



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



FOREST
INSPIRED
NATURE
DISCOVERY™

Natural Inquirer Reader Series

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Taking Care of Our Forests



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Woodsy Owl's® words are in **bold**.

<https://www.naturalinquirer.org>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/learn/kids/woodsy-owl>



One of Woodsy Owl's® famous sayings is "Lend a Hand, Care for the Land!" Woodsy® likes to lend a hand and care for the land by helping take care of **forests**.



Forests are areas mostly covered with trees and other plants.



Woodsy® wants to teach you about ways people take care of the forests. It is important to take care of forests. Forests give us many **benefits**.

Forests are home to animals and plants.



Bobcats live in the forest.



Canada geese can be found in forests.

A **benefit** is a good or helpful result.



Forests help keep our air and water clean. Forests give us places to play and work. There are many other benefits of forests too.



Forests help keep water clean. The roots of trees keep soil in place, so it doesn't wash away when it rains.



Some people like to hike in forests.

Many people help take care of our forests. Some people plant trees to help the forest.



A forest worker helps plant new trees.



People plant trees in areas that have been hurt. The areas may have been hurt by things like fire and flooding.



A fire burned some of this forest.

Some people work for the Forest Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which helps take care of forests. The Forest Service takes care of 154 forests!



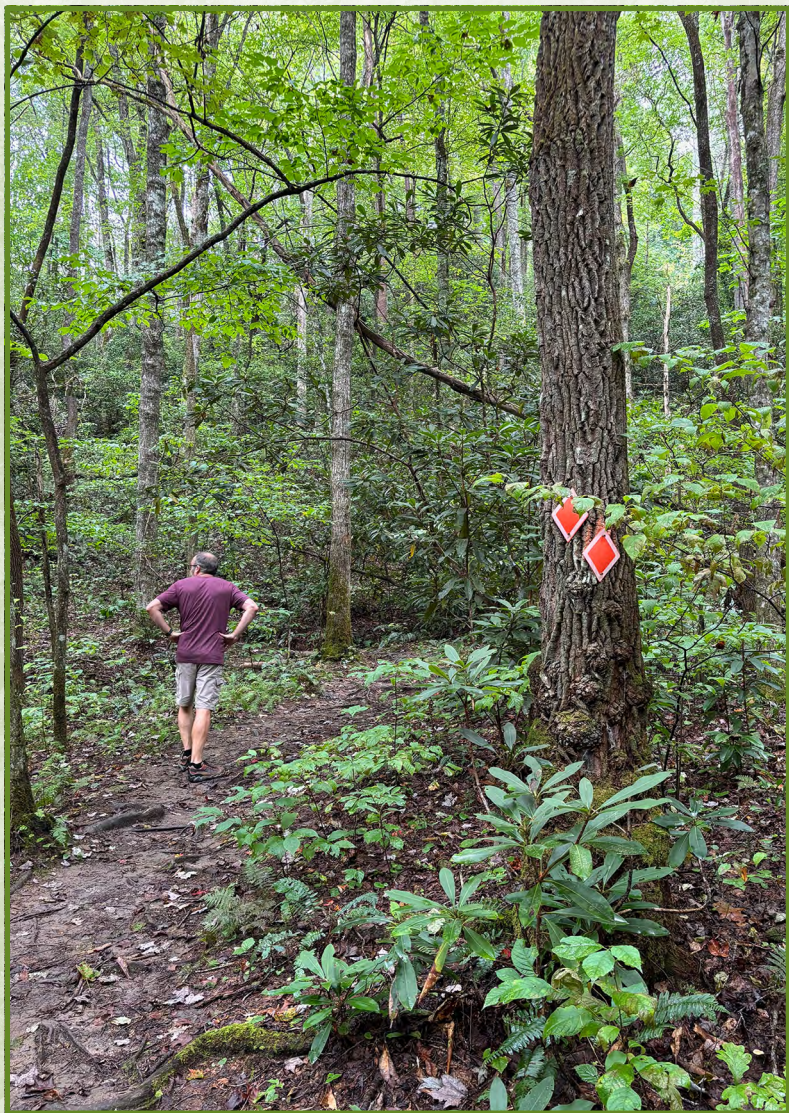
Some people help take care of trails. People use trails to walk through a forest.



People also help take care of trails by removing plants and fallen trees and branches.



Some people help mark trails. Marking the trails helps hikers know where to go.



There are two bright orange trail markers on this tree.
Two trail markers are used to show the trail will turn.

Some people help when there are fires in a forest.
Not all fires hurt forests. Some fires are good.



Some people use fire to help the forest. Using fire to help the forest is called a prescribed fire. During a prescribed fire, parts of the forest are carefully burned to take away **fuel**.



A **fuel** is something that will burn in a forest.

Some people help the forest by fighting wildfires.

Wildfires are unplanned, outdoor fires. Some wildfires hurt forests. Plants, trees, and buildings can be burned.



Some people study the forest. These people are called scientists.



This scientist is getting information about the weather.

Scientists try to solve problems in the forest. They may study animals and where the animals live. Scientists may study trees and plants to learn where they grow best.



This scientist is studying longleaf pine trees.

Some people take care of forests by building things like bridges and roads. Bridges and roads help people get to the forest.



Sometimes people take care of the forest by cutting down trees. There are different reasons to cut down trees.

Trees that are unhealthy or dead may be cut down.



Trees may be cut down to help **manage** wildfires. If there are too many trees close together, fire can move through them more quickly.



Manage means to take care of something.

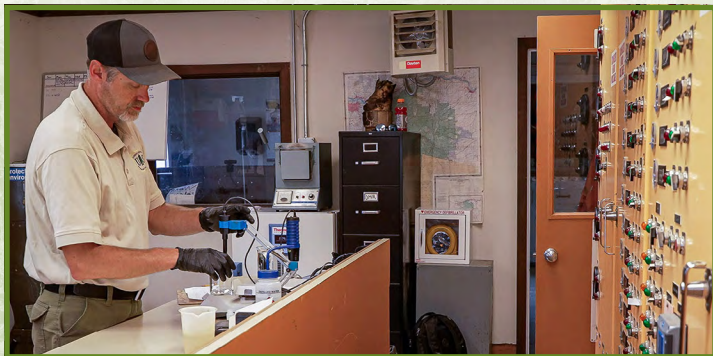
Trees are also cut down for wood. Wood is used to make paper, furniture, houses, and many other things.



Some people help the forest by teaching others about the forest. They teach people about the benefits of forests. They also teach people about what happens in a forest.



People also help the forest by keeping the water and land clean.



This person tests the water to see if it is clean.



These people **volunteer** their time to help clean up the forest and trails.

When people **volunteer**, they give their time for free to help with a project. There are many volunteer groups that help forests.



People take care of forests by helping with **invasive** animals and plants.



Sometimes, people **remove** invasive animals and plants. They remove them so the invasive animals and plants do not take over the area.



These people help remove invasive plants from the forest. An **invasive** animal or plant is an animal or plant that spreads easily and in a place where it does not usually live. **Remove** means to take something away.

There are many people who help take care of our forests. People help take care of the land in many ways:

- Planting trees
- Taking care of trails
- Fighting wildfire
- Using prescribed fire to manage wildfire
- Studying the forests
- Building bridges and roads
- Teaching about the forest
- Keeping the water and land clean
- Removing invasive plants and animals





Can you think of some other ways you can help the forest?



Woodsy Owl® lends a hand to care for forests. You can be like Woodsy Owl® and help take care of forests, too!

- Stay on the trail when you are hiking. Staying on the trail keeps the homes of animals and plants safe.



- Take your trash with you when you leave the forest.
- Teach others what you learn about forests.
- Be careful with campfires. Make sure your campfire is completely out before you leave it.





We've asked a lot of questions while we learned about forests. Here are some other interesting questions to think about and answer!

WOODSY OWL[®] WONDERS...

1. What are two benefits of forests?
2. Think about what you learned about fire in a forest. When can some fire be good in a forest?
3. How can you help take care of forests, even if you don't live near one?



Here are the new words
we learned in this Reader!
Woodsy Owl's® Words can
also be called a glossary.

WOODSY OWL'S® WORDS

benefit (be nə fit): A good or helpful result.

forests (fôr əsts): Areas mostly covered with trees and other plants.

fuel (fyü(-ə)l): Things that can burn, like branches, grasses, other plants, leaves, and trees (in a forest or grassland).

invasive (in vā siv): Something that grows and spreads quickly. Invasive animals and plants grow and spread quickly into an area where they have not lived before.

manage (man ij): To look after and care for something.

remove (ri müv): To take something away.

volunteer (vä lən tīr): To give time for free to help with a project or support a group.

TRY THIS!



Make a list of three ways people can help take care of the forest.

Think about what you've read about taking care of forests. Think about the list you made about ways to take care of the forest. Now, create a poster in the space below to help others learn about how to take care of the forest.

Natural Inquirer Reader Series

Number 14

Grades K–2

Word Count: 798

Genre: Nonfiction

Background: This Reader helps students learn about how to care for forests and to preserve and protect the benefits they provide. Some forest benefits include providing clean air and water, carbon storage, plant and animal habitat, timber, erosion control, recreation opportunities, and aesthetics. To learn more about the benefits of forests, visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov>. To learn more about Woodsy Owl, visit <https://symbols.gov>.

Note: For more background information and lesson plans, visit <https://www.naturalinquirer.org> and choose the “For Educators” tab.

All photos are USDA Forest Service images unless otherwise noted.

Pages 1 and 7: Jessica Nickelsen, USDA Forest Service; pages 2, 3 (forest river), 5, 6 (fallen branch removal), 11, 12 (road construction), 15, and 17 (water testing): Preston Keres, USDA Forest Service; pages 4 and 10: Kelly Martin, USDA Forest Service; page 6 (hiking in San Gabriel): Bob Wick, USDA Forest Service; page 8: Alexa Pengelly, USDA Forest Service; page 9: Kari Greer, USDA Forest Service; page 12 (bridge): Craig Taylor, USDA Forest Service; page 13: Zach Behren, USDA Forest Service; page 16 (speaker to group of students): Tracie Rohne, USDA Forest Service; page 18-19: Joshua Boisvert, USDA Forest Service.

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Be a Possibility Possum

Scientists make things possible;
They ask and answer questions.
You can make things possible
If you follow these suggestions.

Observe your world and wonder;
Ask how, what, why, and who?
Ask and answer questions
To make things possible for you.

Wonder is a good thing;
It is very plain to see.
When I ask and answer questions,
I make things possible for me.



Woodsy Owl® has invited children of all ages to explore and care for the natural environment since 1971. Woodsy Owl®, in partnership with the *Natural Inquirer* Reader Series, helps introduce children to science and the natural world. In this Reader, children will learn about taking care of forests.



Woodsy Owl's® motto is "Lend a Hand, Care for the Land!"®
As you read, look for ways that you can lend a hand and
care for forests near you!