

Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center's
Wilderness Investigations
High School

Wilderness 101/Lesson 4
The Wilderness Act: What and Why?

Goals:

Explore key elements of the Wilderness Act -

- Why did Congress establish the National Wilderness Preservation System? (From Section 2. (a) of the Wilderness Act)
- How is wilderness defined in the act? (See Section 2. (c) of the Wilderness Act)
- Prohibition of certain uses in wilderness (See Section 4. (c) of the Wilderness Act)

Investigation Objectives

Audience: 9-12 grades.

- Students will become familiar with key pieces of basic information contained in the Wilderness Act. (Behavior)
- Students will be given a copy of the Wilderness Act to study and discuss.(Condition)
- Students will be able to articulate why Congress designates wilderness, how they define wilderness, and the role of self-control and constraint in using/managing designated wilderness. (Degree)

Common Core Standard Connections

NOTE: See Common Core Standards sections to see listed objectives for this and other lessons/activities.

Time Requirement: 50 minutes

Materials/Resources Needed and Pre-Investigation Tasks

- Wilderness Act of 1964 (see Appendix)
- Highlighters or colored pencils for each student

Teacher Background

Before teaching this lesson study Sections 2 and 4 of the Wilderness Act and be prepared to highlight key components in classroom discussions.

Step-by-Step Presentation Instructions

Key Elements of the Wilderness Act (Part 1)

- Make sure students have highlighters or some other method of identifying parts of the Wilderness Act (as directed).
- Refer students to Section 1, Section 2, and Section 4 (c) of the Wilderness Act (a copy of the entire Act is located in the Appendix of this curriculum).
- Have individual students go through Section 2. (a) and use highlighters to showcase the reasons Congress felt compelled to establish wilderness.
 - Discuss and make sure the following are brought up:
 1. To assure that increasing population... expanding population... growing mechanization... does not occupy/modify all areas of the U.S.
 2. (That those things outlined in #1) ...leave no lands designated for preservation and protection in their *natural condition*
 3. To assure an enduring resource of wilderness for present and future generations
 4. For the use and enjoyment of the American people... in a way that leaves them unimpaired... as wilderness
 5. Protection of these areas
 6. Preservation of their wilderness character
 7. Gathering and dissemination of information

Key Elements of the Wilderness Act (Part 2)

- Now, we defined wilderness last week. Let's see how Congress defines it in the Wilderness Act:
 - Have students go to Section 2. (c)
 1. Highlight main points of the definition (individually)
 2. In small groups, discuss these main points
 3. Bring the discussion to the whole group and clarify points from the definition

Key Elements of the Wilderness Act (Part 3)

- Write SELF CONTROL and CONSTRAINT on the board or flip chart
- Ask for ideas about what these words mean
- Discuss times in life when we practice self-control and/or constraint for the good of the *greater community* of fellow citizens:
 - Stop signs, not throwing cigarettes out the window, not littering, obeying speed limits, respecting property of others, etc.
 - Why do we do this? (for the greater good)

- Explain that designated wilderness requires this same sort of mature approach -- We don't do just *anything* there because we're *trying* to protect wilderness character.
- Look at Section 4. (c) and discuss prohibited activities
 1. No commercial enterprise
 2. No permanent roads
 3. No temporary roads
 4. No use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats
 5. No landing of aircraft
 6. No other forms of mechanical transport
 7. No structure or installation
- Why? (Refer back to the Definition of Wilderness)

Extension: Individual assignment

- Have each student complete the following sheet and assess their grasp of Sections 2 and 4 of the Wilderness Act.

Wilderness Act Assignment

The Wilderness Act: Sections 2 and 4

Student: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____

Instructions: Use your copy of the Wilderness Act to find the correct responses to the questions or prompts below.

1. In Section 2 (a) Congress outlines why they felt it necessary to create a National Wilderness Preservation System in 1964. Study that section and then list three of the reasons Congress outlined in Section 2 (a):

- _____

- _____

- _____

2. In Section 2 (c) of the Wilderness Act, Congress defines wilderness. Study their definition and then, on the lines below, write a definition paragraph of your own using their key points:

3. Certain activities or uses are prohibited in designated wilderness. Study Section 4 (c) of the Wilderness Act and then list 8 prohibited uses as outlined therein:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

