

Forested Systems Initiative: Youth Forestry and Natural Resource Education Logic Model

Inputs

- County Extension Administrators, Agents, Program Coordinators and Specialists
- State, Federal and Non-Government Partners
- National 4-H office
- Research based forestry and natural resource curricula
- Facilities
- Financial support
- Evaluation materials

Situation

Forests cover more than 12 million acres or nearly half of all the land in Kentucky. These forests provide many environmental and cultural benefits that include ecosystem services such as cleaner air and water, carbon sequestration, biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Forests also provide recreational and aesthetic beauty for all people. In addition to the ecosystem benefits, the forests and the species found within them contribute significantly to the state's economy; forest and wildlife-related industries in Kentucky have an economic impact totaling more than \$14 billion annually and are responsible for more than 60,000 jobs. Given the importance forests and wildlife, it is vital to provide educators and youth with programs that facilitate greater awareness and understanding of how Kentucky's forests and wildlife contribute to our quality of life.

Outputs

Activities

- Raise awareness through media (ex. websites, Constant Contact, newsletters, articles)
- Educational Programs (ex.: 4-H Forestry Field Days, NRESci Academy, RCARS Mountain AG Youth Day, Win With Wood, KY Forest Leadership Program & Environmental Field Days)
- Educator Trainings (ex. Project Learning Tree)
- State Fair (ex. 4-H projects)

Participation

- Youth
- Educators
- Volunteers

Outcomes – Impact

Short Term

Change in awareness and understanding of:

- Importance of trees, forests, and wildlife in both rural and urban environments
- Identifying forests and natural resources in their community
- Importance of forest products, such as wood, in everyday life
- Stewardship –managing forests and natural resources to provide products as well as protect the environment
- Increased participation in 4-H Forestry and other natural resource education programs

Medium Term

- Participants complete a forestry/natural resources educational project (ex. county/state fair project)
- Youth will investigate career opportunities in science, forestry and natural resources

Long Term

- Kentucky's forests will be better protected and understood in the future
- Students pursue additional education or careers in science, forestry and/or natural resources
- Participants create or implement a forestry/natural resource improvement project (ex. tree plantings, stream clean-up, habitat creation, and invasive plant removal)
- Participants share information about the community's forests/natural resources (ex: citizen science – Adopt-A-Tree / Feeder Watch)

Assumptions

- The youth of Kentucky have a limited knowledge about forests and natural resources. They do not understand the economic or ecological value of forests and natural resources to the Commonwealth, they seldom participate in with outdoor activities, and they receive limited outdoor instruction.
- 4-H, Agriculture, and Natural Resources agents are interested in forestry and natural resource education programs
 for youth. This interest stems from the importance of these subjects in K-12 school systems and the personal
 interests of individual agents.
- There are large target audiences for youth forestry and natural resources educational programs because these are very important topics and the general public is interested in the environment.
- Educating youth about our forests and natural resources will benefit all Kentuckians by helping to inform future policy decisions and improving the quality and quantity of forests, wildlife, and related products.

External Factors

The complexity of Kentucky's forest systems makes it difficult to provide comprehensive educational programs.

School systems may not rely on extension agents to provide forestry and natural resource education programs for the youth.