Global Perspectives on Wilderness

Lucas A. Sprouse, Boise State University

These lesson plans will encourage students to better understand the significance of The Wilderness Act as well as how global perspectives on wilderness differ from the American paradigm. More specifically, these lesson plans look at the impact of changing perspectives on wilderness in the United States, exclusionary practices regarding native peoples, global perspectives on wilderness looking specifically at Africa, Latin America, and Australia, and the importance of The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

These lessons were created to benefit university educators from multiple disciplines and they can be utilized individually or as a unit. The lesson plans contain analytical questions for class discussion followed by activities. While the activities were created for groups, many of them can be made into individual projects or assignments. When used as a unit, these lessons encourage students to analyze the global impact of The Wilderness Act. “50 Years of Wilderness in the United States” and “Can Humans Coexist with Wilderness?” encourage students to look at the significance of The Wilderness Act and think about the concept of wilderness. “Native Peoples and Wilderness: A Study on Exclusionary Practices in Canada” examines the precarious state of affairs regarding indigenous peoples and national parks in North America. “A Modern, American Perspective on Wilderness” analyzes wilderness in an increasingly politically polarized American society and evaluates the impact of The Wilderness Act in the United States. “An African Perspective on Wilderness,” “A Latin American Perspective on Wilderness,” and “An Australian Perspective on Wilderness” compare and contrast the American paradigm of wilderness with global examples. “Pictorial Perspectives on Wilderness and the Land and Water Conservation Fund” examines the importance of the oft overlooked, and arguably more significant Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. As a whole, these lessons encourage students to analyze the significance of The Wilderness Act in the United States while examining how preservation of wilderness differs from the prevailing American paradigm around the globe.

Lesson Plans:

- “50 Years of Wilderness in the United States”
- “Can Humans Coexist with Wilderness?”
- “Native Peoples and Wilderness: A Study on Exclusionary Practices in Canada”
- “An African Perspective on Wilderness”
- “A Modern, American Perspective on Wilderness”
- “A Latin American Perspective on Wilderness”
- “An Australian Perspective on Wilderness”
- “Pictorial Perspectives on Wilderness and the Land and Water Conservation Fund”
Articles (available through this site at no charge):


Primary Sources (provided):

- Excerpts from “The Wilderness Act,” Public Law 88-577
- Canada’s Aboriginal “Treaty No. 1”
- Canada’s Aboriginal “Treaty No. 3”
- Canada’s Aboriginal “Treaty No. 6”
- Canada’s Aboriginal “Treaty No. 10”
- American Views toward the Environment, a public opinion chart from the Environmental Values Survey
- Political Views and the Environment, a public opinion chart from the American Environmental Values Survey

* Lucas Sprouse completed a Master of Applied Historical Research at Boise State University. He researched and wrote these lesson plans during an internship with Lisa M. Brady, Professor of History and Editor in Chief, *Environmental History*. This teaching unit was sent for external faculty review.