



Lesson Two

The National Parks And You

Goal: The students will be able to explain:

- What is a National Park?
- Why is it a National Park?
- Why is it important that we have National Parks?
- What is the visitor's responsibility to a National Park site?

Objectives:

- discover what is a National Park and why is it important to protect them
- choose a National Park in your favorite state (www.nps.gov)
- research your National Park and know why it has been designated as a National Park
- construct a list of activities you might do when you visit your park
- describe your National Park to a friend in written form
- think about a question you have for your park and find out the answer (research, visit, write a letter)

Colorado Model Content Standards Addressed:

History: K-4 (3.1, 3.2) 5-8 (4.1, 4.2)

Mathematics: K-4 (2.4) 5-8 (2.3, 6.1)

Reading & Writing: K-8 (components of 1,2,3,4, 5, and 6)

Geography: K-4 (2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4), 5-8 (2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3)

Materials Needed:

Internet Access (www.nps.gov) (nps = National Park Service)

Books about National Parks

Research/Library Access

Background information of NPS designation

Background Information:

Students will use the following National Parks Service labels for their project.

Designation Units of the National Parks: (reasons and definitions of parks)

- National Monument - landmarks, structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest on lands controlled by the government
- National Preserve - areas much like the National Park but Congress has permitted hunting, trapping, oil/gas exploration and extraction
- National Historic Site - usually a national historic site contains a single historical feature that was directly associated with its subject
- National Historic Park - generally applies to historic parks that extend beyond single properties or buildings
- National Memorial - is commemorative of a historic person or episode

- National Battlefield - includes national battlefield, national battlefield park, national battlefield site, and national military park
- National Cemetery - presently 14 national cemeteries in the National Park System - all are administrated as a unit
- National Recreation Area - 12 sites are centered on large reservoirs and emphasize water-based recreation, 5 sites are located near major population centers and provide outdoor recreation for a large number of people
- National Seashore - 10 national seashores have been established on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coasts
- National Lakeshore - all are located on the Great Lakes and closely parallel the seashores in character and use
- National River - this category includes: national river and recreation area, national scenic river, and wild river
- National Parkway - refers to a roadway and the parkland paralleling the roadway - intended for scenic motoring
- National Trail - National scenic trails and national historic trails are the titles given to these linear parklands
- Affiliated Areas - any area of land and water administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service for park, monument, historic, parkway, recreational or other purposes (preserve significant properties outside the National Park System)
- Other Designations - some units of the National Park System bear unique titles, like the White House

Activity One:

Tell your students that you are going to be visiting a National Park. Give them some background information on the purposes of the parks and the labels that National Parks are given. Go to www.nps.gov web site and have the students either independently or with a partner, choose a favorite state and click on it. Go through the National Parks listed for that state and pick one for a mini research project other than Bent's Old Fort. Let the students know that they will need to know: Why is your site a part of the National Park Service? What kind of National Park site is it? Why was it selected as a National Park? What would you expect to see and do if you visited your National Park? Come up with a couple of questions that you would like to have answered about your National Park site.

Activity Two:

Write a one page mini report on the National Park site that you have chosen and be prepared to share it with your class mates.

Activity Three:

Repeat Activity One, but select Bent's Fort as your park of choice. This will reinforce Bent's Fort's influence on the opening of the West and the place it holds in Colorado's history. This is a great pre-visit activity. The more your students know about Bent's Fort and its history, the more they will benefit from their visit.