

Create a National Park

Sunshine State Standards: SC.H.3.2, 3.3; SC.G.2.3; SS.D.2.2; SS.C. 2.2; SS.D.1.1; SS.B.2.3

Time: 45 minutes

Objectives:

The student will be able to: state 3 reasons why we have national parks, describe characteristics of a national park, and list 3 problems facing national parks.

Materials:

National Park Service emblem, National Park Service map, for each pair or group; a twelve-foot piece of string, 6 Popsicle sticks with flags.

Procedure:

1. Using the Park emblem and map discuss national parks with the students. What does the Park emblem represent? (The protection of scenery, water, plants, animals, land formations, and our history and culture (represented by the shape of an arrowhead)).
2. Choose 2-5 students per group depending on class size.

Background

Currently there are over 380 national park areas in the National Park System. They have been set aside by Congress to preserve and protect the best of our natural, recreational, and cultural resources for the use and enjoyment of all persons and for future generations.

This activity focuses on parks set aside for their natural wonders, wildlife, and plants. A park may have several outstanding features or it may be preserved for a specific site. A park may offer any one or a combination of the following: camping, (tent or motor home), wilderness hiking trails, scenic overlooks, motor tour routes, nature trails, campfire programs, boat or tram tours, bike trails, canoeing, fishing, hunting, boardwalks, rock climbing, and swimming, etc. Some parks have areas closed off for either the protection of the area or the safety of the visitor. Others do not allow cars in certain areas.

Though protected national parks face problems. These may include over-visitation, pollution, budget cuts, etc. Park management is set up much like a school system, the rangers being the teachers. The rangers teach visitors about the parks and the problems facing them, so that people can better understand the concerns of the parks. After all, the national parks belong to each of us.



3. Let each pair or group choose an outdoor spot for their national park. Using the string they are to rope off their area.
4. The students are the rangers. They are to name their park and flag special places in their park to interpret to visitors: a hole might be a canyon, or a rock might be a mountain. Encourage them to use their imagination.
5. Give each group about 15 minutes to name their park, decide why it became a national park, and prepare to teach the visitors about the park. Encourage everyone to participate.
6. Have the groups visit each park. The visitors listen to the rangers teach them about the park. Afterwards the visitors may ask questions.

Wrap up: When all parks have been visited inform the students that there have been budget cuts and some of the parks must be closed. What would they do? Discuss.

