

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

**Wilderness 101/Lesson 5**  
***This Place was Once Wilderness Too!***

**Goal:** Students will imagine/speculate what their local landscape looked like when it too met the wilderness definition.

**Investigation Objectives**

**Audience:** 9-12 grades.

- Students will be able to communicate past wilderness elements of their place. (Behavior)
- Students will explore with their senses and imaginations what their place might have looked like when it too met the definition of wilderness. (Condition)
- Students will create a visual image of their place when it was wilderness-like. (Degree)

**Common Core Standard Connections**

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

**Time Requirement:** Two 50 minute blocks

**Location:** In and out of class

**Materials/Resources Needed and Pre-Investigation Tasks**

- Blank paper and clipboards for small working groups
- Student journals or notebooks
- Pencils
- Posterboard or large sheets of blank paper for *This Place was Once Wilderness Maps*.
- *Pencils, colored pencils, markers, etc.*

**Teacher Background**

Students have explored many ideas related to wilderness so far during their Wilderness Investigations experience. They have been exposed to the following:

- There was once now word for wilderness amongst Native People;

- Some sought to get rid of wilderness for a variety of reasons (agriculture, fear, growth of communities, natural resource extraction, etc.);
- Many citizens of a young United States sought to preserve wilderness and wild places;
- The Wilderness Act was passed in 1964.

Few of us see our present locations as the wilderness landscape it once was. This lesson presents that concept with the goal of helping students understand the story of their place and the value of wilderness preservation of some public lands.

### **Step-by-Step Presentation Instructions**

#### **Step 1: Introduction/Review**

- Do a quick review of the Wilderness Timeline concept and the main key points of the Wilderness Act.

#### **Step 2: wild → wilderness → Wilderness**

- Ask: Are there wild places that are not wilderness?
  - Wild means essentially that no one is controlling or managing them; small or large
  - Examples around our town?
- Ask: Are there different kinds of wilderness (larger areas of *untrammelled* landscapes?
  - Little “w” (Not protected as wilderness but defacto wilderness at this time).
  - Big “W” (Protected landscapes under the Wilderness Act OR areas proposed as WILDERNESS).

#### **Step 3: This Place was Once *Wilderness Too!***

##### **Part 1**

- Head outdoors (TAKE pencils, clipboards, blank sheets of paper or journals) and point out/discuss natural landscape features.
- Have each student begin a list of natural BIOTIC inhabitants in this place 500 years ago.
- Share lists and have students increase their own.
- Handout clipboards and blank sheets of paper. In small groups, students should do a birds-eye-view visual/map and place main landscape features (thus creating a basic map with the top north, etc.) while leaving out human additions (roads, buildings, etc.).
  - Have them add biotic features where they might belong.

## Part 2

- Back indoors, teams create visual images of their place as wilderness (maps or birds-eye-view images, etc.) on posterboard or on large sheets of blank paper.
- When finished, post maps/visuals around the room and provide time for students to study the work of other students.

### **Step 4: Conclusion**

- In this very place was once wilderness—unspoiled, untrammelled.
- Through time that wilderness status has changed.
- Express gratitude for the fact that we have preserved and protected some of our country as WILDERNESS.

### **Extension Ideas**

#### Journal Idea:

- Have students create written descriptions of their place when it was wilderness.
- Check out the *Wild Journaling* section of the WI Appendix for ideas for journaling in and about wild places.

