

SCHOOL FORESTRY TOUR INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

The School Forestry Tour has been an annual event in Douglas County for over 40 years, and has become something of an institution of its own. Many of its instructors have returned year after year and have their presentations down to a science. If you're relatively new to the event, however, the task may seem a bit daunting. Here are a few thoughts to help you get started.

- 1) The School Tour is designed to provide Douglas County's 5th grade students (some schools send 4th or 6th grade students) with a brief overview of forest management activities and considerations. The emphasis is on breadth, not depth, of information. Our experiential learning stations include Tree Identification, Forest Products, Forest Management, Fire Management, Forest Wildlife, Fisheries, and Archaeology.
- 2) You'll have about 20 minutes of time with each class to cover your topic area. This isn't a lot of time, so your focus should be on introducing the students to important aspects of that topic and sharing some of your first-hand experience. Your basic content should come from the School Forestry Tour Booklet, but feel free to customize your presentation to draw upon your strengths. A copy of the booklet is available upon request.
- 3) Fifth-grade students respond well to hands-on and other highly interactive instruction methods. While your time with them won't allow major projects, you can get them involved by asking questions, having them hold and touch example items, and getting them to share their experiences.
- 4) Visual aides are very appropriate for the tour's method of instruction. The tour organizers provide tree samples, cones and seeds for Tree ID; skull and pelt kits for Forest Wildlife; tree cookies for Forest Management; product examples for Forest Products; and reproduction artifacts for Archaeology. We provide large, custom-designed poster sets for Tree ID, Forest Wildlife, Forest Management, and Fisheries. The DFPA has its own set of instructional aides for the Fire Management Stations. Other stations' instructors provide their own props tailored to the presentations they want to deliver. Tour organizers can provide suggestions if you're new to a station. Just call the Extension Office (672-4461) and we'll help with ideas and materials.
- 5) At approximately 20-minute intervals the tour coordinator will sound an air horn signaling the end of each session. When you hear the horn, quickly wrap up your presentation and direct the students to their next station. Once students arrive at their first station, all other class movement is done in a clockwise manner. The attached map illustrates how classes are to rotate from one station to the next.
- 6) Participating schools have copies of the School Forestry Tour Booklet and a supplementary Teachers' Guide. Many schools study these materials prior to the tour, and use the tour as a capstone for their environmental education curricula. While schools vary in the extent to which they emphasize the material, most arrive with some exposure to it. You should feel free to quiz students on their knowledge of your topic area.

- 7) Student discipline is rarely a problem at the School Forestry Tour. You will have excited students though, and you may find it necessary to instruct students to sit down, stop side-conversations, raise their hands to answer questions, calm down and listen, etc. Generally, teachers will prevent their classes from getting too unruly. If things seem to be getting out of control, don't hesitate to ask teachers and accompanying parents to help you reign in their youth. Each class will be accompanied by a teacher and one or more adult chaperones.
- 8) Each class is a bit different, so be flexible in your presentation. We do not expect you to cover exactly the same information with each group of students. To some extent, you will need to "go with the flow" of each class.
- 9) School tour is intended to offer an opportunity for forestry professionals to share their experience with our county's youth. This is your chance to open their eyes to the many activities and considerations involved in managing our forests. The tour curriculum is intentionally flexible to allow you room to interact with the students in the manner best suited to your personality, training and experience. Enjoy it!