



THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 260
SURRY, MAINE 04684
207.667.1025
info@HumaneEducation.org
www.HumaneEducation.org

LOCAL TREASURES

Grades: 3 and up

Time: At least two hours

Materials: A whistle or drum; pencils/pens; laminated “treasure” fact cards (see below); numbered activity sheets with blank spaces to fill in information beside each number -- the back of each sheet should have a map of the site with the “treasure” locations numbered

Optional: Global Positioning System (GPS) devices. One GPS device may be used per group of five or six students. If using the GPS devices, the numbered map will not be necessary. Instead, the activity sheet should have GPS coordinates indicated beside each number.

Relevant Subjects: Science, Social Studies, History, Geography, Mathematics, and Language Arts

This activity is ideal for a field trip to a national/provincial park or local wilderness area. If a wilderness field trip is not possible, this activity could also be performed on school grounds or in a nearby city park.

Preparation: This activity is essentially a “treasure hunt” for information. After choosing a location for the activity, research and write out 15 or more age-appropriate fact cards about the natural history, environmental landmarks, ecology, and development of the site. For example:

- This Douglas fir is 140 years old. When this tree was one year old, the American Civil War was just coming to an end.
- This Mountain Hemlock was once part of a hemlock forest that covered most of North Vancouver, B.C. The seeds from this tree provide an important part of the Dark-Eyed Junco’s diet. (Include a picture of a Dark-Eyed Junco.)

Place the “treasure” cards throughout the wilderness site and indicate the locations on the activity map or with GPS coordinates.

1. Divide the students into groups of five or six. Give each group an activity sheet with a map on the back, or alternately, an activity sheet and a GPS device. (Depending upon the age and maturity of the students, you may wish to have an adult volunteer assist/monitor each group.)

2. Have the groups begin at different numbers on the activity sheet to avoid “traffic jams.” Each group will try to complete as much of the activity sheet as possible in one hour. The “treasure” fact cards should be read and then returned to their original positions for the next group of students to find. Have the groups meet back at a central location when they hear the whistle or the drum sound.

3. Initiate a discussion with the entire group about what they discovered during this activity. Encourage students to share discoveries about the site which may not have been included in the activity.

Activity by Liberty Mulkani (M.Ed. Student)