

The Wild Debate

Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary is one of North America's largest freshwater rehabilitation projects. Surrounded by two major cities, its future will be determined by the decisions that humans make about its use. Students will explore the future of this unique place from multiple points of view and make proposals about the future of the marsh.

Overview

Curriculum Subject	Science	Grade Level	Grade 6
Topic	Human Interactions with Nature	Timeframe	3 hours

Science: Biodiversity	Overall Expectations	1. assess human impacts on biodiversity, and identify ways of preserving biodiversity
	Specific Expectations	1.1 analyze a local issue related to biodiversity, taking different points of view into consideration, propose action that can be taken to preserve biodiversity, and act on the proposal

Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are learning about how human choices and actions have positive and negative impacts on the environment.
Success Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can examine an issue related to biodiversity from different points of view. • I can take action on a plan to preserve biodiversity.
Assessment and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder group proposal (group work) is a check-in for the final Proposal Assignment. Use this as an opportunity to provide feedback.
Prior Learning	<p>Prior to this lessons, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been introduced to the science concepts of biodiversity, natural community, and invasive species. • RBG offers a suite of Biodiversity lesson plans that connect students to the work being done to protect the Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary. This lesson can be incorporated as an extension of these lessons, or as a standalone lesson.
Materials and Preparation Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to beginning this lesson, students should have access to the following files to read and refer to: “Biodiversity in Cootes Paradise” (.pdf) and “The Wild Debate” (.pdf). The “Biodiversity in Cootes Paradise Marsh” slideshow is also included as a resource in the download folder for this lesson plan.

Procedure

Minds On:

- Reflect on positive example of human interaction with environment. For example, watch “Japan’s Town with No Waste”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS9uhASKyjA>
 - What was the point of view of the shopkeeper, the housewife, and the cook at first? Did they completely agree with the decision of the town (Kamikatsu) to eliminate all waste?
 - Think of this scenario from their point of view. Why would the town’s decision create a challenge for these people? How did their point of view change over time?
- When making big decisions or dealing with big issues like the biodiversity of a natural area, it’s important to keep in mind that many different points of view are involved. It is important to consider things from different perspectives. Remind students of work they have done to incorporate a specific point of view in their writing work, or a time when they had to work with someone who did or did not understand their point of view, and how that felt.

Action:

- Tell students that they will be examining an issue from different points of view. As a class (via videoconference app), read the “Background” section of the Wild Debate resource.
 - Optional: to provide background on Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary, give students access to “Biodiversity in Cootes Paradise Marsh”. This is a PDF slideshow that discusses how plants contribute to a healthy ecosystem that benefits local animal species as well as humans.
- Introduce the “Scenario” and “Your Task” sections of the Wild Debate resource. Explain that students will be divided into groups that represent different local groups who all see this issue from different perspectives.
- Divide students into pre-selected or self-made groups of three to four students each for the following assignment.
- In small groups, have students develop their response to the questions posed in the assignment:
 - What is the most important problem your group wants to solve?
 - How can Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary be used to solve this problem?
 - What is your group’s goal for the Nature Sanctuary? Write a proposal in three complete paragraphs that outlines what your group’s goal is, why it is important to the people of this region, and three things that will result once your goal is accomplished.
- Groups can submit their responses to this assignment using a sharing app that they are familiar with, such as FlipGrid. One student for each group will act as the presenter. As a class, review the answers of each group: note how the proposals from each group are different, and where they have similarities.

Consolidation and Connection:

- As a class, discuss: which of the proposals will create the best chance for biodiversity to prosper in Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary? As they consider this, remind them of the success of the town of Kamikatsu in reducing their waste. Though it took hard work, it has been a great success that is now a model for other towns to follow.

