NEH Hudson River Workshop Lesson Plan 2013

Teacher: Marianne Kenney & Emily Gale

Subject: Interdisciplinary (Art, History, and Geography)

Grade Level: 9th-12th Grade

Summary:
The goal of this interdisciplinary lesson is for students to delve into the historical tensions that existed in the initial development of Rocky Mountain National Park. Students will begin this “place-based” lesson by analyzing the Hudson River School artist Albert Bierstadt’s painting of Estes Park and draw inferences about its message and purpose. The “Fishbowl Discussion” format was selected because students can practice and develop important discussion skills while analyzing primary sources as well as explore points of view surrounding the preservation or development of the natural environment.
Creating Rocky Mountain National Park:  
A Place-Based Study  
through Visual Art, History, and Geography

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Course: AP Human Geography, APUSH, Colorado History, Humanities

Grade-level: High School (but could be modified for middle school)

Duration: Three class periods or two block periods

Big Ideas: Conservation and Development

Essential Questions:
How should we shape a relationship with the natural environment?  
Should we create a national park near Estes Park, Colorado?

Academic Vocabulary:
Romanticism – Manifest Destiny – Conservation - Perspective – Sacred Place

Rationale/Introduction: Students will work in teams to discuss the merits of creating a national park in the Rocky Mountains. Groups will present their perspective.

Goal: To weigh the pros and cons of a specific issue

Objectives:
The students will:
  • Engage in a fishbowl discussion on creating a national park.
  • Create a thesis and justify whether or not a park should be created.
  • Create an argument that takes a stance on either pro-conservation or pro-development.
  • Analyze primary sources.

National Geography Standards:
Standards 3: How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth’s surface.
Standard 4: The physical and human characteristics of places
Standard 18: How to apply geography to interpret the past
Standards in Historical Thinking:
Standard 3 – Historical Analysis and Interpretation
• Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas.
• Consider multiple perspectives.
• Distinguish between unsupported expressions of opinion and informed hypotheses ground in historical evidence.

Standard 4 – Historical Research Capabilities
• Formulate historical questions.

Standard 5 – Historical Issues - Analysis and Decision-Making
• Identify issues and problems in the past.

Materials:
• Landscape with Deer, View of Estes Park, Colorado http://www.albertbierstadt.org/Landscape-with-Deer,-View-of-Estes-Park,-Colorado-large.html
• Estes Park, Colorado http://www.albertbierstadt.org/Estes-Park,-Colorado.html
• History of Rocky Mountain Park http://www.ohranger.com/rocky-mountain/history-rocky-mountain-park
• Handout #1 – Primary Source Documents
• Handout #2 – Fishbowl Discussion and Evidence
• Handout #3 – Fishbowl Discussion Guidelines
• Handout #4 – Fishbowl Discussion Rubric
• Optional: http://www.redesignllc.net/images/EstesThenNow.pdf

Teacher Background: In 1859, Joel and Milton Estes first encountered Estes Park. Milton later recalled this discovery, “We stood on the mountain looking down at the headwaters of Little Thompson Creek, where the Park spread out before us. No words can describe our surprise, wonder and joy at beholding such an unexpected sight.” Although the Estes family remained only a few years, many others followed their footsteps into Estes Park: homesteaders, mountain men, lumberjacks, artists, writers, and tourists, who came for many reasons.
Later that same year, Albert Bierstadt made the first of many trips west, joining a survey expedition led by Colonel Frederick William Lander that followed the Oregon Trail to California. Along with the Lander party, Bierstadt traveled through Nebraska and into Wyoming Territory. Overcome by the beauty of his surroundings, Bierstadt left his place on the journey, deciding instead to explore and return home on his own. While sketching the glorious peaks of the Rocky Mountains, Bierstadt was inspired to write a letter to the well-known artists' publication, *The Crayon*, proclaiming the mountains to rival the Alps in Europe. In addition, he expressed his enchantment with American Indians and the wildlife that he discovered. Of these, he took numerous photographs and made several sketches and oil studies that would later be incorporated into the grand-sized paintings created in his New York studio. This fantastic excursion spurred the young artist's curiosity with North American landscape, a subject matter that would secure Bierstadt's position as one of the premiere artists of the American West.

**Opening the lesson: Hook/lesson launch:**
1. Tell students to use the questions that follow to analyze this painting (a primary source document of Estes Park painted by Albert Bierstadt). Project the painting “Landscape with Deer, View of Estes Park, Colorado” In table groups, students discuss:
   a. Where are we?
   b. What do you notice?
   c. How do you feel?
   d. What elements of art contribute to those feelings?
   e. What possible message does this painting give to the viewer?
   f. If you were to summarize your response in one word, what would it be?

2. And now, a new question – imagine someone created this painting for a purpose – what might that purpose be? Now give students information about the artist, the title, the location, and the year it was painted. How does this information influence your thinking?

3. Assign partners or small groups of students to examine the painting and record their findings. After students have processed this activity in writing, project the painting again and allow time for students to share their inferences and summarize findings on art, history, and geography derived from the painting.

4. Tell students many artists in the mid 19th century wanted to capture the beauty of nature before it was destroyed by humankind. Some artist’s
romanticized the American landscape. What effect did the artists have on Americans’ view toward land conservation and development?

5. Background: Bierstadt, along with others who had explored the West, hoped to persuade the legislature of an entire nation that certain locations in our country were sacred spaces that belong to all people and all generations. Lawmakers would soon vote on legislation to establish national parks in the United States before the locations were altered, bought, sold, used, or used up – and most of these lawmakers had not been to the West. Therefore, Bierstadt brought the West to them in his huge, panoramic paintings. The emotional effect of viewing his paintings was a major factor in the passage of legislation that preserved these spaces for future generations.


7. Do you think these are historical or documentary paintings? What qualities of the American West does Bierstadt express?

8. The 100th anniversary of Rocky Mountain National Park is approaching in 2015. We might take it for granted that we have conserved this iconic public land, but it was not always a given. Students are about to begin a lesson on the history and geography of this park.

Developing the Lesson:

Using a digitized map of Colorado, project it on a screen and orient student by locating Denver and identify the region around Estes Park.

1. Break the class into four equal size groups.

2. Assign each group a different perspective on creating a national park near Estes Park: 1) conserve the land for wilderness; 2) conserve the land for a national park; 3) manage the land for development of forests, livestock, and mining; and 4) develop the land for private business.

3. Give each group time to read the primary source documents (Handout #1) and develop conceptual arguments in support of the group’s perspective. Individually, each student will write a thesis from the group’s perspective.

4. Begin the fishbowl discussion by placing four chairs in the middle of the room, one for each perspective.
5. Have one representative from each group enter the fishbowl to make their group’s opening statement. Only students in the fishbowl are allowed to talk. Those on the outside listen, evaluate, and take notes with the rest of their group at four separate tables. Allow 2 minutes per group for the opening statement.

6. After the opening statement, another set of four students enters the fishbowl. This cycle repeats until all have entered the fishbowl and the last student makes the closing statement. No student may re-enter the fishbowl until everyone in the group has been in it.

**Fishbowl Discussion – Variations**

1. Entire class comes with sticky note questions. In groups of four, they reduce down their group questions to the best three. These are put on the chalkboard and the fishbowl revolves around these questions. The fishbowl is still student lead.

2. Teacher leads discussion around class questions. Teacher is leader of fishbowl and sits in fishbowl. This works really well with underclassmen.

3. Make the fishbowl voluntary – only students who want to be in the fishbowl pull in their desks – but they have to show you their sticky notes or other evidence that they’re ready to discuss. Give the students who aren’t chosen another job to do.
**Handout #1: PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

**Document #1**

![Image of a family standing in front of a house with horses]

**Document #2**
Source: Albert Bierstadt (1864).

Truly all is remarkable, and a well-spring of amazement and wonder. Man is fortunate to dwell in this American Garden of Eden.

**Document #3**
Source: Kathrine Lee Bates, “America the Beautiful” (1895).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O beautiful for spacious skies,</th>
<th>O beautiful for heroes proved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For amber waves of grain,</td>
<td>In liberating strife,</td>
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<tr>
<td>For purple mountain majesties</td>
<td>Who more than self their country loved,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Above the fruited plain!</td>
<td>And mercy more than life!</td>
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<tr>
<td>America! America!</td>
<td>America! America!</td>
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<tr>
<td>God shed His grace on thee</td>
<td>May God thy gold refine,</td>
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<td>And crown thy good with brotherhood</td>
<td>Till all success be nobleness,</td>
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<tr>
<td>From sea to shining sea!</td>
<td>And every gain divine!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| O beautiful for pilgrim feet,             | O beautiful for patriot dream           |
| Whose stern, impassioned stress           | That sees beyond the years              |
| A thoroughfare for freedom beat           | Thine alabaster cities gleam            |
| Across the wilderness!                    | Undimmed by human tears!                |
| America! America!                         | America! America!                       |
| God mend thine every flaw,                | God shed His grace on thee              |
| Confirm thy soul in self-control,         | And crown thy good with brotherhood     |
| Thy liberty in law!                       | From sea to shining sea!                 |
Document #4
Source: National Park Service, “Map 4: Early Mining and Settlement” (c. 1870s).

Document #5
Source: Rocky Mountain National Park, “Prospectors” (c. 1870s)
Document #6
Source: Englishman G.W. quoted in The Field (1873).

A United State [sic] Government title to the property, it is estimated, would cost £2000; to fence in the whole park, portions being already fenced, and build a good house, lumber and stone being on the spot, £1000; to stock it with 1000 head of cattle or 10,000 head of sheep, £6000—total £12,000... There is water power enough for a saw mill, and abundance of fine timber. They churn by water power, and have about 1200 cattle and forty horses in the park, all of which are in fine condition, and get nothing but the grass. Oats will grow well near the streams, and a great portion is easily irrigated. I should like to see it in the hands of an English company, as lots of money is to be made by stock and sheep farming in Colorado.37

Document #7
Source: Rocky Mountain National Park History Center, “Building the Grand Ditch” (c. 1880s).
Document #8
Source: Kenneth Jessen, “Early Roads to Estes Park” (1903).

Document #9
Source: The Lyons and Estes Park Stage Line (1905).
Statements and Stipulations
of the
Estes Park Protective and
Improvement Association

Adopted
September 22, 1906

Estes Park, Colorado
September 22, 1906

We the undersigned, residents or owners or agents of property, in Estes Park, Larimer County, Colorado, being desirous of Associating ourselves for Social purposes, and for furthering the beautifying of said Park, and not for pecuniary profit, do hereby associate ourselves together, under the following Statements and Stipulations.

First.
The name of our Society shall be The Estes Park Protective and Improvement Association.

Second.
The particular business and object for which our said Association is formed, shall be to promote Social intercourse among ourselves, and to suggest, provide for, and maintain improvements, such as roads, trails, fish hatcheries, tree planting, forestry, and any like attempts intended to be of use and benefit to the members of this Association and its associates.

Document #11
**Document #12**

**Document #13**
Document #14
Document #15
Source: Estes Park Area Historical Museum, Colorado Mountain Club with Arapahoe identifying geographic features using original Indian names (1914).

Document #16
Source: Denver Post, “Enos I’m Proud of You!” (1915).
ENOS MILLS

When Enos Mills was just a lad--
A genius in the bud--
An inward urge gave him no rest,
'Twas nature in his blood.

For Enos had a goal in mind,
A place where he could start
To learn the joys of nature's life
Perhaps near Estes Park.

He chose a long and rugged path,
With many miles to go;
Through rivers, hills and valleys deep,
And oft through winter's snow.

At last, the place he sought was reached,
Where fir trees hummed a tune,
And high above their leafy boughs
There hung a harvest moon.

'Twas pleasant for this lad to climb,
The peaks however high,
And tame the forest animals
And watch the bluebirds fly.

A cabin first was built by Mills,
And then a stately Inn;
A never-failing source of help
Where many trails begin.

When gazing all around these woods
And rugged Estes Park,
His eyes would lift to lofty Long's
A trail he knew by heart.

The fame of Enos spread afar
And many people came,
To share the beauty of his find
And magnify his name.

His Monument is The Forests,
And these he worked to save,
Preserving all for Estes Park,
His life and love he gave!
Discuss and conceptualize: How should we shape a relationship with the natural environment? Should we create a national park near Estes Park, Colorado?

Please select a minimum of five pieces of evidence to support your group’s perspective and develop concepts to discuss in support of your thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOC. #</th>
<th>EVIDENCE FROM DOCUMENT</th>
<th>CONCEPTS TO DISCUSS</th>
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</table>

My Thesis:


**Handout #3: FISHBOWL DISCUSSION GUIDELINES**

**IMPORTANT POINTS for any FISHBOWL DISCUSSION:**
- This is a discussion based on the documents and other evidence, not opinions
- One never says, “I think” or “In my opinion.” All responses are “based on document.”
- The teacher may ask follow-up questions for clarification or to refocus the discussion.
- Always be polite, even if you disagree
- Listening is an important tool for understanding

While the discussion is taking place, the team members are to listen and evaluate the arguments of the different teams. In the box below keep track of the “best evidence” made by each perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIRCLE</th>
<th>GROUP 1</th>
<th>GROUP 2</th>
<th>GROUP 3</th>
<th>GROUP 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Discusser</td>
<td>Best Evidence for Perspective</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Opening Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Should the U.S. create a <strong>wilderness area for conservation</strong> near Estes Park, Colorado?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Should the U.S. create a <strong>national park for recreation</strong> near Estes Park, Colorado?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Should the U.S. <strong>manage land</strong> near Estes Park, Colorado <strong>for forests, livestock and mining</strong>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Should the U.S. allow <strong>private business to develop the land</strong> near Estes Park, Colorado without restrictions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Closing Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFTER Groups 1 and 2 Discussion (Conservation Groups)</td>
<td>AFTER Groups 3 and 4 Discussion (Development Groups)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I learned from this perspective is...</td>
<td>What I learned from this perspective is...</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The best argument made by either of these groups was...</td>
<td>The best argument made by either of these groups was...</td>
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<td>...because...</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>After reflecting on the entire Fishbowl Discussion experience, my thesis has/has not changed because...</td>
<td>After reflecting on the entire Fishbowl Discussion experience, my thesis has/has not changed because...</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Handout #4: Fishbowl Discussion Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Rubric</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substantive</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>States and identifies issues.</td>
<td>Insightfully and accurately states several concepts from the group’s perspective.</td>
<td>Accurately states concepts from the group’s perspective.</td>
<td>Somewhat accurately states concepts from the group’s perspective; may emphasize facts.</td>
<td>Does not state concepts from the group’s perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses foundational knowledge.</td>
<td>Accurately expresses completely relevant foundational knowledge pertaining to the concepts raised during the discussion.</td>
<td>Accurately expresses mostly relevant foundational knowledge pertaining to concepts raised during the discussion.</td>
<td>Accurately expresses somewhat relevant foundational knowledge pertaining to a concept raised by someone else.</td>
<td>Does not express any relevant foundational knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborates statements with explanations, reasons, or evidence.</td>
<td>Pursues a broad concept with more than one elaborated statement.</td>
<td>Pursues a broad concept with one elaborated statement.</td>
<td>Elaborates a statement with an explanation, reasons, or evidence.</td>
<td>Does not elaborate any statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procedural</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invites contributions from, and acknowledges statements of, others.</td>
<td>Engages others in the discussion by inviting their contributions and acknowledging their contributions.</td>
<td>Invites comments from others and does not acknowledge their statements.</td>
<td>Does not invite comments from others but allows others to speak. Does not acknowledge contributions from others.</td>
<td>Does not invite comments from others and/or acknowledge their statements and/or dominates the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges the accuracy, logic, relevance, or clarity of statements.</td>
<td>Constructively challenges the accuracy, clarity, relevance, or logic of statements made.</td>
<td>Responds in a civil manner to a statement made by someone else by challenging its accuracy, clarity, relevance, or logic.</td>
<td>Responds in a civil manner but does not challenge the accuracy, clarity, relevance, or logic of statements.</td>
<td>Does not respond in a civil manner in all conversations. Does not challenge the accuracy, clarity, relevance, or logic of statements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment:**

Students will be assessed in one of more of the following:

- Grading the student handout on evidence
- Participation in the fishbowl discussion
- Cooperative team skills

**Enhancement:** Following this lesson, choose a local environment such as a park, forest, or river, and discuss how this land should be developed, based on assigned perspectives.

**References:**


