

Meet Ms. Laseter!

Photo: Stephanie Laseter, Forest Service



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Glossary words are in **bold**.

Written by
Julia Dobish
Jessica Nickelsen
Babs McDonald

Illustrated by
Stephanie Pfeiffer

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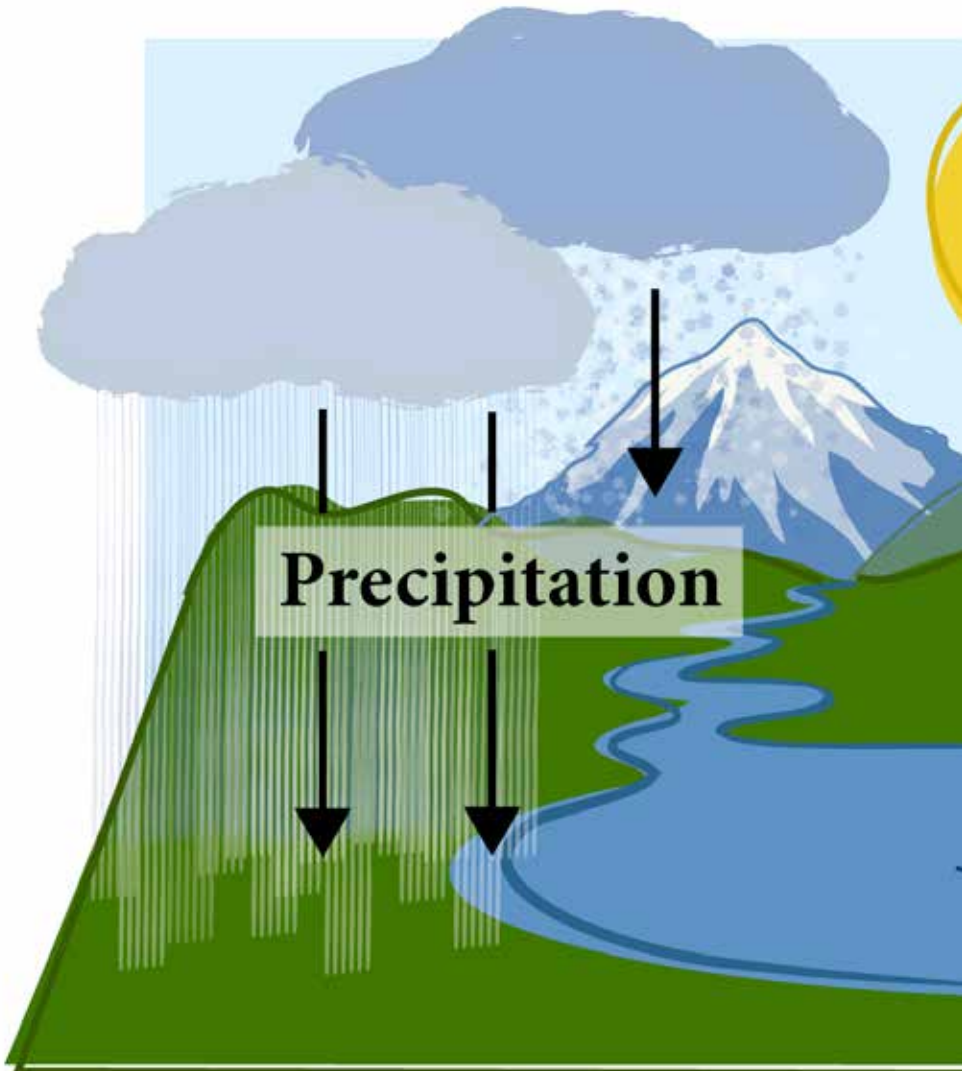


This is Ms. Stephanie Laseter.



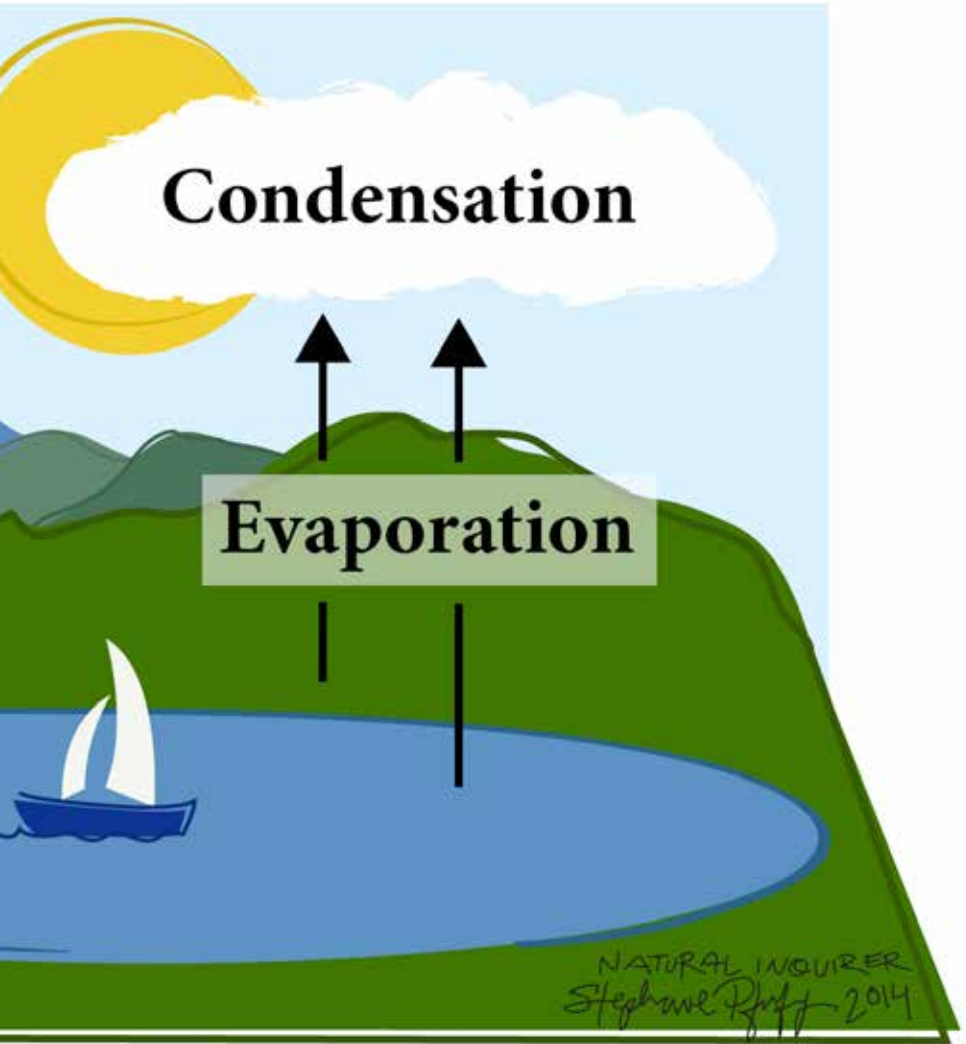
Photo: Stephanie Laseter, Forest Service

Ms. Laseter is a scientist who studies water.



The water cycle shows how water falls to Earth and **evaporates** back to the **atmosphere**.

She studies how water moves on **Earth**.



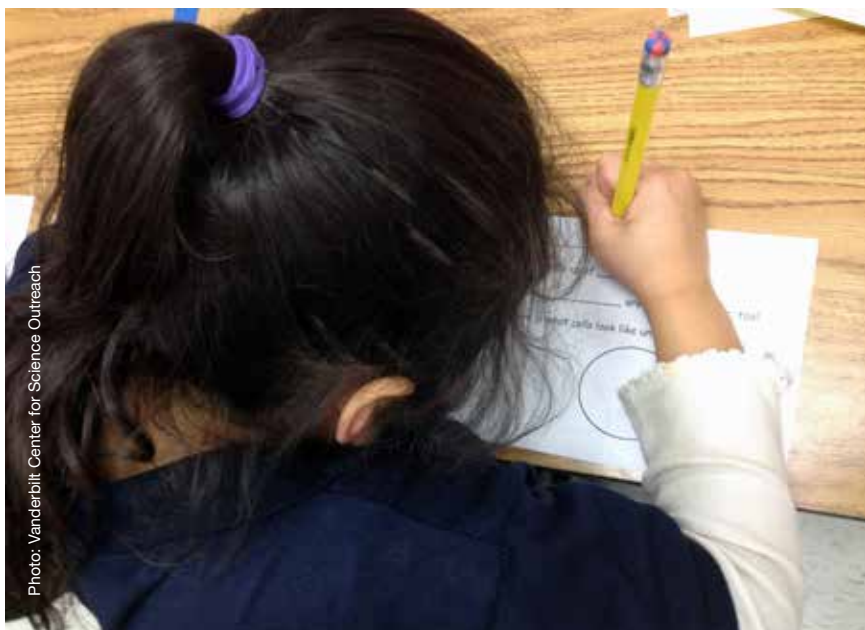
Ms. Laseter loved being outside when she was young. When she was in 6th grade, she was in a science fair. She began to love science.



Photo: Babs McDonald

This high school student is in a science fair.

Ms. Laseter pays attention to details. She also enjoys **solving** problems.



Like Ms. Laseter, this student enjoys solving problems.

Ms. Laseter likes to ask questions about our world.



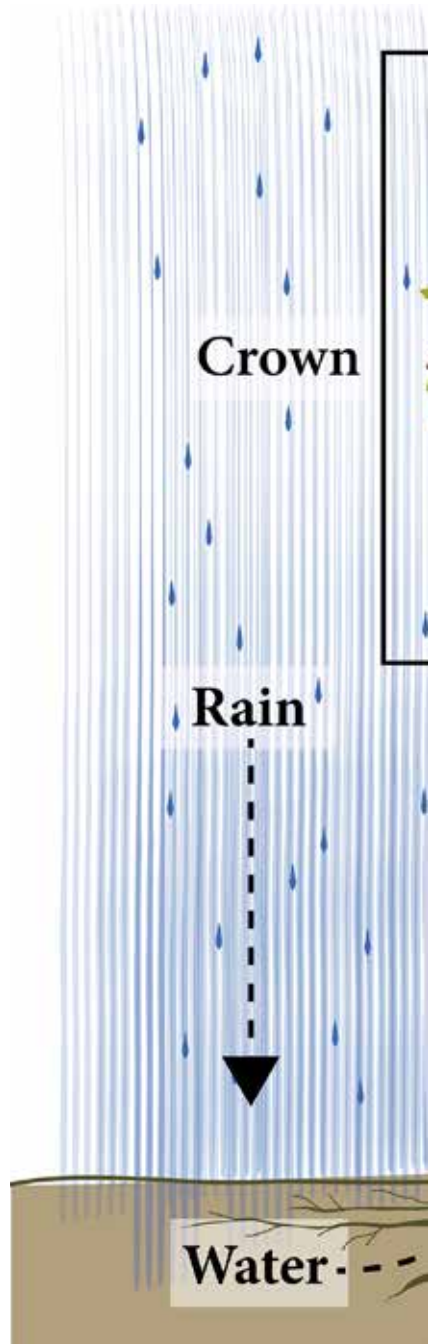
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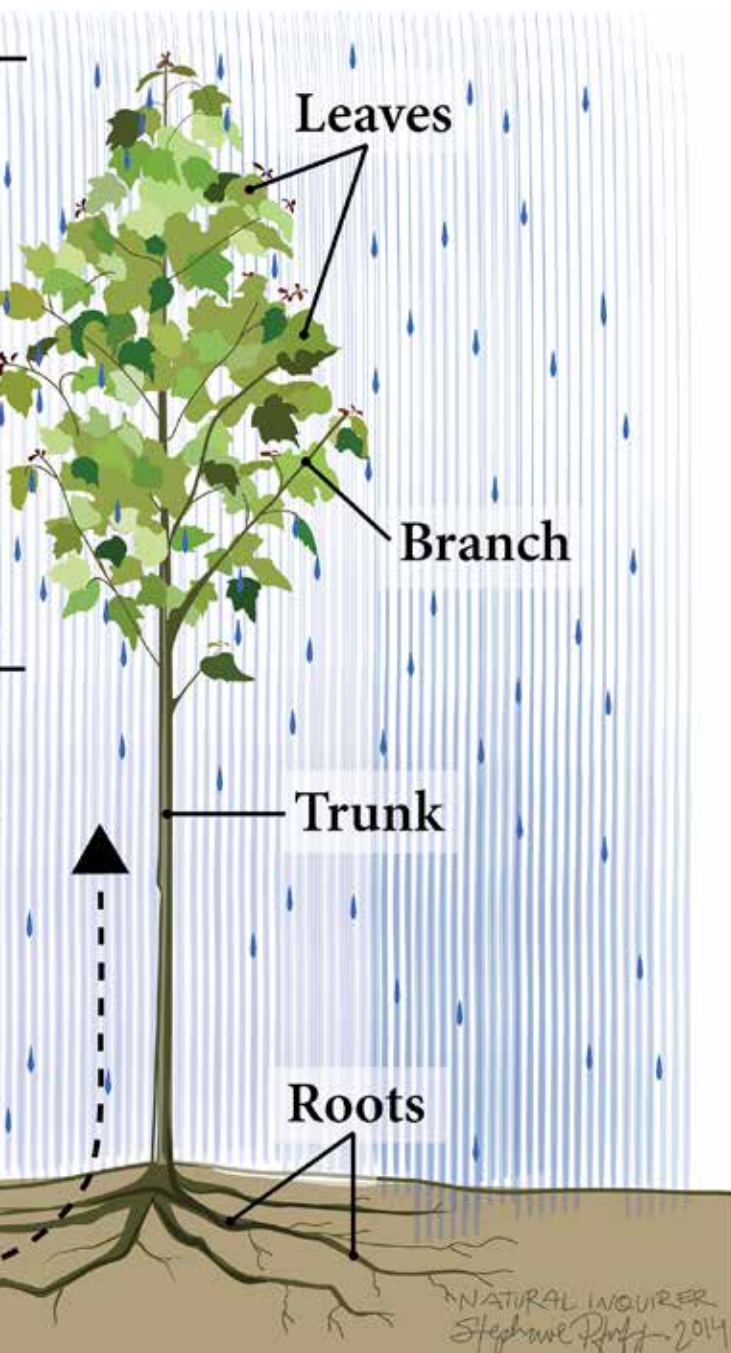
Ms. Laseter asked a question about **forests** and **streams**.



Photo: James Holland

She knew that forests need water to **survive**.





She also knew that streams provide water for forests.



Rain falls to Earth and gathers in streams and other bodies of water.



Photo: Babes McDonald

Ms. Laseter asked, “How does rainfall **affect** forests and streams over time?”



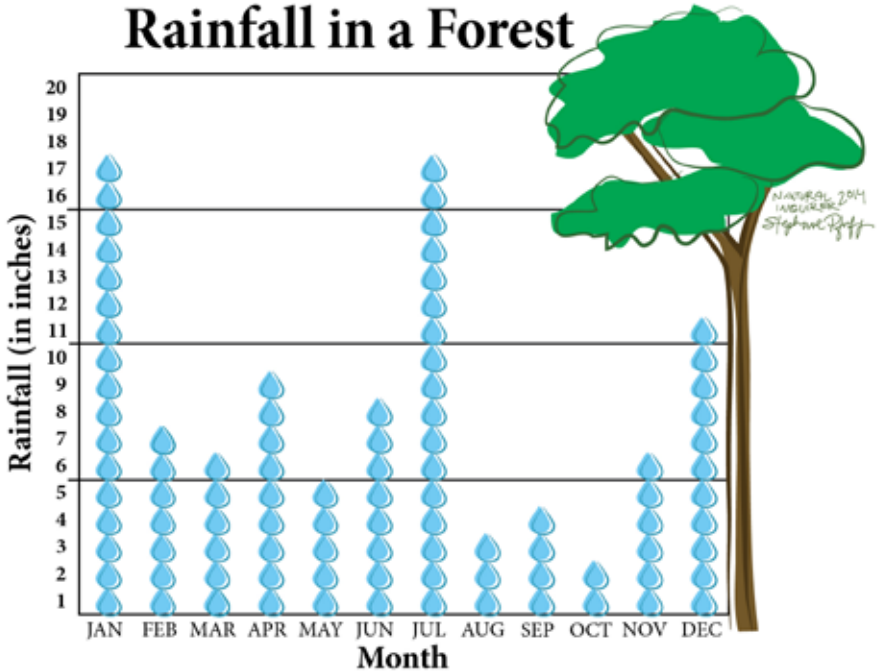
Photo: Forest Service

Ms. Laseter used a rain gauge to help her answer her question. A rain gauge measures how much rain, or **precipitation**, falls in an area.



Photo: Babas McDonald

Ms. Laseter **observed** that rain **patterns** are changing over time. She discovered that changing rain patterns can affect forests and streams.



Scientists ask and answer questions about the patterns that they observe. What is one pattern that you have observed in the world? What is one question that you have about this pattern?



When more rain or less rain falls, the forest can be affected. What change do you see in this forest?



Critical Thinking Questions:



- The trees in a forest need water to survive. What other things do trees need to survive?
- Ms. Laseter observed that rain patterns are changing over time. If less rain falls each year, what do you think might happen to trees?
 - What do you think would happen to the streams?
- Ms. Laseter likes to ask questions. Why do you think it is important to ask questions?

Glossary:

atmosphere (**at**-mə-sfīr): Air that surrounds Earth.



affect (a-**fekt**): To make something or someone different.

Earth (**ə**rth): The planet on which we live.

evaporate (i-**və**-pə-rāt): To give off moisture.

forest (**fō**r-əst): A very large area of trees.

observe (əb-**zərv**): To watch something.

pattern (**pa**-tərn): Something that happens in a regular and repeated way.

precipitation (pri-**si**-pə-**tā**-shən): Water or the amount of water that falls to Earth as hail, mist, rain, sleet, or snow.

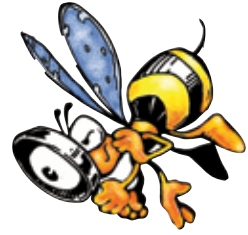
solve (**sōlv**): To find the correct answer to.

survive (sər-**vīv**): To remain alive.

provide (prə-**vīd**): To supply something that is useful or needed.

stream (**strēm**): A body of running water (as a river or brook) flowing on Earth.

Try This!



Ms. Laseter used a rain gauge to measure precipitation over a period of time. In this activity, you will also use a rain gauge to measure precipitation over a period of time.

Your teacher may bring a rain gauge to class. You can also build your own rain gauge by using the following directions. Write the amount of rainfall each day for 2 weeks using the chart on page 22. Observe and check whether the sky is clear, mostly clear, somewhat cloudy, or very cloudy each day. What do you observe about the cloud cover each day and the amount of rain in the rain gauge?

To make your own rain gauge:

Materials needed

- A clean can that once held canned vegetables or fruit
- Duct tape
- Ruler
- Chart on page 22

1. Your teacher will bring a clean can to class. This can be a can that held canned vegetables or fruit.
2. Your teacher will tape the top rim with duct tape.
3. Find an open area outside to leave your rain gauge.

Each day, go outside and measure how much rain has fallen. To measure, insert your ruler so that it reaches the bottom of the can. You should put the 1-inch end in first.

4. Pull the ruler out and observe where the water reached on the ruler. Write the number that the water level is closest to on the ruler. An adult may need to help you.
5. After you have written the number, empty the can and place it back in the open area.
6. Continue to measure the number of inches of rain in your rain gauge each day for 2 weeks.

Precipitation Chart

Day and Time	Amount of Rain-fall in Inches	Sky Conditions (Check One)			
		Clear	Mostly Clear	A Little Cloudy	Very Cloudy

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Note: For more background information and lesson plans, visit <http://www.naturalinquirer.org> and click on “*Natural Inquirer* Reader Series.”

Background Information: Precipitation is important for all plants, including trees. Trees and forests respond differently when they receive more or less precipitation. Over time, more or less precipitation can even change the type of tree species growing in a forest. Ms. Laseter was interested in discovering how trees and forests might be affected by more or less precipitation over time. Students can be challenged to think of whether animals might also be affected by more or less precipitation. For more information about this research, read “Flow Down!” in the *Natural IQ* Southern United States Climate Change edition at <http://www.naturalinquirer.org>.

Production Staff

Julia Dobish, Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association

Jessica Nickelsen, Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association

Babs McDonald, USDA Forest Service

Michelle Andrews, University of Georgia

Emily Melear-Daniels, Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association

Forest Service

Thomas L. Tidwell, Chief

Jimmy L. Reaves, Deputy Chief, Research and Development

James Hubbard, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry

Daina Apple, Acting Director, Science Quality Services

Bill Helin, Acting Director, Conservation Education

Rob Doudrick, Director, Southern Research Station

Jennifer Plyler, Assistant Director, Southern Research Station

Stephanie Laseter, Hydrologist, Forest Economist, Southern Research Station

Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association

Carlton Murrey, Executive Director

Jennifer Grantham, Chair

Adam DeWitte, Director of Education

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Be a Possibility Possum

Scientists make things possible;
They ask and answer questions.
You can make things possible
If you follow these suggestions.

Observe your world and wonder;
Ask how, what, why, and who?
Ask and answer questions
To make things possible for you.

Wonder is a good thing;
It is very plain to see.
When I ask and answer questions,
I make things possible for me.

