

Student Instructions

Ecotourism in National Wild Areas

Background

Pristine wild areas are becoming increasingly scarce as we use land for a variety of economic reasons including urban growth, logging, mining, fishing, ranching, and energy generation. When national parks and wilderness areas were set aside, some as much as a century ago, they were to retain the native ecosystem so that generations of Americans might experience America's wild places. Today there are mounting pressures to use the land for its economic resources. Many people don't value land unless there is some "economic" use for it. Today, some people are turning to "ecotourism," or tourism to places of natural or ecological interest, to provide an economic value simply for letting the land be. In many states, tourism in wild places is a major revenue generating industry.

Imagine you are an outdoor enthusiast who is also a member of a local chamber of commerce. You hear that there is a movement to "develop" the local wilderness. This might be through logging, mining, or urban growth. Since the local economy has been slow lately, citizens are leaning towards supporting this development. Your goal is to find an economically valuable use for the land without significantly damaging the ecosystem. You will research the features of your wilderness, then determine what it has to offer that tourists might pay to come see. You will design an ecotour and you will make a brochure that is intended to draw people in to the region to see your wilderness.

Instructions

1. Work in a group of three and obtain your wild area from your teacher
2. Use books, the internet, or primary materials from the wild area you are studying (available by calling or writing them).

Here are some internet sites to get you started

- **National Park Service**
<http://165.83.219.77/parksearch/state/usamap.cfm>
- **National Wilderness Preservation System**
<http://www.wilderness.net/nwps/map.cfm>
- **National Forest Service**
<http://www.fs.fed.us/>

Try to find information on the following questions:

1. Where is the wilderness area located? What are some unique features that make this area special? The following are examples of areas you might want to research:
 - Wildlife
 - Geology
 - Scenery
 - Habitat
 - Ecosystem
 - Climate

American Field Guide Teacher Resources: National Parks

Access this lesson plan online at: www.pbs.org/americanfieldguide/teachers

- History
 - Archaeology
2. What do you think the wilderness area has to offer tourists? Think about what you could offer in your wilderness that people would pay to come see.
 3. Research the logistics. For instance, if you offer fishing or hunting, are there licenses that people would need to get through the state? How would people get in to the wilderness area? Where would they stay?
 4. Make a brochure advertising an ecotrip into your wilderness area. Don't forget that the purpose of the brochure is to try to sell your trip to people. Be sure to be clear and thorough and give details that people might find interesting and exciting. Include:
 - Information about the area's special features
 - Types of activities you will offer on your ecotrip
 - Type of food and lodging (camping, hotels, etc.)
 - Type of transportation
 - Route maps and/or pictures

Assessment

You will be graded on:

- Accuracy of the content
- The relevance of your tour to the special features in the park or wilderness
- The attention you give the details of your tour package
- Creativity