***This is America***: National Parks Independent Study Activities

The following are the activities you will need to complete for your independent study. You should complete all of the video activities, and the final “museum exhibit” activity.

Main Web Page Access for independent study project: **http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/for-educators/lesson-plans/**

**Introduction:** go to the following website and read the two page section. Feel free to look through pictures and other information

**http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/parks/yosemite/**

**Activity 1**

**“This is America” Video - use main link above**

**Part 1:** The story of our national parks is a long and complicated one, full of competing demands between utterly American impulses — between preservation and exploitation, the sacred and the profitable; between the immediate desires of one generation and its obligation and promise to the next. THIS IS AMERICA is a complete 45-minute film that tells the story of the national park idea through the prism of our nation's diverse population, weaving together stories of extraordinary people from a wide variety of backgrounds who devoted their lives to the national park ideal— to preserve and protect these special places for everyone, for all time— and helped it broaden and evolve over the course of 150 years. In this lesson, students will examine the challenges these individuals faced, their contributions and the personal qualities they each possessed. Then they will consider issues and problems at a national park near them and develop an action plan to address those or other community needs.

**Contributors from the Past - For each of the following contributors, fill out the Video Segment 1 graphic organizer with the following: which national park they were associated with; what problems they faced; what actions they took on behalf of the park; and what were the lasting results.**

a. Captain Charles Young

b. George Masa and Horace Kephart

c. George Melendez Wright

d. Chiura Obata

e. Lancelot Jones and Juanita Greene

f. Federico Sisneros

**Part 2: Contributors of the Present** - For each of the following contributors, fill out the Video Segment #2 graphic organizer. For each contributor, note what they said in the video, and what the quote says, then put into your own words what main point he/she was trying to make regarding the National Parks.

a. Shelton Johnson

b. Gerard Baker

c. Ernest Ortega

d. Robert Stanton

e. John Hope Franklin

**Activity 2**

**Watch “A Campfire Conversation” video** - use the above main link

**A CAMPFIRE CONVERSATION** During a private, three-day camping trip in the Yosemite Valley in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt and preservationist John Muir shared their views on wilderness use while “talking freely around the campfire.” Both men shared a life-long appreciation for the wilderness and its natural inhabitants. But each brought different views on how, why, and to what extent that environment should be protected. Their exchange of those views eventually led to the expansion of Yosemite National Park under the federal government. Students will use online tools – as well as information contained in this episode – to research the backgrounds, experiences, and points of view of both men. They will then share that information in a recreation of one of the pair’s “campfire conversations

**Your turn:** Consider the following questions as you watch this section of the video, and answer them in your own words (minimum - one paragraph for each question please).

a. What personal and professional experiences did Roosevelt bring to the meeting?

b. What personal and professional experiences did Muir bring to the discussion?

c. What was the point of view expressed by each man?

d. What did each man take away from the experience?

**Activity 3**

**Watch “Images of the Parks” video - use the above main link**

It was paintings and photography that first brought the grandeur of the regions yet to become national parks to the public’s attention in the latter half of the 19th century. Both played a crucial role in the creation of parks and in the nation's perception of them and their value. Images of jaw dropping beauty accompanied by vivid and expressive articles in popular publications brought the secrets of the West to the American people. This lesson explores several of the themes in The National Parks: America’s Best Idea by comparing the works of artists and photographers who documented and interpreted the spectacular scenery of the parks during the 19th and 20th centuries.

**Overview:** In this activity you will develop a” museum exhibit” on your artist or photographer. Your gallery exhibit will feature the artist’s work, a map of the area where they did their work. Your presentation can be constructed as a traditional museum exhibit on poster board, or you can create a digital presentation of slides, online maps and video clips from the NATIONAL PARKS series or a combination of both.

**Directions:**

**1.Choose one of the following artists that you were most interested in researching**

**photographers listed below.**

• George Catlin (painter)

• Albert Bierstadt (painter)

• Thomas Moran (painter)

• George Masa (photographer)

• Ansel Adams (photographer)

• Iwao Matsushita (photographer)

• Chiura Obata (painter)

• William Henry Jackson (photographer)

• Frank J. Haynes (photographer)

**2. Research your artist on the following areas and include the information in your “museum exhibit”:**

a. A brief biography of the artist covering how he got started in their craft and an overview of their work in general.

b. Several (five-six) examples of the artist’s work in a national park(s) or the region that became a national park that can be enlarged for easy viewing. Write a caption for each that states the name of the artist, the title of the work, and the date it was created. Also, any reference to who holds the copyright.

c. An analysis of how the artist’s work reflects the uniqueness of a park or a region that became a national park.

d. The impact of the artist in bringing awareness to Americans of the importance of the region or the park.

e. Quotes from the artist you feel are appropriate and enhance your exhibit

f. A map of the area that is the subject of their art. Identify specific areas where some of the work was created.

**3. In addition to pbs.org/nationalparks, use some of the suggested sites below to assist you in you in your research Resources:**

**• National Gallery of Art www.nga.gov (search by artist)**

**• National Parks Service www.nps.gov (search by park, then artist)**

**• Library of Congress lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/mdbquery.html**

**• National Parks Museum Management Program www.nps.gov/history/museum/ (click Park Profiles)**

**• Masters of Photography** [**www.masters-of-photography.com/index.html**](http://www.masters-of-photography.com/index.html)

**Feel free to look at other resources**