



FORESTS ON THE EDGE

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the different ways we use and depend on forested lands near our cities. After this lesson, students should be able to describe why forests near cities are important and how they think those forest lands should be used.

OUTCOMES:

- 1) Students will gain an awareness of the benefits of forest lands - especially those found near urban areas.
- 2) Students will learn the different ways that forested lands can be used.
- 3) Students will express their own view and learn the views of others.

SUGGESTED GRADES: 5th-8th

TIME: 60 minutes

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS:

Visit mtsgreenway.org/get-involved/education/standards for a full listing.

MATERIALS:

- FOE Introductory Lesson Power Point
- Video: "Middle Fork Majesty"
[youtube.com/watch?v=CHQuzpPKhQY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHQuzpPKhQY)

PROCEDURE:

1 FORST LANDS NEAR CITIES?

The second slide in the Power Point shows a dramatic photo of a forest on the edge of the city and the essential question of this curriculum:

Why are forests near cities important and how should they be used?

Ask the students:

- Who has been in a forest and what do they remember about it?
- What did they do there?
- What did they like or dislike about their experience?

2 "MIDDLE FORK MAJESTY"

Show the video "Middle Fork Majesty" (1:40 minutes). Find the link in the Materials list and on the Power Point slide.

Ask the students: How were the people in the video using the forest? Then have them discuss in pairs what they felt when watching the video (emotions, sensations, thoughts).

Suggestion: Show the video again after asking these questions.

3 WHAT IS THE GREENWAY?

Show the slide with the map of the Greenway. Ask the students: Where is their

school/city on the map? Help them find it, if necessary.

Find Tiger Mt., the location of their field trip. What route do they think they will take to get there, and how long will it take?

As them:

- How does the land itself change going from west to east? (Puget Sound to mountains)
- How does the use of land change going from west to east? (Refer to the key to zones on map)

Point out that millions of people live in the urban areas on the west side of the map (the gray area), and that the forests and mountains and small rural communities stretch eastward.

Point out the Middle Fork (of the Snoqualmie River), which is highlighted in the video; this is an area that recently received a new road and a greatly improved hiking trail.

Tell them what has recently happened in the Middle Fork is an example of a forest near a city. Over the last two decades, the Middle Fork has been reclaimed from criminal misuse such as illegal dumping, rampant shooting, and hidden meth labs. Now, with a major road improvement project providing easy recreational access for the first time in generations, the Middle Fork faces a new challenge. How will we expand infrastructure needed to accommodate a dramatic visitation increase of the Middle Fork?

4 Seattle and the Middle Fork

Show slide with side-by-side photos of downtown Seattle and the nearby forest lands. Ask the students: Why should people living in cities worry about what happens in nearby forests? (I.e. recreation, experience of nature, wood products, medicine, clean water, areas for new homes, etc.).

Ask the students to work in pairs to make a list of at least 5 things we need forest lands for. Examples include:

- Better air and water quality
- Wildlife habitat
- Wood products
- Recreation opportunities (i.e. hiking, camping, bird-watching, picnics, fishing, mountain biking, etc.)
- Food (Agriculture)
- Place to build homes
- Medicine
- Jobs
- Forests are beautiful

Regroup and ask pairs to share their ideas with the class. Draw out, or if necessary introduce, all of these uses; in particular, make sure the last three are mentioned as important for our lives and our growing population.

5 Show Your Opinion

Conduct an exercise in expressing one's own views and learning the views of others. For this activity, identify which side of the classroom will represent "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree."

Reveal and read the statements on the sixth slide one at a time and ask the students to show their opinion by standing near the "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" side of the classroom, or somewhere in the middle... it's a continuum!

After students arrange themselves along the continuum with each statement, discuss why they chose their spot. Ask specific students from each end of the continuum and one from the middle. Allow students to shift their position after hearing explanations from others.

The statements are:

1. It is important for people to preserve forests as they are.
2. It is important for people to be able to use forests for recreation: hiking, fishing, hunting, and camping.
3. It is important for people to be able to get wood products from forests.
4. It is important to remove some forests to build more homes, malls, schools, playfields, and farms.
5. It is important for people to be able to use forests in different ways such as for wood products, recreation, clean air and water, areas for homes, and wildlife habitat

After students discuss all statements, ask them to work in pairs to come up with ideas on how this could work. How and where could these uses be combined? Put the map of the Greenway back on the screen – this may help to stimulate ideas based on current land use, populations, and physical features.

Conclusion: Ask the students to be ready to discuss their ideas with the Greenway educator!