

Watersheds & Wetlands Lesson Plan

Keywords: wetlands

Grade level: 3rd & 4th Grades

Setting: classroom

Subjects covered: Science

Goals:

The student will describe characteristics of wetlands.

The student will identify plants and animals found in wetlands.

The student will identify reasons wetlands are important to our environment.

Materials:

**Watersheds and Wetlands* flier (from Environment & Ecology Series) - 1 per student or pair of students

*chart paper/markers

*variety of wetlands resource books appropriate for grade level

State Standards Addressed: E & E Standards: 4.1.4.D, 4.1.4.E

Preparation:

1. Read background information and preview/read *Watersheds and Wetlands* flier
2. Title chart paper – Wetlands

Lesson Steps:

1. Students may have some prior knowledge about wetlands. They may have heard the term wetlands, and they may have visited wetlands, but they may not be able to identify specific characteristics, plants and animals found in wetlands. Solicit prior knowledge by asking, “*When you hear the word wetlands, what do you think of? Has anyone visited a wetland?*”
2. Continue to spark curiosity by giving the following scenario to your students. Adapt and personalize as necessary. For instance, if your school is near a known wetland (ie: Millbrook Marsh in State College, PA) personalize the story to make a local connection. *Yesterday when I was walking down town, I noticed flyers posted in many of the store windows. Flyers were titled “Save the Wetland!!” Apparently a developer wants to build a shopping center directly next to(over) our local wetland. Other information on the poster provided a meeting location, date, and time. Why would people in town be concerned about saving the wetland? Today we’re going to begin to explore exactly what a wetland is, what plants and animals are found there, and why wetlands are important to our environment.*
3. Distribute *Watersheds and Wetlands* fliers to individual students or pair of students. Before students begin reading, ask them to pay attention to the text and try to make connections to the wetlands information. Ask for volunteers to read aloud section on wetlands. (As time permits on subsequent days, students should explore other resources provided by the teacher.) Discuss written information.

4. Refer to chart paper titled wetlands. Solicit learned knowledge through discussion. Develop a class definition, a list of plants, animals, and list reasons that wetlands are helpful to our environment. Post in room so students can refer to information. Student responses will probably reflect their geographic location. Students from the northeast may create a list containing the following organisms:

cattail
sedge
rush
pin oak
turtle
snail

beaver
muskrat
frog
duck
minnow
water snake

dragonfly
crayfish
turtle
great blue heron
tall grass
spring peepers

5. Continue to spark interest in the town controversy. Teacher should suggest that the class create a project to inform the local town population about wetlands and their importance in nature.
6. Solicit ideas. One project idea involves a video taped interview. One student takes on the role of a reporter who is going to visit a wetland. At the wetland, the reporter meets organisms that live there. Other students in the class take on the roles of plants and animals. (As a class, generate questions that the reporter could ask to identify the purpose of a wetland, and plants and animals found there.) The plants and animals could provide information through their answers that would create an awareness that the wetland is more important to the community than the construction of another place to go shopping. If a field trip to a wetland is possible, the opportunity would provide students with a more realistic and personal connection to the project.
7. The “final interview” could be video-taped. Students could take turns taking the video/DVD home to discuss the concept of wetlands with their parents. If desired, teacher could create a brief list of questions for parents to answer for “homework.”

Resource: *Watersheds and Wetlands* flier (from Environment & Ecology Series)

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