

THEME 4

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FORESTS?

The concepts within this theme help people identify ways to become stewards of the forests to help sustain them for present and future generations. People can actively promote forest sustainability by observing, understanding, and experiencing forests first-hand, by choosing products that are sourced sustainably, and by taking appropriate actions in their communities, starting with the trees in their yard. It is critical for individuals to be engaged and educated to ensure that forests fulfill their role as one of our greatest solutions to global sustainability challenges.

A. OUR CONNECTION TO OUR FORESTS

Helping people see their personal connections to forests helps them understand how their actions impact forests.

1. Everyone should have the opportunity to identify and explore their personal relationship with trees and forests.
2. Resources that we use and consume every day are connected to forests. We have the opportunity to choose products (e.g., renewable, legally sourced, certified) that support sustainability.
3. Individuals can connect with the forest by hiking and picnicking, volunteering for projects in and around forests, studying in or about forests, owning and managing forestland, and more.
4. Everyone is a stakeholder in the forest. Individuals can take action by becoming informed and active voters, attending public meetings, and participating in lifelong environmental learning.
5. Consumers should be aware of their purchasing options and should choose wood products with certification labels indicating that they are from well-managed forests.
6. By understanding objectives for and perspectives on forest management at local, national, and global levels, individuals will be better able to engage in conversations and actions supporting sustainable forest management and sustainable supply chains.



B. WORKING FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR FORESTS

Learning to take action to support the forest gives people pathways to involvement now and in the future.

1. Everyone has a responsibility to treat forests with respect and to be a conscientious steward of forests and forest resources.
2. Personal actions in the natural environment directly impact the health and resiliency of our forests. For example, how we treat trails and campgrounds, and how we hunt or use fire, can either help or harm forests. Landowners have a responsibility to manage trees and forests on their property in a sustainable way.
3. Choices that we make as consumers affect our ability to sustain forest ecosystems into the future. By choosing wood and wood fiber products certified by third-party labels, consumers support forest sustainability.
4. A variety of professionals and skilled trade workers are needed to sustain our forests, including foresters, biologists, soil scientists, engineers, lawyers, information technology professionals, land managers, investors, environmental educators, communications specialists, harvesting professionals, mechanics, and forest product manufacturers.
5. As individuals or as members of groups, we influence laws and policies affecting our forests. Individuals can have their say by voting, working with community officials, joining organizations that conserve forestland, and weighing in when public opinion is sought.

