

## ***Community Forests Lesson Plan***

**Keywords:** community forests, natural resources, exotic and native species, and community/rural forestry

**Lesson Plan Grade Level:** 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>

**Total Time Required For Lesson:** 50 minutes (additional time may be required if a guest speaker or field trip are included)

**Setting:** Classroom/ Community Forest- Field Trip

**Subjects Covered:** Environmental Science

**Topics:** Community forests, rural forests, town/city trees

### **Goals For The Lesson:**

Students will gain an understanding of the importance and benefits of Community forests.

Students will examine characteristics of Community forests.

### **Materials Needed:**

*Community Forests* fliers (From The Woods Series)

*Community Forests pre- Assessments* (one for each student)

*Community Forests post Assessments* (one for each student)

Paper

Pencils

Appendix 1 – review questions

Appendix 2- Field trip permission slip

Appendix 3- Design Your Own Community Forest

\*Colored pencils/ crayons/ markers

**State Standards Addressed:** *E&E Standards:* 4.2.7, 4.8.7

**Teaching Model:** Experiential Learning Model (Experience, Share, Process, Generalize, Apply)

### **Methods:**

#### **Preparation:**

Read through the entire lesson and appendices to ensure your understanding of the content and activity.

Create four areas in the classroom. The students will be working in groups and should have a designated area to work.

(If necessary provided each group with markers, colored pencils or crayons to be used with Appendix 3.)

### **Doing The Activity:**

Introduction to the lesson. Explain to the students that they will be learning about the characteristics and benefits of community forests.

### **Steps:**

**(Experience and Share Stages 25 minutes)**

1. OPTIONAL -Administer the pre assessment to the students; explain that the purpose of the assessment is test knowledge the students already have acquired on the subject. (allow approximately 7 minutes for the test then collect)
2. Ask the students if they have any comments concerning the Assessment.
3. Ask the students to brainstorm a list of things they would expect to find in a forest. Allow the students approximately 2 minutes to complete.
4. Allow time for the students to share their list (briefly).
5. Then ask the students if they can think of how anything on their list may benefit humans and the overall community. Permit time to discuss.
6. Explain to the students that they will be working in groups to read information regarding forests.
  - First the groups will read the flier
  - Then they will write down four points/ facts they found interesting in the reading- to share with their classmates.
  - Ask the students if they have any questions before handing out the flier.
7. Separate the class into groups to complete the activity.
8. Hand out the fliers to the groups and ask them to complete the reading and activity (15 minutes) Supervise the students to ensure everyone is participating.

**(Share and Process Stages 20 minutes)**

9. After each group has completed ask them to share their information. (Call on one group at a time asking them to share only one of their points- ask the class to listen carefully in order not to repeat information). Refer to Appendix 1; if the students do not address all the questions ask them to the class.
10. Ask the students to get out colored pencils, markers or crayons. Explain to the students that they will be designing their own community forests with their team.
11. Hand out the fliers (Appendix 2) and read through the directions with the students.
12. Allow the students sufficient time to complete the activity. Ask the groups to share their designs, (you may display their work as a bulletin board).

**(Generalize and Apply Stages 10 minutes)**

13. Ask the students if they have any further questions regarding the material.
14. Administer the assessment. Allow the students time to complete then collect.

**OPTIONAL – FIELD TRIP TO A COMMUNITY FOREST**

\* If you are able to arrange a field trip, contact a community forester and ask if you may bring your class to “their forest.” Also inquire if they would discuss their forest and job to the students. Arrange a suitable day and time to meet with the forester(s) - let them know the number of students that will be attending.

\* Be sure to contact an appropriate number of parent volunteers to join you on the field trip.

\* Make all necessary transportation arrangements well in advance.

\* Prior to the field trip you may want your students to brainstorm/assign questions they might ask the forester.

While on the field trip, after the forester has spoken allow time for the students to walk around the area- ask them to observe what is located in the forest.

Once you have returned discuss the highlights.

\*\*If you are unable to attend a field trip, you may contact a representative to the Community forest and inquire if they would be available to be a guest speaker in your classroom.

**Assessment:** The students will be evaluated through participation and upon completion of the activity and assessment.

**Conclusion To The Lesson:** “This completes today’s lesson I hope that you have gained a more thorough understanding of the characteristics and benefits of community forests. Does anyone have any further comments concerning the lesson?”

**References and Resources:**

*Community Forests* (A flier in the *From The Woods Series*)  
The Pennsylvania State University  
112 Agricultural Administration Building  
University Park, PA 16802

*This lesson was prepared by Ms. Katie Roth, Teacher, and Dr. Sanford Smith, Extension Specialist Penn State School of Forest Resources.*

**Appendix 1**  
REVIEW QUESTIONS- possible answers are italic

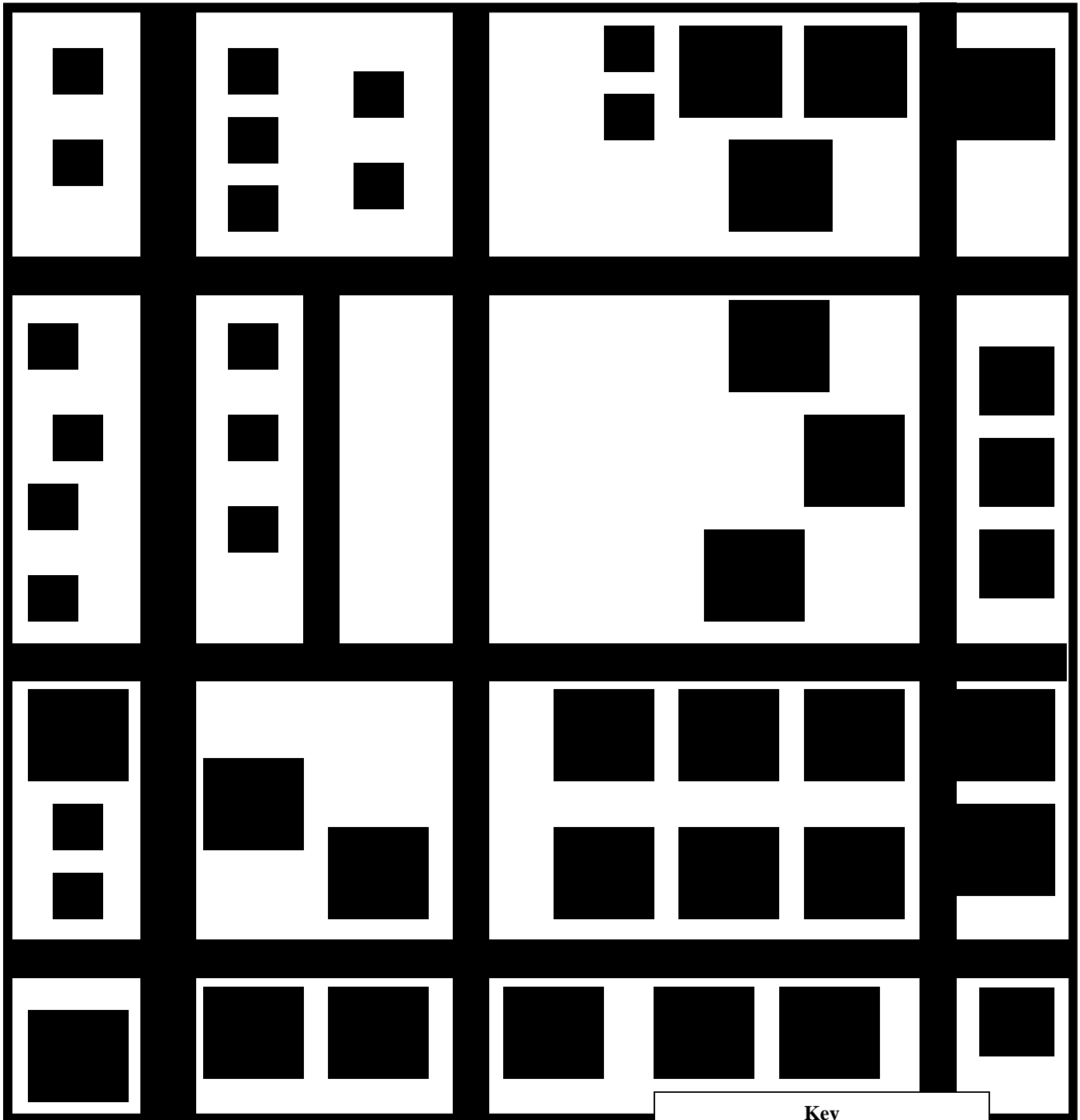
1. Where are community forests located?  
*(Around towns and cities; streets, buildings, sidewalks, parks, etc surround them.)*
2. What does the author refer to as a 'rural forest'?  
*(remote wild areas)*
3. What do 'rural forests' offer?  
*(recreation, natural setting, wood, water, etc.)*
4. Compare a community forest with a rural forest.

<u>Rural</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Community</u>
<i>Generally native plants</i>	<i>trees</i>	<i>native and exotic plants</i>
<i>Native animals</i>	<i>animals</i>	<i>native and exotic animals</i>
		<i>Built structures/ roads</i>
		<i>People</i>

5. What are some benefits of community forests?  
*(connections with nature, aesthetic beauty trees- produce oxygen, provide shade, slow winter winds, protects soil from erosion, etc.)*
6. How do these benefits help to reduce air pollution waste and save energy?  
*(trees provide shade to help buildings stay cool during summer and warmer in the winter- blocking winds- no need to burn fuels for heating and cooling thus decreasing air pollution, waste and saving energy)*
7. How can community forests positively affect a residential area?  
*(reduce crime, attract more residents and businesses, increase property value and revenue from taxes to help maintain public areas, ads privacy, recreation areas,*
8. What are some of the responsibilities of community or urban foresters?  
*(maintain a healthy and safe forest- prunes trees, removal of dead or fallen branches, tree planting- knowledge of what trees survive best in certain areas, and control wildlife)*

## Appendix 2 Design Your Own Community Forest

**Directions:** With your team design a Community Forest for the city block provided below. Be creative add various vegetation, trees, shrubs, flowers etc.. Be sure to include a key of your own to explain what you have incorporated in your forest.



**Key**

-  - Commercial/ Office buildings, Retail stores
-  - Residential homes/ Apartment complexes