

PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of the NESAs program is a personal environmental ethic, based on an understanding of the earth's life support systems and how they work.

The first stage in achieving this goal is environmental literacy. An environmentally literate person is one who understands that he is an inseparable part of a system composed of people, culture and the natural environment.

He accepts the fact that man's activities alter the interrelationships of this system.

He grasps the implications of the human ability to consciously manipulate, control, wisely use, preserve, or destroy his environment.

He possesses a fundamental knowledge of the problems confronting man and of ways he can act toward solving these problems.

As he acquires environmental literacy, he develops a personal environmental ethic; he adjusts his own personal set of attitudes and life style to this new understanding; he assumes responsibility for the condition of his environment; he is motivated to do something about it.

The child who would achieve environmental literacy must realize that he, himself, is as much a part of the natural world — as subject to its laws — as are the trees, the mountains and the seas.

A NESAs can be the doorway to that realization.

There is one web of life and you are part of it.

The web is in trouble.

You can do something about it.



For information
on National Environmental Study Areas
write:

Director,
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

NORTHEAST REGION

National Park Service
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS

National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20242

SOUTHEAST REGION

National Park Service
Federal Building, P. O. Box 10008
Richmond, Virginia 23229

MIDWEST REGION

National Park Service
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

SOUTHWEST REGION

National Park Service
P. O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

WESTERN REGION

National Park Service
P. O. Box 36063
San Francisco, California 94102

NORTHWEST REGION

National Park Service
Room 931, 4th & Pike Bldg.
Seattle, Washington 98101



U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NESAs



HISTORY AND STATUS OF THE PROGRAM

The National Environmental Study Area (NESA) program is a cooperative venture of the bureaus within the Department of the Interior, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Office of Education, the National Education Association, and local education communities, using guide materials developed by the National Park Service and the existing curricula of participating schools.

From its beginnings on lands of the National Park System, the program is spreading through cooperative action to other Federal as well as many non-Federal land areas. The Office of Education (HEW) maintains a catalog of NESA sites and environmental education materials. Information can be obtained by writing to:

Environmental Education
Office of Education
Washington, D. C. 20202

OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM

NESAs provide a different kind of environmental learning experience that makes imaginative use of both the cultural and natural worlds, as they combine to make up the study areas. The areas, together with the study guide materials developed for the area and the regular school curriculum, help students relate to their world by:

1. Introducing them to their total environment — cultural and natural, past and present.
2. Developing in them an understanding of how man is using his resources.
3. Equipping them to be responsible and active members of the world they are shaping and being shaped by.

PROGRAM SITES

Some NESAs are primarily natural. In them are

exemplified the elements and forces and balances out of which man himself is made and out of which he spins his cities and society and culture. Everything man is, or builds, is "nature" before it is anything else.

Other NESAs are primarily cultural. Their cultural significance generally springs from certain natural factors . . . a rise of ground that formed a logical battlefield, or a desirable landing site along a river that grew into a gateway to some interior region. In such places, a youngster learns to recognize how the environment has affected man's development and how man, in turn, has affected his environment. The environment and the individual become an indivisible whole — a reality whose meaning for each person lies in his own involvement. Some characteristics to consider in identifying an appropriate environmental study site might be the following:

1. features that lend themselves to interpreting man's relationship to his environment;
2. an overall "sturdiness" sufficient to offer a wide range of educational opportunity without impairment of the essential integrity of the environment;
3. location and facilities that make it convenient for regular use as part of curriculum-related education programs by area schools.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL STRANDS

These are the "constants" that run through the web of life and give it the satisfying order that is sometimes called "balance of nature" — a balance mankind seeks to emulate. They are:

1. Interaction and Interdependence
2. Variety and Similarity
3. Patterns
4. Change and Continuity
5. Adaptation and Evolution

These strands plus the NESA site resources are not a "subject" to be added to the teaching load. They are an endless source of lively new approaches to any and all regular subject areas. They can be applied in art, music, mathematics, history, social sciences, communications. The more they are used, the richer a resource they become.

PROGRAM BACKUP

The NESA guidelines, developed by the National Park Service and the National Education Association, provide the framework within which each local area can adapt to its own needs. The approach is interdisciplinary, man-centered, and based on the five environmental strands — themes that underly the working processes of both the natural and cultural worlds. Within these parameters, all the variety and peculiarities of the local study area and all the creativity, imagination and innovativeness of the local teachers can be amplified to the fullest.

Teacher workshops, set up through the sponsoring resource agencies and carried out in cooperation with the local school system, introduce teachers to the NESA, provide resource material on the area, and suggest ways of adapting the on-site experience to the entire range of classroom curriculum.

At the workshops, emphasis is placed on interpretation of regular curriculum through the use of the five dynamic strands. Successful operation of this process enables a child to see the relationships that exist throughout the universe — from the farthest galaxy to his own living room. The NESA Guide supplies the information on the strands and related material, the workshops show the teachers how to use them, and the teachers themselves decide how best to fit them into the daily curriculum flow.

