

Title: "Mapping" Georgia's Habitats, Grades 3-5

Created by Crystal Lien (Paraprofessional), Huntley Hills Elementary and Montessori School

Lesson Description: By outlining the boundaries of Georgia's 5 natural ecosystems, students will identify the various plants, animals, habitats, food webs, landforms, and many ways that humans impact the delicate balance of these environments.

Curriculum Standards:

"Habitats: Georgia On My Mind"

S3L1: Students will investigate the habitat of different organisms and the dependence of organisms on their habitat.

S3L2: Students will recognize the effects of pollution and humans on the environment.

"Ecosystems"

S4L1: Students will describe the roles of organisms and the flow of energy within the ecosystem.

S4L2 Students will identify factors that affect the survival or extinction of organisms such as adaptation, variation of behaviors (hibernation) and external features (camouflage and protection).

"The Changing Earth: Georgia's Landforms"

S5E1: Students will identify surface features of the Earth caused by constructive and destructive processes.

Materials Needed: Repurposed state road maps, graphite pencils, 5 different colors of pencils or sharpies to color code the region. Field Trip needs include gloves (garden gloves cause less impact on the environment than disposable ones) buckets, bags, or boxes to collect trash on trails. If you have access to a grabber tool this could come in handy as well. Most state parks have recycling bins for aluminum and plastic bottles; if these items are found on the path they can be deposited into the bins right at the facility.

Outline For Teaching

Introduction: Divide the class into 5 groups, each team is assigned to research one of the natural communities in the state of Georgia. They will use books, textbooks, videos, and/or websites to learn about these unique natural environments. This part can be done over a period of time with emphasis on the environmental aspects as well as vocabulary.

Activities Description: After researching the habitats and learning the appropriate terminology for this lesson, students are given a State of Georgia Road Map (repurpose old maps that

parents can donate or free current maps can be picked up at any Welcome Center near the state lines); a designated student will carefully draw a border of their region with a graphite pencil; after getting the “ok” the group scribe can then choose a sharpie or colored pencil to highlight the boundary; each ecoregion should be assigned a different color. From this visual students can see what cities, bodies of water, state parks, National Forests, wildlife, and landforms are within their region. Essential Questions can then be addressed.

Wrapping Up: Groups present their research and map boundary to discuss findings from the Essential Questions. Finally, take a field trip to one (or more) of the ecoregions and visit a state park where students can observe the habitats, while collecting trash along some trails or the beach.

Resources: [The Natural Communities of Georgia](#) (by Leslie Edwards, /'et. Al.) This text is an excellent resource for background information, class read aloud, or a book to have on hand for students to peruse since it has plenty of pictures but also a plethora of new vocabulary words, even for the youngest learners. [Georgia, My State Series](#) (by Dorothy Bennett,) [And the Tide Comes In...](#) (by Meryll Alber), [The Southern Swamp Explorer](#) (by Irene Brady), Yumion the Onion Series (by Rhonda Frost Knight), “Sails, Pails, and Alligator Tails (by Rhonda Frost Petty), Your favorite websites or go to the GaDOE and there are plenty of links within the Curriculum Standards.