

Time Frame

5 Class Periods

Key Words

Woodlot

Arbor Day

Urban Blight

Urban Forests

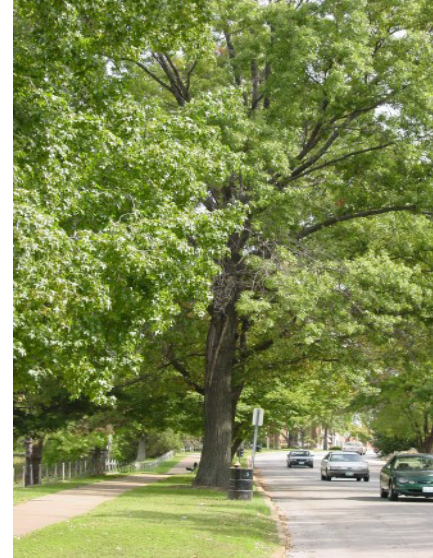
Stewardship

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OVERVIEW

Trees in Your Own Backyard has students practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic. Students will examine the impact of urban blight and urban flight on trees in the city landscape and the political response to their condition.



Tree-lined city street. Photo courtesy of [City of St. Louis Department of Parks and Recreation and Forestry](#)

OBJECTIVES

National Standards for History

- The student will evaluate the effectiveness of domestic politics in addressing environmental issues. (Era 10, Contemporary United States: Standard 1A)

National Council for Social Studies

- The student will practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic republic. (Standard X, Civic Ideals and Practices)

Student Pages

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LESSON PLAN

Advance Preparation

Obtain a map of the schoolyard and enlarge it. This will be the Base Map for the Project. (Aerial photographs can usually be found at www.mapquest.com.) Number each tree pictured on the map. (Draw in newly planted trees. Cross out any trees that have been removed.) Decide how you are going to divide up the trees to be mapped so that every pair of students has trees to survey. Obtain a clipboard and a measuring tape (or string marked off) for every pair of students.

Day 1

Set the stage for this activity by leading a group discussion answering the following questions:

1. How do you interact with the trees around you?
2. Who takes care of the trees in your neighborhood?
3. Which of the nation's trees are managed and protected by the U.S. Forest Service?
4. Do you have any responsibility to care for the trees around you?

Have students read the Essay and complete Worksheet 1 and Worksheet 2. **(Student Pages 1-6)** This will give students an overview and foundation for the rest of the activity.

Day 2

Hand out clipboards, pencils and measuring tape. Handout Worksheet 3 and Tree Survey. **(Student Pages 7-8)** Send students out to survey.

Day 3

Upon completion of the Tree Survey, have students transfer the most interesting tree information from their Tree Surveys to the Tree Key **(Student Page 9)**. Attach these keys to the Base Map.

Day 4

Handout Worksheet 4 and the Cooperative Forest Assistance Act of 1978. **(Student Pages 10-11)** Using the language of the Act and the Tree Survey results, have the students fill out Worksheet 4.

Day 5

Teachers can choose from one of three assessment activities.

- The Application and Integration Exercise has been designed to allow students to integrate the content into broader contexts. **(Student Page 12)**
- The Test has been designed to measure how well students master the History objectives. **(Student Page 13)**
- The Reflective Exercise has been designed to measure how well students master the Social Studies objectives. **(Student Page 14)**

Use Teacher Answer Key to grade assessments. **(Teacher Pages 5-6)**

Class Extensions

- Take a field trip to a local land trust sanctuary. Have students ask questions of the land trust representative about how the land came to be preserved.
- Invite a developer into the classroom to discuss issues such as tree buffers and cost of tree preservation on site.

TEAM TEACHING POSSIBILITIES

Technology: Since Worksheet 3 has students conduct a tree survey and complete a sample tree key, ask students to transfer this information into a spreadsheet. The information could be retained on cds or disks for future study.

English: Have students write a poem describing the schoolyard or a local park.

Math: Ask students to use the results of their tree surveys to draw a bar graph detailing the types of trees located in the schoolyard.

Science: Worksheet 3 can be used in social studies and science classes. For example, in conducting the survey of trees in the schoolyard or nearby park, social studies classes will focus on human interactions and the social value of trees to the school, whereas science classes will concentrate on measurements, naming tree species, and the environmental value of the trees to the school grounds.

LINKS

Forest History Society--Bibliographic resources on forestry, conservation and environmental history. <http://www.foresthistory.org>

American Forests--Has information on economic benefits of trees to communities. <http://www.americanforests.org>

Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute--The College of Agriculture at California Polytechnic State University maintains this web site for researches in urban forest ecosystems. <http://www.ufe.calpoly.edu/>

Map Quest--Source of aerial photo of school site.
www.mapquest.com

Trees Atlanta--Trees Atlanta, a non-profit citizens' group dedicated to protecting and improving our urban environment by planting and conserving trees, maintains this website. <http://www.treesatlanta.org/urbanforestry.html>

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TEACHER ANSWER KEY

Worksheet 1: Keywords

Woodlot

1. The woodlot, as it was called then, was to be held in common—owned and maintained by all—to provide the raw material for heating, cooking, shingling, clapboarding, furnishing, fence-laying and road building and the habitat for game.
2. An area set aside for the purpose of growing trees.

Arbor Day

1. J. Sterling Morton, founder of Arbor Day, said on the 30th anniversary of the day in 1902 “Arbor Day is now one of the recognized institutions of the country. Every spring it directs attention to the interest that attaches to trees and gives instruction respecting the kinds and their cultivation.”
2. The day designated for nationwide tree planting.

Urban Blight

1. “Getting on the subject of beautification is like picking up a tangled skein of wool,” she wrote in her diary, “all the threads are interwoven, recreation and pollution and mental health, and the crime rate and rapid transit, and highway beautification, and the war on poverty, and parks—national, state and local.” *Lady Bird Johnson diary entry.*
2. The wither and decay of a city.

Urban Forests

1. Since then, research has proved statistically what many people feel intrinsically—cultivating and maintaining urban forests yields measurable aesthetic, economic and environmental benefits to Americans
2. Parcels of land preserved in a city for the benefit of the community.

Stewardship

1. We find ourselves again, like the Plymouth pilgrims, practicing stewardship over a woodlot that is co-owned and co-maintained by the entire community where “(a)ny inhabitant of the Towne” has the liberty to take of the timber of urban and community forests. Taking not the limbs or the branches, but the pleasures and benefits bestowed upon us by the trees.
2. Being responsible for the long term care of something.

Worksheet 2: Essay Analysis

1. How long have Americans been preserving forests for the benefit of the community?
400 years.
2. What was the challenge of the woodlot managers during the Colonial period?
To make sure that any timber cut was used by the household and not sold for profit. To settle disputes over bee trees.
3. What was the challenge of the street tree managers at the turn of the 20th century.
There was no money allocated for the maintenance of street trees.
4. What was the challenge of the urban tree managers during the period of urban blight and flight?
They had to contend with highways and new roads being built in urban woodlands and parks and had to deal with the neglect of city trees – a consequence of urban flight.
5. What are the challenges to contemporary urban foresters in our cities today?
The continued rise in population in American cities has led to pressure for the development of many urban woodlands and parks. Also, urban foresters face budget cuts that threaten their livelihood.

Test

1. When was the first legislation enacted to protect the urban forest?
1978
2. What economic benefits do urban forests provide people?
Reducing air conditioning costs, storm water run-off costs, air pollution costs, global warming costs.
3. What ecological benefits do urban forests provide people?
Increasing the number of functioning ecosystems is the only way to increase the manufacture of clean air, clean water and clean soil.
4. What aesthetic benefits do urban forests provide people?
Strengthening the imagination, lifting the spirits, soothing social problems.
5. Who is responsible for maintaining the health of the trees in the urban forest?
All of us.
6. How effective do you think this legislation is in addressing environmental issues?
Personal opinion