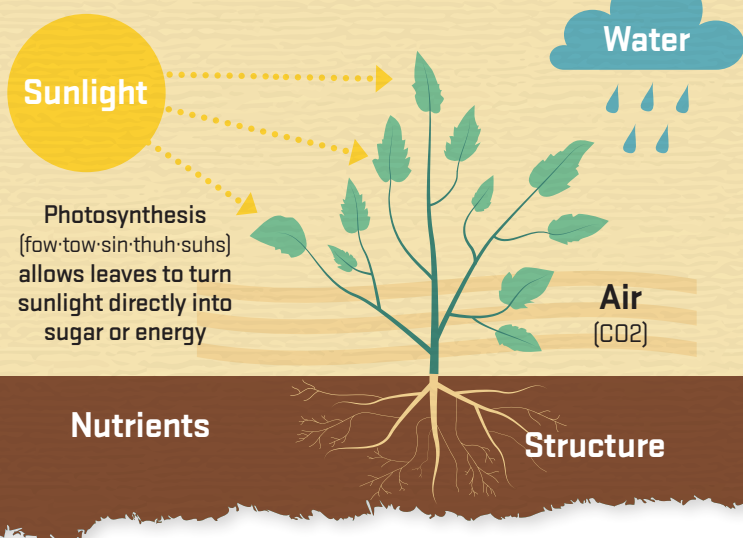


THE WHITE OAK



The Life of a Tree

Who knows what a tree needs to grow?



Activity!

Could a tree grow here?

- **Can you find a sunny spot and stand there?** (Sunlight). If you find a sunny spot, plant your feet on the ground. Stand still and pretend your roots are growing into the ground.
- **Without moving your feet, can you find any water where you are?** (Examples: Wet leaves, wet ground, or wet wood?)
- **Can you find nutrients?** Look for leaves, needles or sticks on the ground, any organic matter.
- **Can you find air?** Take a deep breath in and out.



THE WHITE OAK



Let's Learn

200 year ago, White Oak was the main tree species here. For thousands of years, White Oak dominated this landscape, and was scattered throughout beautiful grasslands. This habitat is called Oak Savanna. Oak Savannas were carefully maintained through-out the Willamette Valley by the Kalapuya people, using fire. But many things have changed over the last 200 years. The White Oaks in Oregon have an important story to share.



Activity! Journey of the Acorn

Follow the trail until you see the fence we share with our forest neighbor. **Look for the acorn sign** and have your group members find a place to stand. Turn your imaginations on full blast, and imagine you have turned into a tree. Read the following story. Let all your group members “act” out the different roles in this trees life.

You are an acorn. You fall onto the warm grassy oak savanna. Your roots begin growing into the soil. Your first leaves push out of the acorn shell and reach up towards the sunlight. You are growing well. Many acorns around you get eaten by squirrels and acorn woodpeckers. Many more are collected by the Kalapuya people and ground into acorn flour.

Fires burn nearby. You can feel the heat, but you are not burned by the flames. After the fire, there are fewer plants competing for sunlight. You grow taller! Deer and elk come by and nibble your leaves but you keep growing.

In the 1830 and 40s, Euro-American settlers arrive and began farming the land around you. Many Kalapuya people have died from diseases that arrive with the settlers. Those who survive eventually move to the newly formed Grand Ronde reservation (1856). The fires stop. Many of the oak trees growing near by are cut down by settlers for fences for their farm animals and firewood. But you keep growing. You are growing when Corvallis first becomes a city (1853).

Soon, small trees begin growing around you. These are Douglas-fir and they love sunlight. With fires no longer destroying their seeds, they quickly begin growing tall. Every year they take more and more sunlight. It is getting harder for you to grow. Eventually the Douglas-fir are taller than you. It is now cold and dark in the forest. Many years go by. You grow very little.

One day, you feel heavy machines rumble into the forest. The Douglas-fir are cut down, but you are left standing. Finally you feel the sunshine again



Follow the trail to the
next stopping point



...HUMANS IN THE FOREST