



Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute

Treasure Chest #2

“Appreciating Nature’s Services”

The treasure chest series is a program of the Idaho Museum of Natural History and sponsored by the National Science Foundation. The materials are designed to “enhance understanding and conservation of the biological diversity of the Intermountain West.” The program consists of 3 kits, each with a different focus. The focus of this kit is “Understanding the Work of Nature.”

Lesson Plan 1: “Services Provided By…” Designed to introduce students to the services provided by nature that are necessary for our day-to-day survival.

Activity Description: Students will discover how humans depend on the services that sustain life on earth. Students will play “jeopardy” and “harvesting the goods”, having the opportunity to use maps to discover how biodiversity around the world supplies us with items we use everyday.

Concepts: Problem-solving, teamwork, deduction, map reading, geography, and biology.

Lesson Plan 2: “Watershed Wise” Designed to help students understand what watersheds and wetlands are and how they work.

Activity Description: Through hands-on simulations and creative thinking exercises, students will discover characteristics of watersheds and wetlands are and how they function. Students will also learn how watersheds and wetlands filter out sediments and digest pollutants to help keep our waterways clean and healthy.

Concepts: Observation, prediction, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and communication.

Lesson Plan 3: “Get down! – To the Dirt!” Designed to teach students that soil is alive with tiny organisms that work to decompose dead plants and animals.

Activity Description: Through demonstrations, investigation, and hands on activities students will learn that the web of life in the soil provides vital services to all the earth’s inhabitants.

Concepts: Mathematics, observation, sampling, investigation, measurement, literature search, language arts, and biology.

Lesson Plan 4: “A Walk in the Park” Designed to help students understand that nature works through diverse biological communities.
Activity Description: Students are able to sit and experience nature while participating in a number of creative activities. Students will develop an appreciation for the recreational opportunities and mental well being we can receive from nature.
Concepts: Observation, critical thinking, creativity, appreciation, writing skills and reflection.

Idaho Science Education Standards Addressed:

I. Unifying Concepts of Science

-Understand concepts of form and function

II. Concepts of Scientific Inquiry

-Understand scientific inquiry and develop critical thinking skills

V. Interdependence of Organisms and Biological Change

-Understand theory of biological evolution

-Understand the interdependence of organisms

VI. Matter, Energy and Organization in Living Systems

-Understand the relationship between matter energy and organization to trace matter as it cycles and energy as it flows through living systems and the environment

-Understand the individual behavior of organisms and their interactions on populations and communities as influenced by physiological and environmental factors

IX. Personal and Social Perspectives

-Understand common environmental quality issues, both natural and human induced

-Understand the cause and effects of population change

-Understand the importance of natural resources and the need to manage and conserve them

To borrow this kit from PCEI, please contact:

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