

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

Wilderness Profile #6
Shenandoah Wilderness

Common Core Standard Connections

Standards addressed will vary depending on how the teacher chooses to approach the lesson and/or activities.

Teacher background:

When one reflects on wilderness they likely imagine untouched landscapes—remnants of a once much larger wilderness place. Although the Shenandoah Wilderness certainly shouts, “WILDERNESS” to anyone fortunate enough to visit, its past suggests a landscape once worn out. Worn out? Yes, this recovering wilderness was cleared, inhabited, farmed, logged, and burned since the early 1700’s.

A study of this wild place allows students a window into the healing powers of nature in the eastern deciduous Appalachian forest. Wildlife abounds, remnants of human history are there for those interested in looking, and wildflowers bloom in a show of diversity and abundance. Located within Shenandoah National Park (42% of the park is wilderness) and entirely inside the state of Virginia, this special place provides refuge for the wilderness and those solitude-seekers who visit.

Instructions for the teacher:

To help students become familiar with the Shenandoah Wilderness choose one or more of the following:

- Use information from *Teacher Background* and the *Student Information Sheet* to prepare and present a mini-lesson about this wilderness.
- If students have already started their *U.S. Wilderness Area Field Guide* (started in Wilderness Profile #1) have them add entries by choosing items from the list below:
 - Photocopy the *Student Information Sheet*, have students go through it and then create a *compare and contrast* list by choosing another wilderness and seeing how they *stack up* side-by-side.

- Using the *Student Information Sheet*, have students choose one of the following creative projects:
 - Write a fictional story that tells about a group of Native People 9,000 years ago living in or moving through what is now the Shenandoah Wilderness.
 - Paint a picture showing farmers in 1750 clearing land and creating farms in what is now wilderness.
 - Compose a poem that features the first meeting of Native People and European settlers in this place.
 - Create a day-to-day diary of a young man or woman who have come to the area with their family to log in the early 1800's.

- Use the wilderness map, included in the WI set, to locate Shenandoah Wilderness and its geographic relationship to places near and far.

- Have students choose one of the animals found in the wilderness.
 - Conduct research to learn about the animals natural history.
 - Write reports, illustrate habitats, and create posters with the items you create.

- Create a *U.S. Wilderness Area* classroom display or place on class webpage. Continue to add information as new areas are focused on.
 - Just a few wilderness areas are focused on as part of *Wilderness Investigations*. Have students choose non-focused areas to research, present and post on the bulletin board.

- For more information about the Shenandoah Wilderness go to www.wilderness.net.

Wilderness Profile

Wilderness

Student Information Sheet



Remnants of Human History—Shenandoah Wilderness

(from Wilderness.net; Image #1818)

What's the story?

- Designated as Federally protected wilderness within Shenandoah National Park in 1976 by Congress.
- 42% of the Park is wilderness.
- Managed by the National Park Service, the wilderness has a total of 79,579 acres.
- Located entirely within the state of Virginia.
- The story of people is the story of the Shenandoah Wilderness:
 - Evidence of use of the wilderness area by Native People goes back 8,000 – 9,000 years ago.
 - Between 1750 and 1850 many hundreds of families built homesteads, mills and stores and planted orchards and crops. The mountains were logged and minerals were mined. Vacation resorts were established.
 - Over 340 structures in Shenandoah National Park are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

- Fire historically played an important role in the natural renewal of forest ecosystems. Fire suppression created an imbalance that is just now being adjusted as fire once again plays its role on the wilderness landscape.
- Wildlife is a major feature of this place:
 - Some of the MAMMALS found here: Chipmunks, groundhogs, deer, bear, bobcats, squirrels, skunks, raccoons, and opossums.
 - Over 200 species of birds have been identified in the area: (including) ruffed grouse, ravens, juncos, barred owls, and wild turkeys.
 - Reptiles: Timber rattlesnakes and copperheads are found here.
- 175 miles of trails traverse the wilderness.
 - 101 miles of the famous Appalachian Trail are with Shenandoah National Park.
- Some water flowing out of the wilderness flow all the way to Chesapeake Bay.



Autumn in the Shenandoah Wilderness

(from Wilderness.net; Image #2996)