

Resource Immersion Outline  
Wilderness  
5/2001

Theme: Shenandoah National Park's designated wilderness becomes more than a legal line on a map after people experience its physical characteristics and forge emotional connections to the ideals which created it.

Goal: Through their personal exploration of Shenandoah's designated wilderness, visitors will gain an appreciation for wilderness and will become active advocates of wild lands.

Objectives: At the end of the program, visitors will be able to:

- 1) state the purpose and meaning of the 1964 Wilderness Act
- 2) state their own definition of wilderness
- 3) state the unique significance of Shenandoah's wilderness
- 4) list at least 4 benefits of designated wilderness
- 5) identify the National Wilderness Preservation System
- 6) list at least 4 ways they can contribute to the preservation of wild lands

So what?: Wilderness as a resource benefits all people emotionally, psychologically, mentally and physically. Getting into and exploring wilderness on all of these levels increases one's appreciation and support of wilderness.

Props: maps of National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

Large dry erase board or blackboard

Paper

Pens

dictionary

Folders containing:

“journal” (made for participants to take and keep, with inspirational quotes)

copy of Wilderness Act

maps of SNP districts showing trails and designated wilderness

Leave No Trace reference tag

Outline:

Part 1 – morning meeting at visitor center

I. Introduction

A. welcome

B. self

C. program details

D. theme

1. How many of you have been to SNP before this visit?

2. How many of you have been in SNP's wilderness area before?

3. That's what I encourage you to do today – to go wild and explore Shenandoah's wilderness – physically, mentally, and emotionally
4. Before sending you out into the wilderness, I want to share with you some thoughts and information about Shenandoah's wilderness, and hear some of your thoughts
5. First ask you to write down a few things

## II. Map activity

- A. hand out paper and pens
- B. ask participants to write down answers to following questions (have questions written on board for all to see):
  1. what is wilderness?
  2. how much of the USA is wilderness?
  3. Write down the following NPS sites –  
Yellowstone, Glacier, Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah
  4. is wilderness important? Why or why not?
- C. What is wilderness?
  1. Ask participants for answer to first question – write phrases on board
  2. state that wilderness is all that and more
    - a. wilderness is an experience and a place
    - b. definitions and perspectives of wilderness have changed throughout history
  3. USA has a definition of wilderness, written in 1964 – anyone know the amazing event that happened that year? – President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act, for “the permanent good of the whole people”
  4. Have someone read excerpt of Wilderness Act (section 2c first sentence)
    - a. Discuss word “trammled”
    - b. Have someone look up in dictionary and read
  5. What does this mean? We'll explore that later
- D. NWPS
  1. the Wilderness Act created a system of wilderness, the National Wilderness Preservation System – a system that encompasses the entire United States, has been added to in the succeeding 37 years, now congressionally designated wilderness in almost every state in the USA
  2. is there wilderness in your state?
  3. Hand out maps of NWPS for participants to find their state and wilderness in it
  4. Look at entire USA – how much wilderness would you say is in the country?
    - a. take guesses
    - b. have everyone hold up hand – this represents whole USA – point to tip of little finger – that's how much designated wilderness is in USA, about 4.5% - ½ is in Alaska
- E. Shenandoah wilderness
  1. NPS manages most wilderness
  2. Which of the 4 parks you wrote down do you think has the most wilderness? (don't peek on map!)
  3. Shenandoah does! 40% of Shenandoah NP is designated wilderness, the others have none

- a. why don't they have any? Are they wild? Yes, have components that you all listed and that are written in the wilderness act. They have proposed wilderness, yet it takes an act of congress to create designated wilderness, the ultimate protection our country can give to land
- F. what does this ultimate protection mean?
  - 1. Wilderness managed in specific ways, written into Wilderness Act
    - a. show list of do's and don't's (from section 4c and 4d)
    - b. this is what you can expect when you enter into a wilderness area
    - c. though responsibility up to visitors too – whether they enter into designated wilderness or not – all of our actions, inside and outside of wilderness effect the character and integrity of wilderness

### III. personal exploration

- A. the last question is up to you to answer
- B. now is your time to go out into the wilderness, to explore the opportunities of “solitude, physical and mental challenge, scientific study, inspiration, and primitive recreation”
- C. hand out folders of information
  - 1. inside you will find maps of Shenandoah National Park, complete with overlooks, trails and designated wilderness area
  - 2. you now can choose one, or more, of these overlooks to stop at or trails to explore – you can hike the whole route, go a little ways, find a rock to sit on by a stream or with a view and contemplate – the way you explore is up to you
  - 3. inside is a small journal for you to take notes, write thoughts, poetry, questions, draw images, write your own wilderness act
    - a. there are quotes to contemplate and questions to guide your thoughts printed on the paper
    - b. if your schedule allows, please meet back here at \_\_\_\_\_ to share our thoughts and discoveries, and I'll let you know where you can find more information about wilderness
- D. safety tips
  - 1. be careful where you step – watch for wildlife, especially if you are quiet, you will have opportunity to see much more
  - 2. tick precautions
  - 3. bring plenty of water, snacks, dress appropriately, bring raingear
  - 4. please follow the principles of Leave No Trace
    - a. especially principle #2 - try to stay on durable surfaces – stay on the trail, but if you go off, step on rocks or hard ground, not on fragile plants
    - b. also #7 – be considerate of other visitors, take breaks away from trails (make sure it is a durable surface!)
  - 5. Be wild and be safe!

## Possible quotes for journal pages

Areas shall be managed to promote and perpetuate the wilderness character of the land and its specific values of solitude, physical and mental challenge, scientific study, inspiration, and primitive recreation” – Congress, Act, 1976

[Wilderness] is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it can bring briefly, as vacation and rest, into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there – important, that is, simply as idea.... We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, part of the geography of hope. – Wallace Stegner, “Coda: Wilderness Letter”, 1960

The wilderness itself is historic... the historic process that gave protection and allowed the return of wild nature is continuing... Shenandoah is both a preserving and a creating park. – Darwin Lambert, Administrative History of SNP, 1979

Shenandoah is one of the great promises of the Wilderness Act, that we can dedicate formerly abused areas where the primeval scene can be restored by natural forces, so that we can have a truly National Wilderness Preservation System... that there are no area in the eastern US that can meet the test of qualification under the definition of wilderness in the Wilderness Act is just not so. – Senator Frank Church, Senate Subcommittee Hearing, 1972

Wilderness is a damp and dreary place where all manner of wild beasts dash about uncooked! – anonymous

As I sat there on the rock I realized that, in spite of the closeness of civilization and the changes that hemmed it in, this remnant of the old wilderness would speak to me of silence and solitude, of belonging and wonder and beauty. Though the point was only a small part of the vastness..., from it I could survey the whole. While it would be mine for only a short time, this.. would grow into my life and into the lives of all who shared it with me. – Sigurd Olson, Listening Point

In scenery you see more than you can absorb. In wilderness you absorb more than you can see. – Tom Detrich

We recognized, through its relatively small size, its already established levels and patterns of visitor use ..that our wilderness area was not of the highest order.. while our wilderness is not supreme, we will not allow its primeval character, and its opportunities for solitude, inspiration, and physical and mental challenges to decline. Furthermore, we will strive, and might be able to improve its overall quality. – Superintendent Jacobson, 1976

Thus always does history, whether of marsh or market place, end in paradox .. all conservation of wilderness is self-defeating, for to cherish we must see and fondle and when enough have seen and fondled, there is no wilderness left to cherish. – Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

Wilderness is two things: fact and feeling. It is a fund of knowledge and a spring of influence. It is the ultimate source of health – terrestrial and human. - Benton MacKaye, Scientific Monthly, 1950.

Our expansive civilization... will eventually modify for human exploitation every last area on earth – except those that through human foresight and wisdom have been deliberately set aside for preservation. – Howard Zahniser

There is a need in our planning to secure the preservation of some areas that are so managed as to be left unmanaged – areas that are undeveloped by man's mechanical tools and in every way unmodified by his civilization. – Howard Zahniser

To know wilderness is to know a profound humility, to recognize one's littleness, to sense dependence and interdependence, indebtedness, and responsibility. - Howard Zahniser

We have to come to realize that we ourselves are creatures of the wild, that in wilderness we are at home, that in maintain ... our access to wilderness, we are not... escaping from life but rather are keeping ourselves in touch with our true reality, the fundamental reality of the universe of which we are part. - Howard Zahniser

The true wilderness experience is one, not of escaping but of finding one's self by seeking the wilderness. - Howard Zahniser

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. – John Muir

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. – Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac