

HUMANS & SUSTAINABILITY: GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS

Grade: High School

Subject: Ecology

PRIMARY SOURCES USED

- [View of Fir covered mountains \[with\] smoky clouds drifting across from Mt. Le Conte, \[Great Smoky Mountain National Park\], Tennessee](#)
- [Great Smoky Mountains National Park Roads & Bridges, Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail, Between Cherokee Orchard Road & U.S. Route 321, Gatlinburg vicinity, Sevier County, TN](#)
- [Great Smoky Mountains National Park Roads & Bridges, Cades Cove Road & Laurel Creek Road, From Townsend Wye to Cades Cove, Gatlinburg vicinity, Sevier County, TN](#)
- [Mapping the National Parks \[online collection\]](#)
(Note: Great Smoky Mountains are an option.)

LESSON IDEAS

- Have students design a vacation brochure, poster, slide show presentation, or commercial advertisement (whichever works best in your classroom, or divide students into 4 groups and cover each) for the Great Smoky Mountains. Students should discuss the virtues, ecotourism opportunities, and purpose of the park while using primary source images available from the Library of Congress.
- [Collection Connections: American Environmental Photographs, 1891-1936](#)
 1. What impact did tourism and the infrastructure built to support it have on the environment?
 2. Do the costs and benefits of tourism balance, or does one outweigh the other?
 3. What policies has the National Park Service created to accommodate tourists and minimize their impact on the environment?

Curriculum Standards: Standard 6: Humans and Sustainability

Conceptual Strand:

- Human activities have reduced the earth's biodiversity.

Guiding Question:

- What can individuals do to sustain biodiversity locally and globally?

Course Level Expectations:

- CLE 3255.6.1
Investigate the role of public lands in sustaining biodiversity.
- CLE 3255.6.2
Examine state, national, and international efforts to sustain native species and ecosystems.
- CLE 3255.6.3
Evaluate the impact of personal actions on the environment.

Checks for Understanding:

- 3255.6.1
Differentiate the purposes of State and National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, and Forests.
- 3255.6.2
Design a vacation brochure, poster, slide show presentation, or commercial advertisement that extols the virtues of a given area (e.g. state or national parks/ forests) and ecotourism opportunities that may be found there.

http://www.tn.gov/education/ci/sci/2009_10/3255_Ecology.pdf



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US TODAY?

Have you visited the Great Smoky Mountains or any other national or state parks? What were your experiences like? Why are these parks important for communities? Why are they important for the environment?

You can find out more about this topic at these Web sites:

- [National Park Service](#)
- [National Park Service: Great Smoky Mountains](#)
- [Great Smoky Mountains– Nature and Science](#)
- [Tennessee State Parks](#)

If you have time, try taking a field trip to a national or state park.

- If the field trip comes before the activity, use the time to talk about the park's role in preservation and biodiversity.
- If the field trip comes after the activity, use the time to discuss other opportunities for ecotourism that they might not have covered in their projects, or what costs to the environment might exist because of ecotourism.

For instance, there has been some discussion of limiting the number of cars that can go through the Smokies, due to pollution. What do you think?



13. Cades Cove Road, with barbed wire fence and mountain view.

[Great Smoky Mountains National Park Roads & Bridges, Cades Cove Road & Laurel Creek Road, From Townsend Wye to Cades Cove, Gatlinburg vicinity, Sevier County, TN](#), from the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record