

FROM THE WOODS

Forest Stewardship

PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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College of Agricultural Sciences • Cooperative Extension

AN EDUCATIONAL SERIES ABOUT FORESTRY FOR YOUTH

The word “Pennsylvania” means “Penn’s Woods.” The “Penn” comes from our state’s founder, William Penn, but the “woods” refers to the vast forests that once covered almost the whole state! Many people think that a forest is just a piece of land covered with trees, but a forest is more than just trees.

A forest has many parts, and each part is important. *Soil* is the foundation of life in the forest. Soil holds *nutrients* and *water*. Add some sunshine and you can grow *plants*, like grasses, weeds, bushes, and trees! *Wildlife* needs these plants to have places to live and things to eat. Finally, *decomposers* break down dead plants and animals in the forest. Over time, decomposed

plants and animals become part of the soil, and the circle is complete! The parts of a forest join together to make a smooth-running system. A forest needs all its parts to work right.

Forests provide us with many things we often don’t think of, such as clean air and water, and beautiful places to camp, fish, hunt, hike, or just relax.

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

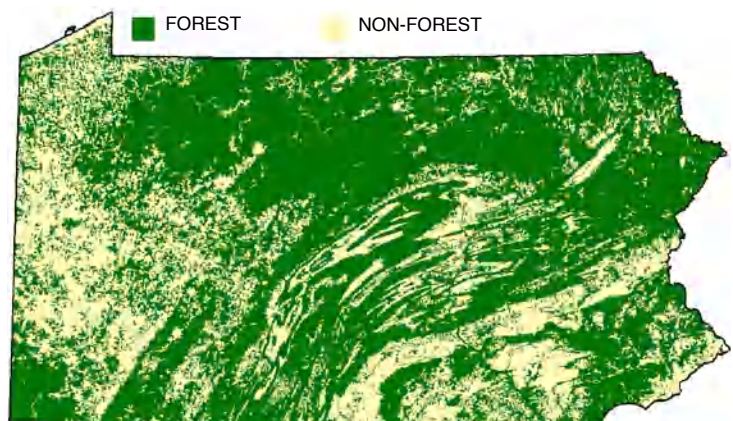
Much of what we use and enjoy from the forest requires us to take something out of the forest. Usually that “something” is trees. That might not sound like a good thing to do, but we can do it in ways that do not hurt the forest overall. If loggers, foresters, and landowners work in the woods carefully, more trees will



grow where others have been cut. Trees are a “renewable” resource.

We can use other materials, such as plastic and metal, in place of wood, but do you know where these other

materials come from? They usually come from oil and ore deposits deep in the earth—deposits that took many years to form and lots of energy to extract. These are “non-renewable” resources. We can’t replace them.



This satellite map indicates areas of forestland in Pennsylvania (shown in green).



ILLUSTRATION: COURTESY OREGON FOREST RESOURCES INSTITUTE

FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship means being responsible for something and taking good care of it—like protecting your belongings and using them carefully without harming or wasting them. So whether we use a forest for hiking, hunting, or getting wood, we need to be good forest “stewards” so that other people can use the forest today, tomorrow, and for many years to come.

What does a forest steward do? The first thing a forest steward does is *plan*. Just like you might plan your weekend, a person can plan for a forest’s future. For example, many people

like their forest for the wildlife that lives in it and the wood it produces. A forest plan can help them know what to do to make their forest a better place for the things they value. How do forest stewards do all this planning? They take time to learn

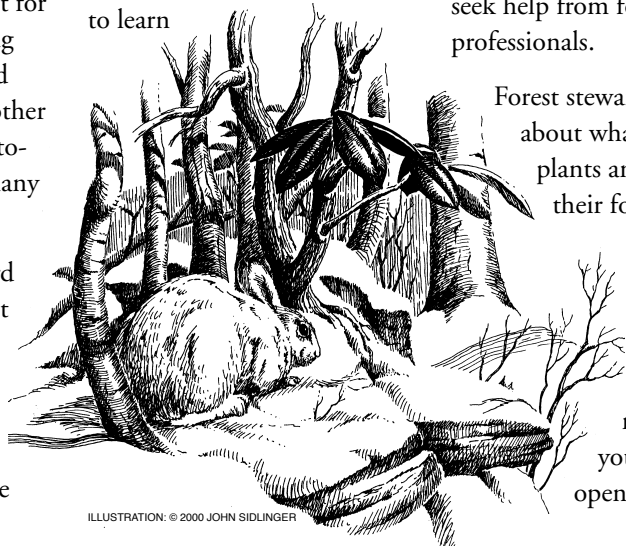


ILLUSTRATION: © 2000 JOHN SIDLINGER

about their forest, and they seek help from forest resource professionals.

Forest stewards care about what affects the plants and animals in their forest, now and in the future. Some animals need big, old trees and others need small, young trees or open areas.

By planning, a forest steward can help provide wildlife species with the kinds of food, shelter, water, and hiding places they need.

Sometimes wildlife can cause damage to the forest. In many areas of Pennsylvania and other states, white-tailed deer are too numerous. When there are too many deer in an area, it is hard to get young trees to grow. These young trees are a favorite food of deer. In some cases, there are so many deer

How many wood products can you identify in this house?

Can you think of 10 useful things in your house that come from forests? See if you can find at least 15 things in this house that come from wood. The entire list of items can be found on the back of this sheet.

in an area that the deer do not grow very well, because there is not enough food to feed them adequately. Often, in Pennsylvania, new trees must be protected from deer. Hunt-ing can help reduce deer popula-tions. Sometimes forest stewards must fence off parts of the forest to keep deer from eating the young trees.

Forest stewards also care about the soil. If roads and trails are planned, they must be designed and built care-fully. These should not be too steep or built where it is too wet. Poorly placed or designed roads can damage forest soils.

DOING YOUR PART

Even though you may not own a forest, you can still



be a forest steward. You are a forest steward when you choose to use products from renewable resources. You are a forest steward when you recycle wood and paper products. You are a

forest steward when you keep the forest beautiful by not littering. You are a for-est steward when you don't damage plants and trees unnecessarily. Someday, you might have a forest

of your own. You will be a forest steward when you plan for and choose to do things in your forest that keep it healthy and produc-tive for plants, wildlife and people.

How many wood products did you iden-tify in the house on the previous page?

We counted 67, but there may be more. Wooden shingles, plywood roofing, 2 x 6 rafters, 2 x 4 wall studs, wooden window frames, doors, garage door, exterior siding, deck floor, deck railing, picnic table, patio furniture, flower boxes, mail in the mailbox, mailbox post, dog's stick, dog house, sawhorses, newspaper, ladder, workbench, hammer handle, blue prints, corrugated recycling boxes, hardwood floors, chairs, table, piano, wood framing in sofa, bookcases, rocking chair, books, artificial plants, lamp shades, lamp base, magazines, place mats, cereal boxes, wallpaper, rayon carpeting, particleboard under carpeting, game board, game cards, game pieces, mop handle, guitar, baseball bat, tennis racket, picture frames, pictures, wainscoting, wood paneling, tissue paper, tissue paper box, toilet paper, toilet paper roll, toothpaste, shopping bag, stairs, stair railing, cellophane, cleaning compounds, hair spray, pencils, colognes, cork, artificial vanilla flavoring (in the ice cream).

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