

# Lesson Six

## Forest Value



### CONCEPTS

1. Forests are valuable to different people for different reasons.
2. Forests can have economic, recreational, aesthetic, egocentric, educational, ecological, and cultural values.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Differentiate between the measurable and non-measurable attributes of a forest.
2. Describe the seven value categories.
3. Place forest attributes within the seven value categories.
4. Discuss why some forest attributes can be placed into more than one value category.

### TEACHING SITE

Indoor classroom

### MATERIALS

Chalkboard and chalk,  
Forest Value Category  
worksheet for each student.

### LESSON TIME

One 50-minute class period

### NUTSHELL

In this lesson, students will examine the values associated with forests. They will learn about seven value categories and place examples of forest attributes into these categories.

### TEACHER PREPARATION

Read background information; copy student worksheet.

### VOCABULARY

- ☛ **Value** – the worth that someone places on something.
- ☛ **Economic value** – a forest’s worth in financial terms (dollars and cents).
- ☛ **Aesthetic value** – the worth of a forest in terms of its natural beauty.
- ☛ **Recreational value** – the worth of a forest in terms of its use for leisure.
- ☛ **Educational value** – the worth of a forest in terms of its benefit for teaching and learning.
- ☛ **Egocentric value** – the worth of a forest in terms of what it offers an individual.
- ☛ **Ecological value** – the worth of a forest in terms of preserving the ecosystem.
- ☛ **Cultural value** – the worth of a forest in terms of the way a person was raised to believe in it.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It should be clear by now that Wisconsin’s forests are valuable to many people, but often for different reasons. A value is the worth that someone places on something. Values cannot be proven to be right or wrong with facts or numbers. Values are perceptions. They are also subject to different interpretation by different people. As we go through life, our values often change due to exposure to new experiences, observations and perceptions.

The many ways in which we value our forests can be simplified into the following 7 categories:

**Economic:** This is a forest’s worth in financial terms.

*Example: This forest can produce five million board feet of lumber.*

**Aesthetic:** The worth of a forest in terms of its natural beauty.

*Example: This forest has a beautiful array of fall colors.*

**Recreational:** The worth of a forest in terms of its use for leisure.

*Example: This forest is popular for hiking and cycling.*

**Educational:** The worth of a forest in terms of its instructional benefit.

*Example: This forest is a good place to teach succession to sixth grade students.*

**Egocentric:** The worth of a forest in terms of what it offers an individual.

*Example: This forest is where I grew up and is my favorite place to explore.*

**Ecological:** The worth of a forest in terms of preserving the ecosystem.

*Example: This forest is a habitat to timber wolves, which are one of the last remaining large predators in Wisconsin.*

**Cultural:** The worth of a forest in terms of the way a person was raised to believe in it.

*Example: I believe that we are all connected to this forest and the animals and trees are my brothers and sisters.*

Value conflicts can arise when people value the same resource for different reasons. For example, a teacher may value the forest which neighbors the school because the class uses it to identify trees (Educational), while the landowner who owns the trees values

them for timber production (Economic). It is easy to see how these values may conflict.

Many people also interpret the value categories differently when examining a forest. For example, a person may find great pleasure in watching a white-tailed deer feed in the neighboring forest (Aesthetic), while another person takes great pleasure in growing and tending new trees (Aesthetic). Though both of these people appreciate the same forest for its aesthetic qualities, it may become impossible to maintain both deer populations and new tree growth since the deer feed on many of the tree seedlings.

It is important to note that many of these values are also complimentary. Many forestry practices that extract trees from the forest for economic gain may also improve the wildlife habitat for different animal species. While a forest area that is protected from logging operations may retain all of its ecological, aesthetic, and cultural values.

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## ACTIVITIES

1. Begin class by asking students how they would define value. *Values are the worth that someone places on something. If a person values something, it is more desirable to them.* Allow several students to share their ideas. Ask students if they think that a person's values are always the same. *No – values can change in response to changing conditions and new information. They should be constantly reassessed.* Students should also understand that values cannot be proven to be right or wrong – they are just a person's perception of the relative worth of something. Keeping this in mind, ask students why they value forests. Brainstorm a list of reasons on the chalkboard. *Oxygen recharge, mountain biking, timber, flood control, climate control, wildlife habitat, beauty, soil protection, nutrient recycling, hiking.* Try to guide their answers so that they include examples from each value category (economic, aesthetic, recreational, educational, egocentric, ecological). Once their ideas are exhausted, write the seven values categories on the board.



As you introduce each category ask students what they think it means. Their answers may vary, but be sure to guide them toward the definition explained in the background information. To help students understand the categories, go through the examples on the board and have students label each as it fits into a particular value category.

2. Pass out the **Value Category Worksheet** to each student or divide the students into groups of 4 or 5. On the worksheet is a list of example values of a forest and a list containing the seven values categories. Students should go through each list and connect every example value with the category that fits. Students will probably find that some example values will fit into more than one category.
3. Have students share which examples they connected to which categories and why. Students may have chosen different placements for the examples. Ask students why some have connected different items to different values. *Everyone has different values.* Are there examples that were placed in more than one category? Ask students which ones have more than one placement. Why can they be placed in more than one category? *Values can be interpreted in different ways by different people.*

## CONCLUSION

To wrap up this lesson, review with your students the seven value categories. They have just introduced themselves to the fact that individuals have different values, and can interpret values differently. How do the students think that having different values can impact forests? What kinds of problems or challenges could arise as a result of these differing values? Have students imagine that a plot of forested land can be used for 3 different purposes – recreation, timber, and as a wildlife habitat. Can they imagine any conflicts that would come up because of the values people place on these different purposes? *Hikers may not want to hike through land that had been logged, the wildlife in the area may not be tolerant of people using the forest or of logging operations.* Tell students that in the next several lessons, they will take a look at who manages forests, how they are managed for different values, and the conflicts that arise.

## LOG BOOK

Have students write a paragraph about how a forest is most valuable to them. Do they value forests for economic, aesthetic, recreational, educational, egocentric, ecological, and/or cultural reasons? Make sure students understand that they can cite several different values if they choose.

## Web Links

Large clearinghouse for other forestry websites— [www.envirolink.org](http://www.envirolink.org)

Wisconsin Forest Resource Education Alliance— <http://www.wfrea.org>

Food and Agriculture Organization— [www.fao.org/forestry](http://www.fao.org/forestry)

## References

Strathe, Sterling. 1994. Wetland Understanding Leading to Protection. Outdoor Skills Center, Inc.

Hungerford, et al. 1973. Investigating and Evaluating Environmental Issues and Actions: Skill Development Module. Stipes Publishing Co. Champaign IL.

# FOREST VALUE CATEGORY WORKSHEET

**Instructions:** Read each of the statements on the left-hand side of the worksheet. Draw a line from each statement to the value that you place on it. The statements may be connected to more than one value.

- This forest is my favorite place to hike and camp.
- Timber for house construction.
- I believe that we should respect all of nature.
- Listening to the rain patter on the leaves.
- Mountain biking.
- Harvesting pulpwood for paper production.
- Ensures clean water in a nearby stream.
- Habitat for the endangered Snow Trillium wildflower.
- Clearing forest for housing development.
- I have a spiritual connection to many of the things in this forest.
- Making a leaf collection.
- I am a logger partly because my family owns a logging company
- Controls soil erosion.
- Clearcutting for farmland.
- I own this forest; I can do whatever I want with it.
- Classroom visit to a forest.
- Deer hunting
- Bird watching.

## Value Categories

1. Economic

2. Aesthetic

3. Recreational

4. Educational

5. Egocentric

6. Ecological

7. Cultural

# FOREST VALUE CATEGORY WORKSHEET

(Answer key. These answers are suggestions. Individuals may have varying opinions.)

**Instructions:** Read each of the statements on the left-hand side of the worksheet. Draw a line from each statement to the value that you place on it. The statements may be connected to more than one value.

- This forest is my favorite place to hike and camp.
  - Timber for house construction. (ECONOMIC)
  - I believe that we should respect all of nature. (CULTURAL)
  - Listening to the rain patter on the leaves. (AESTHETIC)
  - Mountain biking. (RECREATIONAL, EGOCENTRIC)
  - Harvesting pulpwood for paper production. (ECONOMIC)
  - Ensures clean water in a nearby stream. (ECOLOGICAL)
  - Habitat for the endangered Snow Trillium wildflower. (ECOLOGICAL)
  - Clearing forest for housing development. (ECONOMIC)
  - I have a spiritual connection to many of the things in this forest. (EGOCENTRIC)
  - Making a leaf collection. (RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL)
  - I am a logger partly because my family owns a logging company (ECONOMIC, EGOCENTRIC)
  - Controls soil erosion. (ECOLOGICAL)
  - Clearcutting for farmland. (ECONOMIC)
  - I own this forest; I can do whatever I want with it. (EGOCENTRIC)
  - Classroom visit to a forest. (EDUCATIONAL)
  - Deer hunting (RECREATIONAL, EGOCENTRIC, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL)
  - Bird watching. (RECREATIONAL, EGOCENTRIC, EDUCATIONAL)
- Value Categories
1. Economic
  2. Aesthetic
  3. Recreational
  4. Educational
  5. Egocentric
  6. Ecological
  7. Cultural
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