

North Dakota Envirothon - MOCK Current Issue Scenario

Note, this is not the 2024 scenario, this is designed to show teams what a scenario could look like and to go with the mock presentation video

Modification of Beth Hill's **TREE-mendous Summer Activities with Your Kids** Outreach and Education Manager, North Dakota Forest Service

Scenario:

Spring is here, the snow is gone! For children, this is the best time of year, with endless opportunities for outside fun. Many students wonder, "Why can't we take the classroom outside?" It's finally warm outside and you've been stuck inside all winter.

Your team is tasked with convincing your new school principal to let students learn outside. Create an argument outlining the pros and cons of learning outside. In addition, outline where teachers can bring their students outside and learn in a safe manner. Please include a list of suggested purchases the school should make to improve the outdoor classroom. Use the study resources below to prepare your presentation.

Study Resources:

Trees benefit the health and wellbeing of all people, but they hold unique benefits for kids, especially when it comes to their development. Creating space for children to learn and play around trees helps them develop physical, social, emotional and personal skills. Trees engage all of their senses and spark their imagination. Exploring natural environments (like climbing trees) develops problem-solving and risk-management skills, boosts confidence, and improves dexterity.

Trees can improve the academic performance of children. They allow all kids to focus better and have even been reported to lessen symptoms of ADHD. Furthermore, kids who have access to green space, which includes trees, have better working memory and can experience an increase in their cognitive development. There have been studies that show students perform better on tests if they can even see green space from their classroom window; imagine the learning they can do this summer outside with you!

Trees can make our kids healthier too. They create a comfortable, shaded area where kids can play, which encourages physically active play. Children who live near trees have been found to be more physically active and have lower rates of obesity. It's not just their physical health; trees also benefit the mental health and wellbeing of kids, limiting stress and promoting relaxation in both children and adults.

There are many easy, fun activities you can do with your kids, while also teaching them about nature. Whether it's in a park, a windbreak, or your very own backyard— take your kids out to explore around a tree. A Tree Rubbing Activity is a simple and creative way to help children learn about patterns and textures. It can also help children learn about the different parts and characteristics of trees as they complete their rubbings. Children will love the opportunity to go outside and practice a new art technique!

Additional resources:

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/ndfs/programs-and-services/prek-12-educators-and-youth>