



## Woodsy Owl

### What is your advice for enjoying the outdoors?

Safety first! Adults need to make sure children have the appropriate tools to enjoy a natural area, such as sun block, plenty of water, natural snacks, hats, and appropriate shoes to hike the trails. When visiting a forest, families should also have a plan, let someone know where they are going, bring whistles in case you lose track, and have charged cell phones so you can call for help in case of an emergency.

- Never hike alone and don't ever leave the trail.
- Don't pollute! Do not leave trash behind.
- Observe and learn from nature! Look for science-based educational resources by the USDA Forest Service, like the science journals *Natural Inquirer* and the *Investi-Gator*.

### What symbols or mottos are important to you?

I was born in the 1970s when pollution was the biggest environmental issue in America. So my favorite motto is "Give a hoot – Don't pollute!" It encourages people not to litter, and to recycle, reuse, reduce, and rot (compost). Another motto important to me is "Lend a Hand – Care for the Land!" By lending a hand, you can help your community thrive, and your forest to be healthy. We can create community gardens and share the harvest with friends and neighbors. We can care for trees in local neighborhoods. We can identify the birds that live in our communities. All of these activities are ways we can lend a hand for conservation.

### Most exciting project

I am fortunate to have a close relationship with the Office of Head Start. Our partnership enables Head Start classrooms to use the tools I created for the students to understand how to be good stewards of the land. I love meeting the students! I also work with community leaders to help them start chapters of the Woodsy Owl Conservation Corps. The Corps provides tools and information to help foster a positive impact in communities and spread my message to others.

### When did you know you wanted to be a spokesperson for caring for the land?

Children have eyes full of curiosity, ears eager to hear new sounds, and open minds that are full of questions! Helping people, particularly children, to engage and begin their conservation journey is my calling. Remember, "Give a hoot – Don't pollute!" and "Lend a Hand – Care for the Land!"