

Lesson 1: What is wilderness?

Grades 6 and above



Wilderness is an indispensable part of American history. Native Americans depended on the bounty of wildlands for survival and held Earth and its wild places as sacred. The great western explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were inspired by the untamed beauty of wild places that became the forge upon which our distinctive American national character was created.

After just 200 years from the time of Lewis and Clark, the essential wildness of America had virtually disappeared. As Americans realized that the long-term health and welfare of the nation were at risk, a vision for conservation emerged.

In 1964 our nation's leaders formally acknowledged the immediate and lasting benefits of wild places to the human spirit and fabric of our nation. That year, in a nearly unanimous vote, Congress enacted landmark legislation that permanently protected

some of the most natural and undisturbed places in America. The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System, the system of all America's wilderness areas, to "secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness."

The United States was the first country in the world to define and designate wilderness areas through law. Subsequently, countries around the world have protected areas modeled after the Wilderness Act. Wilderness is part of our history and heritage and is passed as a legacy to future generations. Indispensable to the American past, the legacy that is wilderness will remain indispensable to the American future.



Lesson 1: What is wilderness?



Objectives

Students will be able to:

- » define wilderness in their own words and compare and contrast their definition to an accepted definition.
- » describe several of the values preserved by wilderness
- » describe how American views of wilderness have changed over time.

Key terms

- » untrammeled
- » primeval
- » ecological
- » watershed
- » Precambrian
- » stocks
- » dikes
- » sills
- » Pleistocene
- » indigenous

Materials

- » Views of the National Parks DVD
- » Vocabulary definition map overhead and handouts
- » Definition compare and contrast worksheet
- » Brochure rubric
- » Sample brochures
- » Timeline notes worksheet
- » Large sheets of white paper

For the complete lesson visit:

nature.nps.gov/views



Inquiry questions

1. What is wilderness?
2. How are wilderness areas different from parks, refuges or forests?
3. How have Americans changed their views of wilderness?
4. What are some things that made Americans change their views?

Procedure

Definition of wilderness

If students have not had a chance to explore the Views CD, allow them some time to explore on their own or in small groups. After students have looked at the disc in general, ask them to find and explore the Wilderness Knowledge Center. Together, read the "Introduction."

Complete a Vocabulary Definition Map using the word wilderness, as a whole class, in small groups or individually, depending your students' level of familiarity with the Map.

Once students have created their own definitions of wilderness, ask them to click on The Wilderness Act, and compare their definition to the definition created by Congress in 1964. Students should complete the Definition Compare and Contrast Worksheet.



Preserved values and resources

Direct students' attention to the "Preserved Values and Resources" page of the Wilderness module.

After students have had an opportunity to read (individually or in pairs/small groups) the sections on Recreational Values, Ecological Values, Geological Values, Scientific Values, Educational Values, and Historical and Cultural Values, assign the following project: Create a brochure encouraging Americans to appreciate and support wilderness in the United States.

Timeline

Direct students' attention to the "Landmark Legislation" page of the Wilderness module. Ask students to read the section, either individually or in pairs/ small groups, completing the Timeline Notes Worksheet as they read.

Distribute large pieces of white construction paper. Ask students to create a "Wilderness Timeline" showing changing views of wilderness and important events that led to the creation of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Remind them to use the information they have noted on their Timeline Notes Worksheets.



Discussion questions

1. Which definition is more comprehensive, yours or Congress'?
2. What does "untrammeled" mean?
3. Why do you think Congress defined "wilderness" the way it did?
4. How are wilderness areas different from parks, refuges or forests?



Lesson 2: Where is wilderness?

Grades 6 and above



Wildlands once spread far and wide across the Earth. Today, only fragments of untrammelled lands remain. In North America, we find these lands mostly in wilderness.

In 1964 Congress designated America's first federal wilderness areas. Collectively, these areas are called the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Between 1964 and 2004, the system has grown from 9 million acres (3,643,300 ha) to 106 million acres (42,898,200 ha) and contains 662 wilderness areas in 44 of 50 states.

Overall, however, only about 5% of the entire United States—an area slightly larger than the state of California—is protected as wilderness. Because Alaska contains more than half of America's wilderness, only about 2.5% of the contiguous United States—an area about the size of South Dakota—is protected as wilderness.

Some people think that wilderness is only found in remote places like towering mountains or vast sandy deserts.

What do you think?

The National Wilderness Preservation System actually preserves a wide variety of ecosystems throughout the country including swamps in the Southeast, tundra in Alaska, snowcapped peaks in the Rocky Mountains, hardwoods forests in the Northeast, and deserts in the Southwest.

More than half of these diverse wilderness areas are within a day's drive of America's largest cities.



Lesson 2: Where is wilderness?



Objectives

Students will be able to:

- » identify a wilderness area near their home (using a map of the United States), as well as a wilderness area far from their home.
- » compare and contrast a wilderness area to the area in which they live.
- » illustrate the different types of areas that are wilderness.
- » read and interpret various types of graphs.

Key terms

- » designate
- » refuge

Materials

- » Views of the National Parks DVD
- » Wilderness Map Worksheet

For the complete lesson visit:

nature.nps.gov/views



Inquiry questions

1. Where is most of the wilderness in the United States located?
2. Why were these areas designated wilderness? What makes them special?
3. What types of ecosystems are found in wilderness?

Procedure

Where is wilderness?

Direct students' attention to the "Where is Wilderness?" page of the Wilderness module.

Divide the class into groups of five students each. Within groups, assign each member a section to read: either the introduction to "Where is Wilderness," or the quotes by Tom McFadden, Meg Weesner, Steve Bair, and Dave Shirokauer.

After students have a few minutes to read their assigned section, they should take turns sharing what they've read with their group of five.

Map

Ask: Why do you think it is important to preserve as wilderness areas close to America's major cities?

Direct students' attention to the "Map" page of the Wilderness module. Students should complete the Wilderness Map Worksheet while exploring the Interactive Map.

Direct students' attention to the graphs located in the "Facts and Figures" section of the module. Ask: Based on a total of 106 million acres of wilderness, how many acres are under the management of the Forest Service? The National Park Service? Etc.

Creating wilderness

Direct students' attention to the "Creating Wilderness Areas" page of the Wilderness module, and instruct students to read the information, either individually or in pairs. Students should also read the "Wildlands" section.

Ask: What do you know about how Congress goes about making a law? Discuss this process. Divide the class into two heterogeneous groups. Explain that they will be holding a mock debate.

They will be assuming the role of Congress, debating whether or not to pass the original 1964 Wilderness Act.

One group should brainstorm reasons why they, as Congress, should pass this act, protecting land as wilderness. Ask: Who would benefit from the passage of this act?

The second group should brainstorm reasons why Congress might not want to pass this act. Ask: Who would benefit from not preserving these lands as wilderness?

After groups have had an opportunity to discuss their "positions," hold the debate. Give each group a set amount of time to state their positions, and an opportunity to refute the position of the "opposition."

Discussion questions

1. What kinds of places in the United States do you think should be preserved as wilderness? Why do you think so?
2. How much/what percentage of land in the United States should be preserved as wilderness? Why do you think so?
3. Why do you think it is important to preserve areas close to America's major cities as wilderness?
4. Based on a total of 106 million acres of wilderness, how many acres are under the management of the Forest Service? The National Park Service? Etc.
5. What characteristics do you think make an area suitable to become designated as wilderness?
6. What kinds of things would make an area not suitable for being designated as wilderness?
7. What do you know about how Congress goes about making a law?
8. Who would benefit from the passage of this act?
9. Who would benefit from not preserving these lands as wilderness?



Lesson 3: Why is wilderness preserved?

Grades 6 and above



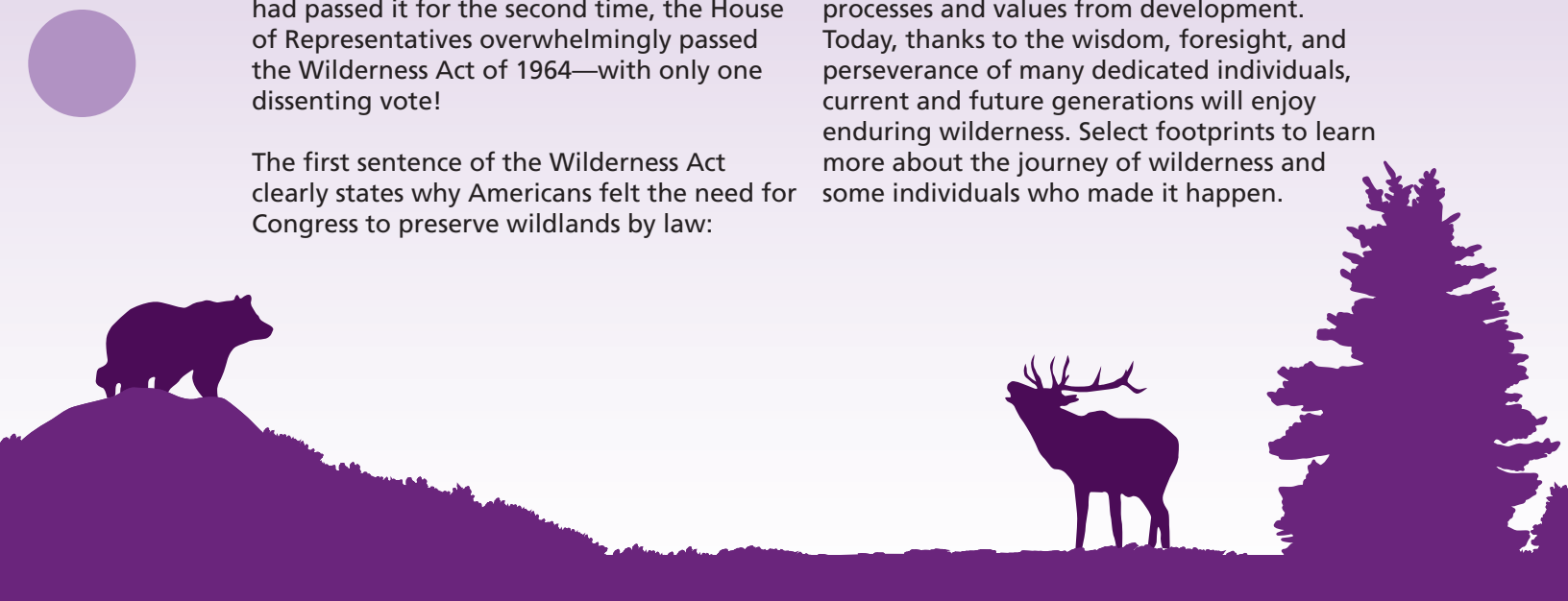
When the first Europeans settled in what is now the United States, they found a continent of almost unbroken wildland. In less than 500 years the undeveloped nature of this 2-billion-acre (809-million-ha) undeveloped estate has been reduced by 98%. As wildlands became scarce, Americans began to appreciate their value.

However, passage of a bill preserving wilderness was not easy. Howard Zahniser wrote the first draft of the Wilderness Act in 1956. The journey of the Wilderness Act covers nine years, 65 rewrites, and 18 public hearings. In August 1964, after the Senate had passed it for the second time, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Wilderness Act of 1964—with only one dissenting vote!

The first sentence of the Wilderness Act clearly states why Americans felt the need for Congress to preserve wildlands by law:

“In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”

With passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, Americans chartered a new course in world history—to preserve some of a country's last remaining wild places to protect their natural processes and values from development. Today, thanks to the wisdom, foresight, and perseverance of many dedicated individuals, current and future generations will enjoy enduring wilderness. Select footprints to learn more about the journey of wilderness and some individuals who made it happen.



Lesson 3: Why is wilderness preserved?



Objectives

Students will be able to:

- » compare and contrast historical and current perspectives on the importance of wilderness.
- » describe their personal perspectives on wilderness.

Key terms

- » mechanization
- » nomadic
- » encroaching
- » conservation
- » conservationist
- » ecologist
- » refuge
- » bipartisan
- » land ethic
- » biotic

Materials

- » Views of the National Parks DVD
- » Timelines created by students in Lesson One, if applicable

For the complete lesson visit:

nature.nps.gov/views

Inquiry questions

1. Why do you think U.S. citizens feel the need to legally protect wilderness?
2. Which of the benefits or values of wilderness are most important to you? To your parents? To the class? Why?
3. What can scientists learn by studying wilderness?

Procedure

Why do we protect wilderness?

Ask: Why do you think U.S. citizens feel the need to legally protect wilderness?

Direct students' attention to the "Why" section of the Wilderness Knowledge Center.

Discuss the quote from President Johnson, "If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology."

Timeline

Ask students to click on the "Timeline" footprint, and read the information presented. In pairs or small groups, ask students to choose the 10 events from the timeline that they feel have been most important to wilderness over the years. Students should be able to defend their choices.



If students have completed timelines from Lesson One, ask them to add these 10 chosen events to their existing timelines. Additional construction paper may be necessary. If students do not have completed timelines from Lesson One, ask them to create a timeline including their 10 chosen events.

Historical Perspectives

Direct students' attention to the Historical Perspectives section of the Wilderness module. Divide the class into five heterogeneous

groups. Ask each group to read the biographical information about one of the Americans who influenced the preservation of wilderness.

After reading the biographical information, each group should write a short summary of the information presented.

Current Perspectives

Direct students' attention to the Current Perspectives section of the Wilderness module.

Distribute copies of the Current Perspectives Worksheet. Students should listen to at least 5 "Current Perspectives" from the Wilderness module.

Students should then write a paragraph describing their personal perspectives on wilderness.



Discussion questions

1. Should advancement of technology be accompanied by the preservation of natural resources? Why or Why not?
2. How might the United States be different if Congress had not taken these steps to preserve wilderness?
3. How have perspectives on wilderness changed over the years?
4. How have they remained the same?
5. Which person's views most closely resemble your personal views about the preservation of wilderness?
6. What are your personal views about the preservation of wilderness?



Lesson 4: How is wilderness managed?

Grades 6 and above



Some people thought that passing the Wilderness Act meant the fight for wilderness was over. After all, it states that wilderness is supposed to be an area where the influence of modernization is absent.

Over time however, we have learned that the “draw a line around it and leave it alone” method does not protect wilderness from current threats. Only in the last 20 years or so has wilderness management or stewardship emerged as a necessary discipline to combat these threats.

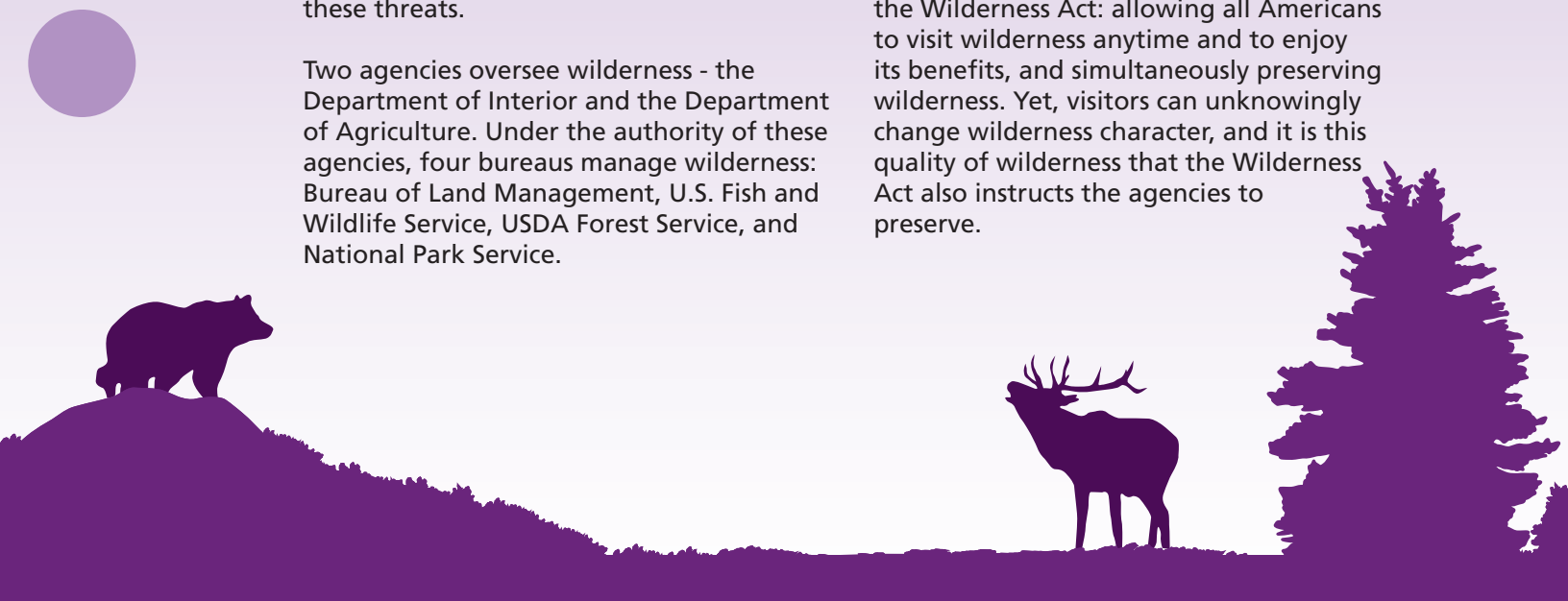
Two agencies oversee wilderness - the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture. Under the authority of these agencies, four bureaus manage wilderness: Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, and National Park Service.

These bureaus get their direction for management from the Wilderness Act.

You might think managing wilderness would be easy given the direction provided by the Wilderness Act.

In reality, managing wilderness is a complicated process. Managers are expected to strike a balance between use and protection.

An inherent tension exists in the language of the Wilderness Act: allowing all Americans to visit wilderness anytime and to enjoy its benefits, and simultaneously preserving wilderness. Yet, visitors can unknowingly change wilderness character, and it is this quality of wilderness that the Wilderness Act also instructs the agencies to preserve.



Lesson 4: How is wilderness managed?



Objectives

Students will be able to:

- » list the federal agencies that share responsibilities for managing wilderness.
- » articulate an opinion about what poses the greatest threat to wilderness by writing a persuasive paragraph.
- » apply their knowledge of the Wilderness Act and other wilderness legislation to make decisions about wilderness in real life management scenarios.

Key terms

- » stewardship
- » sanctuary
- » mandate
- » sky glow
- » celestial

Materials

- » Views of the National Parks DVD
- » Wilderness Bureaus Outline
- » Wilderness Threats Worksheet
- » 5 sheets of blank construction paper or card stock
- » Sticky notes or similar-sized pieces of paper, 1 for each student

Inquiry questions

1. Is “draw a line around it and leave it alone” enough to protect wilderness from current threats? Why or why not?
2. Which is more important to you in regards to wilderness; use or protection?
3. What poses the greatest threat to wilderness?

Procedure

Who manages wilderness?

Direct students’ attention to the “How” section of the Wilderness Knowledge Center, and ask them to read the introduction. Discuss the statement that “we have learned that the ‘draw a line around it and leave it alone’ method does not protect wilderness from current threats.”

Ask students to read the Managing Agencies section, individually or in pairs. Students should fill out the Wilderness Bureaus Outline as they read.

Threats to Wilderness

Ask: What kinds of things do you think pose threats to wilderness? Allow some time to brainstorm as a class or in small groups.

In pairs, have students read the information presented in the Threats section of the module. As they read, students should complete the Wilderness Threats Worksheet.

On each of 5 blank sheets of construction paper or card stock, write one of the threats discussed in the module: Overuse, Fire Suppression, Invasive Species, Pollution and Public Awareness. Post these around the room.

Distribute a small piece of paper to each student (Post-It notes work well). Ask students to jot down which of the 5 threats discussed poses the greatest risk, in their opinion, to the preservation of wilderness. Once all students have jotted down their opinions, ask them to move to the sign that matches the threat they have chosen.

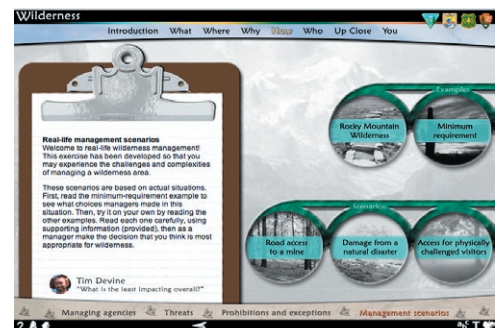
Once in groups, students should discuss their choices. Have students pair up with someone who chose a different threat and explain the reasons for their choices.

Assign the writing prompt: Write a good quality persuasive paragraph that states your opinion about what poses the greatest threat to the preservation of wilderness. Back up your opinion with at least three reasons.

Scenarios

Ask students to click on “Prohibitions and Exceptions” and read the material presented.

Next, students should click on “Management Scenarios” and, individually, or in pairs, work through the examples and scenarios provided, making decisions based on what they’ve learned about wilderness preservation.



Discussion questions

1. Discuss the statement that “we have learned that the ‘draw a line around it and leave it alone’ method does not protect wilderness from current threats.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
2. If that method does not work, what suggestions do you have?
3. What kinds of things do you think pose threats to wilderness?
4. Why do you think this threat poses the greatest risk to the preservation of wilderness?
5. What kinds of things do you think might reduce that threat?

Lesson 5: Wilderness and you

Grades 6 and above



High visitation in sensitive areas has disrupted the natural systems on which sensitive plants and animals rely.

Huge expanses of wilderness have experienced destructive changes because of fire suppression. Invasive species of plants, animals, and insects are invading natural areas and destroying native species in wilderness all across the country.

In light of all these issues, it would be easy to become frustrated by the sheer size of these challenges and do nothing.

However, you can always do something to help protect and preserve wilderness, and you do not have to visit wilderness to actively protect it.

A great way to work for wilderness is to volunteer. You can check with your local land management bureau to see what volunteer projects you can become involved in.

You may even decide that working in or for wilderness is the right career path for you.

Wilderness is part of our country's system of public lands — lands that are set aside for the public and managed by the public.

Every citizen has a voice that affects wilderness through local or national government.

How are you involved with wilderness?

How would you like to be involved with wilderness?



Lesson 5: Wilderness and you



Objectives

Students will be able to:

- » describe personal choices that can help preserve wilderness.
- » illustrate the diversity of wilderness.

Key terms

- » Vocabulary will vary depending on which wilderness areas students choose to explore.

Materials

- » Views of the National Parks DVD
- » Wilderness and You Project Planner
- » Examples of poems or other writings inspired by nature

For the complete lesson visit:

nature.nps.gov/views

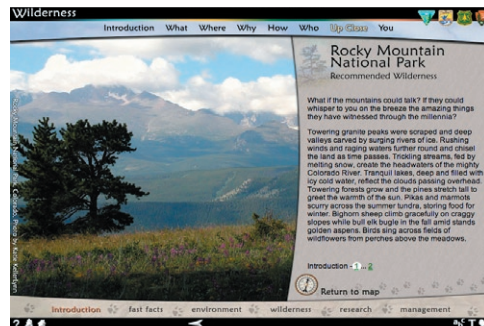


Inquiry questions

1. Do any of your daily activities depend on wilderness?
2. Do any of your daily activities affect wilderness?

Procedure "Up Close"

Direct students' attention to the "Up Close" section of the Wilderness Knowledge Center, and allow them some time to explore the information presented about various wilderness areas around the country.



Explain Part One of the Wilderness and You Project, distributing copies of the Wilderness and You Project Planner. (This project can be completed either individually or in pairs/small groups.)

Ask students to choose at least 3 diverse wilderness areas to explore further. Students should read the information that has been provided about those three areas.

Brainstorm types of media that students can choose to illustrate the diversity of the wilderness areas they have chosen. Examples of media might include a map, a tabletop display, a poster, a Power Point presentation, etc. Encourage students to be creative!

Part two of the project is to write a poem, song or rap inspired by one of the wilderness areas described in the "Up Close" section of the Wilderness module, or by a wilderness area students have visited.

If possible, share examples of poems and other writings inspired by nature.

"You"

Direct students' attention to the "You" section of the Wilderness Knowledge Center. Read the introduction, "How you can help."

Ask students to use the information presented in "Careers in wilderness," "The first step" and "The second step" to complete the Wilderness and You Project Planner.

Discussion questions

1. How are all of these wilderness areas similar?
2. How are they different?
3. Do you think it is important to preserve diverse types of wilderness?
4. Have the wilderness agencies done a good job of preserving diverse areas?
5. What does it mean to be "inspired" by something?
6. What kinds of things do you think inspire writers and songwriters?

