

## SCHOOL FOREST BENEFITS

A functioning School Forest can positively affect all your student body, faculty, staff, parent-teacher organization, and community. (For specific [program benefits, see page 7.](#)) Consider the following benefits of a school forest site.

### For students, school forests can:

- Make lessons relevant because school forests provide meaningful, real-world situations that allow students to apply learned skills and allow them to be a part of the natural world, rather than a separate entity.
- Reach students through hands-on learning, especially important for those who struggle in traditional classrooms.
- Allow older students to mentor younger students and encourage higher self-esteem.



MN DNR

Columbus School Forest students plant trees.

- Provide opportunities for long-term environmental investigations.
- Encourage physical activity and improve student health.
- Allow students with disabilities frequent, safe contact with the natural world.
- Foster a sense of ownership, promote a conservation ethic, increase school pride, and decrease student vandalism.
- Capture young peoples' innate interest in the natural world.

### For the school and staff, school forests can:

- Allow teachers to try new teaching methods in an outdoor setting.
- Help address academic standards by giving opportunities to include environmental education into the regular curriculum.
- Give staff a chance to see the profound effects of the natural world on children.
- Allow teachers and other staff to interact with students on a different level.
- Help “green” your school by teaching grounds-keeping staff sustainable and efficient ways of maintaining school property.
- Provide resources and support for teachers and staff on natural resource education topics and techniques.

**For parents, families, and communities, school forests can:**

- Strengthen parent-teacher relationships when working toward a common goal.
- Provide increased recreation and exploration opportunities with an eye on learning, such as hiking and bird-watching.
- Create a more environmentally literate population who will make sound long-term community decisions.
- Create a sense of ownership among parents, families, students, and community members.
- Engender cooperation between stakeholders.
- Expose students to possible local career choices through increased community connections.
- Involve community members as guest presenters and volunteers, and allow them to serve as positive adult role models.
- Increase community safety. Studies show that crime decreases as a community spends more time outside in a positive environment.



ROB MAROHNI

Camping adventure for Bayview School Forest students.