

A LITTLE PIECE OF FOREST OR TUNDRA



Grade Level: 6-12

Alaska State Content Standards (2006): Art A-1; Geography E-4, E-5, E-6, F-3; Government G-3; Language Arts D-1a, D-2, D-4, E-2

Subject: Language Arts, Geography, Government

Skills: Analysis, Comparison, Generalization, Problem-Solving

Duration: 2-3 class periods

Group Size: individual

Setting: indoors

Vocabulary: management policy, interest groups

OBJECTIVE

Students describe the different opinions usually associated with forest management.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Students role play different interest groups associated with forest management decisions.

MATERIALS

- Writing materials
- Fire Policy Cards: Boreal Forest
Tundra
- Fire Role Cards
- 3 blank sheets of paper for each student
- Markers

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Local **interest groups**, industry, and government agencies have concerns about how forest resources are managed. Hunters, fishermen, bird watchers, firewood cutters, gold miners, trappers, and others are sensitive to any changes in forest **management policies** that may affect the future of their activities.

Different public agencies manage lands according to their federal or state guidelines. Their challenge is to manage their land according to their guidelines, with consideration given to all the interest groups involved. It is important to learn how to negotiate and compromise in a group situation.

ADVANCED PREPARATION

1. Copy, laminate, and cut out "Fire Role Cards" so that every student has a card. You may need to make more than one copy of some of the cards to have enough.
2. Copy, laminate, and cut out one set of "Fire Policy Cards".

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute one "Fire Role Cards" to each student. The students receiving the "Expert" cards will be required to answer questions as that expert.
2. Ask each student to read his/her card carefully and to imagine that they are the person described in the card. They are to forget their own opinions and think only like the person they are portraying. Make sure that the students understand that they are only portraying one person's opinion in that role and that other people in that role may have different opinions.
3. Each student should have a marker and three pieces of paper. On each paper students should write (in large letters) one of the following response phrases:
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Need more information
4. Explain that students are attending a public meeting at which they will be invited to give input on the development of policies and regulations for use of a public forest. You will represent a land manager conducting the meeting and students will represent people who are experts or are interested in forest management for business or personal reasons.

5. Explain the procedure to students. You will read a "Fire Policy Card," give the students a minute to think about it, and then ask them to hold up the response card that represents their reaction to the policy read. Ask those who agree with the policy who they represent and why they agreed. Repeat this format with those that disagreed. Students that need more information may ask questions of the "experts." If the "experts" do not know the answer, discuss where a person might be able to get more information.
6. Finally, after hearing all the input, read the policy again. Then ask students whether any would like to change their opinions. What caused them to change? Repeat the above steps for each Fire Policy Card.

EVALUATION

1. Discuss with the students how they felt about the revised policy. Were they frustrated with the procedure? How does this game resemble real life? How does it differ?
2. Pick a policy where groups of students both agreed and disagreed. Make two groups, one of students that agreed and one of students who disagreed with the policy. Give each group 5-10 minutes to write a new revised policy that represents their viewpoint. Ask the groups to read their policy to the entire class. Once each group's policy is heard, the entire class will negotiate a final policy that is in the best interest of the resource and that the majority of the class can agree on. You, as the land manager, monitor the negotiations, suggesting compromises.