

Lesson Plan #1: Introduction to the Snake River Corridor Project

Objectives

Students will:

- discover the importance of the Snake River Corridor as a valuable habitat for numerous wildlife species.
- practice protecting wildlife in public spaces and on their property.
- understand that Jackson is surrounded by public lands, which comprise 97% of Teton County's physical space.
- learn about the significance of local conservation easements in preserving and safeguarding open spaces, wildlife habitats, working lands, and community spaces.

Overview

The Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation will introduce the students to the Snake River Corridor Project. The students will research local conservation efforts and discover how private landowners can act as community stewards.

Materials

- [Snake River Corridor Project film](#) (6:28)
- [SRC Project Film Script](#)
- [Teton County GIS website](#)
- Student copies of [Public Lands Research](#)

Background Information

Wildlife species heavily rely on the Snake River Corridor. Losing this habitat would have significant impacts on wildlife populations. We must consider how wildlife perceive the landscape to minimize human-caused impacts such as habitat loss and wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Private lands play a crucial role in this landscape mosaic. Landowners must understand that their property is part of a greater ecosystem, and animals do not recognize jurisdictional boundaries. To protect their land and preserve wildlife habitat, landowners can utilize conservation easements and take more minor actions to aid wildlife. Such actions may include opening gates, modifying fencing to be wildlife-friendly, removing obsolete fences, installing acopian bird savers on windows, and preserving native vegetation.

Procedure

1. Share the Snake River Corridor Project [film](#) (6:26) with the students.

2. Ask the students to share what they learned from the film and what surprised them.
3. Ask them to identify the percentage of Teton County, WY, public land (97%) and examples of local public lands (Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park, United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, etc.).
4. Discuss how this leaves only 3% of the land for private use, including agricultural, residential, commercial, and conservation properties. *More ideas for students to practice calculating percentages using total acreage are included below.*
5. Display the Wyoming Land Ownership Map (below) and ask the students to use the key to determine publicly or privately owned land.
6. Challenge them to identify Teton County, knowing that only a small portion is private land, comparable to "3 berries out of 100" or "3 pennies out of 100."
7. Lastly, ask students to explore the Jackson Hole Land Trust's conservation easements on the [Public Lands Research](#) document.

Reflection/Evaluation

As a reflection and evaluation activity, ask students to answer the following question:
What are two ways private landowners can assist in wildlife conservation?

Possible answers include:

1. *Opening gates and modifying fences to be wildlife-friendly to allow for safe movement across the landscape and between summer and winter ranges*
2. *Installing acopian bird savers and using UV-coated glass to prevent bird strikes*
3. *Preserving native vegetation, especially in riparian areas*
4. *Establishing conservation easements to protect and preserve wildlife habitats*

Extension:

Ideas to practice calculating percentages using total acreage:

1. Have students research the total acreage of different land use types in their community, such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and natural areas. Then, ask them to calculate the percentage of total land area occupied by each land use category.
2. Use a local or state map and have students calculate the percentage of the total area covered by different land cover types, such as forests, wetlands, grasslands, and urban areas.
3. Have students research the total acreage of protected lands in Wyoming, including national parks, wilderness areas, and wildlife refuges. Then, ask them to calculate the total protected land area percentage.
4. Give students a hypothetical scenario where they own a certain amount of land and want to set aside a percentage for conservation purposes. Have them calculate the exact acreage that corresponds to their desired percentage.
5. Using real estate listings or county records, have students research the size and acreage of various residential properties in their community. Then, ask them to

calculate the percentage of the total land area occupied by residential properties and compare this to the percentage of the total land area designated for public use or conservation purposes.

Wyoming Land Ownership Map

