

ELEMENTARY
CURRICULUM

CONSERVATION NATION

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES OF WISCONSIN



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Introduction:

In creating curriculum, understand the need to look at a variety of options on which to build a broad learning experience for students. As directors of learning, teachers can approach subject matter through a variety of subjects: science, social studies, and language arts. In addition, material must also meet the needs of various pupils' developmental levels and styles of learning.

Into the Outdoors is a rich collection of information around which teachers can create a curriculum that will excite and enrich learning for students at all learning levels. The material will allow teachers to expand on the information provided by having students do research work, creative nonfiction writing, expressive art presentations, and oral presentations.

The following is the mission statement from *Into the Outdoors*, an ongoing series developed for television. This mission statement offers a long-term learning goal for teachers and their students:

The Mission of "Into the Outdoors" is to continue the outdoor legacy of Wisconsin and introduce it to a new generation of users, creating a solid foundation of stewards and conservationists that will appreciate our beautiful resources. We do this by reaching kids of all ages with a television show, website, educational print material, and outdoor events that are high-impact, entertaining, innovative, challenging, and leave no question of how much FUN it is to be ... into the outdoors. We want to expand your knowledge of the outdoors and compel you to get into the outdoors, seek more fun, information and activity.

Students and teachers using the website IntotheOutdoors.org and EEK, a second site through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, can create a baseline of study in many areas of the curriculum, but especially in social studies and science.

I. Enduring Knowledge:

Students should be aware of the importance of good stewardship of their environment. In order to develop this awareness, students should understand how different cultures have interacted with the natural environment, sometimes with disastrous results and sometimes in a manner that sustains and supports the natural environment.

The students should appreciate the traditional Native American views and uses of the natural environment. They should also understand the ways in which contemporary bands and tribes in Wisconsin are contributing to a healthy, sustainable natural world.

In order to become an educated person and good citizen, one must be able to communicate, problem-solve, and make decisions across various curriculum areas. Learning about the environment and the communication of this learning through other curriculum areas will help students become stronger learners.

Learning to work within groups by sharing ideas, communicating knowledge, organizing materials, and accepting responsibilities within the group is a life-long skill students should practice while in school.

Learning Targets:

1. Students should be able to form and ask questions in multiple areas of study. After formulating these questions students should be able to develop answers and disseminate them to other people.
2. Active learners should be able to identify problems within in any given area of study. Students should be capable of working toward solutions to these problems through problem solving methods.
3. Learners should know how to work within in a group to present materials that will be organized and understood by a variety of people.
4. Students should be able to give a report to a group of people through a variety of written and oral methods.

Vocabulary:

1. **adaptation:** physical and behavioral characteristics that allow organisms to survive and reproduce
2. **carnivores:** animals that eat other animals
3. **culture:** shared beliefs and values of groups
4. **ecosystem:** the interrelationship of organisms (animals, plants) and their environment
5. **endangered species:** anyone or anything whose continued existence is threatened with extinction
6. **fry:** young fish
7. **habitat:** the environment in which a plant or animal lives
8. **natural resources:** materials or capacities supplied by nature, such as minerals, plants or waterpower
9. **omnivores:** animals that eat both animal and vegetable substances
10. **pollinate:** to transfer pollen and fertilize plants
11. **predator:** a carnivorous animal that hunts, kills and eats other animals
12. **preserving:** to keep something protected
13. **prey:** animal hunted by other animals

II. Teacher Background Materials:

Note: *Bolded words are found in the vocabulary list.*

Conserving and preserving the environment has always been a part of Native American life. In recent times, due to changes in our world, many new environmental problems have developed. This video separates the discussion into several different topics and shows how Native Americans are working to identify and correct the problems.

Bears

Conservation and preservation of bears: Members of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band are studying bears. It is important to study bears because they are part of the **ecosystem** and contribute to balance within nature. They eat such things as tent caterpillars. If they did not eat them, the caterpillars would become out of control and significant tree die-off would occur.

Problem: Because of dwindling natural habitat, bears are coming into urban areas causing a conflict between the bear population and general public. The question being studied is how can we keep bears in our **ecosystem** but out of the heavily populated areas?

Importance to Native Americans: The black bear is an important animal of Menominee tribe. According to their tradition the Black Bear Clan is the speaker and leader for the tribe.

Wolves

Preservation of wolves: Native Americans from Menominee and Stockbridge Tribes also study the timber wolf. In 1967, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated the timber wolf as a federally **endangered species**. The timber wolf is important to the environment because it is a predator to other animals.

Wolves are carnivores: Wolves eat other animals, such as white-tailed deer, snowshoe hare, beaver, muskrats, squirrels, mice, and other small animals. They are essential to the balance of the **ecosystem**.

Problem: Wolves were hunted because they have a bad reputation; they were considered dangerous to the public and believed to attack farm animals. However, the destruction of the wolf population resulted in an imbalance within the **ecosystem**, allowing other species, such as deer, to grow into larger populations that were unsustainable within the environment.

Importance to Native Americans: The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin is studying wolves because they are important in controlling animal populations in the **ecosystem**. Wolves are also a powerful cultural symbol for the tribes.

Fish

Preservation of fish: Lac du Flambeau and Lake Superior Chippewa Indians have set up a Natural Resource Department to study the impact of ecological changes on the fisheries of Wisconsin.

Problem: The Department of Natural Resource's research showed that the waters of Wisconsin were being over-fished. The Tribal Fish Hatchery in Northern Wisconsin was founded to help restock fish to waters.

Importance to Native Americans: Replenishing over-fished waters helps keep fish in Wisconsin, creating a food supply for people and animals, as well as serving as an important source of recreation for Wisconsin fishermen.

Birds

Preservation of birds: The North Lakeland Discovery Center on the Powell Marsh is working to protect and preserve birds by studying the impact of the modern world on their habitat.

Problem: Birds are an important part of the **ecosystem**. By transplanting seeds they help grow new plants; they control population by eating insects, amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals; and they provide food for other animals. If any one of these areas becomes out of balance the **ecosystem** will suffer.

Importance to Native Americans: The study will help the **ecosystem** and will give people a better understanding of birds. Native Americans hope that when people learn more about birds they will take steps to protect them.

Wild Rice

Preservation and conservation of wild rice: Ojibwe tribes are working to conserve and preserve the wild rice plant and the waters where this plant grows.

Problem: Wild rice is part of an **ecosystem** that provides food for animals and people. The habitat of this plant is being destroyed by the many stressors put on the waters of the area. Some of these demands are dams, shoreline development, pollution and boat traffic. In addition, wild rice is an important part of the Ojibwe **culture**.

Importance to Native Americans: The Ojibwe tribe wants to maintain wild rice areas because it is part of their history and **culture**; it helps feed people, serves as an important economic product, and maintains an important part of the **ecosystem**.

Traditional Housing

[Note to teacher: Before teaching this section it is important to establish the fact that the igloo is part of traditional Inuit or Eskimo culture, and not typically found in Wisconsin. This section is included because some schools teach the construction methods for comparison purposes.]

Preservation of traditional housing: The Intercultural Leadership Initiative, the school districts that serve Native American students, seeks to maintain cultural knowledge of past survival techniques, improve academic success, and teach different ways to communicate with each other as they learn about American Indian **culture**.

Problem: Many of the younger generations of Native Americans have not been taught the earlier ways of their people.

Importance to Native Americans: Organizations like the Intercultural Leadership Initiative are helping students become aware of the brilliant skills of their forefathers to survive in the environment. They are learning to build traditional homes, preserve the music and art forms of past generations, and being reintroduced to their Native language and traditions.

Beaver

Conservation of beavers: Beavers are an important part of the **ecosystem**. In addition, they have traditionally provided pelts for clothing and meat for food. They are also an important cultural animal to native tribes.

Problem: In early years the beaver was nearly eliminated from the woods and streams of North American by the over-trapping. The beaver became famous for its warm and waterproof pelt. This caused a heavy demand for the pelts in America and Europe.

Importance to Native Americans: The beaver was very important to native Wisconsin tribes. To some Native Americans the beaver represented a gatherer or a builder and one who accomplishes tasks.

III. Before/After Viewing the Video:

There are many teachable ways to use this video. Use the following ideas based on classroom discussion and research and inquiry.

1. Classroom Discussion:

A. Discuss the following topics about the environment:

- Define the word environment. (See vocabulary list.)
- What are the different parts to the environment? (water, animals, trees, soil, plants, humans, etc.)
- Discuss how each part of the environment is part of what we call the **ecosystem**. What is an **ecosystem**? Create a Web of Life to explain an **ecosystem** and how it works. (See Expanded Activity After the Video)
- After students understand the interrelationship of the **ecosystem**, they can discuss the problems that occur when one part of an **ecosystem** is in trouble or destroyed.
- Discuss how within each part of the **ecosystem** there can be individual problems. Ask the students to watch the video and pick out some of the problems relative to each of the topics. Ask students how these individual problems may affect an **ecosystem**. For example, ask what would happen if all the wolves disappeared. Or ask what would be the result of having no birds.

*B. Classroom Discussion after video based on **adaptation**:*

- What are **adaptations**? (See vocabulary list).
- What were the **adaptations** in some of the topics? (the tail of the beaver, the hibernation of the bear) How did this uniqueness affect the life of these subjects?
- How did these **adaptations** affect the **ecosystem**?
- Did some of this uniqueness cause the subject problems? (Why?)

2. Research and Inquiry:

The video also models the techniques of good research and inquiry skills. The following are questions a teacher could raise about how the people in the video used these subjects to create a research project:

- What did the person want to investigate? For example, why were there so many deer in one place?
- What problems did they find out about the topic?
- What other questions might they have raised about the topic?
- Explain how many different ways facts were presented.
- What are some concepts that were presented?
- How many sources of information did you see used? Could there have been more? What is the need for multiple sources of information?
- Did students find the way the information was presented interesting?
- Was the information accurate? How might you be sure? (prior knowledge, additional research)
- Did you like this form of presenting the material? How else could this information be presented?

3. Expanded Activity After the Video:

The Web of Life:

- Have students form a large circle.
- Each student in the circle is given a card that names part of an **ecosystem**: This **ecosystem** example is centered on pond life:

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| 1. Seeds from plants | 12. Fox |
| 2. Frog | 13. Mice |
| 3. Water Plants | 14. Crayfish |
| 4. Clover and green plants | 15. Coyote |
| 5. Water Bird—Crane | 16. Deer |
| 6. Red Wing Black—marsh bird | 17. Rabbit |
| 7. Snake | 18. Snails |
| 8. Lizards | 19. Worm |
| 9. Fish | 20. Skunk |
| 10. Turtle | 21. Water Beetle |
| 11. Fly | 22. Grasshopper |

- Next, one student is given a large ball of string and they throw the ball to another person in the circle that has something to do with their part of the **ecosystem**. (A bird might pick a water beetle; a turtle might pick a fly, etc.) The web begins to form and students see how these things are inter-connected.

Another way to play the game is to have students throw the ball and if a student misses the toss they are out of the **ecosystem**. As more and more students are taken out of the circle students see how they are affected by the loss of different parts of the **ecosystem**.

IV. Research and Inquiry

Assign students to create a research/inquiry paper. This assignment can be done in small groups or on an individual basis.

Outline the goals students have for information presented in a research paper. Depending on this outline students would choose a topic based on the curriculum. Choosing can be very difficult for all levels of learners. To help in the selection of a topic, have students brainstorm ideas in a small or a large group.

As students prepare to do the research and writing, present them with several types of graphic organizers. It could be as simple as listing the different parts of a research paper; or one that provides space for questions, facts, new information and things they need to include in the paper.

The assignment of a research paper can be overwhelming to some students. Allowing them to work in small groups to form questions, to share ideas, to read and organize their thinking can be a big help for young learners. Since some students may wish to work independently; these students should be monitored closely for frustration and to make sure they can do the research.

Students' ability to have many resources available to them is an important part of the teacher's responsibility in this assignment. Teachers may wish to show this video first as a model to explain to students some important parts of a research paper. A research paper should have a question, a problem, have important facts, and be interesting. Besides the use of the video, use the website IntotheOutdoors.org, [EEK](http://EEK.org), or consult library books, magazines, etc.

The following are steps to help students through the process of writing a research paper:

- Using the teacher background materials for subjects, the video and other sources students would search for a topic of interest to them.
- Students may form small study groups to create lists of questions for each of the topics within the group. Group work at this point can help all types of learners to create more in-depth questions.
- Students will need to use resources to answer the questions they have compiled. Students may also write down more questions as they continue with their research.

- Part of a research assignment is to look for problems within the topic. Using some examples from the video, ask students if they can see problems such as the beaver being over trapped, water pollution spoiling wild rice beds, etc. Ask the students to continue with their research but to be aware of some problems within their topic. As they find problems they should make a list. Teachers may wish to have a bulletin board where students could put a card stating problems they are finding on their subject.
- Continue to have small group meetings so that children can share their latest findings and encourage each other to discuss answers they have found out about their subject. Challenging students to find answers to their problems may be based on answers they have already read or heard about in their background work. However, students should be made aware of the fact that some problems may not have answers at this time.
- Summarizing their findings and drawing conclusions may again be a time for small group discussion. Students can share ideas on how to end their work.
- Writing the paper is again determined by the individual teacher's requirements, but the use of graphic organizers can help with the actual writing.

Depending on the teacher's vision for this assignment, the following ideas could be used in the study of the environment:

- Students could use these papers to create a classroom activity on a bulletin board or by bringing in materials that could create a physical **ecosystem**. This actual ecosystem would be based on facts learned in students' research.
- Have students create a classroom book on the different topics chosen by the students. Each student would contribute information about their topic. Individual books could also be created in such a way that they could be shared with students in other grade levels. Upper grade level (high school art classes, middle school) students could help students with art work, writing, and binding of the books.
- Ask students to produce a video on their subject (using this DVD as an example). Students could create a video on several presentation styles such as a newscast, a play, or small reports. These videos could be shared in different classrooms by the use of all school video streaming or by making copies of their DVD.

V. Assessment:

Teachers can use a number of ways to assess students:

- Classroom discussion
- Small group discussion
- Research reports
- Classroom activities