



Trees, Water and Peace

Age range: 16 to 18 (senior)

Time: 60 to 120 minutes

Subjects: Science, World Issues, Geography, English, Civics

Resources: copies of Wangari Maathai's acceptance speech for each pair or group of students (*available at www.nobel.no; select Laureates, then Speeches and Lectures*). Other resources depend on the final product.

Learning Outcomes

Students will understand the connections between sustainable forestry and sustainable freshwater, ecological health, and quality of life.

Hook: We're All Connected



Have a student record on the chalkboard as the class names 20 things we share with people in Africa on a physical, social and spiritual level:

- the water we drink is shared through the global water cycle,
- the air we breathe travels all over the planet,
- global disease threats,
- weather, pollution, climate change, the changing seasons,
- war,
- family and friends, religion, special celebrations,
- the need for income, shelter, clean water and food,
- social problems such as drugs, poverty and violence.

Go to www.nobel.no; select *Laureates* and then print and make copies of the brief two-page List of Laureates. Discuss former Peace Prize winners and why they won. What criteria are used to award the Nobel Peace Prize? Leave your students with the question: How could someone win a Peace Prize for planting trees?

The famous story by Jean Giono (free to the public domain), *The Man Who Planted Trees*, makes an excellent addition to this lesson, as it contains the same concepts in a well-written narrative set in France. It can be found on many Web sites, including www.perso.ch/arboretum/Man_Tree.htm. Read it to the students on a day following this activity, or watch the animated video by Frédéric Back available at http://secure.dep.ca/en/produit_details.asp?ID=1612.

Procedure



Individually, in pairs or small groups, have students read and analyze the acceptance speech made by Wangari Maathai.



Extensions

Students create a flow chart/thought web diagram on the handout *How Sustainable Practices Affect Society* (see page 28). Key phrases/concepts from Ms. Maathai's speech are placed in random order at the bottom of sheet. The teacher's example represents one possible way that a student could connect the concepts. Students could also construct larger flow charts/thought webs, adding pertinent quotes cut directly from the speech. These could be enhanced by hand-drawn or cut-out pictures illustrating the concepts.

Using the phrases at the bottom of the handout, students write a poem/ballad in honour of Ms. Maathai's accomplishment, explaining fully why she won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Students construct a chart with two columns. In column one list several criteria for awarding the Nobel Peace Prize, and in column two list how Ms. Maathai met those criteria. Turn the chart into a paragraph.

This award and acceptance speech clearly explains why sustainable forestry practices, such as those used in Canada, are so important. Sustainable forestry is a complex process of managing with clear objectives that pertain to the present as well as the future, allowing for controlled consumption of wood so that this renewable resource remains at a consistent level. It includes selective and well-planned harvesting, replanting and many other activities that allow for the ongoing use of wood products we all depend on – sustainable freshwater resources, wildlife habitat and a wide variety of recreational activities.

Non-sustainable forestry, which has been practiced in many parts of Africa and other countries for extended periods of time, includes widespread deforestation leading to many of the terrible circumstances described by Ms. Maathai. The power of sustainable resource use is not to be underestimated in its scope of influencing every part of our lives.



“Many human activities... are devastating to the environment and societies. These include widespread destruction of ecosystems, especially through deforestation, climatic

instability, and contamination in the soils and waters that all contribute to excruciating poverty...”

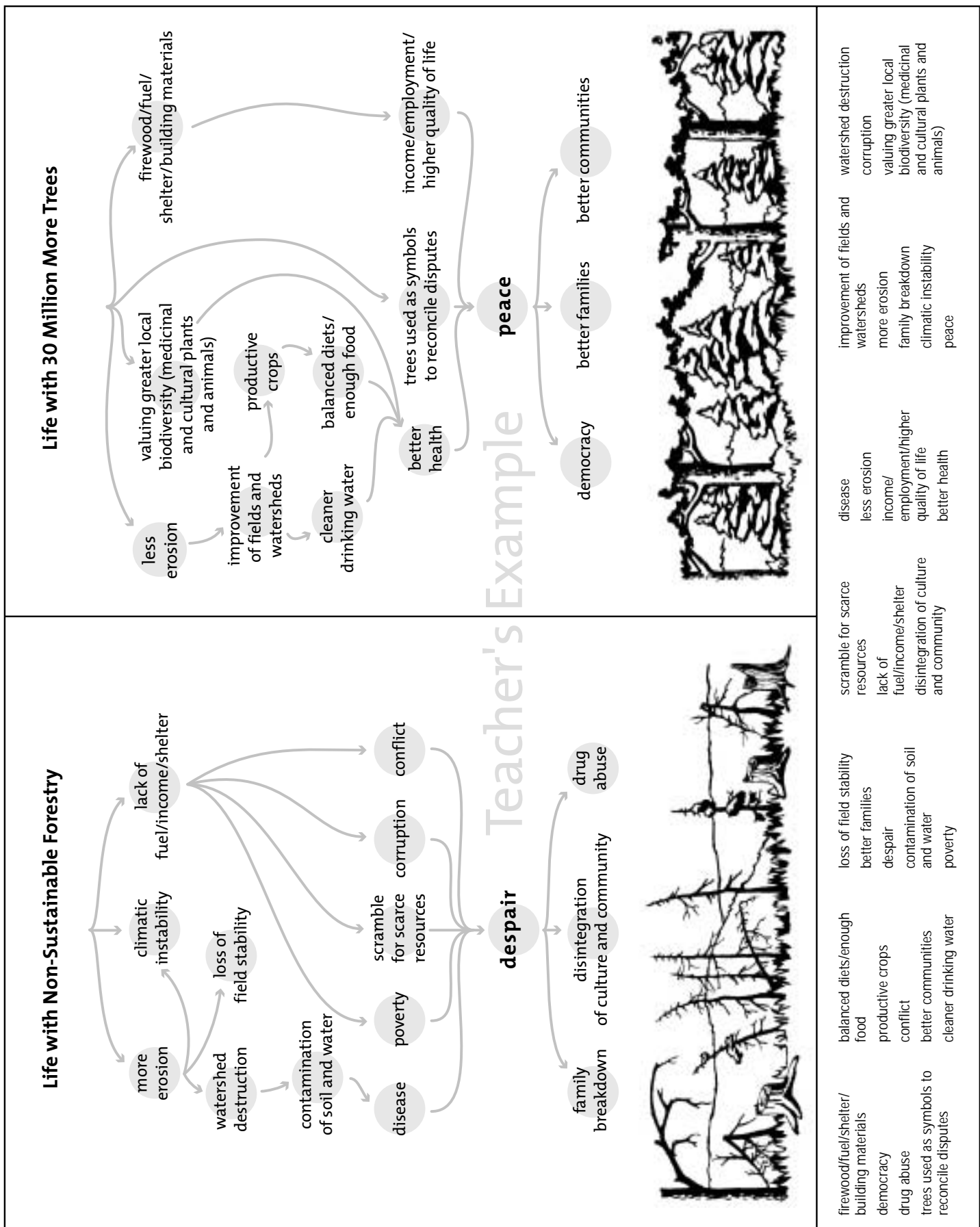
“As I was growing up, I witnessed forests being cleared and replaced by commercial plantations, which destroyed local biodiversity and the capacity of the forests to conserve water...”

“So, together, we have planted over 30 million trees that provide fuel, food, shelter, and income to support their children’s education and household needs. The activity also creates employment and improves soils and watersheds...”

Excerpt from Wangari Maathai’s acceptance speech, December 2004.

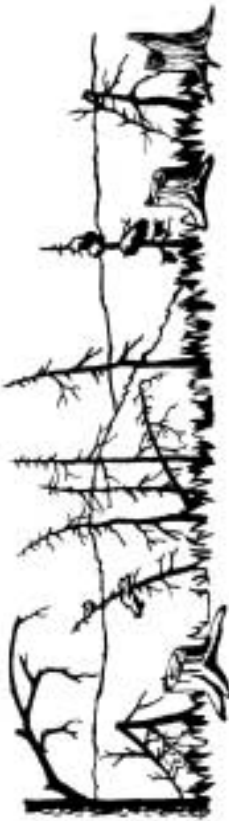



How Sustainable Practices Affect Society





How Sustainable Practices Affect Society

<p>Life with Non-Sustainable Forestry</p> 	<p>Life with 30 Million More Trees</p> 					
<p>firewood/fuel/shelter/ building materials democracy drug abuse trees used as symbols to reconcile disputes</p>	<p>balanced diets/enough food productive crops conflict better communities cleaner drinking water</p>	<p>loss of field stability better families despair contamination of soil and water poverty</p>	<p>scramble for scarce resources lack of fuel/income/shelter disintegration of culture and community</p>	<p>disease less erosion income/ employment/higher quality of life better health</p>	<p>improvement of fields and watersheds more erosion family breakdown climatic instability peace</p>	<p>watershed destruction corruption valuing greater local biodiversity (medicinal and cultural plants and animals)</p>

