



USDA Forest Service
 Northeastern Area
 State and Private Forestry



CONSERVATION EDUCATION — Success Story
 Wisconsin Forest Resources Alliance

INTRODUCTION — Since 1998, the Wisconsin Forest Resources Education Alliance (FREA) has worked in partnership with educators, forest industry, university faculty, and state and federal agencies to educate teachers and students about the importance of sustainable forestry balancing the environmental, economic, and social values of forests. The Wisconsin FREA coordinates grades K-12 forestry education by serving as a clearinghouse, and by keeping educators abreast of current natural resources teaching materials and curricula.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION — Through a USDA Forest Service, conservation education grant, the Wisconsin FREA received \$10,000 to:

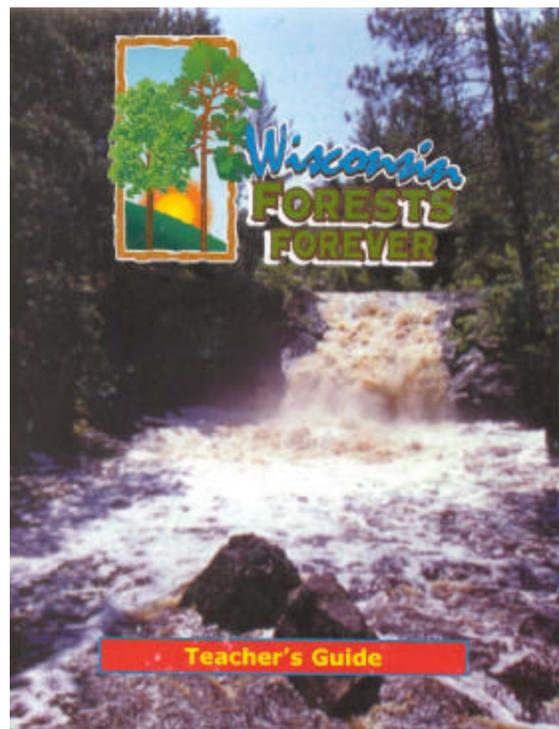
- Develop an educational CD and an accompanying Teacher’s Guide about Wisconsin’s Forests.
- Host forestry education workshops for teachers, youth, and individuals.
- Partner with the Temperate Forest Foundation to host a Forestry Tour for teachers.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & PARTNERSHIPS — The “Wisconsin’s Forest Forever” CD is targeted toward youths aged 8 to 12. Matt Hasselbeck, quarterback for the Green Bay Packers, is featured in the CD’s introduction and he explains the underlying theme of sustainable forestry. He challenges youths to learn how sustainable forestry provides us with wildlife habitat, forest products, industry jobs, and many recreational opportunities.

A quiz, at the beginning and the end of the CD, measures existing knowledge levels for comparison to what has been learned after viewing the CD. The four sections focus on Environment, Products, Balance, and Recreation. The Teacher’s Guide contains 13 activities that compliment the CD, hard copies of the pre/post tests, and an appendix with a wealth of information, including reference

materials, a list of related websites, and a children’s fiction and non-fiction literature list.

The Wisconsin FREA and the Temperate Forest Foundation hosted the first Lakes States Teacher’s Tour in July 2000. Thirty-three teachers participated, including a former



THE Teachers Guide-features activities to complement the CD developed by the Wisconsin Forest Resource Education Alliance.

Wisconsin Teacher of the Year, who had taken part in a similar tour in the Pacific Northwest and had learned so much there that she jumped at the opportunity to learn more about Wisconsin’s forests.

From Menominee Tribal Enterprises on the Menominee Reservation participants learned how sustainable forestry is practiced from the ground up. They visited three forest industry

sites representing the paper industry and two wood products firms, and they learned how quality recreational experiences are provided at Wisconsin State Parks.



Learning about sustainable forestry from the ground up from the Menominee Tribal Enterprises.

Teachers shared with each other ways to incorporate sustainable forestry concepts into their classrooms. Comments from the evaluations clearly illustrate the impact the tour had on the participants. Hopefully, their enthusiasm will be taken back and transferred to their students. The comprehensive teacher evaluations will be used to improve future tours. One teacher said:

I was impressed with the superior accommodations, sites for learning, and the overall respectful and professional treatment we received. Sustainable forestry practices are the hope for social, economic, and ecological companionship and harmony. This tour gives educators a balanced and informed message that far exceeds any textbook, because it's a dynamic message. *Kathryn Russell*

CONCLUSION — Future plans for the Wisconsin Forest Resources Education Alliance include:

- Continue distributing the Wisconsin Forests Forever materials at workshops, teacher trainings, and conferences.
- Assist with future Teacher Tours in both Wisconsin and Michigan. Discussions are underway to bring the program to Minnesota with a vision of bringing it to each state every third year.
- Continue distributing a Wisconsin School Forest manual and work with the state Department of Natural Resources in investigating how to fund a School Forest coordinator position.
- Provide leadership in the development of a K-12 forestry curriculum that meets state education standards.
- Assist with making the vision of a Wisconsin Forest Education Center, located on the former Milwaukee county fairgrounds, a reality by 2004 -in time to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the State Forests in Wisconsin.

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