

Visiting Protected Areas Association

Activity Information

Grade Level: Elementary / Intermediate

Subject Area: Science, Technology, Language Arts, Art

Duration: 105 – 175 mins

Group Size: Individual or Small Groups

Purpose: To familiarize students with the goals and objectives of the Protected Areas Association, and to appreciate the importance of protecting our province's natural areas.

Teacher's Notes: *Wilderness Reserves, Ecological Reserves, National Parks and Provincial Parks are four ways that Newfoundland and Labrador can protect natural areas for the future. Each has a slightly different purpose and all help achieve the goal of preserving unique natural features throughout the province. The introduction to the Ecoregion Brochure series, Newfoundland and Labrador: Understanding and Protecting Our Natural Heritage, gives details about the importance of protecting areas and how these parks and reserves help achieve that goal.*

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Access to the internet
- Notebook
- Elementary Research Guide (BLM – one per group)
or Intermediate Research Guide (BLM – one per group)
- Poster making materials such as markers, paints, crayons, paper, glue
- Ecoregion brochure series

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Appreciate the goals of PAA
- Appreciate the importance of protecting natural areas
- Identify study areas of interest to PAA and other organizations
- List several benefits of protecting natural areas
- Design a poster to create awareness for a proposed protected area

PROCEDURE:

After discussing protected areas, students will then see how PAA, a grassroots, non-profit organization, is successfully working to protect natural areas in the province. In this activity, through use of the internet, students can connect their studies to real local issues and the importance of protecting natural areas.

Students will then develop a poster to educate others about the importance of protecting natural areas. Older students are asked to focus on one of the study areas found on the PAA website.

Part I (Discuss) 15 minutes:

Begin with a class discussion about protecting natural areas. Ask students to define protected areas in their own words. (These are areas of land especially dedicated to giving natural development priority over human development.) What are some examples of protected areas in Newfoundland and Labrador? Answers should include provincial parks, ecological reserves, and wilderness reserves. Tell students that in order for a natural area to become a park or reserve, it must go through a specific procedure, which sometimes takes quite a long time. However once these areas are protected they will safeguard the land and the species living on it from the pressures of development.

For older students, the teacher may want to invite students to look at the legislation used to create protected areas in Newfoundland and Labrador (the Provincial Parks Act and the Ecological Reserves Act). These can be viewed through PAA's website.

Part II (Groups) 45 – 60 minutes:

Organize the class into small groups to begin their web search. Invite students to log onto Protected Areas Association's website to find out more about PAA and what they do.

Protected Areas Association

<http://www.paanl.org>

Use the website to find the natural areas in Newfoundland and Labrador that PAA is currently most concerned about. Follow the "About PAA" link to find detailed information about these and other projects and successes.

Students will use Protected Areas Association's website to complete Part A of the worksheets appropriate for their grade level.

If you have access to only one computer in the classroom, have groups rotate to the computer station while others begin a library search on the current PAA study areas mentioned above. This will be the start of their Part III research.

Part III (Activity) 30 – 45 minutes:

Students can work independently or in small groups of three or four. This could also be a take home project.

Following the instructions in Part B of the worksheet appropriate for their grade level, students will create a poster to educate others about the importance of natural areas. They

may need to find other web or library resources to answer questions in their own area of interest. The Ecoregion Brochure series can provide detailed information about specific regions. Use the guiding questions in Part B to decide what topic to investigate further.

Elementary students will consider the general question of the importance of protected areas within the province. They may wish to get more specific detail on a particular issue such as logging, endangered species or climate change.

Intermediate students will use one of the study areas found on the PAA website and build on their research from there. They will need to learn as much as they can about the area in order to show why it needs protection.

After completing their research, students will need to decide how to present this information in a poster. Part B of the research guide outlines what should be included and offers ideas on how to best relay their message.

Part IV (Evaluate) 15 - 25 minutes:

When all the posters are complete and before they are displayed in the school or community, allow time for students to compare their posters. Have different groups who studied the same area found different key messages? What is the difference between a poster targeting young children versus the general public?

Assure the group that we all have different reasons for wanting to protect our important natural areas. The key to this project is that we all have reasons and that we share those ideas with others!

Extension Activities:

1. Write a letter to the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador to help PAA in its campaign to protect one of the study areas found on its website. Refer to the "Let's Take Action" lesson plan for letter writing ideas.
2. Design a logo that best represents the biodiversity in and around your community.
3. Try an activity from the Just for Kids pages of Protected Areas Association's website.
4. Develop an activity for the Just for Kids pages of Protected Areas Association's website and submit it to us through the contact information on the website.

