

School Forest Programs and Administration

NRES 742

Agenda

Course Goal: To increase teachers' and administrators' ability to effectively utilize their school forests for environmental education and sustainable natural resources management.

Course Objectives: Participants will:

- 1) Examine the legislation and history of the school forest program
- 2) Explore the steps necessary to register a school forest and the responsibilities that come with registration
- 3) Review background information on environmental education
- 4) Explore how other selected school forests have developed and are running their programs
- 5) Analyze important initial steps to develop their school forest program
- 6) Gather information about the resources that exist at the school forest
- 7) Create an outline of a school forest strategic plan considering environmental education, natural resources management, and facilities
- 8) Develop an outline of their school forest education plan
- 9) Know where to get resources they need to develop their school forest program

On-Line Component

WEEK 1

Legislation (15 minutes)

The school forest program has its foundation in the community forest legislation that was first created in 1927. There are some basic legal requirements based in the legislation. This section will make you familiar with the community forest law and its obligations.

History (15 minutes)

The school forest program has a long and storied history. Understanding this history will provide you with some perspective on the goals and value of school forests.

Registration process and responsibilities (30 minutes)

Having a registered school forest provides benefits and also requires responsibility. In this section, you will learn about registration of a school forest and the benefits and responsibilities that it bestows.

Environmental education (15 minutes)

Environmental education is the core mission of the school forest program. It is important to fully understand the goals and approaches of environmental education. This section will provide you with that background information.

WEEK 2

School forest case studies (30 minutes)

Information about and internet links to a variety of different school forests can be found on the school forest website. In this section, you will explore different school forests to find examples of programs and facilities that can provide ideas for your school forest.

Getting Started with the School Forest Program (2 hours)

This section of the course will cover the basics of starting a school forest program: communicating your goals, getting land (if you don't have any yet), working with the school board, and forming a school forest committee. These are important steps to providing a solid foundation for your school forest program.

WEEK 3

Gather Information (3 hours)

This section will focus on gathering information about the school forest. It will include collecting the natural and facility features of the forest, the land use history, educational resources available, and district-wide knowledge and use of the school forest. This information will be used to develop the education plan for your school forest. A fair amount of time "in the field" will be required to collect this information. Feel free to include students, school forest committee members, and resource professionals in your field work.

WEEK 4

Master planning (1 hour)

There are three general areas to consider while developing a school forest program: environmental education, natural resources management, and facilities. This section will get you thinking about the goals for each of these areas.

Face-to-Face Component

Introductions and workshop overview (30 minutes)

Instructor and participants introduce themselves. An overview of the workshop will be provided.

Review of On-line Component (30 minutes)

The on-line component of the course will be reviewed. The instructor will focus on deficiencies indicated by the assignments. Participants will ask questions and discuss areas of interest.

School Forest Education Plan Overview (4 hours)

An overview of the education plan will be provided. Each section of the plan will be discussed, the sample plan reviewed, and time will be given for participants to work on each section.

Needs Assessment (30 minutes)

The example needs assessment will be discussed with ideas on how to conduct.

School Forest Resources (30 minutes)

A variety of resources will be reviewed including professional development programs, background literature, and funding sources.