Forest Ecology Issues

Ages: 14 to 18 (Grades 9 through 12)

Time: 4 weeks, each session 2 hours (J-Term)

Minimum number of students: 4

Maximum number of students: 20

Minnesota has four biomes, two of which are forest biomes. Why are forests important not just for wildlife but humans as well? Through group activities and discussions, students will explore Minnesota forests and forest issues. Topics will include basic tree structure and functions, forest composition, forest succession, the role fire plays in forests, invasive species, and how we use our forests. Each week there will be reading assignments to be completed before the next session for discussion.

**Syllabus:**

**Session 1:**

* Tree structure and functions
* Photosynthesis
* Forest structure
* Forest succession

*HW: Reading “Tree Tops Valley” with discussion questions*

**Session 2:**

* Understanding fire and forest fires
* History of fire suppression
* Forest fire management plan group project

*HW: Reading “The Crisis in our Forests”; research one animal or plant in MN that depends on fire*

**Session 3:**

* Invasive species
* Invasive species management group discussion
* Minnesota’s invasive species issues

*HW: Reading “Old Growth Forests” with discussion questions*

**Session 4:**

* Discussion on what a forest is to you
* Discuss how people use forests and the issues that come up
* Old Growth Forest group discussion