

Going Green in the 19th Century

Unit Overview:

The National Parks System in the United States represents a concerted effort to preserve portions of the land for future generations. The United States was the first nation to establish a national park, Yellowstone, in 1872.

The origins of the park system, however, lie in the exploration of the West by hunters, trappers and miners, military expeditions by the US Cavalry; forced removal of indigenous populations; and the potential for natural areas like Yosemite to be recreational tourist destinations. Popular illustrated magazine articles touted Yosemite and other areas as representative of a distinctly American pioneer spirit. Easy passage of the Yosemite Grant in 1864 in the midst of the Civil War was viewed as an example of American pride and patriotism. The goal of the unit is to help students understand the historical underpinnings of the conservation movement and the impact of early conservationists on present-day America.

In this lesson, students conduct Internet research involving primary source documents, take structured notes, and write a persuasive essay on the significance of land conservation in 19th century America.

Student Objectives for Lesson:

Students will:

- Research, evaluate, and synthesize information about the origin of the conservation movement in the United States from various resources
- Demonstrate an understanding, through class discussion and persuasive writing, of the importance and the future of the conservation movement in the United States

Essential Question:

How does Albert Bierstadt's panoramic painting, "Looking down Yosemite Valley," help inspire a sense of obligation to conserve land to political leaders and individual citizens both past and present?

Internet Resource:

"The Evolution of the Conservation Movement, 1850-1920." *Library of Congress Home*.

12 Jan. 2010. Web. 28 Mar. 2010.

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/conservation/file.html>

Key Vocabulary:

conservation	the careful utilization of a natural resource in order to prevent depletion; official supervision of rivers, forests, and other natural resources in order to preserve and protect them through prudent management
ecology	the branch of biology dealing with the relations and interactions between organisms and their environment, including other organisms
indigenous	native to a particular area
landscape	a section or expanse of rural scenery, usually extensive, that can be seen from a single viewpoint; a picture representing natural inland or coastal scenery
sustainability	capacity to endure

Vermont Standards:

- 1.4 Students comprehend and respond to a range of media, images, and text for a variety of purposes.
- 1.11 In persuasive writing, students judge, propose, and persuade. This is evident when students take an authoritative stand on a topic; support the statement with sound reasoning; and use a range of strategies to elaborate and persuade.
- 1.19 Students use organizational systems to obtain information from various sources (including libraries and the Internet).
- 6.7 Students use geographical knowledge and images of various places to understand the present, communicate historical interpretations, develop solutions for problems, and plan for the future.

Student Performance Tasks/Activities:

Session 1: Divide the class into three groups and visit “The Evolution of the Conservation Movement” website. One group will examine documents from 1847-1871, another 1872-1889, and the third 1890-1900. Art works from each time will be examined for their reflection of and relationship to the conservation movement. As students explore the site, each will complete a thematic web graphic organizer or Cornell note-taking form (see attached).

Session 2: Students jigsaw into new groups with representatives from each of session one’s three groups. Information from research is shared and additional notes are taken. Bierstadt’s painting will be examined and discussed in relation to the conservation movement. Individual students will complete a persuasion map (see attached) in preparation for their essay using information gathered through research and. Students will write a persuasive essay on the significance of land conservation in the 19th century.

Assessment:

Students will review WMHS rubric (see attached) for persuasive essay and assessment vocabulary will be reviewed if needed. Notes and persuasion map will be reviewed for completion.