

Living Archaeology Weekend: Lesson 1

Loving the Red River Gorge To Death

SUBJECTS: Science, social studies, language arts

SKILLS: Analysis, synthesis, evaluation

STRATEGIES: Debate, role play, values clarification, decision making, writing, visualization, communication, problem solving

DURATION: One to two 45-minute periods

CLASS SIZE: Any; groups of 3 to 4

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Academic Expectations

AE 1.12, AE 2.15, and AE 2.18

Core Content

SS-05-1.1.1 Students will describe the basic purposes of the U.S. Government as defined in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution; give examples of services the U.S. Government provides and analyze the importance of these services to citizens today. DOK 3

SS-05-1.1.2 Students will explain and give examples of how democratic governments function to promote the “common good”. DOK 3

SS-05-1.3.2 Students will describe specific rights and responsibilities individuals have as citizens of the United States and explain why civic engagement is necessary to preserve a democratic society. DOK 3

SS-05-2.3.2 Students will give examples of conflicts between individuals or groups and describe appropriate conflict resolution strategies. DOK 2

SS-05-3.1.1 Students will describe scarcity and explain how scarcity required people in different periods in the U.S. to make economic choices and incur opportunity costs. DOK 2

WR-05-1.1.3 In transactive writing, students will establish and maintain a focused purpose to communicate with an authentic audience. DOK4

WR-05-1.2.3 In transactive writing, students will support main ideas and deepen the audience’s understanding of purpose. DOK4

MATERIALS:

Copies of "Loving the Gorge to Death" master for each student.

Objectives:

In their study of archaeological issues, students will use a role play to:

1. Debate the viewpoint of four different interest groups regarding how to best manage the land, and the archaeological sites, at the Red River Gorge.
2. Formulate their own decision about the proper course of action.

Vocabulary:

cultural resources: a definite location of past human activity, occupation, or use identifiable through field inventory (survey), historical documentation, or oral evidence; includes pre-historic and historic sites.

land manager: an employee of a federal land managing agency (such as the U.S. Forest Service) with authority to decide how land under the jurisdiction of the agency, and the resources on it, will be used. Effects on cultural resources are among the factors weighed in a decision.

National Register of Historic Places: the official list of our country’s most significant historic, architectural, and archaeological districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects, and the ones deemed most worthy of preservation.

Background:

Many people care about the past for a host of different reasons. Sites and artifacts can provide meaning on several levels. Using the example of Stonehenge in England, we can list some values people hold toward the past. Archaeologists value Stonehenge for its scientific potential. Many people appreciate its aesthetic value. Druids, even today, believe Stonehenge has spiritual or religious significance. The English punk movement held a large gathering there annually to make social and political statements. The concessionaires and businesses around Stonehenge also value it for its commercial and economic value. To some people, Stonehenge has an intrinsic value, and to many Britons, it embodies heritage

values (Chippindale 1988; Project WILD 1983:257- 258).

We can examine these meanings by placing them in one of two categories: consumptive and non-consumptive. Consumptive uses are those that "use up" or deplete the past. Non-consumptive uses are those that do not deplete sites, artifacts, or the information they contain.

To some people, places and things of the past are tangible reminders of their heritage and history. If a person experiences this by observing and being near certain sites or objects, they are acting in a non-consumptive way. The thing or place will be there for them to experience again, and for others to experience. On the other hand, if a person takes an arrowhead, pottery sherd or old bottle, or writes his or her name on the wall of an historic cabin or rockshelter, they are consuming the past, and removing parts of it from others' experience. Other consumptive actions include collecting artifacts to sell or trade, and destruction by development projects, such as plowing and construction of buildings.

In a gray area between non-consumptive and consumptive use is site excavation done by a qualified archaeologist. The use of the site is consumptive, in that physically, the site is no longer intact. It is non-consumptive in the sense that information derived from the site is obtained by scientific excavation and becomes public knowledge.

Archaeology is a rapidly changing field. New scientific techniques are developed every year that allow us to learn more from sites and artifacts. Archaeologists have adopted the ethic of conservation, and laws concerning cultural resources also recognize that we need to conserve - to wisely use - sites. There will not be any more of them, and an archaeologist has to have a good reason to "consume" a site through excavation.

Archaeologists and land managers who make decisions about projects on public lands spend considerable time and energy analyzing how sites and artifacts are to be conserved. The issues surrounding use of the past are complex and often strike at the core of personal values. Responsible citizenship means being knowledgeable about these issues and taking informed and thoughtful actions.

Setting the Stage:

People often have conflicting ideas about what is the best use of a resource; and some uses preclude others. Brainstorm some examples. Possibilities include wildlife (hunters versus wildlife watchers), rivers (harnessing rivers for energy versus open rivers and fish habitat), and fields (farming or housing development). These same kinds of conflicts affect archaeological and historic sites and artifacts as well.

Procedure:

1. Divide the students into four groups: archaeologists, rock climbers, campers/hikers, and business owners.
2. Distribute "Loving the Gorge to Death" master to students. Ask them to read the story through the eyes of their assigned role - to adopt the viewpoint of that interest group. They will be presenting an argument for their viewpoint to a land manager at the final "LAC meeting," who will make the final decision about the project. What should the land manager decide to do about the problem? The manager can be the teacher, a student, or a panel of students.
3. Give students 10 to 15 minutes to discuss in their groups. Each group appoints a spokesperson to present their arguments. They can propose solutions to the problem that they believe could meet the concerns of all parties, as well as their own.
4. Call the "LAC meeting" to order and establish two ground rules: (a) no interrupting another person, and (b) be brief and to the point with your arguments. You may also want to impose a time limit on presentations.
5. Each group presents their desired outcome to the manager(s), supporting their goal with solid reasons. General discussion and rebuttal follows.
6. Summarize the discussions by asking each group to choose one or two words that describe the value with which their group is most concerned. Examples may include science, heritage, religion, money, progress, fun.

7. Discuss how each of these values and concerns has validity, and that there is no absolute right or wrong answer to the problem. Point out that being a responsible citizen means understanding all of the viewpoints about an issue before making a decision or taking an action. Challenge the students to think of solutions to the problem that could meet everyone's concerns.

Closure:

Students abandon their assigned role and express in writing what they would personally decide if they were the land manager, and why.

Evaluation:

Evaluate students' group participation, the clarity and reasoning of their arguments, and their written work.

Extension:

Ask students to write a persuasive article for a local newspaper urging people to attend an LAC meeting because it is their civic responsibility.

References:

Chippindale, Christopher

1988 "Telling Tales of the Past to the Public: The Stonehenge Experience." Paper presented at the Second Annual Presenting the Past Conference, Minneapolis, MN.

Western Regional Environmental Education Council

1983 *Project WILD Elementary Activity Guide*. Project WILD, Boulder, CO.

This lesson was adapted with permission from *Lesson 23: The Road Showdown*, pages 114-116, in **Intrigue of the Past: A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades**, by Shelley J. Smith, Jeanne M. Moe, Kelly A. Letts, and Danielle M. Patterson. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (1993).

Loving the Red River Gorge to Death

The land managers at the Daniel Boone National Forest are worried. Visitors to the Red River Gorge are "loving it to death." If something isn't done soon, they are afraid there won't be much left in the Gorge *to* love.

So, they have decided to make a plan. It will limit or completely stop certain activities visitors can do in the Gorge. They call it "Limits of Acceptable Change" or LAC.

The land managers want the interested public to help them make the plan. They have put announcements about LAC meetings in local newspapers and on the internet. At these meetings, the land managers and the public talk about what to do. Several different groups are interested in what the plan will say.

Archaeologists have discovered lots of prehistoric and historic sites in the Red River Gorge. Many more are inside the Gorge than outside it. Several special sites contain information about how prehistoric people learned to grow their own food. Some are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Archaeologists believe the sites in the Gorge are some of the best in all of Kentucky. These sites can help answer many questions about how people lived long ago. Recently, archaeologists have noticed damage at an important site. It is in a popular rock climbing and camping area. They think this area should be closed to climbing and camping. In fact, they say that all cliff lines and rockshelters in the Gorge should be off-limits to climbing and camping.

The Red River Gorge is a famous rock climbing spot. The president of the local rock climbing club believes the Gorge is one of the best places in the world to climb cliffs and large boulders. At least once a month, she leads climbs in the Gorge. The trail above the damaged archaeological site is the club's favorite. It has a special view of a natural stone arch at the top. The president wants to keep leading climbs to this place.

Because the Red River Gorge is so beautiful, it is an important camping and hiking place. But people are camping too much in the most popular spots. The soil is starting to wear away and plants are not growing under the trees. Campers also are cutting off tree branches for campfires. Camping is damaging some archaeological sites, too. Campers and hikers are worried about the LAC plan. They have been coming to the Gorge for years. They want to keep using their favorite camping spots.

Many different businesses in and around the Red River Gorge serve climbers, hikers, and campers. These include stores, cabins, places to eat, and hiking tour companies. But local business owners are worried. What if the LAC plan closes parts of the Gorge to recreation? This will cause them to lose the business they count on to make a living. People may go some place else to climb, hike, and camp. If they do, they won't be traveling through the area on their way to the Gorge. They won't be buying gasoline, food, or lodging. The business owners are against limiting recreation in the Gorge.