

ADVOCACY, CONSERVATION, AND COMMUNITY: AN INTEGRATED MIDDLE SCHOOL VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY

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 activity and essential questions have been designed to meet a range of ages and abilities. It is a foundation 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 this activity:

logginginlincoln.com

whitemountainhistory.org

plymouth.edu/go/WeeksExhibit

EXPRESSING IMPORTANCE: CONSERVATIONIST AND ADVOCACY POSTERS

Essential Questions

- Why are natural areas important to a community?
- What do photographs tell us about our communities and natural environment and the impact that industry has on them?
- What is the relationship among individuals, communities, industry, and the environment?
- How and in what ways are visual images important to and powerful in expressing feeling, experiences, and causes?

Materials

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

Pencil

Paper

Camera

Computer

Computer printer

Scissors

Glue

Paint

Paint brushes

Paint trays

Water containers

Images of natural areas and details



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.



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

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- analyze the importance of natural areas to communities;
- identify and describe the issues brought forth by advocates and conservationists that sought to save the forests of the White Mountains in terms of historical context and present impact;
- visually communicate and express their personal views of the importance of an area through the design and creation of a mixed media advocacy poster;
- analyze and interpret the application and impact of visual images used for social advocacy statements in contrast to visual images used solely for personal expression.

Description of Lesson

The movement to save the White Mountains in the late 1800s and early 1900s was an effort and a debate that was in the public eye. Advocates worked to teach the nation about the devastating impact of unsustainable logging and industry on the White Mountains' environment, landscape, and communities. The effects of unsustainable logging and industry on the White Mountains were documented through photography and personal accounts and made public. Photographs, posters, personal accounts, and printed matter were the visible, readable, and tangible materials used by this movement. Of these materials, the visual images are the most powerful and telling of the devastation caused by the unsustainable logging practices of loggers like J. E. Henry and George Van Dyke. This activity is an exploration and discussion of the power of the visual images and stories from that period. It is an investigation of the stories from those involved in the advocacy and conservation movements and the stories the visual images, specifically the photographs, tell. These images will be used to discuss what was seen at the core of reasons to save the White Mountains and its forests and the ways these images and experiences were used by all sides in this debate. Students will use this exploration and discussion as a catalyst to identify, investigate, and discuss areas or sites in their community they feel need to be conserved or saved. Through their exploration and discussion of the reasons to conserve or save these areas, they will make connections to the movement to save the White Mountains and its forests. They will discuss and use their personal experiences and use photographs or other visuals of the area chosen to create materials that express reasons to conserve or save the areas and inform the public, just as the advocates and conservationists of the White Mountains sought to do.



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

Anticipated Length of the Lesson

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

Estimated class length: 45 minutes

Estimated length of lesson: 4 to 5 days

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



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: Using materials from the “Protecting the Forests: The Weeks Act of 1911” Web site, the teacher and class will discuss the movement and the groups who sought to save the White Mountains from the impact of unsustainable and unregulated logging and industry, its effects on the environment, landscape, and communities of the White Mountains, and the resulting 1911 Weeks Act. They will explore and discuss the strategies and materials used by the advocates and conservationists of the White Mountains, their photographs, and personal experiences and the importance and power of the visual images (photographs) and personal experiences in activism. They will use this discussion and investigation as a catalyst to identify and discuss areas in their community that are rapidly changing and transforming because of development and industrialization, the reasons for the change, and reasons to prevent the change and conserve the areas. This will include a discussion of the changes (positive and negative) on aesthetics, environment and community. The class will explore and discuss how visual images and their personal experiences may be used to express and bring awareness to conservation of the area they identified.
- Day 2: The teacher will refocus the students on the 1911 Weeks Act, forests of the White Mountains, and the movement and its advocates and conservationists who sought to save the forests. The teacher will introduce Ryuichi Yamashiro’s *Forest* (1954) and Roy Lichtenstein’s *Rain Forest* (1992) to the class and discuss the visual imagery used by the artists and how it expresses the artists’ personal feelings (these are suggested works of art to use in the lesson). The class will revisit the areas they chose as important to save and discuss the ways they could use personal experiences and visual images to express their importance. Using mixed media such as photographs, magazine images, and paint, the teacher will demonstrate how to create an advocacy poster. The students will begin developing a concept to express their feelings about conservation and begin creating their posters. Students should have a completed concept and design idea for their poster.
- Day 3: The teacher will refocus the students on the topic of the lesson. The students will continue to work on their advocacy posters.
- Day 4: Students will complete their advocacy posters. As a class, students will discuss their completed advocacy posters and the visual imagery they used to express their personal feelings.

** Modifications: The teacher may predetermine a local community area for the activity. 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

Ryuichi Yamashiro, *Forest* (1954) moma.org/collection/artist.php?artist_id=6487

Roy Lichtenstein, *Rain Forest* (1992) artinthepicture.com/paintings/Roy_Lichtenstein/Rain-Forest
internationalposter.com

designreviver.com/inspiration/30-inspiring-poster-designs

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



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

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 on their classroom profiles.

Vocabulary

Advocacy

Conservation

Poster

Community

Industry

Tourism

Visual literacy

Mixed media

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.



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

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 the 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.