

LESSON PLAN

CONSERVATION



Green sea turtle hatchling faces Gulf surf, Padre Island National Seashore.

Image courtesy of National Park Service

GRADE

4th–8th

TIME

30–45 minutes

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

In this lesson, students will learn about President Kennedy's advocacy for environmental conservation and his efforts to protect the nation's natural resources. Students will analyze the President's remarks given after signing the bill establishing the Padre Island National Seashore to pick out important facts about this area and why it should be protected. Students will use the links in the [Materials](#) section to select a national or state park located in their home state and complete an activity to understand its natural resources.

If desired, there are optional [extension activities](#) that encourage students to dig deeper into various plant and animal life within their chosen park. They will also have the option to create a brochure or other method of communicating the unique characteristics of their chosen national or state park.

MATERIALS

- Links for students to look up national and state parks in their state.
 - › [National Park Service](#)
 - › [State Park Listings](#)
- Optional Resources | National Places Focus
 - › [National Park Criteria](#)
 - › [Designation of National Park System Types](#)
- [Appendix A](#) | Transcript of President Kennedy’s Remarks After Signing the Padre Island National Seashore Bill
- [Appendix B](#) | Original Copy of President Kennedy’s Remarks After Signing the Padre Island National Seashore Bill
- [Appendix C](#) | Descriptions of National Park System Place Types
- [Appendix D](#) | National / State Park Note-Taking Worksheet
- [Appendix E](#) | Exploring Biodiversity Note-Taking Guide

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About National Seashores

National Seashores protect recreation areas along the nation’s coastlines, creating non-development areas and preserving beaches for public use. Congress designated Cape Hatteras in North Carolina as the first National Seashore in 1937, however, it did not open as a park until 1953. In 1956, the National Park Service published a report on the rapid disappearance of the nation’s shorelines. Senator John F. Kennedy pushed for the acquisition of seashores as public lands to ensure their existence while preserving them for generations to come. Between 1961-1962, President Kennedy, an avid sailor with a deep appreciation of nature, created three National Seashores—Cape Cod National Seashore in Massachusetts, Point Reyes National Seashore in California and South Padre Island in Texas—to protect hundreds of miles of shoreline in Texas, California and Massachusetts. Today, there are a total of 10 National Seashores in the National Park Service.

About Padre Island National Seashore

Throughout history, Padre Island has kept its undeveloped wilderness and preservation efforts have allowed visitors to almost step back in time with much of the land still looking as it was described by early explorers. The island has mainly been used for ranching, however, in the early 1920s, the tourism industry began developing various parts of the land such as the town of South Padre Island and areas along the seashore. During the 1950s oil and natural gas development began moving in on other parts of the shoreline, raising concerns for environmental conservation advocates and the National Park Service alike. Padre Island is dubbed the longest stretch of underdeveloped barrier island in the world with sparkling waves, serene beaches, and colorful wildlife. To ensure the conservation of the remaining wilderness while maintaining a responsible balance of tourism and recreation, President Kennedy signed S. 4 on September 28, 1962, making Padre Island the country’s fourth National Seashore.

President Kennedy on Conservation

John F. Kennedy was an advocate for the conservation of public land and resources before and during his presidency. His remarks still echo the goals of the National Park Service and advocates for the conservation of public lands for the greater good.

In September 1963, President Kennedy embarked on a conservation tour across the United States. In collaboration with Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, the nationwide tour highlighted environmental crises and proposed solutions to current environmental concerns. President Kennedy visited eleven states from Pennsylvania to California in just five days, delivering 15 speeches.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What prompted President Kennedy to create three national shorelines?
2. What characteristics of Padre Island made it an ideal candidate for conservation?
3. Why is land conservation important and how does the U.S. government support this effort?
4. What are some of the unique characteristics of a national or state park in your home state that need to be protected?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will use primary sources to learn about the Padre Island Seashore and why President Kennedy wanted it protected.
2. Through small group and class discussions, students will understand the need and value of protecting the nation's natural resources.
3. Students will research a national or state park in their state and communicate their findings through an appropriate mode of presentation.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

[TEKS | C3 standards](#)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Briefly read and discuss the Background Information portion of this lesson with the students.
2. Have the students read and analyze [Appendix A](#): President Kennedy's Remarks After Signing the Padre Island National Seashore Bill.
 - a. In small groups or as a class, have the students pick as many important facts as possible about Padre Island.
 - b. Discuss why it is crucial to protect America's natural areas and resources.
3. If you would like the students to conduct more in-depth research on Padre Island after reading President Kennedy's remarks use the link below.
 - a. [Padre Island History](#) | National Park Service webpage discussing the features, characteristics, and history of Padre Island.
4. If you want this activity to be focused on national places, the link below provides more information on how a place becomes a national park.
 - a. [Criteria for New National Parks](#)
 - i. This webpage from the National Park Service outlines the eligibility requirements a place must meet to become a national park.
 - b. [Appendix C](#): Descriptions of National Park System Place Types helps students understand the different types of National Places in the Parks Service.
5. Distribute [Appendix D](#): State / National Park Note-Taking Worksheet for students to utilize in Step 6.
6. Using the links below, have students select and research a national or state park in their state.
 - > [National Parks](#)
 - > [State Park Listings](#)
7. Students will share the following information about their state or national park. This can be done in small groups or as a class.
 - a. The name of the park.
 - b. The year it was founded.
 - c. One plant and one animal found in the park.
 - d. A brief overview of why their park is unique and should be protected.

Optional Extension Activity 1: Exploring Biodiversity in Parks

1. After students have researched their park using their note-taking worksheet, they will take a closer look at the biodiversity in their selected park.
2. Students will use the link below from the National Park Service.
 - a. [Explore Diversity Across National Park Service](#)
 - i. Scroll down to the map of the United States.
3. Students will find their national park on the map and click on “Explore Park Biodiversity” link.
 - a. If the student chose a state park or their home state does not have a national park, the student will select a national park of their choice in neighboring state.
4. As students explore the national park’s biodiversity, they will use [Appendix E: Exploring Biodiversity Note-taking Guide](#).
5. After looking at the biodiversity of the students’ chosen national park, in small groups or as a class students will share the following.
 - a. Three different types of plants in the park.
 - b. Two different types of animals in the park.
 - c. One type of insect in the park.
 - d. How do humans impact the plants, animals and insects found in and around the park?
 - e. How can changes in the environment (temperature change, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires, volcanoes, etc.) affect the park’s biodiversity?
 - f. What threats (human, environmental, invasive species, etc.) exist in the region that may affect the biodiversity of the park?

Optional Extension Activity 2: Creating a National or State Park

1. Using the criteria for establishing a National Park, have the students select an area in your community or state and make the case it should become the next National or State Park.
 - a. [Criteria for New National Parks](#)
 - b. Make sure students identify what type of park it will be.
2. Have the students create a 30-60 second speech laying out their argument as well as a slogan for their campaign.
3. Students will create a poster including images and important information to share during their campaign speech.

Optional Extension Activity 3: Travel Brochure

1. After the students have researched their park using the note-taking worksheet, they will create a travel brochure.
2. Encourage the students to include as much information about the park as possible.

TEXAS ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (TEKS)

SOCIAL STUDIES

4th Grade

§113.15 (b) (8) (B) explain reasons why people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas, past and present, such as the use of natural resources to meet basic needs, facilitate transportation, and enhance recreational activities.

5th Grade

§113.16 (b) (8) (B) analyze positive and negative consequences of human modification of the environment in the United States.

6th Grade

§113.18 (b) (3) (C) identify and locate major physical and human geographic features such as landforms, water bodies, and urban centers of various places and regions.

§113.18 (b) (4) (B) identify geographic factors such as location, physical features, transportation corridors and barriers, and distribution of natural resources that influence a society's political relationships.

7th Grade

§113.19 (b) (8) (B) locate and compare places of importance in Texas in terms of physical and human characteristics such as major cities, waterways, natural and historic landmarks, political and cultural regions, and local points of interest.

§113.9 (b) (20) (A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas.

8th Grade

§113.20 (b) (11) (B) describe the positive and negative consequences of human modification of the physical environment of the United States.

§113.20 (b) (29) (C) organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

SCIENCE

6th Grade

§112.26 (b) (13) (C) describe how variations within a population can be an advantage or disadvantage to the survival of a population as environments change.

7th Grade

§112.27 (b) (4) (A) relate the impact of past and current research on scientific thought and society, including the process of science, cost-benefit analysis and contributions of diverse scientists as related to the content.

8th Grade

§112.28 (b) (3) (B) communicate explanations and solutions individually and collaboratively in a variety of settings and formats.

§112.28 (b) (12) (B) describe how primary and secondary ecological succession affect populations and species diversity after ecosystems are disrupted by natural events or human activity.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGE ARTS, AND READING

4th Grade

§110.6 (b) (6) (E) make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society.

§110.6 (b) (6) (G) evaluate details read to determine key ideas.

5th Grade

§110.7 (b) (7) (E) interact with sources in a meaningful way such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating.

6th Grade

§110.22 (b) (12) (D) identify and gather relevant information from a variety of sources.

§110.22 (b) (12) (J) use an appropriate mode of delivery, whether written, oral, or multimodal, to present results.

7th Grade

§110.23 (b) (12) (E) differentiate between primary and secondary sources.

§110.23 (b) (12) (F) synthesize information from a variety of sources.

8th Grade

§110.24 (b) (5) (F) make inferences and use evidence to support understanding.

§110.24 (b) (6) (E) interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating.

C3 FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS: COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE

D2.Geo.2.6-8 Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions, and changes in their environmental characteristics.

D2.Geo.5.6-8. Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.

D2.Geo.6.6-8. Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.

D2.Geo.10.6-8. Analyze the ways in which cultural and environmental characteristics vary among various regions of the world.

APPENDIX A

Transcript of President Kennedy's remarks after signing the Padre Island National Seashore Bill

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, SEPTEMBER 28, 1962
OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON THE SIGNING OF S. 4
TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE
IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to approve S. 4, providing for the establishment of the Padre Island National Seashore.

The 113-mile-long Padre Island along the Texas coast of the Gulf of Mexico, extending from Corpus Christi on the north almost to Mexico on the south, is the longest barrier island of the United States. By preserving 80 miles of the island's scenic, untrammled shore land, this measure will make possible a broad range of year-round opportunities for recreation and quiet enjoyment of a natural environment for a large number of people.

The Padre Island National Seashore is the third authorized by the 87th Congress insuring that this Congress will enjoy an honored position in the development of conservation in this country. Padre Island on the Gulf will now take its place with Cape Cod on the Atlantic, and Point Reyes on the Pacific. Each of these areas has its unique characteristics – each is readily accessible to millions of Americans – each will offer an enduring opportunity of renewal of the body and spirit where the land meets the sea.

I want to congratulate the members of Congress. As I said, these are three very exceptional sites which have been preserved for the people of the United States. The one at Cape Cod which I know intimately was a great step forward as was the one at San Francisco, and now we will have this one off the coast of Texas. I think the members of Congress can look upon this step forward with unprecedented pride for many, many years.

END

APPENDIX B

Original copy of President Kennedy's remarks after signing the Padre Island National Seashore Bill, September 26, 1962

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, SEPTEMBER 23, 1962

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON THE SIGNING OF S. 4
TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE
IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

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END

Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston.

APPENDIX C

Descriptions of National Park System Place Types

Below are the descriptions for all the types of places in the National Park system. This will be a useful tool to help guide you when selecting and investigating a place of your choice.

National Park | These are generally large natural places having a variety of characteristics that are sometimes significant in history. Hunting, mining, and environmentally harmful activities are not allowed.

Example: Saguaro National Park in Arizona.

National Monument | The President can publicly declare landmarks, structures, and other objects that are important to science and history if it is on land owned or controlled by the government.

Example: Effigy Mounds National Monument in Iowa

National Preserve | Areas like National Parks but Congress has allowed public hunting, trapping, oil/gas exploration, and removal.

Example: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve in Alaska.

National Historic Site | Usually has one historical feature that relates and is important to its subject.

Example: Fords Theater in Washington D.C.

National Historic Park | Applies to historic parks that include more than one building or property.

Example: Cane River Creole National Historic Park in Louisiana

National Memorial | A place that is dedicated to a historic person or event.

Example: Peral Harbor National Memorial in Hawaii

National Battlefield | General title that includes national battlefield, national battlefield park, national battlefield site, and national military park.

Example: Monocacy National Battlefield in Maryland

National Cemetery | There are 14 national cemeteries in the National Park System all under one category and not marked individually.

Example: Fort Logan National Cemetery in Colorado

National Recreation Area | Urban parks that combine rare open spaces with care for historic resources and are considered important outdoor spaces that have activities for a large number of people.

National Seashore | Ten national seashores have been established on the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts; some are developed but others are relatively untouched.

Example: Padre Island National Seashore in Texas.

National Lakeshore | All on the Great Lakes and very similar to national seashores in character and use.

Example: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in Wisconsin

National River | There are several types in this category including national river and recreation area, national scenic river, wild river, etc.

Example: Buffalo National River in Arkansas.

National Parkway | Refers to a roadway and the parkland next to the road. All were intended for scenic driving along a protected passage and often connect cultural sites.

Example: Foothills National Parkway in Tennessee.

National Trail | National scenic trails and national historic trails are names given to linear parklands that are over 3,600 miles and controlled under the National Trails System Act of 1968.

Example: Florida National Scenic Trail in Florida.

APPENDIX D

State / National Park Note-Taking Worksheet

State and national parks help protect many plants and animals that are native to the area and in each park, visitors can see many different things.

DIRECTIONS

Select a state park or national park, site, shoreline, monument, etc. in the state you live in and do some research. Research the park and use the table below to take notes. Give at least two examples from your chosen place for each major aspect in the table.

| Major Aspect | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Why is it a state or national park? | 1. 2. |
| Wildlife | 1. 2. |
| Plant Life | 1. 2. |
| Habitats | 1. 2. |
| Conservation and Research at the Park | 1. 2. |
| History / Human Culture | 1. 2. |
| Recreation | 1. 2. |
| Two Interesting Facts | 1. 2. |

In 3-5 sentences, give an overview of the place you chose and why it is unique?

APPENDIX E

Exploring Biodiversity Note-taking Guide

DIRECTIONS

It is time to explore the biodiversity of the national park you have selected. Use [Explore Diversity Across National Park Service](#) and locate your state and national park you have chosen on the map. Then click on the “Explore Park Biodiversity” link when the two-bullet point menu appears.

Use the note taking guide below to help you keep track of the **plants, animals, insects**, and other unique characteristics your national park has to offer.

Note: If you chose a state park first or your home state does not have a national park, select a national park located in a state that neighbors yours.

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Plant 1: | Plant 2: | Plant 3: |
| Color: | Color: | Color: |
| Leaf Shape: | Leaf Shape: | Leaf Shape: |
| Animal 1: | Animal 2: | Insect: |
| Color: | Color: | Color: |
| Diet: | Diet: | Ground or air? |
| Movement: | Movement: | Movement: |
| Habitat: | Habitat: | |

How do humans impact the plants, animals, and insects in and around the park?

How can changes in the environment (temperature change, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires, volcanoes, etc.) affect the park’s biodiversity?

What threats (human, environmental, invasive species, etc.) exist in the region that may affect the biodiversity of the park?