

Forbidden Places and Forgotten Spaces - Exploring Interlachen Watershed Area

What is worth enduring understanding?

How do we find value in our own communities and home towns? How do we communicate this value and educate the community about the value of its past and natural resources?

Instructional Objective/ Student Outcomes

From the Massachusetts DOE, ELA Standards:

- **Standard 20: Consideration of Audience and Purpose**
Students will write for different audiences and purposes.
- **Standard 24: Research**
Students will gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.
- **Standard 26: Analysis of Media**
Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the conventions, elements, and techniques of film, radio, video, television, multimedia productions, the Internet, and emerging technologies and provide evidence from the works to support their understanding.
- **Standard 27: Media Production**
Students will design and create coherent media productions (audio, video, television, multimedia, Internet, emerging technologies) with a clear controlling idea, adequate detail, and appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and medium.

Motivational Engagement

Young people like to get out of the classroom, and this lesson will provide ample opportunity to do so. Not only will students be outside, they will be in a wooded space not usually accessible to the public. The area contains the ruins of a 19th century ice house and two old homes, one of which had elaborate gardens surrounding it, the remnants of which are still visible.

Students will also be able to create media that will be used to eventually promote the area and educate the public concerning the resources there.

Students will read *Tunnel Visionary*, an article written by Stephen P. William for **Smithsonian Magazine**, April 2004. The article describes how "Intrepid explorer Julia Solis finds beauty in the ruins of derelict urban structures." Students will journal about the "derelict urban structures" which fascinate them and why.

Instructional Material and Resources

Texts

- **Walden**, H.D. Thoreau, Chapters - "The Ponds," "Former Inhabitants and Winter Visitors."

Internet Resources

- *Tunnel Visionary*, Stephen P. William, **Smithsonian Magazine**, April 2004
<http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/smithsonian/issues04/apr04/peoplefile.html>
- *Massachusetts Geographic Information Viewer* <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/mapping.htm>
- *The Trustees of the Reservations* <http://www.thetrustees.org>

Institutions

- Fall River Public Library
- Fall River Historical Society
- Fall River Government Center
- The Trustees of the Reservations
- The Fall River Herald News
- Bristol County Registry of Deeds
- Bristol County Family and Probate Court

Materials

- Video Cameras
- Digital Cameras
- Tape Recorders
- Scanners
- Copy Machines
- Notebooks
- Computers

Learning Factors

This lesson will have a little bit for everyone. Students will be able to do the following:

- Group work
- Writing Logs
- Use video cameras (visual arts)
- Use digital cameras (visual arts)
- Sketching (art)
- Mapping (geography)
- Hiking (physical education)
- Long term project

Environmental Factors

Students will take part in a field trip to Interlachen, a protected watershed area on the shores of the North Watuppa Pond, Fall River's Municipal Water Supply. While the distance from the school is short, this will require bus or van transportation depending on the size of the class or classes.

Students work groups will have to travel to a number of the above noted institutions to conduct research. This will be conducted after school, and supervised by the teacher.

Instructional Activities

Instruction Day 1 - Introduction

1. Students will be assigned the "Tunnel Visionary" article for homework. For a journaling exercise to follow-up on the reading, students will be asked about the "derelict urban structures" which fascinate them. Class discussion will focus on why these places fascinate the author and why they perhaps fascinate us.
2. Students will be invited on a field trip to a derelict space in Fall River, Interlachen. Very little information about the area will be given at this time, except that it is city owned property with the remains of several structures still there. Students will use the computer lab and locate the property on the Massachusetts Geographic Viewer. Students will be encouraged to view the property on several different maps, and asked to document what types of information are included on each map. Discussion on legends, scales, and directions will be elicited. To generate interest in the mapping software, students will be allowed to find the school and their own homes on the mapping and photographic software. Students should print a variety of maps for later use on the island.

Instruction Day 2 - Preparation for Interlachen Visit

1. As part of a previous unit on Concord, Massachusetts, students will have read the **Walden** excerpts noted above. Emphasis will be placed on Thoreau's observation skills as they apply to the pond and natural environment surrounding Walden. Emphasis will also be placed on Thoreau's discussion of the previous inhabitants of Walden Pond. Students will be asked to

- discuss what they recall of these readings and how they could apply to our visit to Interlachen. Tell students that Thoreau was a keen observer of his surroundings and that he used his observations of Walden Woods both in his literary and scientific pursuits. Also, discuss how he documented his findings (maps, journals, drawings, collecting samples, etc).
2. Have students brainstorm how it might be best to gather information while on the island and document their findings. Inform students that the goal of the visit will be to gather information about the island - roads, ruins, water, wildlife, past inhabitants, etc. What tools might they need to document their trip?
 3. Have students form into groups or teams according to their brainstorming about how to gather information from the island.

Instruction Day 3 - Visit

1. Transport students to island. Have them note the route on maps they have previously printed. Ask them to compare the roads to those that would have existed 100 or 200 years ago.
2. Meet Mike Labossiere from the Trustees at the property entrance. Have him explain his profession (property manager) and the mission of the Trustees. He will inform students of their common goal in documenting the history or story of the island.
3. Explore the island, prompting students to journal or create documentation when they come to significant phenomena. Students should hypothesize about island artifacts (home and ice house ruins) before they are introduced and described by Labossiere.
4. Conduct several mini-lessons:
 - a. Math/Geometry - Calculate volume of ice house using a ruler. Measure subdivision and multiply. $L \times W \times H$. Obtain height by comparative/ratio measurement. Using map scales determine how far they have hiked.
 - b. Environmental Science - what would be some of the potential problems associated with an ice house on the water supply? Where does the Connolly stream empty into the property? What is a potential problem with that and how is it remediated.
 - c. Biology - Discuss issues of forest succession. Given the calculated volume of ice, what would be the corresponding volume of water? The weight of the ice? The weight of the water? Note the relative size and location of trees and speculate as to their origins. Note any odd or unfamiliar species of plants (or animals) that you come across.
5. Students will document the property in video, pictures, sketches, and journal entries. Also, document class trip on video (work of students, etc).

Instruction Day 4 - Follow-up activities

Students will visit web pages for the Trustees of the Reservation to analyze and critique the property descriptions on their web site. Based on the Trustee model, student groups will be given opportunities to research various elements of the island that interest them. Some research will likely include:

- Water supply protection efforts for Watuppa pond and how they affected island inhabitants.
- Who were the inhabitants? Use community records to determine.
- The island's unique horticulture.
- The fate of the ice house. How did an ice house operate?
- Aboriginal cultures that frequented the island and pond.
- Potential uses for the property in the future.

Student groups will document their findings in a research paper and give an in class presentation. Students will then be challenged to work as a class to assimilate their findings to create promotional material for the island as a local historic/cultural resource — web site, pamphlet, newspaper or magazine article, or short film. Students will share materials with the Trustees for use in their education program for the island.

Conclusion

Recognize students for their ability to conduct meaningful research and emphasize the value of their contribution to the community.