

Module

4

Lesson

1

Benefits of Public Lands

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Lesson at a Glance

Benefits Brainstorm (10 min):

Participants will brainstorm ideas that come to mind for “benefits of public lands” in pairs as a round robin activity.

Commercial Break (15 min):

Participants will create and perform a commercial advertising public lands.

Conclusion (5 min): Review material.

Learner Outcomes

Participants will:

- Understand and articulate why public lands are beneficial from an ecological, economic, social, and cultural perspective.
- Internalize the value of public lands.

Getting Ready

Participants:

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Butcher paper; markers, paper, pencils

Preparation: Create posters for ecological, social, cultural, and economic benefits; spread posters around instructional space.

Location: Indoor or outdoor with room to move around.

Objective: To learn about the benefits of public lands.

Benefits Brainstorm (10 min)

Transition from talking about personal places to public lands.

1. Ask the group to pair up with a different partner and walk to a poster around the room.
2. Pose the question to the group, “*what are the benefits of public lands?*” Explain that we will be doing a group brainstorm, and their task is to think of words, images, people, places, and ideas that come to mind. There is no correct answer, and ideas may be written as words, phrases, or even doodles. Encourage participants to open their minds up and be creative.
3. Set a timer for 2 minutes. In this time, participants should document on the poster any benefits they can think of related to the category (economic, environmental, cultural, social). After 2 min, the pairs rotate to the next poster and add any ideas they can think of. Allow time for each group to have 2 min at each poster.
4. Review what is written on each sheet of paper. Circle the concepts that represent tangible benefits.

Ecological Benefits include: air and water filtration; healthy wildlife habitats, migration routes, and breeding grounds; preservation of diverse plant and animal communities; and climate change mitigation and adaptation that occurs when biodiversity, vegetation and land cover take up atmospheric carbon dioxide.

Economic Benefits include: natural resources such as timber, minerals, fossil fuels, renewable energy (wind, solar, geothermal); and support and infrastructure for a \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy that provides over 7.6 million direct jobs (as of 2017).

Social Benefits include: diverse recreational opportunities that support physical and mental health and provide endless possibilities for fun for individuals, groups, and families; educational opportunities that support valuable nature-based, experiential learning; connection to the cultural and natural history that is part of our national heritage; and the ability to build and enhance community through connection to place.

Cultural Benefits include: connection to spirituality and the sacred (Indigenous Peoples, despite being dispossessed of their land, still visit sacred land and often consider the land an essential part of their well-being); connection to cultural history of Mexican Americans in the Southwest, and connection to African American history.

Commercial Break (15 min)

1. Divide participants into groups of 4-5 people, or less depending on numbers. Instruct them that have 10 minutes to create a commercial advertising public lands. They may use all four categories or come at it from a specific angle. Encourage creativity, such as costumes, props, etc. Designate a “stage” and have each group perform their commercial.

Conclusion (5 min)

Debrief the lesson with the following questions:

Are there any benefits of public lands that surprised you? Why?

Are any of the benefits in conflict with each other?

Some examples of conflicts include:

- The anthropocentric vs. eco-centric conservation debate, in which the former focuses on humans and the economy, whereas the later focuses on the flora, fauna, and soils.
- Ongoing tensions between recreation and conservation such as the debates surrounding mountain biking in Wilderness or kayaking on Wild and Scenic rivers.
- Cultural resources management debates such as the controversy over protection of the Bears Ears National Monument for cultural heritage purposes.
- The debate between federal and state management of public lands (with some states gaining management over former federal public lands, and then selling off these lands to developers).

Are the benefits of public lands equally shared by the American people?

*Are there some people who benefit more than others from public lands?**

*This final question may lead into a discussion about equity and access to public lands, which is great! Foster the discussion, but do not force it if it is not going in that direction.

Why are public lands valuable to you?

Module

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Lesson

2

Threats to Public Lands

Lesson at a Glance

Benefits Brainstorm (10 min):

Participants will read slips of paper explaining different issues facing public lands and, using devices, come up with one to three current examples of threats to public lands.

Conclusion (5 min): Discuss action steps and questions.

Learner Outcomes

Participants will:

- Articulate the current threats and issues facing public lands today.
- Provide current examples of threats.

Getting Ready

Participants:

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Printed slips of paper, journals, pencils

Preparation: Cut up threats for group work.

Location: Indoor or outdoor with room to sit in a circle.

Objective: To understand the different threats and issues that public lands face today.

Issues and Current Events Exploration (25 min)

1. Begin by asking participants to think about and discuss some of the current issues and threats facing public lands that they've heard about. Pass out the threats and ask participants to read the threat and distribute. Ask participants to read the issue aloud to the group.
2. Ask participants to group up according to the issue that most interests them, ensuring that all issues have representation.
3. Allow 5-10 min for participants to research on their devices or from their own knowledge current examples of the threat they are representing. Have each group assign a note taker and a presenter.
4. Ask each group to report out on their findings.

Conclusion (5 mins)

1. Ask for popcorn-style responses to the follow questions:
What did you learn from your exploration that surprised you?
What can you do about these issues?
2. Leave time for questions.

Adapt the Lesson

If internet or cell service isn't available, place the issues with a piece of butcher paper around the teaching space and allow the group to gallery walk. Individuals can record any information that they know about the issue, how it makes them feel, and potential solutions to the issue and what people can actively do to work toward a solution.

