

# LEARN ABOUT FORESTS

We all depend on trees and forests! Use this fun, hands-on activity to engage youth in learning about sustainable forest management. It's perfect for educational events, career days, or field visits.



## SEEKING SUSTAINABILITY

### PLAN

**KEY CONCEPT:** Sustainable forest management ensures attention to natural processes and goal-oriented decisions and actions to achieve a variety of desired outcomes, including ecological (e.g., wildlife habitat), economic (e.g., timber production) and social (e.g., recreation) outcomes. Many outcomes are interrelated and are often managed simultaneously. [PLT's Forest Literacy Framework, Concept 3.B.5]

**OBJECTIVES:** Provide opportunities for learners to

- Explore the concept of forest sustainability.
- Recognize connections between forests and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

**SESSION TIME:** 50 minutes

**SETTING:** Indoors



## BACKGROUND

In 2015, the 193 countries of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also known as the 2030 Agenda. Since then, the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become the framework for many countries, companies, and conservation organizations to examine the contribution of their activities to sustainable development. Forests play an integral role in many of these goals.

The 2030 Agenda is centered on four main objectives: eradicate poverty, heal the planet, secure prosperity for all, and foster peace and justice. It reaffirms the need to make progress in all three dimensions of sustainable development—environmental, economic, and social—and commits the international community to act together to overcome the complex challenges facing the world in the 21st century.

## PREPARE

**MATERIALS:** Slips of paper with Sustainable Development Goals, box or other container, markers, and poster paper (or presentation software).

**GET READY:** Copy and cut apart the Sustainable Development Goals from the worksheet. There should be one goal for each team of 2–4 learners. While most of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are connected to forests in some way, you might choose to use only the ones with the more obvious connections, such as Goal 1, Goal 2, Goal 3, Goal 6, Goal 7, Goal 8, Goal 11, Goal 12, Goal 13, and Goal 15. Place the slips in a box or other container.

## BENEFITS OF FORESTS

Forests are key to sustainability, and many different forest-related jobs are involved in making progress toward sustainability, both domestically and internationally. These include traditional forestry jobs, as well as jobs in carbon accounting, green energy, sustainable supply chains, environmental justice, and international law and policy.







## LEAD

### INTRODUCE:

Ask the group what they think the word “sustainable” means. Divide learners into teams of 2–4, and challenge them to come up with a definition for sustainable. Ask a few teams to share their definitions. Identify the key components of the group’s definitions. Ask, “What might the term ‘forest sustainability’ mean? How would we know if a particular forest is being managed sustainably?”

### EXPERIENCE:

1. Introduce learners to the Sustainable Development Goals (see Background).
2. Have each team draw a slip with a goal to analyze. Encourage teams to consider:
  - How are trees connected to this goal? How do forests help achieve this goal?
  - How does sustainable forest management help to achieve this goal?
  - How could a country tell whether it is making progress toward this goal? What data would it need?
  - What jobs can help countries work toward this goal?
3. Challenge teams to make a poster of their goal that includes:
  - A description of the goal
  - Its connection to forests
  - A job that would help countries meet that goalTeams may use poster paper and markers, or digital tools such as presentation or mind-mapping software.
4. Give teams 10–15 minutes to complete their posters.

## CONNECT:

Have teams display their posters and describe their main points to the group. Discuss:

- What is the aim of the Sustainable Development Goals?
- How are forests and sustainable development connected?
- How might these goals relate to the sustainability of other natural resources like water, air, fish, or wildlife?

## CLOSE

Invite students to share their ideas about what people can do in their own lives to support forest sustainability.



# TAKE ACTION

Challenge students to find out what is being done in their state or region to ensure forest sustainability, either through work toward the Sustainable Development Goals or other efforts.

# WORKSHEET

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

In 2015, 193 countries around the world agreed to 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which chart a course toward a better, more prosperous future for the planet and all its people. As part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the aim of these goals is for countries to mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities, and tackle climate change by the year 2030.

For each of the goals, consider:

- How are trees connected to this goal?
- How do forests help achieve this goal?
- How does sustainable forest management help to achieve this goal?
- How could a country tell whether it is making progress toward this goal? What data would it need?
- What jobs can help countries work toward this goal?



### **NO POVERTY**

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.



### **AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.



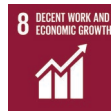
### **CLIMATE ACTION**

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



### **ZERO HUNGER**

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.



### **DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.



### **LIFE BELOW WATER**

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.



### **GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



### **INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.



### **LIFE ON LAND**

Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.



### **QUALITY EDUCATION**

Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.



### **REDUCED INEQUALITIES**

Reduce inequality within and among countries.



### **PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS**

Promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies.



### **GENDER EQUALITY**

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



### **SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**

Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.



### **PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**

Revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development.



### **CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**

Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.



### **RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Source: United Nations. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. September 2015.

[sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld)

For more *Learn About Forests* activities and supporting resources, visit [www.plt.org/learnaboutforests](http://www.plt.org/learnaboutforests)