



## Lesson 8 – Rebuilding Our Forests



### In a Nutshell

Planting new trees after the forests of Wisconsin had all been cut down was not an easy task. It took a lot of work and a lot of thought. In this lesson, students will create their own “slide show” to help them understand who was involved in the replanting of Wisconsin’s forests.

### Concepts

- Counties acquired much of the tax delinquent lands and began establishing county forests.
- The Civilian Conservation Corps provided a major work force for replanting trees in Wisconsin.
- Trees For Tomorrow helped educate landowners in forest management.

### Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain how county forests helped the reforestation effort.
- Identify three major projects of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Wisconsin.
- Explain why wood products were especially important when Trees For Tomorrow was established and what Trees For Tomorrow did to improve forests.

### State Standards

- ELA SS  
C.4.1 A.4.4  
C.4.2 A.4.8  
C.4.3 B.4.2  
D.4.1 B.4.4

### Total Estimated Time

1 hour

### Vocabulary

**Crops** – plants that are grown and harvested for food

**Cutover**– what northern Wisconsin was referred to as after all of the trees had been cut

**Great Depression** – a time period in the United States, in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s, when many people lost a lot of money

**Tax delinquent** – overdue in paying one’s taxes

### Materials

Paper  
Drawing materials

### Teacher Preparation

Read through the lesson and slide show narrative (Insert 8.1)

### Background Information

The late 1920’s was a time of financial depression throughout the country, especially in the cutover regions of northern Wisconsin. It was evident that crops were not going to grow as well as they did in the southern part of the state. People started realizing that northern Wisconsin was more fit for trees than for food crops.

In 1927 the Forest Crop Law was established. Under this new law, the land would be taxed annually, but timber would only be taxed when it was cut and the income realized. Before this law, timber growing on land was taxed for its



full worth every year. It is clearly not profitable to raise timber when the growth of previous seasons is taxed year after year. The law was meant to encourage people to practice private forestry.

The next step to promote forests came in 1928 and was led by the county of Marinette. At this time, 400,000 of Marinette's 905,000 acres were tax delinquent. People couldn't pay the taxes on their land and just abandoned it. Charles Drewry, an extension agent and crop expert, suggested that pine should be replanted in the area. Tax delinquent land became county forests under public ownership. Land on streams and lakes was set aside for recreation. The Civilian Conservation Corps helped in the endeavor, and other counties soon followed.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was established in 1933 by president Franklin Roosevelt. It was in response to both conservation needs and unemployment due to the Great Depression. People from cities were sent to work in forests all over the country. In Wisconsin, 483 bridges were built, 4,040 miles of telephone wire were laid, 4,390 miles of truck trails and minor roads were built, 265,631,000 trees were planted, 269,447 man-days were spent fighting forest fires, and 517,792,648 fish were stocked! The CCC was a major success and lasted until 1942.

Workers also built campgrounds and lookout towers, surveyed and developed forest cover maps, worked on timber stand improvement and soil erosion control projects, and were called upon in

crisis situations such as floods, storms, and disease and insect infestations.

One of the most remarkable forestry programs in Wisconsin is still active today. It is Trees For Tomorrow, and was established in 1944. It was headed up by Melvin N. (Mully) Taylor and nine paper mills in the Wisconsin River Valley. The idea behind Trees For Tomorrow was that if shown how, small woodland owners could be convinced of economic stability through improved forest management.

The original objectives of the program were to provide "1) a local, self-sustaining wood supply for industry by encouraging small forest landowners to plant trees and practice management techniques; 2) year-round employment from the woods to the mills; 3) stabilization of the tax base; 4) better watershed protection, and; 5) enhancement of the resource for an expanding but sometimes precarious tourist business."

During WWII, Trees For Tomorrow offered two free tree seedlings for every tree cut for the war effort. By the 1970's, the replanting of Wisconsin's trees was nearly complete, and Trees For Tomorrow began to focus on natural resources education. This is still their focus today.

### **Introduction**

You have been learning a lot of information about the cutover lands of northern Wisconsin. Well, eventually something had to be done to improve its condition, right?! Something was definitely done. Each of you, with a partner, are going to get a piece of paper that describes a little bit of what was



done. It will be your job to draw a picture that shows your part. In the end, we will read each part in order and show the picture that goes with it. We'll have our own special slide show of the replanting of Wisconsin's forests.

### **Activity 8.1 - How Wisconsin's Forests Were Rebuilt (40 min)**

Insert 8.1 contains the bits of information that you should hand out to each pair of students. Remind them that each one might not make perfect sense since they don't yet know where it fits into the story. You might also need to help them think of things that they could draw for their "slide."

#### **Conclusion**

When they have finished, each group should come up with their picture and read the information for their slide. The slides and the information that goes with them can be hung up in the classroom.

#### **Evaluation**

- Evaluate students on their slide show presentation.

#### **Extension**

- Have students research what the Civilian Conservation Corps did in your area.
- Have students pretend you were working for the CCC. Write a letter home and tell about what you have been doing.
- Have students find out where Trees For Tomorrow is. How could they get there from where they live? Use the maps found in Lesson 6.
- Have a county forester talk to your class about forest management.

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## Insert 1

1. At the turn of the century, 1900, most of Wisconsin's forestland was cutover. The logging companies had cut down the best trees, leaving piles of slash, or tree leftovers, behind.
2. Much of the land was destroyed by fires. Farmers tried to change the land from forests to farms, but not all of Wisconsin was good farm land. Poor soils, short growing seasons, and rocky ground make the northern area a difficult place to farm.
3. After the farms failed, families moved away to try their luck in better areas or just gave up. Nobody wanted the land, and so nobody was paying taxes on it. The land was said to be "tax delinquent." This tax delinquent land that was not fit for farming became the property of the counties.
4. Let's look at Marinette County as an example of what could be done to make the land healthy again. Their idea was to plant new forests! Many people did not agree with this, but the county board stuck by their decision.
5. By replanting pine trees in Marinette County, land that was not fit for growing food could once again grow a crop...trees! In 1933, the first county forest was set up. Many other counties soon decided to do the same thing.
6. These new county forests began bringing in money. Marinette County was able to build a courthouse, a hospital, and many public parks with that money. It once again had beautiful forests. In fact, 75% of the county is now covered in forests. These forests bring in thousands of visitors every year. But who planted all of these trees?
7. 1929 was the beginning of the Great Depression in the United States. Many people lost all of their savings and it was very hard to find a job. During the Great Depression, a man named Franklin Roosevelt became president of the United States. He had an idea of how to help people without jobs, and at the same time help the environment.
8. In 1933, President Roosevelt began the Civilian Conservation Corps, or the CCC. It was made up of a group of men who had lost their jobs. Their new job in the CCC was to help take care of natural resources, like forests, in the United States.



9. The CCC was active from 1933 to 1942. During this time, 75 camps were started in Wisconsin and over 75,000 men worked there. Their main jobs were:
  - Protecting the forests from fire, disease, and insects.
  - Improving the forest by planting trees, taking care of them, and making maps of the forest.
  - Building campgrounds and parks for people to use.
  - Improving where animals live by planting, doing forest research, and improving streams.
  
10. In the early 1940's, WWII was going on, and wood and paper were needed, but most of the foresters were now soldiers in the army. So, farmers, old men, and even kids were urged to go out and cut trees.
  
11. In 1944, nine paper mills led by a man named Mully Taylor got together and organized Trees For Tomorrow. Their goal was to work with people who owned land and show them how they could make money by planting and taking care of forests on their land. Trees For Tomorrow was another group that played a very important role in replanting Wisconsin's forests.
  
12. In the early years, Trees For Tomorrow held workshops for landowners. They started the "2 for 1" plan. Under this plan, two seedlings were given to people for every one tree they cut down. Trees For Tomorrow taught people how to plant trees, had summer camps for teachers, and summer camps for high school students. Even after the war was over, Trees For Tomorrow helped plant trees in Wisconsin.
  
13. By the 1970's, reforestation had been a success. Wisconsin was again covered with forests! Trees For Tomorrow began to focus on teaching kids. Today they are still teaching students like us all over the state!