Instructional Unit Title: Whose Land is it Anyway?

Integrated Science & Social Studies (Environmental Education)

4th Grade

The teacher may provide visuals (e.g., weathering and erosion time lapse video, maps, Google Earth, etc.) representing various geographic features of Colorado so that students can begin to connect how physical geography and climate determine the formation of environmental systems.



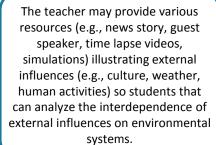
The teacher may lead students on an investigation exploring an outdoor space so that students can identify various nonliving and living (e.g., people, animals, plants) elements of an ecosystem.



The teacher may facilitate hands-on activities that demonstrate interdependent relationships within various ecosystems so students can explain and illustrate how living systems (e.g., food web, including humans; predator/prev relationships; etc.) interact with the biotic and abiotic factors within an environment.



The teacher may lead a Socratic seminar concerning human's everyday needs so that students can explain how the interdependence between technology, economies, and activities (e.g., mining, hunting, trapping, industry, trade) is contingent upon the availability of resources.





The teacher may engage students in a brainstorming session about various resources available in Colorado so students can analyze how human dependence on and consumption of nonrenewable and renewable resources can affect environmental systems.



The teacher may lead a discussion on the importance of adaptation and provide examples and/or artifacts (e.g., animal pelts, videos, pictures) so that students can describe how these modifications help plants, animals, and humans adapt to and survive in their habitat.



The teacher may invite a guest speaker (e.g., Colorado Parks and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Audubon) to discuss wildlife management so that students can explain how human activities can influence the endangerment of some species and habitats.



The teacher may provide primary and/or secondary sources from various cultures and perspectives (e.g., field trip, guest speaker, maps, images) so students can recognize how cultural perspectives and beliefs influence the choices and actions (positive and negative) that have an impact on the environment.



PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: A developer has proposed to build a new dam on your local river to generate electricity for the community. This dam will have an impact on the surrounding environmental systems, both locally and regionally. You will present to the city council at a town hall meeting in one of the following roles: biologist, concerned citizen, mayor, representative of the electric company, or developer. You will research your position (for or against) in order to identify the ecological and economic impacts of the dam on humans, plants, animals, and the habitats along the river system. Your presentation should include a speech and visual aids (e.g., maps, graphs, charts, pictures) on whether or not the dam should be built.

This unit was authored by a team of Colorado educators. The unit is intended to support teachers, schools, and districts as they make their own local decisions around the best instructional plans and practices for all students. To see the entire instructional unit sample with possible learning experiences, resources, differentiation, and assessments visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples.