



### LESSON SUMMARY

Students will learn about the history of Sherwood Forest and how its management differs from modern day forests. Students will also research stories behind significant local trees.



TD Friends of the  
Environment  
Foundation



## Activity Information

<b>Grades:</b>	Senior
<b>Estimated duration:</b>	130 minutes for discussion. Additional time needed for individual research and presentations.
<b>Setting:</b>	Indoors and Outdoors
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	Heritage Tree, Crown Forest Sustainability Act, Crown Forest

## Learning Goals

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- understand the role of Crown Land and the Crown Forest Sustainability Act in managing Ontario's forests;
- understand some of the characteristics that make trees culturally, spiritually or environmentally significant

## Curriculum Connections

### Geography: Canadian & World Studies

#### Grades 9: Issues in Geography, CGC1D

OE A1. Geographic Inquiry & Skill Development - Use the geographic inquiry process and the concepts of geographic thinking when investigating issues related to Canadian geography.

OE C1. The Sustainability of Resources – analysis impacts of resource policy, resource management , and consumer choice on sustainability in Canada

#### Grades 9: Issues in Geography, CGC1D

OE A1. Geographic Inquiry & Skill Development - Use the geographic inquiry process and the concepts of geographic thinking when investigating issues related to Canadian geography.

#### Grades 11: Regional Geography, CGD3M & CGF3M

OE A1. Geographic Inquiry & Skill Development - Use the geographic inquiry process and the concepts of geographic thinking when investigating issues related to Canadian geography.

## Background

In the medieval mind, a forest was something different. A Forest was a legal term and an area subject to “Forest Law” which protected venison (deer) for the King as well as the trees and vegetation which comprised deer habitat. For more information visit <http://sherwoodforesthistorystory.blogspot.ca/p/introduction.html>

By law it was illegal to hunt deer or chop down trees within a royal forest. Foresters and wardens patrolled the forest on horseback to enforce these regulations. A forest was not wild but was a productive resource that was actively managed.

The Sherwood Forest was not a continuous forest, but rather a birch and oak woodland that was interspaced with large areas of heath and grassland. It is famously known for its link to the legendary tale of Robin Hood, who was forced to live as an outlaw in the depths of the forest where he was said to have defied Forest law by hunting deer that were protected for the King.

Robin **Do you know what forest this is?**

Marion **This is Sherwood forest.**

Robin **Wrong. This is my forest.**

Marion **A forest is owned by no man.**

Robin **Not true, Marion. King and lords make forest laws to stake their claim over oak and deer. Now I have staked mine. This is my land. And you're on it.**

Located just south of Sheffield in England the Sherwood Forest is home to the Major Oak. Thought to be between 800 and 1,000 years old the Major Oak is a **Quercus robur**, or English Oak, and is named after local historian Major Hayman Rooke. English oak can be found in various urbanized areas throughout eastern Canada, but is not native. It is most suitable for parks because of its need for full sun and regular watering. English oaks make ideal shade trees.

Today the Major Oak is of national importance in Britain and several conservation measures have been carried out to support its branches and protect its trunk as it ages. More information can be found online at <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/country-parks/sherwood-forest>

### Crown Forests of Ontario

In Canada our public land is referred to as Crown forests, or land belonging to the monarch (“the Crown”) Where the British monarch is the head of state, the term is used to refer to public land. In Canada, 89% of the forest is Crown forest – administered either by the federal or provincial governments. While Crown forest is owned by the public it is often managed by companies or individuals. In Ontario, these groups are licensees of the forest unit and are required to follow the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA).

The CFSA requires that:

- large, healthy, diverse and productive Crown forests and their associated ecological processes and biological diversity should be conserved;
- long term health and vigour of Crown forests should be provided for by using forest practices that, within the limits of silvicultural requirements, emulate natural disturbances and landscape patterns while minimizing adverse effects on plant life, animal life, water, soil, air and social and economic values, including recreational values and heritage values

The CFSA ensures the sustainable use of Crown forests. This Act does not apply to private land, of which there is a significant amount within Canada. On private land other legislation may apply but this differs by province.

**Crown forest - a forest ecosystem or part of a forest ecosystem that is on land vested in Her Majesty in right of Ontario**

### **Heritage Tree Program**

Trees, like works of art, stories or historical buildings, can also be part of a shared cultural, spiritual or natural heritage. In some cases, trees may form a sense of identity for groups and individuals. Heritage trees are an important component of urban forestry. The Heritage Tree program identifies and records the location of significant trees across the province of Ontario. Heritage trees may be notable for their size, form, shape, beauty, age, colour, rarity, genetic constitution or other distinctive features. They may also be a prominent community landmark or a specimen associated with a historical person, place, event or period. It may also be associated with local folklore, myths, legends or traditions. By this definition, the Major Oak would qualify to be a Heritage Tree if it was located in Ontario. For more information about the Heritage Tree program visit [www.forestsontario.ca](http://www.forestsontario.ca)

## ACTIVITY #1

Have a discussion as a group around what a “forest” means to students. Using a board or flip chart paper, ask students to use one word to describe what a forest means to them. Then introduce students to the concept of what a forest meant in medieval England and its role for the King. Are forests valued the same now and then?

1. Provide students with the background on Sherwood Forest, the Major Oak and Forest Laws. Ask students to think about what a forest is used for today and how it is managed – how is this different, or similar, to medieval times?
2. Based off the discussion write down any questions the students have. These can be investigated at a later time or as part of an independent study unit.

## ACTIVITY #2

1. Ask each student to think of a local tree that they consider significant, it can be for personal, cultural or environmental reasons. Ask each student to put together a presentation to argue for the significance of their tree. The presentation can include visual aids and/or handouts but must include the following information:
  - a. What makes the tree significant?
  - b. Is the tree currently protected in any way?
  - c. Physical information: species, estimated height, diameter at breast height, general health.  
For information about how to assess tree health you can refer to the FOF 78 – Taking Stock lesson plan.
2. Have each student present their heritage tree to the class, including their argument for why it is significant. Make note of some of the reasons why trees were suggested and review them after presentations are complete.

## EXTENSION

1. If any of the suggested trees are on, or close, to school grounds take your class outside to see them. Select one to be nominated for the Heritage Tree program. Have your students complete the application which can be found at [www.forestsontario.ca](http://www.forestsontario.ca)
2. Ask students to research the oldest trees in Ontario. Where are they located and what species are they?

\*\*Please note that the Heritage Tree program requires that a certified evaluator validate any nominations. While you can enter your tree for Heritage Tree designation it may not qualify.