

Earth Day Activity: Explore with *The Lorax*!

Event description: Experience Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* like never before - on a walk through Hawk Valley Farm! In honor of Earth Day, learn about the Lorax and how he "speaks for the trees" as you find and read the colorful pages scattered throughout the four-acre, historic conservation property. After you finish this environmental classic, join us for a Lorax craft and reflect on how YOU, too, can "speak for the trees." Please RSVP to 978-934-0030 or to Carolyn at cmeklenburg(at)lowelllandtrust.org by 5PM on Monday, April 17 so the correct number of craft materials can be ordered. Limited to 30 participants. Ages 5 - 10.

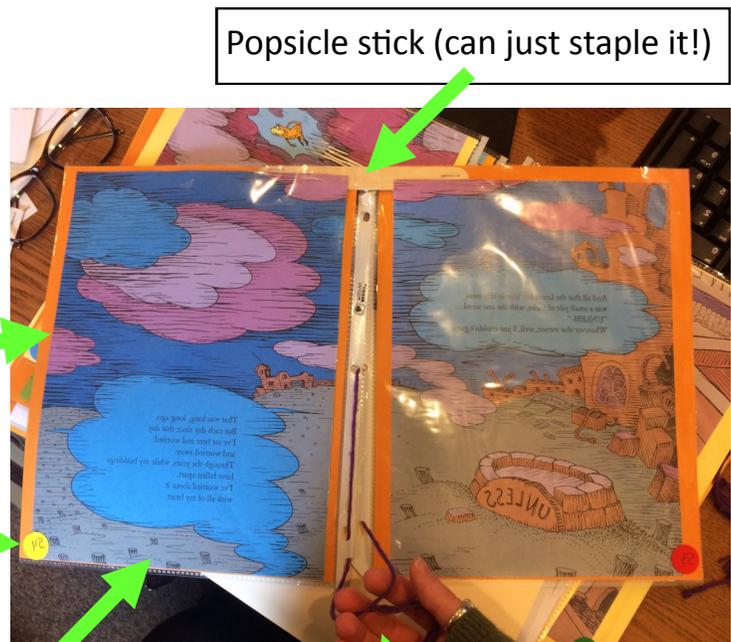
1) "StoryWalk®" through Hawk Valley Farm

StoryWalk® is a copyrighted term and can only be used by certain organizations, so when describing the event, the folks at StoryWalk® ask that it be called something else.

From their website, <http://www.kellogghubbard.org/storywalk> :

"StoryWalk® is an innovative and delightful way for children — and adults! — to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time. Laminated pages from a children's book are attached to wooden stakes, which are installed along an outdoor path. As you stroll down the trail, you're directed to the next page in the story...StoryWalk® was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and has developed with the help of Rachel Senechal, Kellogg-Hubbard Library."

As StoryWalk® does not have *The Lorax* available, I created my own pages.



Popsicle stick (can just staple it!)

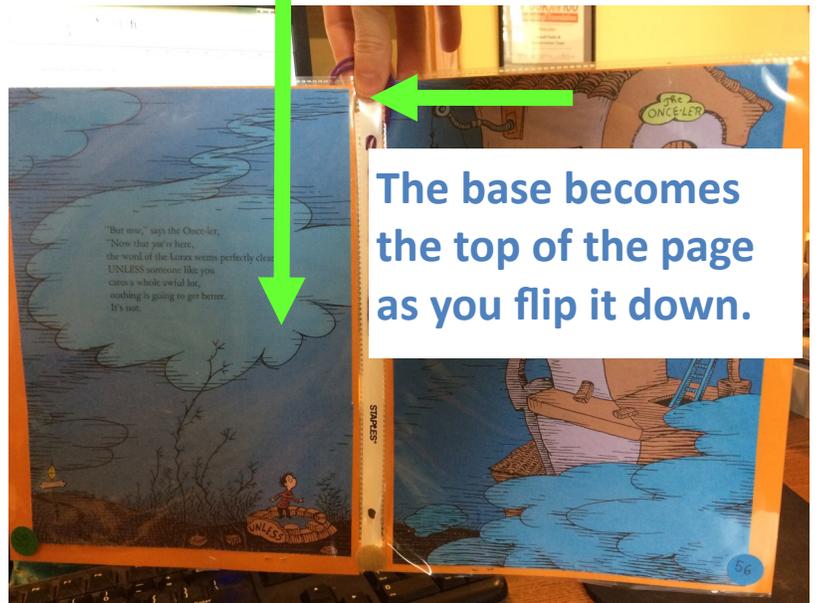
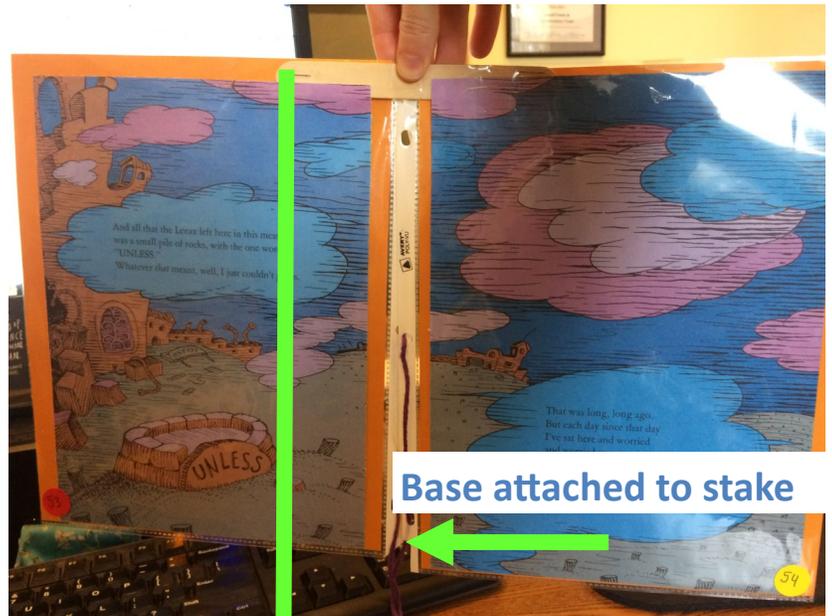
Cardstock backing

Circle stickers w/ page #

Plastic sleeve (tape or staple it closed so the pages won't fall out).

Yarn tied in a loose loop, with room at the base so it can be tied to the stake.

Be sure to place the pages in order and in the correct orientation so that when flipped, the next two pages can be read. As most books have double-sided pages, copies will have to be made to be sure each page can be read.



When placing stakes around the property to set up the story, be sure that **you can see the next stake from where you're standing**—that way, the trail participants are supposed to follow is made clear. This is particularly important so that they read the pages in order.

2. Lorax Mustaches

The Lorax is most recognizable for his big yellow mustache! There are many templates on line for making your own. The one I used is on the next page.

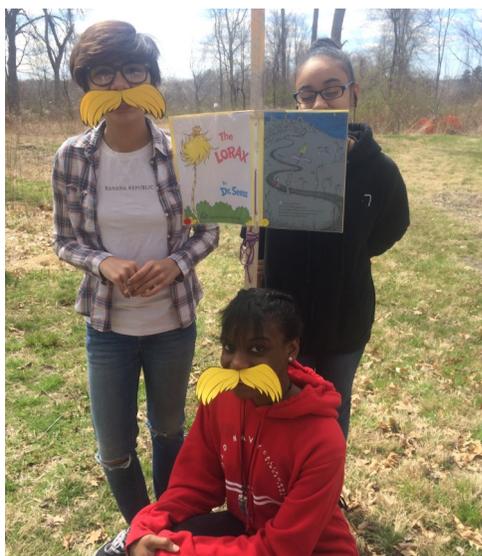
Materials:

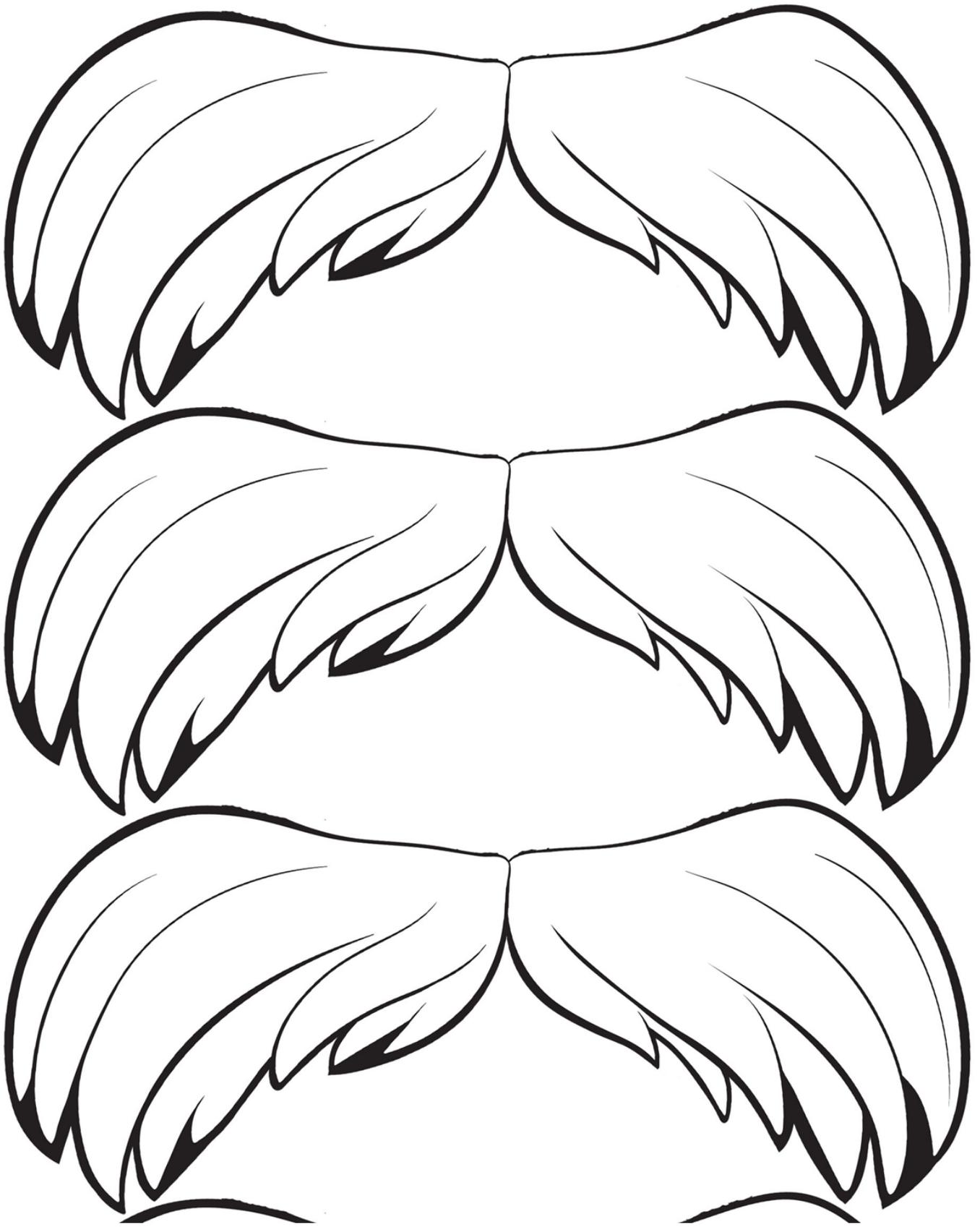
- Mustache template
- Yellow cardstock
- Popsicle sticks
- Masking tape
- Scissors



Kids can cut out the mustaches themselves, or with help, and just tape it to the popsicle stick. This is fun to do before they read the story, so they can “be a Lorax” as they read!

Our Compass Freshman ladies were a little more serious, and just used Velcro® on their faces...





3. Truffula Trees

In *The Lorax*, the truffua tree is the critical species that is destroyed for industry, which has a ripple effect on other ecosystems in the area (the Brown Bar-ba-loots have no more truffula fruit to eat, the Swomee-Swans can't sing due to smog, and the Humming-Fish cannot live in water polluted with industrial waste). As the child at the end of the story becomes the steward of the remaining truffula seed, having kids make their own truffula trees to take home serves as a reminder of the importance of environmental stewardship.

Materials:

- Toilet paper rolls OR paper towel rolls cut in half
- Pipe cleaners in a variety of colors
- Cardstock in a variety of colors, pre-cut into circles
- Scissors
- Markers



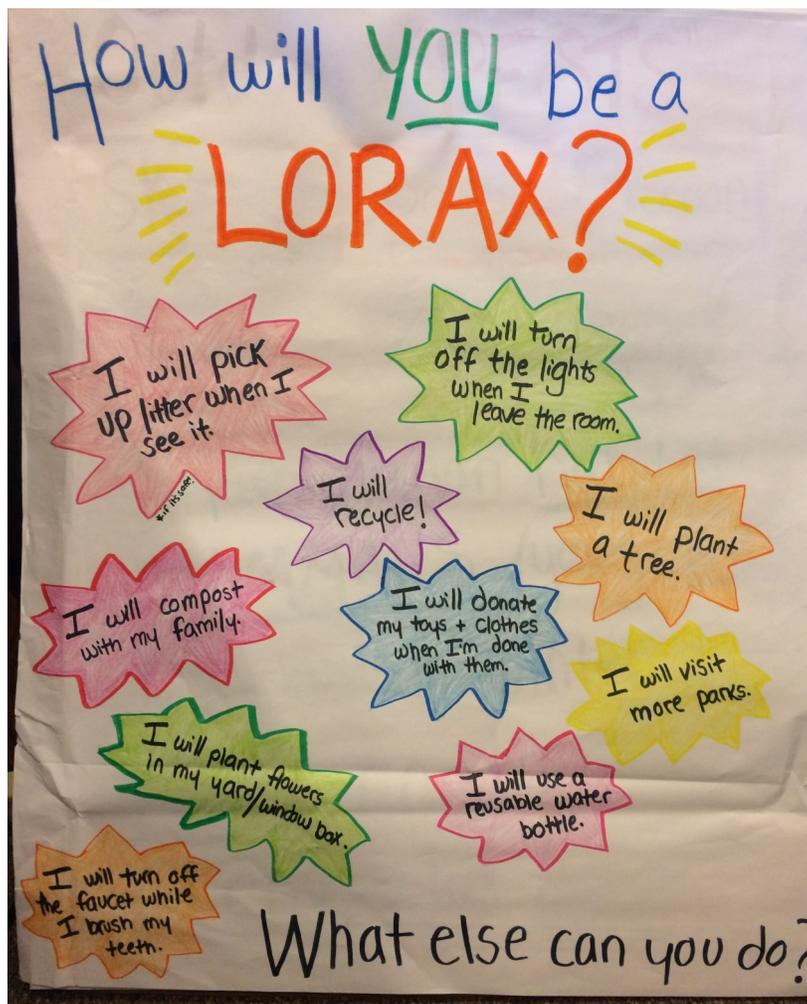
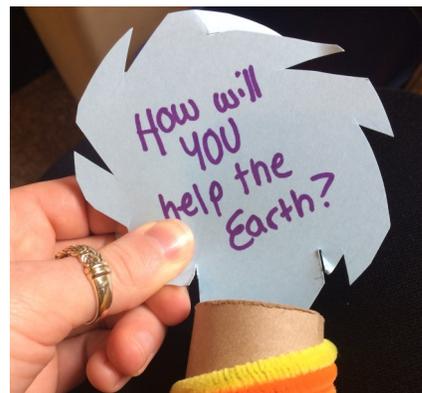
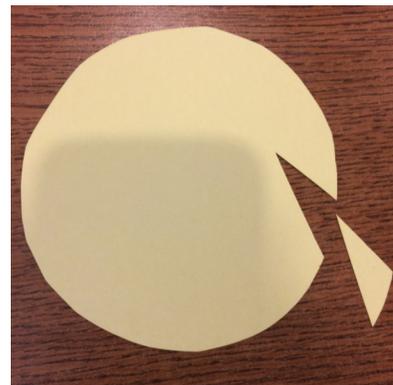
Base of the tree:

- Cut a small notch in the top of the roll.
- Select two or three different pipe cleaners. Bend the tips so they will fit into the notch, and then wind them down the tube until they reach the bottom. Cut another notch to secure the pipe cleaners at the bottom.
- If you want more “stripes” around the tree, twist two pipe cleaners together and then continue to spiral them around until you reach the bottom.



Top of the tree:

- Pre-cut circles of card stock that are about 3.5" - 4" in diameter.
- Each child can shape their own tree. To get the basic "truffula shape," cut triangles around the outside of the circle.
- Cut slots in the bottom of the circle according to the width of the tube so it can sit securely on top of the base.
- Encourage the child to write something they can do to help the Earth. It is helpful to provide some examples as such.



This event works well if people are allowed to come and go as they please. This avoids any crowding around pages of the book, or the craft tables. It's best if each craft is at its own table. During PLAYcation 2017, we had 20 children and 7 adults pass through, although we could have handled more.

Note: While the event is child-focused, having information for parents can get them engaged in the science behind current environmental problems. For example, I placed our “Climate Change” display next to the craft table, and noted many parents reading it while their child worked on their projects.

