This outline supplements the Planning a Walk in the Forest guidelines on page 8. This example combines a Walk in the Forest with a Project Learning Tree educator workshop.

Benefits for a Walk in the Forest for Educators:
In addition to the goals of a Project Learning Tree workshop, the walk will:
> Teach educators about forests, forestry, and foresters.
> Provide educators with a positive outdoor, hands-on learning experience about forests, natural resources, forestry, and foresters.
> Increase educator’s awareness, appreciation of, and respect for, nature, forests, and foresters.
> Expose educators to the many benefits of forests—biological, aesthetic, recreational, educational, environmental, and economic.
> Expose educators to the many aspects of forestry, e.g., forest management, fire prevention, forest health, forest products, forest ecology, and wildlife management.
> Encourage educators to share their knowledge and understanding with students in the classroom and out-of-doors.
> Encourage educators to take their students outside to learn.

The Goals of a PLT Workshop:
> To encourage educators to approach learning and teaching from an ecological and multi-disciplinary perspective.
> To prepare educators to use PLT materials by modeling a sample of PLT activities and teaching strategies.
> To show educators how they can incorporate PLT into their current and future lesson plans and curriculum.
> To increase educators’ confidence in teaching environmental education concepts.
> To enrich educators’ knowledge of content included in PLT lessons.
> To create a setting in which educators can meet other professionals in their region interested in environmental education.
> To provide a fun and motivating forum that encourages educators to enjoy their own learning process.

Please note a PLT workshop must be coordinated by a trained Project Learning Tree facilitator. Costs for PLT workshops and PLT curriculum materials vary from state to state. For help identifying PLT facilitators, or to become a PLT facilitator, contact your state PLT coordinator. Visit www.plt.org for contact information.

Project Learning Tree provides tens of thousands educators every year with environmental education curriculum materials and resources to help them incorporate teaching about the environment into their everyday lesson plans—and take their students outdoors to learn. More than 500,000 educators have been trained to use PLT curriculum, reaching more than 75 million students.
BEFORE THE WALK

Develop a Plan for a PLT Workshop in Conjunction with a PLT Facilitator

☐ Determine target audience [for example, preK through 12th grade educators in public or private schools, home schools parents or tutors, camp staffs, Girl Scouts and Boy Scout leaders, state Parks and Recreation Department staffs, university professors of pre-service teachers, forestry or environmental science majors].

☐ Contact the school’s science coordinator several months in advance to select a teacher in-service day for the PLT workshop and another date for the walk, or one date for a combined workshop and field day. Similarly, contact your targeted nature center, university department, regional youth group or education center, etc.

☐ Submit a Project Learning Tree workshop proposal to your state’s PLT Coordinator as soon as date is established with an estimated number of participants. Post the workshop on your state’s and National PLT’s website.

☐ Apply for grant money from either National SAF, or through local sponsorship to offset costs of the workshop and the PLT curriculum guides.

☐ Create a registration form, including payment information (if applicable), and confirmation letters for participants to be sent upon receipt of the registration form—include list of participants, directions, what to expect/wear, etc.

Establish Objectives for the Walk

☐ Determine if the PLT activities meet the objectives of a Walk in the Forest. Determine if the PLT activities meet the needs of the registered participants [i.e. grade level, subject, etc.]

☐ Plan for giveaways for the teachers. Your state forestry department, a forest products company, or a local nursery might be willing to donate seedlings or seed packets with planting instructions for participants or additional giveaways. PLT and SAF also have promotional items.

☐ Set your objectives, taking into consideration the goals of the walk.

☐ What topics do you want to cover? What PLT activities will you use to address these topics?

☐ What two or three major points do you want participants to know or understand? [See pages 4-6 for some Talking Point ideas, and consider local, national, or international issues.]

☐ Joining with foresters in local, state, and federal agencies, forest industry, consulting firms, conservation organizations and your state’s PLT program will help develop valuable partnerships.

Establish Itinerary for a Walk in the Forest Combined with a PLT Workshop

☐ Allow one[?] hour to welcome all participants, conduct a PLT activity “icebreaker,” and introduction to PLT.

☐ Divide participants into groups based on their school, or grade level they teach, or for rotating a large group through several stations.

☐ Layout the location of each station, decide which PLT activity will be conducted at each station, and assess material needs. Use a hands-on PLT activity at each station—you’re in the woods, take advantage of it!
Prepare Information Packet to Give to Walk Participants
Consider including these items:
- Walk schedule and map of walk area
- PLT workshop objectives and history
- Participant list
- Website resource list
- Briefing paper with key forestry terms, issues to be discussed, etc.
- Photographs (i.e. harvesting methods)
- Names of SAF/PLT members involved and their affiliation
- Names/phone numbers of SAF/PLT contacts for further information
- State forest facts (available from state agencies or associations)
- SAF and PLT brochures and information
- State and national correlations to academic standards for the PLT guides that will be distributed
- Information about trails in the area to bring students back to, or tips on how to start their own trail on their school campus. Provide information about PLT’s GreenWorks! grants for funding to develop a trail, or another for environmental service-learning projects.
- Blank classroom planning sheets

Finalize Plans
- Place an order through the PLT workshop facilitator for the appropriate number of PLT curriculum guides based on the number of registered participants.
- Send invitations to media to cover the event. Have a designated spokesperson.
- Gather PLT supplies and props for the facilitators of each station.
- Coordinate lunch details
- Send reminders to presenters on times, what is expected, final schedules, etc.
- Collect giveaways from donors.
- Prepare PLT certificates

Registration Information
- Make nametags. Consider using tree cookies, a cross cut section of tree stem, for the tags.
- Develop a sign-in sheet (including payment information if applicable)

“"The visits into the woods and mills was a wonderful experience that gave a whole new perspective on forestry, and the dedication to stewardship by those working in and managing the forests.”

Martha Borden, Maine middle school teacher
DAY OF WALK

Pre-Walk
☐ Welcome guests and have a registration table for them to check in.
☐ Distribute nametags, group assignments, and walk information packet.

Proceed with Walk in Accordance with Schedule
☐ Start on time.
☐ Gather all participants together in one place for the welcome, icebreaker, history and introduction to PLT.
☐ Give brief information on safety (i.e. snakes, poison ivy, and heat), restrooms, lunch, and the site.
☐ Allow time for a brief question and answer session.
☐ Break out into different groups and send participants to their first station stop. Rotate stations to the sound of a horn.
☐ At each station, the presenters should introduce themselves, conduct the activity, involve the audience i.e. ask open-ended questions about the topic rather than a question that could be answered with a yes or no.

Conclusion
☐ Bring the group back together for the conclusion—the distribution of PLT curriculum guides, Hike through the Guide, lesson planning worksheets, and survey and wrap up.
☐ Promote PLT facilitator workshops, Outstanding PLT Educator program, PLT GreenWorks! grants, and Teachers Conservation Institute if present in your state.
☐ Allow time for a final question and answer session.
☐ Encourage additional contact with SAF members and PLT facilitators.
☐ Distribute and collect both PLT’s workshop evaluation form and a Walk in the Forest evaluation form.
☐ Thank guests for attending and make sure all guests have transportation.
☐ Have a giveaway table that participants can collect items as they leave and pick up their PLT certificates. Have volunteers staff the table.

AFTER THE WALK

☐ Review surveys. Evaluate what worked and what didn’t work.
☐ Return completed PLT workshop participant surveys, PLT facilitator survey including names of all PLT facilitators who volunteered, and all remaining material to state PLT coordinator.
Project Learning Tree’s “Walk in the Forest”

Project Learning Tree is an award-winning environmental education program designed for educators and other resource professionals working with youth from preschool through grade 12.

PLT uses the forest as a “window” on the world to increase students’ understanding of our environment; stimulate students’ critical and creative thinking; develop students’ ability to make informed decisions on environmental issues; and instill in students the commitment to take responsible action on behalf of the environment.

You are invited to “Walk in the Forest” with Project Learning Tree and the Society of American Foresters!

On the walk, learn about trees, the forest ecosystem, and how professional foresters care for the forest. We will follow a trail through Tuskegee National Forest. Please dress for cold weather and wear hiking boots.

To sign up, please complete the attached application and mail it to the address indicated on the form, or email your information to wifinfo@gmail.com. To learn more about Project Learning Tree go to www.plt.org.

When: 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. January 6, 2012

Where: Visitor parking at Tuskegee National Forest, Tuskegee, Ala.

Cost: Free

Questions: Joe Smith
555 Alabama Street
Tuskegee, AL 36104
(334) 555-1212
wifinfo@gmail.com
Example #3:  
WALK IN THE FOREST FOR  
LOCAL LEADERS

This example supplements the Planning a Walk in the Forest guidelines on page 8.

Benefits for Local Leaders’ Walk in the Forest

> Educate your elected officials and local opinion leaders about forests and forest management.
> Help policymakers understand the important role forests play in the community, providing clean air, clean water, and jobs.
> Demonstrate the commitment in time and resources it takes to responsibly manage forests.
> Become a resource for an elected official and their staff for information about forestry in your state or local area.

BEFORE THE WALK

Establish Your Objectives

☐ Do you want to explain a local forestry-related issue?
☐ Teach elected officials about forestry or foresters in their district?
☐ Sway opinion on a particular bill or proposed piece of legislation?
☐ Increase awareness of the forestry profession?
☐ For assistance with this type of program consider contacting your state forestry association, or the governmental affairs directors with SAF and AFF.

Decide Where You Will Hold the Walk and What You Will Cover

☐ Consider addressing a current “hot” issue.
☐ Attract attendance by inviting a well-known resident such as a landowner or executive of a forest products company to be a walk speaker.
☐ Look for an opportunity to combine your walk with a local mill tour.
☐ If appropriate, invite media to the event and be sure to let them know which legislators or other VIPs have confirmed they will attend, and who the speakers are.

Invite Elected Officials, Opinion Leaders

☐ Contact up to six weeks in advance.
☐ Welcome participation from elected official’s staff members as well.
☐ Send personal invitations with background information on forestry, what will be seen on the walk, and who the speakers are; request RSVP.
☐ Follow-up with a phone call, to confirm receipt of the invitation and answer any questions.
☐ Invite the elected official to deliver remarks at the event and work the legislator’s staff to provide talking points.
☐ A few days before the event, confirm attendance and agenda.
Develop List of Media to Invite
☐ Check with the legislators or other VIPs to determine if media presence is desired.
☐ Consider inviting:
  • TV, radio, newspaper, and magazine reporters
  • environmental/forestry reporters, outdoor freelance reporters
  • nature/science reporters
  • business/economic reporters
  • feature/local news reporter
  • newsletter editors of local outdoor groups, community associations, etc.
  • bloggers
☐ Send a press release or media advisory one week before the event, and be sure to follow up with another email or phone call two days before the event.
☐ Prepare press kits. Include a press release, with approved quotes from a legislator or other VIP, and other background information such as forest fact sheets, and SAF and AFF briefings on forest issues.
☐ For assistance, contact the communications staff of your state forestry association, SAF or AFF.

DAY OF THE WALK

Introduction
☐ Welcome guests as they arrive. Have guests sign in with emergency contact information.
☐ Distribute nametags.
☐ Explain what type of forest you are in and why.
☐ Distribute materials such as SAF and AFF program brochures, SAF and AFF briefings on forest issues, forest fact sheets.
☐ Introduce all speakers.
☐ Review the walk agenda and answer preliminary questions.

Proceed with Walk
☐ Allow time for questions, discussion, and photographs.

Conclusion
☐ Question and answer session.
☐ Distribute and collect evaluation forms.

AFTER THE WALK

Send Thank You to All Participants and Volunteers
☐ Offer SAF and AFF as a source of information.
☐ Provide any pertinent follow-up materials from the walk.

Monitor Press Coverage
☐ Send copies of articles, photos, or a description of radio and TV broadcasts, etc., to the SAF and AFF communications staff.
PROMOTION

SHARE YOUR PLANS WITH SAF AND AFF!

Let us know what you plan to do by answering these project questions. This information will help us keep track of projects around the country, and enable us to help publicize your walk.

Organizing unit and partners:

Contact name[s], email, and telephone number[s]:

What type of walk are you planning:

Who is your walk audience:

Date of your walk:

Additional materials or assistance required:

Other comments:

Attach copies of plan outlines, materials and promotion/advertising

RETURN TO:
Society of American Foresters
5400 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814
Fax: 301-897-3690
safweb@safnet.org

Vanessa Bullwinkle
Director of Communications
American Forest Foundation
1111 19th Street NW, Suite 780
Washington DC 20036
Phone: 202-463-2472
Fax: 202-463-2461
vbullwinkle@forestfoundation.org
Local Foresters Take Fourth Graders on a “Walk in the Forest”
Hands-on activities teach students the many benefits forest provide for people

[CITY, STATE]—The White Mountain Chapter of the Allegheny Society of American Foresters in partnership with Pennsylvania Project Learning Tree will take fourth graders and teachers from Newtown Elementary School on a Walk in the Forest on Friday, October 21 from 9 am -noon at Will and Edna Hamilton’s Tree Farm. SAF members will lead the children on a Walk in the Forest and teach them about forests and trees and how foresters work to keep the forests healthy and thriving. Teachers will receive an introduction to the award-winning Project Learning Tree curriculum while the children participate in several hands-on PLT activities.

The Walk in the Forest program is part of a national campaign coordinated by the Society of American Foresters [SAF] and the American Forest Foundation [AFF], including AFF’s national environmental education program Project Learning Tree® [PLT], a network of 500,000 trained educators using PLT materials with 75 million students, and the American Tree Farm System®, a network of more than 95,000 woodland owners sustainably managing 26 million acres of forest land. SAF members, PLT participants, and Tree Farmers across the country will take school children, media, lawmakers, neighbors, and others on a Walk in the Forest on October 21.

Through the Walk in the Forest program, children and teachers will learn about forests and their importance to people, our health, the environment, and the economy. The walk will get children outside and active, learning about and developing an appreciation for nature.

About the Society of American Foresters
The Society of American Foresters is the scientific and educational association representing nearly 17,000 professional foresters and natural resource professionals in the United States. The society’s primary objective is to advance the science, technology, education, and practice of professional forestry for the benefit of all society. The White Mountain chapter has about 120 members. The majority of members are employed by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Bureau of Forestry; others work for the forestry industry or are professors or researchers at Pennsylvania State University. www.safnet.org

About the American Forest Foundation
The American Forest Foundation [AFF] works to keep forests healthy and our children well-prepared for the future. AFF’s sustainable woodland system, the American Tree Farm System®, helps family forest owners manage more than 26 million acres of forest land. AFF’s Project Learning Tree® program works with tens of thousands of teachers each year, giving them a peer-reviewed, award-winning environmental education curriculum that opens a door to America’s outdoor heritage and has reached more than 75 million students. AFF works with international, national, state, and local partners. In [state], PLT is sponsored by [name of organization[s]]. www.forestfoundation.org.

Note to editors: You are invited to cover this event. We expect very interesting comments and photo opportunities from the children.
October 22, 2011

Sue Jones (get name if possible)
Editor, Daily News
220 Jones Bridge Road
Simpson, PA 17806

Dear Ms. Jones:

As a member of the White Mountain Chapter of the Society of American Foresters, in partnership with Pennsylvania Project Learning Tree, I had the pleasure yesterday of taking fourth grade students and teachers from Newtown Elementary School to Will and Edna Hamilton’s Tree Farm for a Walk in the Forest. It was a joy to see the children get excited when they saw a woodpecker pecking a tree, or when they explored under a log.

Some of these students and teachers had never been in the woods before, so this was not only a wonderful learning opportunity, but also a personally enriching experience for the children. American children ages 3-12 are spending 27 percent of their time with electronic media, and only 1 percent outdoors. If we wish for today’s youth to become tomorrow’s stewards, we must engage them with the outside world. On the Walk in the Forest, children learned about forests and their importance to people and the environment, while their teachers learned some new ways of incorporating nature into the classroom.

The Walk in the Forest program is part of a national campaign coordinated by the Society of American Foresters and the American Forest Foundation (AFF), including AFF’s national environmental education program Project Learning Tree®, and the American Tree Farm System®, a network of more than 88,000 woodland owners sustainably managing nearly 26 million acres of forest land.

Sincerely,
Susan Green
Chair, White Mountain SAF Chapter
IDEAS FOR USING WALK IN THE FOREST LOGOS

The Walk in the Forest digital logo can be used in many ways. Use the suggestions outlined below or let your imagination run wild and promote the Walk in the Forest program.

For SAF logo:
Louise Murgia
Society of American Foresters
Director of Field Services
Phone: 202-463-2472

For AFF, PLT, or Tree Farm logos:
contact John Otte at jotte@forestfoundation.org.

✔ Use the logo on letters, invitations, brochures, and flyers.

✔ Use the logo on small, inexpensive items to give away to children who participate in your walk. Examples: stickers, rulers, erasers, folders, etc.

✔ Print t-shirts or hats with the logo for walk volunteers to wear to identify themselves. For T-shirts, place partner organizations’ logos, including the SAF, PLT, and Tree Farm logos as appropriate, on the back.

✔ Make a large walk banner to hang at your walk site, and include organizational logos as appropriate.
Thank you for joining us on our Walk in the Forest today. We hope you enjoyed the experience. To help us evaluate the success of our walk, please answer the following questions. A walk leader will collect this before you leave.

1. Were the goals of the Walk in the Forest clear to you?

2. Did the Walk in the Forest meet the stated goals?

3. Did the topics help meet the stated goals? Any topics omitted?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>Not Appropriate</th>
<th>Appropriate</th>
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<td>B. __________________________</td>
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<td>C. __________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. __________________________</td>
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</table>

4. Did the speakers cover their topics in an interesting and informative way?

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<tr>
<th>SPEAKERS</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

5. Was the venue appropriate for meeting the goals?

6. How have your impressions of forests and foresters changed?

7. Please note any questions that were left unanswered.

8. Please share any recommendations for ways to improve the walk.

---

Name and address (optional):
Web Sites
Connecting Kids to Nature activities www.forestfoundation.org/family-activities
Project Learning Tree Coordinators www.plt.org
Tree Farm Committees www.treefarmsystem.org
Society of American Foresters State Societies and Chapters www.safnet.org

Books
For Adults:
_Last Child in the Woods_ by Richard Louv
_Sharing Nature with Children, Parents/Teachers/Nature Awareness Guidebook_ by Joseph B. Cornell

For Children:
Dawn Publications
_The Giving Tree_ by Shel Silverstein
_The Man Who Planted Trees_ by Jean Giono

Insurance
SAF Finance and Administration Department
301-897-8720, ext. 103

American Forest Foundation
Phone: 301-897-8720

Promotion
Society of American Foresters
5400 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814
Fax: 301-897-3690
safweb@safnet.org

Vanessa Bullwinkle
Director of Communications
American Forest Foundation
1111 19th Street NW, Suite 780
Washington DC 20036
Phone: 202-463-2472
Fax: 202-463-2461
vbullwinkle@forestfoundation.org

Logos
For AFF, PLT, or Tree Farm logos:
John Otte at jotte@forestfoundation.org

For SAF logos:
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