

Phillips School Forest Plan



(updated/edited in 2022/23 from the original WEEB
grant plan completed in 2006/07)

Phillips School Forest Education Plan

Goals of a school forest (from LEAF handbook)

- Integrate environmental education into our school's curriculum.
- Strengthen school-community relations.
- Demonstrate sustainable natural resource management.
- Provide outdoor experiential learning opportunities.
- Meet state standards.
- Provide income for educational activities.

Rational

Mission Statement

To provide the youth of the School District of Phillips with educational opportunities that nurture personal growth of environmental knowledge and appreciation for nature while developing devoted citizens who will work individually and together to maintain a love and stewardship of our natural resources.

Value Statement

The Phillips school forests are the perfect setting for providing opportunities to enhance student and teacher learning in a natural environment, provide a community connection to our school, and develop our appreciation for nature. It is well documented that outdoor education increases student test scores, attendance, and mental health over all grade levels. Time outdoors lowers the impact of stress and helps students deal with adversity (LEAF Outdoor Education Research Summary).

Target Messages

- 1) We are part of the natural world: we rely on the earth and the earth relies on us.
- 2) The natural world has inherent value.
- 3) We have an obligation to contribute to and protect the health of human and natural communities.
- 4) Our environment and community are sustained by individual and collective responsible natural resource use, as well as with environmental knowledge, awareness, and appreciation.
- 5) We must value the role we play in sustainability, conservation, and stewardship.
- 6) Environmental education should be a continuous lifelong process, beginning at the elementary level and continuing through all stages of life.

Needs Assessment Results

The last needs assessment survey was conducted in 2004. Although it would be beneficial to have a new survey administered, some of the same barriers remain. A few teachers are actively using the school forest as part of their curriculum and others are still unsure of how it can be utilized. There has been a fairly large turnover of teachers recently with many not knowing what's available to them. With the planned facility improvement, some of the barriers preventing more outdoor educational opportunities will be mitigated. The barriers identified in the latest survey were as follows.

- Feeling ill-equipped to teach students in the outdoors.
- Transportation concerns.
- Lack of decent restroom facilities.
- Lack of an adequate shelter in case of inclement weather.
- Unaware of the school forest's availability.

Site Descriptions and Opportunities

Descriptions and Locations

Five parcels make up the Phillips school forest. Although all parcel descriptions will be included here, the school forest committee has determined that most future plans will focus on the Worcester parcel. Numerous reasons such as size, diversity, location/accessibility, familiarity to teachers, and ease of development lead to this decision. This parcel has recently been expanded to include 30 additional acres along the Elk River. Maps of the Worcester school forest are included.

Worcester (approximately 227 total acres)

Legal description: SW1/4,SE1/4 and SE1/4,SW1/4 and part of the W1/2,SW1/4, Section 4, T37N R1E (approximately 110 acres) and NE1/4,NW1/4 and NW1/4,NW1/4 and NW1/4,NE1/4, Section 9, T37N R1E (approximately 117 acres)

This parcel consists of nine forest stands consisting of young aspen, medium aged aspen, red pine plantation, red pine/aspen, white pine/aspen, and scattered bogs. There are also some vernal pools scattered throughout. Exclosures have been built in two locations. Access to the Elk River can be found on the NW corner of the property. Facilities include a large parking lot that allows easy access for buses, a storage building, and two port-a-potties.



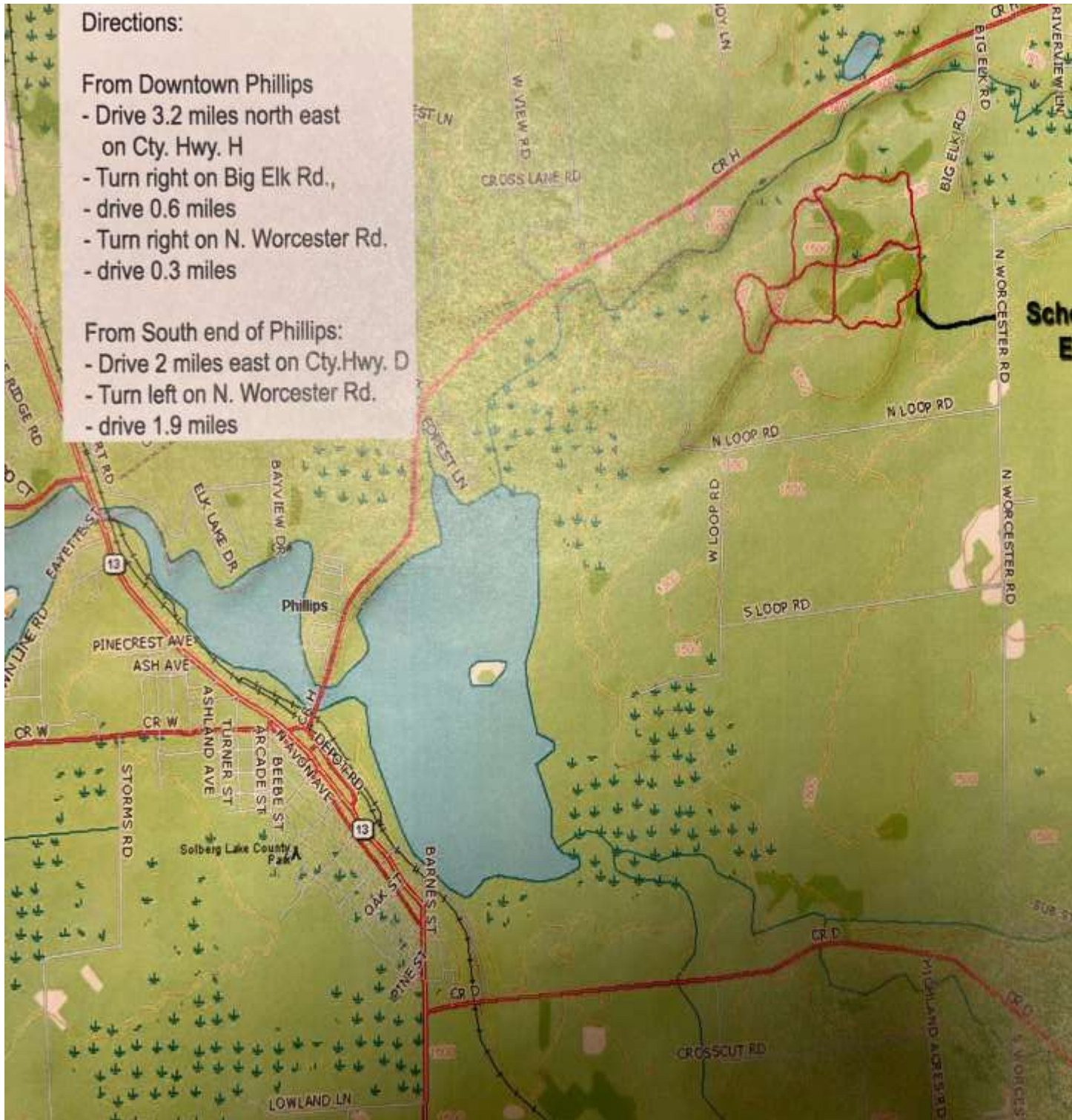
Directions:

From Downtown Phillips

- Drive 3.2 miles north east on Cty. Hwy. H
- Turn right on Big Elk Rd.,
- drive 0.6 miles
- Turn right on N. Worcester Rd.
- drive 0.3 miles

From South end of Phillips:

- Drive 2 miles east on Cty.Hwy. D
- Turn left on N. Worcester Rd.
- drive 1.9 miles



Phillips School Forest

Ski, Snowshoe, Hiking and MTB Trails

Ski Trails

More Difficult

Loop 1 = 1.1m/1.7k

Loop 4 = 0.7/1.1

Most Difficult

Loop 2 = 0.8/1.3

Loop 3 = 0.6/1

Easiest

Loop 5 = 1.2/2

Singletrack Trails

Easy to Intermediate

A Loop = 0.5m/0.9k

B Loop = 0.4/0.7

C Loop = 0.6/1

D Loop = 0.3/0.5

E Loop = 0.2/0.3

F Loop = 0.7/1.1

Wilke Trail = 0.7/1.1



Site Descriptions Continued

Harmony

Legal description: NW1/4,NE1/4 and NE1/4,NE1/4, Section 9, T36N R1W (80 acres)

This parcel contains four forest stands including northern hardwood, aspen, tamarack, and wetland bog. Access is limited and there currently aren't any facilities.

Lugerville

Legal Description: SW1/4,SE1/4 and S1/2,SE1/4,SE1/4, Section 17, T38N R1W (60 acres)

This parcel contains 5 forest stands that include aspen/evergreens, white cedar wetland, swamp hardwoods, tag alder, and upland grass (power line right of way). Approximately twelve acres are considered wetland.

Catawba (2 parcels)

1) Legal description: NW1/4,SW1/4, Section 9, T35N R1W (40 acres)

This parcel consists of two forest stands including aspen and northern hardwoods. This piece also includes an intermittent stream and wildlife opening.

2) Legal description: Found in the SW1/4,SW1/4, Section 5, T35N R1W (12 acres)

The gently rolling terrain contains three forest stands. These include northern hardwoods, aspen, and red/jack pine.

Worcester Site History

Logging began in the area in the mid-1800s. Following the cutoff, a major fire ran through the area in 1894. A few large pines survived, but many of the area's trees have been replanted. This can be evidenced by the pine plantations on many of the school forest parcels. Some unique elements found within the school forest include several bogs, animal dens, large nursery trees, and a bald eagle nesting area. Most parcels were obtained in May of 1934. The Previous owners used the land as a source of wood, pasture land, and agricultural fields.

Phillips began utilizing the Worcester parcel for outdoor education in 2004. It became the main site for elementary through high school education opportunities. In 2005, a WEEB Grant was awarded for site development and teacher education. A summer in-service "Getting to Know Our School Forest" was held for district teachers on August 8th and 9th, 2005. In 2006, another WEEB grant was awarded for the original "A School Forest Education Plan for Phillips." Another district in-service was offered titled, "Map Reading, Orienteering, GPS, and School Forest on August 3rd, 2006.

The Worcester parcel was logged in 2006. 450 cords of aspen, 30 cords of white birch, and 15 cords of mixed hardwood were removed. The site was again logged in 2020 with proceeds going into the school forest fund. The cutting included pine thinning, patch cutting aspen, and select cutting of red maple, balsam fir, and spruce. Over the past 20 years, there have been many upgrades to the trail system. Most of this work has been done by classes from the high school, teachers and community volunteers. Price Area Trail Hub, Inc. (PATH), a local non-profit silent sports organization, currently maintains the trails. There have been numerous tree plantings done by the elementary school. Planning is now underway for a major facility improvement project.

Educational Connections

K-12 Environmental Education Standards

The Wisconsin standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability are linked below. Section 1, pages 1-5 discuss Wisconsin's approach to academic standards. Section 2, pages 6-16 define environmental literacy and sustainability, section 3 discusses Wisconsin's vision for environmental education, and explains the structure of the standards. The third section, pages 20-38 include the standards, which distinguish between connection, exploration, and engagement.

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/standards/New%20pdfs/EnvironmentalLiteracySustainabilityStandards2018.pdf>

Classroom curriculum connections, site connections, key concepts, and Wisconsin's state standards

A Word document including environmental lessons taught K-12 can be found in the district office. A hard copy will be attached to this document as well. These lessons are enhanced with the utilization of our school forest. Many of the lessons are taken directly from either current Science/Environmental Education Curriculums or the Wisconsin K-12 Forestry Education Program (LEAF). All of the lessons are infused into the curriculum as written by the teaching staff in the Phillips School District and approved by the Phillips Board of Education.

Facilities

Plans are underway for the construction of a new building on the Worcester School Forest to serve as both an environmental learning center and community use facility. Fundraising has begun, but more money through donations will be required. The school forest committee has been meeting to discuss ideas regarding both the building and securing the funding. Currently the Worcester site has a large parking area for buses, storage building, kiosk, picnic tables, and portable toilets.

Sustaining the School Forest Program

Committee Members

Angie Ericksen
Dave Berens
Julie Teeters
Tara Scholz
Bob Dural
Brent Edwards
Caroline Corbett
Dave Scholz
Erik Olson
Heather Soukup
Joe Grapa
Joe Van De Voort
John and Kathy Wilke
Jon Pesko
Kevin Rose
Kristi Speer
Marty Krog
Mary Rohde
Richard Windmoeller
Ron Kendziera
Steve Lorenz
Tammy Holman
Tyler Ring
Vicki Spacek

Responsibilities of the School Forest Committee

- Financial planning
- Site development and maintenance (facilities, trails, educational materials)
- Continuously review the management plan to ensure it is relevant and being followed
- Continuously review education plans and personnel
- Identify and address potential issues with the school forest

- Seek additional opportunities for the school forest program

Communications

The Phillips School District has an accessible link on the district website.

<http://www.phillips.k12.wi.us>

Staff and students can post updates on the school forest, community activities, and photographs of events and activities. There have been and will continue to be presentations regarding the school forest made to the Phillips School Board. The Price County Review has shared important events at the school forest including management activities, community involvement, student/teacher activities, and building project plans.

Long Range Planning

The major goal in the long range plan is to complete the new building (learning/community center) on the Worcester site. The building, which will include kitchen and bathroom facilities, will greatly increase the utilization of the school forest. The school forest/environmental education curriculum is also in need of being updated. A curriculum does exist, but hasn't been updated since 2006. Updating the curriculum will ensure environmental literacy and sustainability standards are being met. Training should be provided so teachers feel comfortable bringing their students to the school forest and teaching them about their outdoor environment. Lastly, the school forest will continue to be professionally managed to optimize the diversity and health of the site.

Implementation

The original implementation plan included in-services for teachers, completing curriculum, and developing outdoor education programs for students. Transportation needs were met with the goal of all students visiting the school forest annually. The original plan also included the need to construct a building with restroom facilities.

District Commitment

The District Owned School Forest Property Amendment (820.2) was passed by the Phillips School Board in October of 2004. It read as follows: The school district of Phillips is fortunate to own "School Forest" properties that provide unique environments which create learning opportunities for children and young adults and hold the potential of being an educational resource to the community at large. The "School Forest" properties are to be utilized to support the mission and philosophy of the School District of Phillips.

Management of the "School Forest" properties shall be conducted in a manner that represents good stewardship of the resources and being good neighbors to adjacent landowners. Management of the "School Forest" shall be guided by the principles of conservation and utilization of natural resources with some land area designated for natural succession and a significant area designated as managed forest.

Income received from sales of forest products, sales of any "School Forest" properties, money received for rental of "School Forest" and other revenues shall be placed in a segregated account and used to support "School Forest" development expenses associated with "School Forest" use by students and staff, curriculum and staff development directly related to environmental education, conservation, and springboard activities that result from the use of the "School Forest". Appropriate curriculum shall incorporate "School Forest" related activities into the instructional courses and teachers are encouraged to incorporate related activities into their lesson planning to ensure effective development and management of the "School Forest". Educational and physical aspects shall be under the direction of the Board of Education with input from students, staff, community, and expertise from local and state personnel. The securing of grants and donations to support the effective education use of the "School Forest" shall be encouraged.

The original School Forest Education Plan was approved at the August 2007 school board meeting. The Phillips School District will commit to sustaining the school forest education program into the future.

