**WONDERFULLY WILD UNIT**

**LESSON 1: Grades 4-6**

**WILD WONDERS WALK**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 1.5, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.1, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:** Communication Arts: 1, 2, 4, 6; Science: 3

**Objective:** To introduce students to the unnoticed wonders and the creatures of the outdoors through the use of all five senses. Students will share what they have experienced through narrative and oral communication and will work cooperatively with others during this experience.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**W.5.7—Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.**

**SL.5.1—Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly:**

Investigate the topic of wildlife in your community. Call various government and non-profit agencies that specialize in this topic to determine those issues that most affect the zip codes of your school and classmates. What can you do to help? Poll the class for possible solutions.

What activities, i.e., fund raisers or awareness campaigns can your class do to impact a positive difference for wildlife?

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility, Respect, Citizenship

**Responsibility:** We all have a responsibility to walk lighter on this earth. This means to leave the earth in a better state just because we are there. Remembering that all animals go barefoot, picking up litter can prevent a wild animal from cutting its paw and getting an infection.

**Respect:** Take good care of public and private property, leaving nature undisturbed for the wild animals. Recognize how your behavior and activity can potentially frighten, harm or disturb wild animals in their natural habitats.

**Citizenship:** Being aware of the ripple effect of our actions. What we do has an impact on the environment, therefore on the creatures with which we share the earth.

**STEM initiatives: Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**5-ESS3-1:** Research the wildlife concerns in your community. What is being done to combat the problems? Does it have a positive or negative impact on the animal life? What can you, as a student or class, do to help the wildlife in your community? How is your daily activity affecting Earth’s resources and our environment?

**Objective:** To introduce students to the unnoticed wonders and the creatures of the outdoors through the use of all five senses. Students will share what they have experienced through poetry and will work cooperatively with others during this experience.

**Materials Needed:**

* Quiet, safe outdoor area, preferably a park (away from traffic, broken glass, etc.)
* Blindfolds (for half the class)
* Pencils
* Paper
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Words for Our Natural World”

**Method:** Begin this unit by encouraging the students to "stop and smell the roses" around them.

Take the class to a quiet, safe outdoor area that has previously been inspected by you. Preferably an area with grass, trees, and flowers where insects, birds, squirrels and other wildlife can be found. Ask them to select a partner or divide the class into pairs yourself. Using a calm, soothing, subdued voice, ask them to close their eyes for a moment and take a deep breath. Guide them through this while their eyes are closed and ask them to continue taking deep breaths while focusing on letting their bodies relax.

Once relaxed, ask them to open their eyes but not their mouths. They are not to talk for the remainder of this exercise. Demonstrate the following with a blindfolded student. Explain that one person in each pair will wear a blindfold while their partner (you) leads them SAFELY around by the shoulders, directing them toward something you have noticed in nature. You should try to find something that can be experienced by different senses. For example, you hear a bird chirping. You would gently face the blindfolded partner's face towards the noise and gently tap his/her ear. The blindfolded person would then focus on listening for about 20 seconds to the bird chirping. You might see a beautiful dandelion and guide his/her partner to it, tilt their head towards it, slide their blind fold up and then tap them on the corner of the eye so he/she could open it and look closely at the flower for 20 seconds. Explain that they should continue doing this until the blindfolded partner has experienced something in nature using all five senses (sight, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling). They can watch an ant crawling on a blade of grass or touch the fuzzy under side of a leaf, etc. Give one person in each pair a blindfold to put on and explain that they will have 10 minutes to experience their senses and then the partners will switch so the other one is blindfolded. Remind them not to pull any flowers and ask the guides to lead their partners around flowers and plants, helping them not to step on the plants. Remember: we want to leave the land as we found it.

**Call to Action:** “Adopt” an agency that helps orphaned wildlife and conduct a collection drive of items they need. Create posters or flyers listing needed items and display them in your school and neighborhood.

**Reading**: Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children’s Literature*** for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Web Sites:**  Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Links*** for animal-related web sites.