

## **A Virtual Field Trip To Wild Florida**

(An Adaptation from a Problems and Prospects field lab produced by The Academy of Public Service, Umatilla High School, Lake County Florida)

**Grade Level:** Adaptable for all grades.

**Time:** 1-2 days

**Concept:** environment, human impacts on the natural environment

**Generalization:** The physical environment will suggest and limit people's activities, but does not dictate.

**Objectives:** Students will:

- 1) use critical thinking skills and observation to investigate and record characteristics of the natural environment in Florida.
- 2) compare and contrast the impacts that people have made on these environmentally sensitive areas of Florida.

### **Materials:**

Things To Think About Guide (this can be made into an overhead and handout for students)

Environmental Observation Data Collection Sheet

Computers with internet access (If you have only one computer or limited computers, you can print the data sets and supporting materials for groups to work with until their turn comes up.)

### **Procedures:**

#### **Initiating Activity:**

Ask students to think about how much damage a single person on a deserted island could cause, (they will most likely say very little) and then ask them what would happen if that same person was on a bulldozer. Tell the students that today they are going on a field trip to some special places throughout Florida without leaving the classroom. This virtual field trip is going to let them make some observations of nature without disturbing the natural surroundings. Place the Things To Think Guide on the overhead and give students a few minutes to think about their responses and any questions it may bring to mind. Have students share their responses and ask their questions. If a particular question seems like it could be answered during their virtual field trip, have them write it on their Things To Think About Guide.

#### **Virtual Field Trip Activity:**

Students are now ready to explore the environments of Florida. Set up the field trip by handing out their Environmental Observation Data Collection Sheets and putting the students in groups. (The groups will be determined by the number of computers with internet access, if every student is sitting at a computer, it is still recommended that they work together so they have someone to discuss their observations with.)

Assign the students to one of the webcam sites at the Web World Wonders website (<http://webworldwonders.firn.edu>). Let them explore the camera sites and work on their observational skills

by filling out the Data Collection Sheets and sketching what they see. Once they have finished their personal observations, have them explore the site for ecosystem data, weather data and other pieces of information that will help them answer their Things To Think About questions.

Once they have finished their data collection, ask them to talk with their partner about what they observed and the answers to their Things To Think About Guide. When they have successfully completed the Data Sheet and Things To Think About Guide, have the group find another group that looked at the same site and compare notes. Remind the students that if they have discrepancies, they can always go back to the site together to do another observation.

**Culminating Activity:** Have students in their original groups find another group that observed a different site. Ask the two groups to discuss what they saw. Ask them to find the similarities and differences between the sites as well as the impacts that people have made to each site. After a few minutes of discussion ask the groups to share with the class what they came up with.

**Evaluation:** Completion of their Things To Think About Guide and Data Collection Sheet along with their group discussions will provide the data for the students to create a field trip log or report that discusses what they learned on their virtual field trip. The supporting data (Things To Think About and Data Sheet) should be turned in with the final report or log.

**National Geography Standards:**

Standard 8: Student knows and understands the characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on the Earth's surface.

Standard 14: Student knows and understands how human actions modify the physical environment.

**Sunshine State Standards:**

SC.D.2.3: the student understands the need for protection of the natural systems on Earth.

SS.B.2.3: the student understands the interactions of people and the physical environment.

**Resources:**

The Web World Wonders website (<http://webworldwonders.firn.edu>) and the related links off the site.

## Things To Think About Guide

Before you visit the Web World Wonders site, think about ways you can sharpen your senses and your observational powers.

1. When you visit the Web World Wonders site, think about the value that these locations hold for you and others who live in or visit the state of Florida.
2. Do you see any evidence of vegetation?
3. Do you see any evidence that the water level may sometimes be higher than it is now? Do you see water marks on trees or shrubs? Do you see any leaves or other debris washed up against the trunks of trees?
4. Do you find any evidence of human activity in or around the area?
5. Do you see any evidence of animals? Example: feathers, tracks, bones, nests, etc.
6. Do you see places that look like they would make good areas for nests, dens, or homes? (sketch the location)
7. Do you see any evidence of animal feeding, such as holes in trees?
8. Do you see any animal constructions, such as spider webs?

Sketch anything interesting you observe:

# Environmental Observation Data Collection Sheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Conditions:      Sunny \_\_\_\_\_      Cloudy \_\_\_\_\_      Rainy \_\_\_\_\_  
   Hot \_\_\_\_\_      Cold \_\_\_\_\_      Moderate \_\_\_\_\_

Location and comments: \_\_\_\_\_

General Topography: \_\_\_\_\_

Land Use:

    Human Alterations: \_\_\_\_\_

    Nearby Uses: \_\_\_\_\_

    Disturbances: \_\_\_\_\_

Birds/comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Insects/comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Animals/comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetation/comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Water/comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Sketches: