Sustainable Woodland Stewards

Objective:
Students will explore principles of sustainable woodland management and apply these concepts to create a detailed woodland management plan, considering environmental, social, and economic factors.

Activity Title:
"Sustaining Our Woodlands: Responsible Management for the Future"

Age Group: KS3
Duration: 2 hours

National Curriculum Links:

- **Geography:** Human and physical geography, focusing on ecosystems and the impact of human activity.
- **Science:** Interdependence of organisms and the importance of biodiversity.
- **Citizenship:** Understanding the role of individuals and communities in environmental stewardship.
- **Art & Design:** Developing creativity and visual representation through model-building.

Materials Needed:

- Maps or diagrams of woodland areas (real or fictional).
- Natural materials (e.g., twigs, moss, leaves) for model-building.
- Woodland management fact sheets (e.g., coppicing, habitat creation, balancing logging with conservation).
- Clipboards, paper, and pencils for note-taking.
- Large sheets of paper for planning and presentations.

Activity Plan:

1. Introduction to Woodland Management (15 minutes)

- Begin with a discussion:
  - What is woodland management, and why is it important?
  - What are the main principles of sustainability in woodlands?
- Introduce topics such as:
  - **Protecting biodiversity:** Safeguarding habitats and promoting native species.
  - **Sustainable resource use:** Techniques like coppicing and selective logging.
  - **Social and economic aspects:** Recreational use and the economic benefits of woodlands.

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2. Woodland Observation Walk (30 minutes)

- Take students into a woodland area (or use maps/diagrams if outdoor access is limited).
- Encourage students to observe and take notes on:

- Tree species and their layers (canopy, understorey, forest floor).
- Signs of wildlife and biodiversity.
- Human impact (e.g., litter, pathways, deforestation).

- Highlight examples of sustainable practices like coppicing or maintaining deadwood for wildlife.

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3. Designing a Woodland Management Plan (45 minutes)

- **Task:** Students work in small groups to design a sustainable woodland management plan.
- **Steps:**
  - Assign groups a woodland area (real or fictional).
  - Each group decides on key features of their woodland, such as zones for biodiversity, resource harvesting, and recreation.
  - Include sustainable practices like planting native species or managing footpaths to reduce erosion.
- Groups can build small-scale models using natural materials to represent their woodland design or create detailed diagrams on paper.

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4. Presentations and Reflection (30 minutes)

- Each group presents their woodland management plan.
- Encourage them to explain how their plan balances environmental, social, and economic needs.
- Facilitate a discussion:
  - What challenges might arise in managing woodlands sustainably?
  - How do woodlands contribute to combating climate change and supporting biodiversity?

Outcomes:

- Students gain a deeper understanding of sustainable woodland management.
- They develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.
- Students apply principles of sustainability to real-world scenarios.

Extension Ideas:

- **Debate:** "Should woodlands prioritise biodiversity over human recreation and resource use?"
- **Research Project:** Investigate local woodlands and their management strategies.
- **Art and Science Collaboration:** Create an infographic or poster showcasing the role of woodlands in climate change mitigation.