

CONSERVATIONIST FOR KIDS

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Conservationist for Kids

Supplement for Classroom Teachers – Connect with Parks

Understanding Parks

A field trip can be an unforgettable educational experience and a treasured childhood memory. New York State’s public lands offer a wide range of learning opportunities for children – and a wealth of education resources for the classroom. Whether you go on a field trip or an armchair tour, take advantage of local federal and state lands and help your students connect with nature.

This year the National Park Service turns 100. With free access for fourth-graders through the **Every Kid in a Park** initiative and special programming to celebrate the National Park Service Centennial, there is no better time than now to get out and find your park. National parks and heritage areas in New York can serve as informal classrooms and as inspiration for in-classroom learning. Check the list of National Park Service sites in New York at www.nps.gov/state/ny/index.htm. New York State Parks and DEC also are supporting efforts to get kids into parks through the **Connect Kids** initiative. This program gives fourth-graders and their families free access to *state* lands, such as the many state parks throughout NY and DEC’s day-use areas. For a map showing the location of all public recreation lands in NYS, visit www.dec.ny.gov/education/105231.html.

Why Teach About Parks?

- Parks fit into the curriculum! Fourth-grade history includes NYS history plus real world applications of math, science and PE standards. Parks and public lands offer great ways to work all of these topics into your curriculum!
- Explore history at federal and state historic sites (Native Americans, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, women’s rights, immigrants, U.S. presidents, etc.).
- Research why sites are important, such as to preserve rare species or beautiful places (Watkins Glen, Letchworth, Fire Island, etc.).
- Mapping activity – What places are near your school? What makes them significant?

This Issue’s “Outside Page”

The “Outside Page” in this issue of *Conservationist for Kids* encourages students and their families to participate in many different opportunities for park and public land stewardship throughout the year. Some are one-day cleanup activities, while others are ongoing. Citizen science is an important and interesting way that students can help state and federal researchers gather information about the various plants and animals they see when visiting parks and documenting things like seasonal changes. By getting involved with stewardship and citizen science activities on public lands, students will feel a closer connection to the natural world and will be doing their part to help parks thrive.

Teacher Workshops

For teachers who have participated in a **Project WILD**, **Project WET**, or **Project Learning Tree (PLT)** workshop, the activities listed below complement this issue of *Conservationist for Kids*. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/education/1913.html for information about workshops and how to obtain curriculum and activity guides.

Project WILD: Pay to Play
Planning for People and Wildlife

PLT: I'd Like to Visit a Place Where...
Loving It Too Much
We Can Work It Out

Project WET: Discover the Waters of Our National Parks

National Park Service Teacher Workshops

Educators of all grade levels and disciplines can learn more about National Park Service education materials and your local national parks and heritage areas during on-site teacher workshops. Workshop topics and duration may vary from park to park. Visit the "Learn about the Park" section of each of the parks and areas listed at www.nps.gov/state/ny/index.htm to find more information on teacher workshops.

National Park Service Teacher-Ranger-Teacher

Develop and deepen your professional practice as a summer Teacher-Ranger-Teacher with the National Park Service. The Teacher Ranger Teacher program is a unique summer-long professional development opportunity for educators to expand their knowledge base, gain first-hand experience with park rangers and researchers in the field, and to spend time developing lesson plans for their own classrooms. This immersive learning experience helps educators infuse national park-based education resources and place-based learning aligned to education standards with their teaching skills.

Do you have an interactive white board in your classroom?

If you use a SMART board or similar interactive white board or projection system in your classroom, consider downloading a PDF of *Conservationist for Kids* and using it along with the printed copies enclosed in this mailing.

Online Resources

DEC Day Use Areas www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7771.html

DEC Education www.dec.ny.gov/26.html

DEC Nature Centers - Statewide Listing of Nature Centers www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/1826.html

DEC Places To Go: Finding State Recreation Lands www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/82098.html

DEC State Lands Interactive Mapper www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45478.html

DEC Watchable Wildlife www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/55423.html

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation www.nysparks.com

NYS Parks - Know Your Nature www.pinterest.com/nystateparks/know-your-nature-activities-for-families

NYS Parks - Nature Centers www.nysparks.com/environment/nature-centers

National Park Service Education Portal www.nps.gov/teachers/index.htm

National Park Service Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program <http://teacherrangerteacher.org>

National Park Service Web Rangers www.nps.gov/webrangers

National Park Service YAP! Teacher's Guide www.nps.gov/nebe/learn/kidsyouth/upload/YAP-Teachers-Guide.pdf

U.S. Department of the Interior - Every Kid in a Park program www.everykidinapark.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: National Wildlife Refuge System - Education www.fws.gov/refuges/education/

Books

- *National Geographic Kids Get Outside Guide: All Things Adventure, Exploration, and Fun* by Nancy Honovich and Julie Beer (2014)
- *The Kid's Guide to Exploring Nature* by Brooklyn Botanic Garden Educators (2014)
- *The Kids' Outdoor Adventure Book* by Glove Pequot Press (2013)

Conservationist for Kids and an accompanying teacher supplement are distributed free of charge to public school 4th-grade classes in New York State three times per school year (fall, winter and spring). If you would like to be added to or removed from the distribution list, need to update information, or if you have questions or comments, please email the editor at KidsConservationist@dec.ny.gov or call 518-402-8047. Limited quantities of some back issues are also available on request. The full archives can be found online at www.dec.ny.gov/education/100637.html