



# The Natchez Trace Parkway Parks as Classroom

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## The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom



A thematic unit on animal orders featuring:

Characteristics of animals  
Classifying animals  
Organisms and environments  
Habitats

Meets Mississippi Curriculum Objectives for

**2<sup>nd</sup> GRADE**





Pre-visit to be completed in your classroom

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## TO THE TEACHER

Thank you for participating in the Natchez Trace Parkway education program. The program provides an interdisciplinary learning experience for students on the natural and cultural resources of the Site with Mississippi curriculum objectives.

The theme of your program is "order." Students will learn about the cultural resources of the Site by learning about habitats. The pre-visit activities included in this packet are specific to the theme of your program and should be presented prior to your visit. The Park Ranger conducts the on-site instruction with assistance in discussion and discipline by the teacher. The post-site activities are designed to reinforce and build upon the Site experience. Please feel free to contact the Site at 1-800-305-7417 or (662) 680-4027 if you have any further questions.

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## CLASSROOM PARAMATERS

Target Class Size:	30-60 Second Grade students
Curriculum areas:	Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science
Site:	The school classroom
Learning Strategies:	This lesson includes a sensory experience with animal skins and skulls, an outdoor exploration of various animal and insect habitats, and an outdoor tour to compare and contrast human habitats with those of animals.
Pre-Site:	Pre-site activities, Pre-test
On-Site:	Reservations are set between the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (we are flexible). Program begins with an introduction by Park Ranger. Rangers will lead a show-and-tell activity using animal furs, animal skulls, and puppets. Break for lunch. A Ranger will lead a nature hike to compare and contrast human habitats with those of animals and insects.
Post-site:	Post-site activities, and evaluation.



Pre-visit to be completed in your classroom

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## LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

### Important Reminders for a Successful Program

- Map:** A map of the classroom and surrounding area is included in this guide. If you need specific directions to the Natchez Trace Visitor Center, please contact the Site at 1-800-305-7417 or (662) 680-4027.
- Where to meet:** All students, teachers, and chaperones will meet the Park Ranger at the bus parking area in front of the Natchez Trace Parkway Visitor Center at Milepost 266. The "Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom" is located approximately 100 yards west of the Visitor Center Parking area (across the Parkway from the Visitor Center). The students will be taken directly to the Natchez Trace Parkway Visitor Center for a restroom break. The introduction will begin after relocating to the "Beech Springs" following the restroom break.
- Restrooms:** Restrooms are located in the Natchez Trace Parkway Visitor Center. It is important that students use the restroom when arriving because the activities will be conducted at the "Beech Springs" where there are no restroom facilities.
- Lunch:** Lunches will be kept on the bus for the duration of the program. Depending on the class schedule, teachers may choose to eat after the program on the lawn around the visitor center or near the Beech Springs parking. Contact the visitor center (662-680-4027) for more lunch area options.
- Weather Conditions:** Please remind students, the day before your site visit, to wear appropriate footwear and clothing for a program that includes some outdoor time. Flip flops and sandals are not recommended. Temperatures and weather may be unpredictable. Call the Natchez Trace Parkway Visitor Center (662-680-4027) if weather is a concern.
- Discipline:** The teacher is responsible for discipline during the program. Please remind your chaperones that they will be expected to assist with this duty.
- Chaperones:** The program is designed for a class of 60 students. The group will be divided in half. We require that a minimum of one teacher and/or chaperone be available for every ten students to maintain a positive and rewarding learning experience. Please share materials with the chaperones so that they may be prepared for the program and have the opportunity to interact with the students.
- Safety:** Please review and be aware of safety concerns addressed in the pre-site lesson. Notify the Park Ranger of any special concerns or medical conditions.
- Cancellations:** Should anything unforeseen occur preventing you from keeping your appointment, please contact the Natchez Trace Parkway Visitor Center at (662) 680-4027 to notify us of your late arrival or cancellation. Late arrivals may impact other scheduled groups so being more than 10 minutes late will result in an activity being cut from the program. Being more than 15 minutes late may result in your forfeiting your entire program.



## Teacher's Information

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION Site Description

#### Nat'l Park Service:

The National Park Service is charged with the management and preservation of the nation's most precious natural and cultural resources. These resources are woven into our natural heritage, and they provide opportunities for recreation, appreciation of natural beauty, historical reflection, cultural enrichment, and environmental education.

The future vision of the service includes protection of Park resources; access and enjoyment for all people; education and interpretation to convey contributions of each Park unit and the Park system to the nation's values, character, and experience; continuing science, research, and resource management to manage and protect Park resources.

#### Natchez Trace Parkway:

The Natchez Trace Parkway was established to commemorate the historic significance of the Old Natchez Trace – a primitive trail stretching some 500 miles through the wilderness from Natchez, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee. The Trace probably evolved from the repeated use of meandering game trails by the earliest human inhabitants. Over time, these paths were traveled by prehistoric American Indians, the known civilized historic American Indian Tribes, European explorers, American Traders, and others.

History has witnessed several phases in the development of the Natchez Trace, each with a distinct origin and purpose. Consider these words from the booklet, "The Natchez Trace – Indian Trail to Parkway":

"The modern concept that a road follows a fixed route does not apply to the Natchez Trace. During the short time that the road was a major line of communication, its location shifted to meet the rapidly changing needs of the old southwestern frontier. Only rarely do all of the various locations coincide to make it possible to say, 'this is the Natchez Trace.'"

Word spread among the early white settlers that it was possible to travel by foot between Nashville and Natchez through the Indian Nations. Traffic increased along this, the "Boatman's Trail," with men returning home to the north after floating the Mississippi and selling their cargo, flatboats included, which were sold for their lumber, at Natchez or New Orleans.



In 1798, Spain surrendered all lands north of the 31<sup>st</sup> parallel. The Mississippi Territory was then established with Natchez as its capital. Traffic on the Trace increased dramatically, to the point where the public was demanding that a new road be built to replace the crude Boatman's Trail. At Natchez by 1800 it was often referred as the Nashville Road. In Tennessee it was referred to as the Natchez Road.

In 1801, Congress proclaimed this route a post road and, with the concurrence of the Indian Nations, ordered the army to clear a new road between Nashville and Natchez. Added usage caused discontent to grow even stronger concerning the harsh conditions of this new route. In 1806, Jefferson directed the Postmaster General to oversee an additional route improvement project, which incorporated strict engineering criteria using \$6,000 appropriated by Congress.

Unfortunately, funds for maintenance were not included in the appropriation. Complaints concerning conditions on the rugged wilderness trail flooded in as river trade boomed along with the increasing population. The war years of 1812-1815 witnessed the all-time heaviest travel along the Natchez Trace.

Before improvements were made, the need for them diminished. After his victory at the Battle of New Orleans in 1858, Andrew Jackson marched his troops home along the Trace – an event that signaled not only the war's end, but also the decline of the Natchez Trace's importance as a transportation corridor. By 1820, steamboats were common on the Mississippi River, making upriver travel easy. Boatmen now chose to return home by water rather than by the overland route. Boatmen now chose to return home by water rather than by the overland route.

## Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom:

The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom, developed in 1994 through a partnership between Tupelo Outdoor Classrooms and the Natchez Trace Parkway, National Park Service, establishes an outdoor environment in which teachers from Tupelo and surrounding communities can provide students with a hands-on learning experience. The facility includes cabins, an informal campfire circle, and amphitheater, and access to the Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail. The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom fosters increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the scenic, cultural, and natural resources of the Parkway and all National Park lands.

The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom is sponsored by Tupelo Outdoor Classrooms, a group composed of Tupelo Business and school representatives, and the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Tupelo Businessman Jack Reed, Jr., president of Reed's Department Store, initiated Tupelo Outdoor Classrooms. Mr. Reed was the catalyst for the creation of a partnership among the Tupelo school system, the Tupelo business community, and the Natchez Trace Parkway. Within this partnership, Tupelo Outdoor Classrooms provided volunteer labor and the National Park



Service provided the materials to rehabilitate and Improve an existing facility on the Parkway. Teachers from King and Milam Intermediate Schools and Tupelo High School developed the initial curriculum materials and were instrumental in promoting the outdoor classroom.

National Park Service funding for this project came from a NPS challenge Cost-Share program (CCSP) grant. The projects funded by CCSP grants are meant to “increase the awareness and participation by neighboring communities and public in the preservation and involvement of National Park Service cultural, natural, and recreational resources.” The CCSP grant encourages partnerships with non-federal organizations and provides up to 50 percent of the cost of a project. In the case of Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom, Tupelo Outdoor Classrooms donated \$13,322 of in kind services to the project including a \$3,000 cash donation from Reed’s Department Store and the National Park Service provided materials and the expertise for rehabilitating the facilities in the amount of \$11,000.



## Teacher's Information

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### MISSISSIPPI CURRICULUM CORRELATIONS Second Grade

- Language Arts:
- Use words that describe and represent real-life objects and actions
  - Learn new words through stories and explicit instruction
  - Extend comprehension of passages heard by retelling stories and by answering questions.
  - Extend skills in recalling information
  - Extend skills in asking questions, discussing ideas, and relating events to daily life
- Social Studies:
- Extend initial ability to display information in graphic form
  - Extend skills in locating new information and expressing understanding of the new information in classroom projects
  - Extend awareness of rules
  - Increase awareness of various environments
  - Extend awareness of the reasons for change in the environment
  - Demonstrate the ability to construct models of physical structures in immediate environment
  - Develop an awareness of government, and Identify Park Rangers and their role in the community
  - Relate land use in their locality to physical features of the land
  - Develop an awareness of environmental problems in local communities
  - Develop an awareness of the ways that personal actions benefit or harm the local environment
- Science:
- Identify questions that can be answered through scientific investigations
  - Demonstrate the ability to perform safe and appropriate manipulation of materials.
  - Develop appropriate skills to design and conduct a scientific investigation
  - Develop skill in using vocabulary associated with science
  - Recognize the impact of society on human health and environmental conditions.
  - Recognize the relationship among science, technology, and society



## Teacher's Information

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### VOCABULARY

Environment:	All of your surroundings. This includes plants, animals, and people (living things) and the air, water, rocks, buildings, and roads (things that are not living)
Habitat:	The environment in which a plant or animal lives
National Park:	An area of land protected by the government for the enjoyment of citizens. This area also includes plants, animals, streams and historic buildings
Vertebrates:	Creatures without backbones
Insects:	Small creatures with 6 legs, 3 body parts that are segmented, usually have 2 pair of wings
Birds:	Warm blooded animals that are feathered vertebrates. All birds have wings, but some can not fly. They have bills or beaks and reproduce by laying eggs
Reptiles:	Cold-blooded animals (do not generate enough internal heat to keep them warm) that are vertebrates with scaly skin. Most reptiles lay eggs.
Amphibians:	Amphibians have soft and slippery skin and spend most of their time in and around water to keep their skin moist. They lay soft jelly like eggs in and around water.
Mammals:	Warm blooded animals with fur or hair that are vertebrates who give birth to live young. Mammals feed their babies milk.
Fish:	Vertebrates with gills instead of lungs. Fish can breathe in water; they are cold blooded and reproduce by laying eggs.

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### SUGGESTED REFERENCES

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* or *The Mixed-up Chameleon* by Eric Carle.



# The Natchez Trace Parkway Parks as Classroom

We are glad you had the opportunity to participate in the education program at the Natchez Trace Parkway. Please help us continue to improve and develop this program by taking a few minutes to complete this form. We know how valuable your classroom time is, and we want to insure our curriculum and programs are serving your needs. Thank you for your time. Please return to Natchez Trace Parkway, Division of Interpretation, 2680 Natchez Trace Parkway, Tupelo, MS 38804.

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Ranger(s): \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about this program? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the reservation system convenient? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Did you have everything you needed to prepare for the Trip? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you prepare for the visit? \_\_\_\_\_

Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the program/presenter and any methods/materials utilized. \_\_\_\_\_

What was the best part of the educational experience? \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle your response to the following questions:

1 (high/agree)      2 (medium/okay)      3 (low/disagree)

Overall Evaluation

Usefulness from curriculum standpoint:      1      2      3

Quality:      1      2      3

Interest level of students:      1      2      3

Age Appropriate:      1      2      3

Program:

Relevant to curriculum:      1      2      3

Suitable for class size:      1      2      3

Appropriate Length:      1      2      3

Content for age group:      1      2      3

Use program in future:      1      2      3

Ranger effectiveness:      1      2      3



Pre-visit to be completed in your school classroom

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## PRE-SITE LESSON Order

Duration:	30-45 Minutes
Location:	School Classroom
Materials:	Color sheets, and response cards
Thematic unit:	Order
Curriculum areas:	Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science

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### INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Learning Objectives:	The students will be able to: 1) list the basic survival needs for living organisms; 2) define habitat
Teacher Task (set):	Read an animal book to the students. Suggested: <i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i> or <i>The Mixed-up Chameleon</i> by Eric Carle.
Teacher task (overview):	Soon we will be visiting Natchez Trace Parkway. The Parkway is a road that was built so that we remember an old trail. As far as we know, the trail was here before any people traveled it and it created by animals.
Teacher task (introduction):	Use color sheets (set A) to introduce six animal groups. Introduce each animal group by reading the name of the group. Read the description of the group below the picture. Discuss skin covering, locomotion, and habitat. Discuss needs that are common to all animals (water, food, space, shelter)
Student task:	Listen to instructions, and complete activities.
Teacher task (closure):	Discussion
Student assessment:	Student's physical and oral participation in activity.



Pre-visit to be completed in your school classroom

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## PRE-SITE LESSON Safety

Duration:	15-20 minutes
Location:	School classroom
Materials:	Teacher discussion sheet on safety
Thematic units:	Environmental awareness
Curriculum areas:	Social studies

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### INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Learning objectives:	The students will be able to: 1) discuss three methods to keep them from getting lost; 2) identify the most important thing to do when lost; 3) discuss and identify three dangers on the field trip and know how to avoid them.
Teacher task (set):	Discuss the safety sheet and dangers students may encounter in the park.
Teacher task (Overview):	Identify behavior that students should exhibit to reduce safety hazards.
Teacher task (instruction):	Discuss methods to keep from getting lost and identify the most important things to do if lost.
Student task:	Participate in discussion.
Teacher task (closure):	Summarize safety issues discussed during the lesson.
Student assessment:	Participate in discussion.
Challenge activities:	Create a list of items that are necessary to safely visit the Natchez Trace Parkway.
Plans for re-teaching:	Post-visit summary and discussion.



## Safety Sheet

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### PRE-SITE LESSON Safety Lesson-Teacher Discussion Sheet

- Dangers on fieldtrips:** Discuss crosswalks, staying as a group and possible weather conditions.
- Avoid dangers by:** Staying together as a group  
Not running or playing rough  
Watch where you put your hands and feet  
Understanding crosswalks  
Listening to instructions
- Avoid getting lost by:** Staying with a group  
Be aware of landmarks  
Letting others know where you are and when you will return
- If you get lost:** Stop, wait, stay calm, and look at everything in your environment to see if you recognize anything or anybody. Stay where you are and wait for someone you recognize or someone in uniform like a Policeman, Park Ranger, or Fireman.
- Words to the wise:** The Parkway is a park where all things are protected by law. The Parkway can be a busy place with many people so not paying attention can get you lost. There is a busy road with no crosswalks, but people in cars can see adults and groups easier than they can see one small child.
- Items for a safe visit:**
- | <b>Necessary</b>   | <b>Do not bring</b>                       |
|--------------------|---|
| Day pack           | Chewing gum                               |
| Bottled water      | Sandals, flip-flops, or other loose shoes |
| Lunch or snack     | Sharp objects                             |
| Rain gear          | Heavy or awkward items                    |
| Good walking shoes |   |



The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom

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## ON-SITE LESSON "Show and Tell"

Duration:	45 minutes
Location:	The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom
Materials:	Animal furs, insect puppets, animal pictures, and animal skulls
Thematic Unit:	Order
Curriculum areas:	Science, and Language Arts

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### INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Learning Objectives:	The students will be able to: 1) identify that animals belong to different groups; 2) name different physical characteristics of animals; 3) understand how animals behave; 3) describe the difference between wild and domestic animals.
Teacher task (set):	Rangers will explain to the students that they will be learning about different animal groups and their characteristics. They will be discussing and acting out how these groups behave
Teacher task (overview):	Discuss the differences between different animal groups
Teacher task (instruction):	Have students listen and respond throughout the activity.
Student assessment:	Participation in activity and discussion
Challenge activities:	Have students list what they remember from each animal that was shown and how each animal behaves
Plans for re-teaching:	Post-site summary and discussion.



The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom

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## ON-SITE LESSON

### Habitat Hike

Duration:	15 minutes
Location:	Outdoor Classroom Across from the Visitor Center
Materials:	Animal props to set up in habitats
Thematic Unit:	Order
Curriculum areas:	Science, Social Studies and Language Art

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## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Learning Objectives:	The students will be able to: 1) list four characteristics of every habitat; 2) identify three habitats that belong to wild animals; 4) explain why it is important to understand an animal's habitat needs.
Teacher task (set):	Rangers will explain to students that they will be locating animal habitats. They will search for habitats and the animals that use them.
Teacher task (overview):	Explain to the students that every living organism has a habitat in which it must live. A habitat will always have the basic needs of food, shelter, water, and space. Different organisms need different amounts, and types, of the basic needs in their habitat.
Student task (instruction):	Students will follow the ranger on the hike and look through the forest to find habitats with wildlife in them. Students will participate in the hunt and a discussion and Q&A session at each habitat.
Student task:	Follow instructions and work as a team. Students will locate a habitat and find the creatures that live there.
Teacher task (closure):	Allow the students to work together with little supervision. Allow them the time to locate habitats and discover what animals live in them.



The Beech Springs Classroom

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ON-SITE LESSON  
Human Habitat

Duration:	15 minutes
Location:	The "Beech Springs" Classroom
Materials:	None
Thematic Unit:	Order
Curriculum areas:	Social Studies and Language Arts

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## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Learning objectives:	The students will be able to: 1) list the basic needs of all living organisms; 2) name how houses are similar to habitats used by other living creatures; 3) name how houses are different than habitats used by other living creatures.
Teacher task (set):	Tour the "Beech Springs" giving examples of the basic needs of humans. Compare the habitats of humans to those of other creatures.
Teacher task (overview):	Explain to students that humans are mammals, and like other living creatures, require the same basic needs. Have the students look for the basic needs in the "Beech Springs".
Teacher task (instruction):	Compare and contrast human habitats with those of animals.
Student task:	Make a list of things that they see at "Beech Springs" that provide the basic needs to people who camp there, and compare them to how other living organisms get their basic needs.
Teacher task (closure):	Use student examples of what they find in the "Beech Springs" that provide for the basic needs, and have them compare these environments to those which other organisms live.
Student assessment:	Participation in the activity and post activity discussion.



## The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom

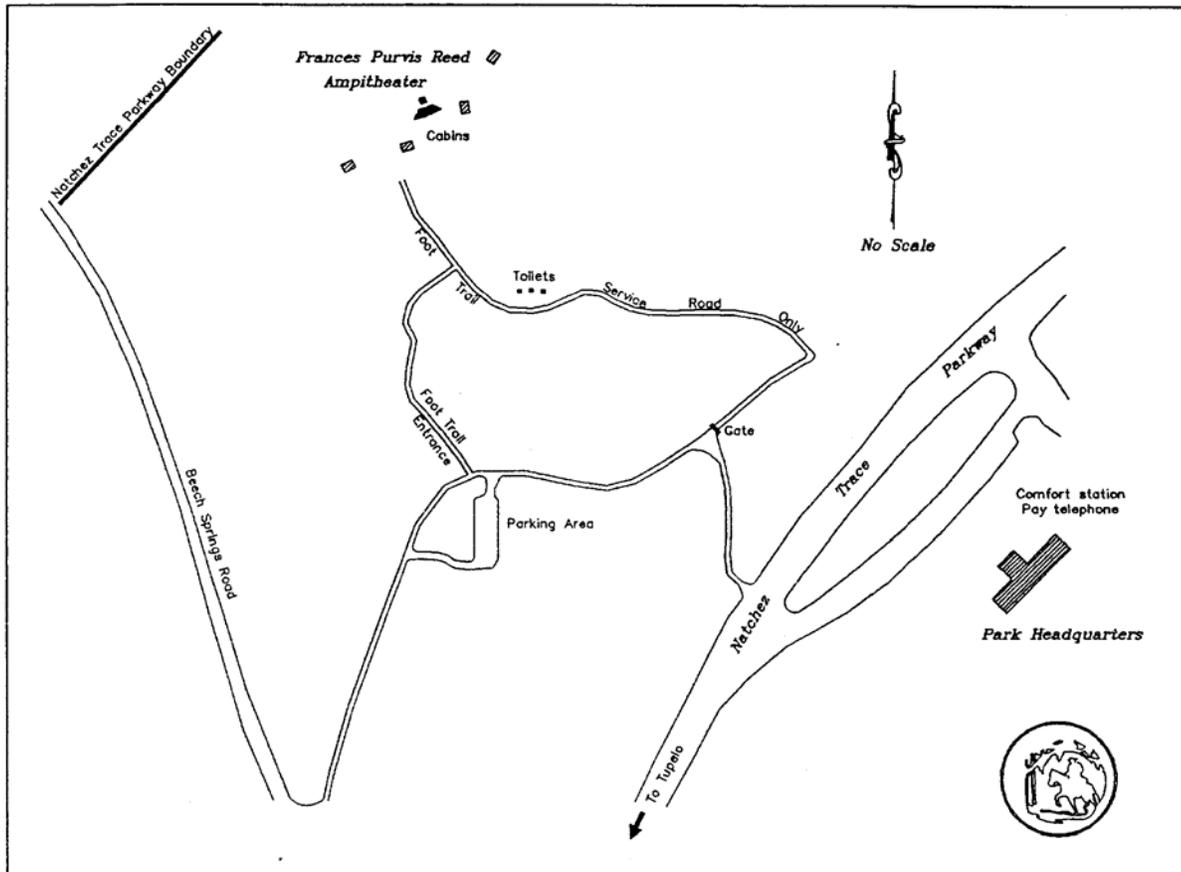
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### POST-SITE LESSONS Challenge Activities

- Overview:** A habitat is a home for living organisms. Living organisms need food, shelter, water, and space in their habitats. Humans build there homes to provide the basic needs in a convenient way. Other creatures modify their habitat to supply the basic needs too. Discuss how some other animals, like beaver's and woodpeckers, modify their habitat to provide for their basic needs just as humans do.
- Student task:** Have students draw their houses and list how their houses give them their basic needs. Have students compare the way that they get their basic to the ways that basic needs were obtained by humans 100 years ago, and 200 years ago.
- Social Studies:** Discuss with students how technology has made obtaining our basic needs easier. Have Students compare and contrast the way humans get their basic needs today as opposed to different periods in history.
- Science:** Have students find pictures of different types of animals. Have them identify what group each animal comes from. Have students paste the animal picture on construction paper and draw the animal's habitat around the animal.
- Language Arts:** Have students give examples that define habitat, environment, insects, vertebrates, birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and fish.



## BEECH SPRINGS OUTDOOR CLASSROOM



The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom Facility.

### THE FACILITIES

The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom was developed at an existing-but-rundown camp site. This facility, renovated through the volunteer efforts of the Tupelo Outdoor Classroom, was formerly called the National Environmental Study Area. Today, teachers and students can once again utilize nature and the environment in the learning process. Entry into the area is by foot only. Wheelchair accessibility is possible, but some assistance in traversing trails in the area may be necessary.

- **Overnight Cabins.** The Beech Springs Outdoor Classroom has four screened cabins. Each cabin accommodates sixteen students, eight on each side of a wall. Platform bunk beds are provided, but students will need a sleeping bag or equivalent, and pillow.
- **Water,** for cooking and drinking.
- **Latrines,** but no shower facilities.
- **Wheelchair-accessible latrine.**
- **Electricity/Telephone.** There is no electricity and no telephone on site, but telephones are available at the visitor center.