

A WALK IN THE FOREST: INTEGRATED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VISUAL ART ACTIVITIES

Introduction: The 1911 Weeks Act: Saving the Forests of the White Mountains



THOMAS COLE, "THE NOTCH OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS," 1839. COURTESY OF THE NH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

By 1900, the White Mountain forests of New Hampshire were disappearing at an alarming rate. What was once an area with vast forests and incredible natural scenery was becoming an area blighted by clear cuts and burned-over mountain slopes. Unregulated forestry practices in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought devastating results that impacted the environment and the landscape of the White Mountains. Tourism, logging, pulp mills, hotels, hikers, farmers, and railroads all competed for resources in the area. A growing number of advocates called for protection of the White Mountains and its forests. As forest devastation grew, all concerned with the long-term vitality of the White Mountains joined the call for change. What could be done to save the mountain forests? Conservationists called for the purchase of private lands to establish a protected national forest.

In the end, efforts of the forest advocates succeeded in creating a national movement, resulting in the passing of the 1911 Weeks Act. The White Mountains and its forests were saved. Today there is a wealth of photographs, personal accounts, and calls for action that demonstrate the efforts of the forest advocates, the original beauty of the White Mountains, and the negative effects of unsustainable practices on the environment, landscape, and local communities.

The accompanying activities have been designed to use the history, stories, photographs, and conservation efforts resulting in the 1911 Weeks Act as a catalyst for exploration, investigation, and discussion of the importance of forested and natural areas. Students will explore the history of the conservation and progressive movement and the connections among its messages and actions and their own community and personal feelings about the environment and nature. They will look at the debates and arguments among the forest advocates and industry and the role that sustainable forestry plays, benefiting community and industry.

The activities and essential questions have been designed to meet a range of ages and abilities. They are foundations that may be modified and changed to meet the needs of educators in their classroom and community. The following sites contain further information and additional resources for these activities:

logginginlincoln.com

whitemountainhistory.org

plymouth.edu/go/WeeksExhibit

THE FORESTS: MURALS THAT EXPRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL AREAS TO COMMUNITIES

Essential Questions

- Why are forests important to our communities and you?
- What makes the forest beautiful?
- How and why are the conservationists' actions important?
- What can you do to protect a forest?

Materials

(Materials and resources may be modified to meet the needs of students and teachers.)

- Paper
- Tempera paint
- Tape
- Pencils
- Paint brushes
- Paint trays
- Water containers

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify and investigate the conservationists and advocates who sought to save the forests of the White Mountains and identify and analyze the key issues each used in their conservationist and advocacy efforts in terms of importance and context.
- Compare and contrast the positive and negative relationships and connections between community and natural areas.
- Work collaboratively to design and paint a mural that expresses their personal and collaborative statements of the importance of a natural area in their community.
- Personally and collaboratively explore, identify, and express why something is important to conserve.



"WHITE MOUNTAIN PATH, C. 1900," PHOTOGRAPHS, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, NH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



"SCENE AT CAMP #12, SEPT. 1903," PHOTOGRAPHS, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, NH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Description of Lesson

This activity is an exploration and discussion of the movement to save the White Mountains and its forests that resulted in the 1911 Weeks Act. It uses the history, stories, and photographs from this period as a catalyst for exploration, investigation, and discussion of the importance of forested and natural areas. It focuses on the environment and landscape of the White Mountains and why conservationists, tourists, industry, and residents found this location to be beautiful and important to save from unsustainable practices of industry. Students will look at the debates and arguments between these groups and the role that forested areas and industry play within a community. The lesson will connect the advocacy and conservation movements and value of the landscape of the White Mountains to areas and landscapes in the students' community and provide them the opportunity to express why they feel a specific area or landscape is beautiful, valuable, and important to them and their community and worth conserving.

Anticipated Length of the Lesson

* *Class time may vary from school to school. The sequence may be modified to fit to a school's instructional schedule.*

30 to 40 minutes each class
3 to 4 class days in length

Sequence of Daily Lessons

The following is an outline of the possible sequence of procedures for the activity. This is a foundation that may be modified as needed by the instructor.

Day 1: The teacher will introduce the history of the 1911 Weeks Act. The class will explore, investigate, and discuss the photographic evidence of the landscape of the White Mountains and the effects of unsustainable logging and industry upon it. They will explore, investigate, and discuss the motivation of conservationists and advocates, the aesthetic qualities of the White Mountains, and the environmental importance of the area. The class will identify and discuss areas in the community that are aesthetically beautiful and important to save. The students will explore and discuss the natural elements and details that make these areas beautiful and important to the environment, to the students, and to their community.

Day 2: The teacher will refocus the students on the 1911 Weeks Act, forests of the White Mountains, and the natural area in their community they choose as important to save. The teacher will introduce Zhu Danian's *Forest Song* (1979), Jane Golden's *Redwood Forest* (1986), and Alan Sonfist's *Autobiography of a Hemlock Forest* (1983) to the class and discuss the ways the artists visually depicted forests in the works of art (these are suggested works of art to use in the lesson). The teacher and students will discuss how they could paint a mural of the natural area they want to conserve and show others through painted images why that area is important. Students will work collaboratively to create a mural of the area to be saved that will visually express the aesthetic qualities, natural elements, and value they explored and discussed.

Day 3: The class will complete their mural and choose an area to display it that can be seen by fellow students. As a group, they will discuss the completed mural, its outcome, aesthetic qualities, and its representation of their feelings of the importance of the area to be saved.

* *Modifications: The teacher can predetermine a local community area for the lesson to focus on. An urban or suburban area or neighborhood may be substituted for a natural area within the community.*

Art History Component

Teacher selected images from 1911 Weeks Act Exhibition

Suggested Visual Art Resources

Jane Golden, *Redwood Forest* (1986) lamurals.org/MuralistPages/GoldenJ.html

Alan Sonfist, *Autobiography of a Hemlock Forest* (1983) alansonfist.com

The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry lynnecherry.com

* *Additional materials and resources may be researched and added by the teacher.*

Assessment Plan

Teachers may assess students formally and informally and design those assessment strategies using this lesson as a foundation and tailor them to their needs based upon their classroom profiles.



PATH OF THE SLIDE, FOLLOWING FOREST FIRES, SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS COLLECTION, MILNE ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

Vocabulary

Advocacy
Conservation
Mural
Community
Industry
Tourism
Forest Management
Sustainable

Standards

Visual Arts Standards

- Standard 1. Apply appropriate media, techniques, and processes.
- Standard 2. Identify and apply the elements of visual art and principles of design.
- Standard 3. Choose and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.
- Standard 4. Understand the arts in relation to history and culture.
- Standard 5. Make connections among the visual arts, other disciplines, and daily life.

New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks

- SS - 3.10.6.8 - Employ photographs to classify areas as rural, suburban, and urban, and to identify similarities and differences in land use in those areas.
- SS - 3.11.6.2 - Identify and discuss the human geographic features of neighborhoods and places including population density, economic activities, forms of shelter, and modes of transportation and communication.
- SS - 3.11.6.4 - Discuss the attachments people have for a particular place and region as well as their sense of belonging in certain places and regions.
- SS - 3.13.10.4 - Evaluate, take, and defend positions concerning the ways changing population patterns can influence the environment and society.
- SS - 3.14.6.1 - Identify and discuss ways people depend upon, use, and alter the physical environment.
- SS - 3.15.10.1 - Evaluate sites within their community or region to identify the best location for a particular activity (for example, school, factory, shopping area, waste treatment plant).
- SS - 3.15.10.4 - Use the concept of sustainable development to analyze how different countries respond to changes in population and the needs of society.
- SS - 4.16.6.6 - Demonstrate an understanding that people, artifacts, and documents represent links to the past and that they are sources of data from which historical accounts are constructed.
- SS - 4.16.6.10 - Discuss the importance of individuals and groups who have made a difference in history, and the significance of character and actions for both good and ill.
- SS - 4.16.10.4 - Examine historical materials relating to a particular region, society, or theme; analyze change over time; and make logical inferences concerning cause and effect.
- SS - 4.16.10.6 - Develop and implement research strategies to investigate a given historical topic.
- SS - 4.16.10.11 - Use knowledge of the past and the processes of historical analysis to carry out historical research; make comparisons; develop and defend generalizations; draw and support conclusions; construct historical explanations, narratives, and accounts; solve problems; and make informed decisions.
- SC - 4.3.10.1 - Investigate how human activities, such as reducing the amount of forest cover and increasing the amount and variety of chemicals released into the atmosphere, have changed the Earth's land, ocean, and atmosphere.
- SC - 4.3.10.3 - Describe possible consequences of reducing or eliminating some of the Earth's natural resources.



"WOODSTOCK & THORNTON GORE RAILROAD," PHOTOGRAPHS, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, NH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

DISCOVERIES IN THE FORESTS: EXPRESSING NATURAL ELEMENTS IN PRINTMAKING

Essential Questions

- What can we learn from the advocates and the conservationists of the White Mountains?
- What can we learn from nature by interacting with it?
- Why is nature important to our community and us?
- How can nature be used to express how and why our environment is important to our community and ourselves?

Materials

(Materials and resources may be modified to meet the needs of students and teachers.)

Natural materials (leaves, bark, sticks, etc.)

Paper

Foam printing plates

Printing ink

Pencils

Brayers

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify and investigate the conservationists and advocates who sought to save the forests of the White Mountains and identify and analyze the key issues each used in their conservationist and advocacy efforts in terms of importance and context.
- Compare and contrast the positive and negative relationships and connections between community and natural areas.
- Explore and investigate the printmaking process and the use of natural materials as a part of the printmaking process.
- Visually communicate their personal feelings about nature and natural areas through printmaking that uses natural materials.



TOWN OF ZEALAND PHOTOGRAPHS, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, NH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Description of Lesson

This activity explores natural materials from forests. Its goal is to connect the aesthetic and tactile qualities of the natural environment with students' expressions about their experiences with and in natural areas. It is a catalyst to connect students with what the White Mountain conservationists and advocates felt was valuable and important to save and conserve. The students will explore and express their understanding and feelings of the importance of natural areas through printmaking.

Anticipated Length of the Lesson

** Class time may vary from school to school. The sequence may be modified to fit to a school's instructional schedule.*

30 to 40 minutes each class
2 to 3 class days in length

Sequence of Daily Lessons

The following is an outline of the possible sequence of procedures for the activity. This is a foundation that may be modified as needed by the instructor.

- Day 1: The teacher will introduce the history of the 1911 Weeks Act. The class will explore, investigate, and discuss the experiences and photographs of the conservationists and advocates of the White Mountains and use them as a catalyst for discussion and exploration of the personal and community importance of nature and natural areas. The class will identify natural areas they feel are important, discuss why they are important, and make connections to the advocates and conservationists of the forests of the White Mountains.
- Day 2: The teacher will refocus the students on the 1911 Weeks Act, forests of the White Mountains and the natural area in their community they choose as important to themselves. The teacher will introduce the artwork of Jin Nong and Gabriel Orozco's *Light Through Leaves* (1996) to the class and discuss the ways the artists depict forests (these are suggested works of art to use in the lesson). The teacher will demonstrate how students can use natural materials as stamps to make prints, the use of colors, and discuss the ways the students want to create compositions that express their feelings of natural areas and materials.
Modification: Foam printing plates can be used to press the natural materials into to make indentations and the foam plate used a printing plate that is inked and printed onto paper.
- Day 3: The teacher will review and refocus the students and the class will complete their prints. As a group, they will discuss their completed prints and the ways they expressed their feelings of the importance of natural areas.

** Modifications: The teacher can predetermine a local community area for the lesson to focus on. An urban or suburban area or neighborhood can be substituted for a natural area within the community.*

Art History Component

Teacher selected images from 1911 Weeks Act Exhibition

Suggested Visual Art Resources

Jin Nong artnet.com/artist/648443/jin-nong.html

Gabriel Orozco, *Light Through Leaves* (1996) moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2001/parkett/parkett2.html

The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry lynnecherry.com

** Additional materials and resources may be researched and added by the teacher.*



LANTERN SLIDE, SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE FORESTS COLLECTION, MILNE ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

Assessment Plan

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Standard 5. Make connections among the visual arts, other disciplines, and daily life.



"ALBANY, NH, 1915 BY R.C. LARRABEE. PASSACONAWAY AND CHOCORUA FROM EAST SIDE," PHOTOGRAPHS, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, NH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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