

Environmental Information Sources: Web Sites and Books

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Educational Institutions

Ancient Observatories: Chaco Canyon

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/chaco/>

Located in the northwest corner of New Mexico, Chaco Canyon is a shallow, ten-mile canyon accessible only by washboard dirt roads. It is an area of tremendous cultural importance, as it was once the center of an elaborate system of buildings, roadways, and other construction. Intense building activity continued at the site until about AD 1150, and then it was quickly abandoned. Today, it is a National Historic Park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On this site created by the Exploratorium in San Francisco, visitors can learn about this unique place via sections that provide insight into its layout, its history of human habitation, and also its various celestial alignments. First-time visitors can click on the Sense of Place tab to view a time-lapse video of the site. The Time area is remarkable, as visitors can read an essay titled "How Old Is It?" and then watch "Migration Stories," which talks about the experiences that humans have had there over the centuries. The site is rounded out by the Observation area, which allows users to learn about how the canyon's unique qualities have fascinated visitors, explorers, and others. *

Teaching Geology

<http://www.colorado.edu/geolsci/Resources/>

This rather remarkable website contains a great collection of resources for web-based instruction and demonstrations of geology concepts. The collection includes, under Classroom demonstration, the very useful SeisMac 3.0, which is an application for Mac OS X that turns a laptop computer into a "low-resolution strong-motion accelerometer," or a basic seismograph. It works by accessing the computer's Sudden Motion Sensor in order to display real-time, three axis accelerations graphs. Visitors can use the application to watch the seismic waves go up and down just by tapping their feet on the floor nearby. Other resources include Virtual Earth (an "interactive minicourse on thermal convection") and a link to Geology in the news, which collates important news stories with a geological theme. *

Pacific Northwest Stream Survey

<http://osulibrary.oregonstate.edu/digitalcollections/pacificNWstream/>

The Oregon State University Libraries has created this wonderful collection of 1,000 different images taken between 1934 and 1945 that document 390 streams in the Columbia River Basin. The photographs were taken by U.S. Bureau of Fisheries researchers who were interested in the spawning and rearing habitats for spring Chinook salmon. Visitors can use the clickable map on the homepage to move around through the images, which cover areas like the Puget Sound, the Clearwater region of Idaho, and the Willamette River Valley in Oregon. Each of these separate maps has a finer level of detail, and visitors can even click on various tributaries to look for detailed images. Visitors can use the keyword search, or the geographic search, which allows them to scroll around via major river basins. The site also contains technical reports on the salmon's spawning patterns created as part of this long-term project. *

The Sleeping Mountain

<http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/roleplaying/examples/sleepmtn.html>

This engaging classroom activity is culled from the Teaching Entry Level Geoscience site created by the staff of the Science Education Resource Center at Carleton College. This particular role-playing exercise has students representing townspeople whose lives and livelihoods are endangered by an active volcano that may or may not erupt in the near future. Along the way, students must debate whether to invest in or to abandon their town. The materials here include learning goals, a section on context, teaching notes and tips, and a brief writing assignment. Also, the site includes additional references and resources, such as links to other role-playing exercises and external websites. *

National Museum of Natural History: Lesson Plans & Classroom Resources

http://www.mnh.si.edu/education/classroom_resources.html

The National Museum of Natural History has a myriad of exciting resources for those who wish to help young people learn about natural history. On the site, visitors can make their way through three sections: Lesson Plans, Web-based Student Activities, and Resources for Teachers & Classrooms. In the Lesson Plans area, visitors can make their way through resources that include the Ocean Portal, which features lesson plans and fact sheets created by several partner organizations, including NOAA. Also, the area contains a great Measuring Biodiversity Across North America activity which uses state-of-the art interactive mapping technology. The Web-based Student Activities area includes a visually stimulating map titled "This Dynamic Planet" that allows users to explore 1,500 volcanoes, 44,000 earthquakes, and 170 impact craters. The area also includes a wonderful coral reef activity and a great encyclopedia of information of mammals in North America. The last area leads to external links such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium Online Field Guide and the popular AnthroNotes, which contains articles on current anthropological research. *

The University of Florida Book of Insect Records

<http://entnemdept.ifas.ufl.edu/walker/ufbir/index.shtml>

Based at the University of Florida and maintained and edited by Thomas J. Walker, the work "names insect champions and documents their achievements." The book is divided into chapters, so visitors can use the Table of Contents to get started on their journeys. In total, there are 40 chapters, including Most Tolerant of Cold, Shortest Generation Time, and Smallest Eggs. Each chapter can be downloaded for easy access and there's ample documentation for each record. This work could be used in any number of general biology or entomology courses and it is quite a find. *

The Getty Conservation Institute: PDF publications

http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/index.html

The Getty Conservation Institute generates a variety of thoughtful publications on its work every year. Many of these publications have found their way to this website and their bounty is seemingly endless. There are over 45 publications available, including "Cellulose Nitrate in Conservation," "Chaco Culture National Historical Park," "Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road," and "Economics and Heritage Conservation." Historic preservation experts, art historians, conservationists, and others will find much to wonder at here. Visitors should also share this resource with others, as the high quality of these works means that others will be glad to learn of their existence. *

International

Parks Canada

http://www.pc.gc.ca/progs/np-pn/pr-sp/index_e.asp

The national park system of Canada is extensive, stretching from Baffin Island to areas in British Columbia. The stated goal of the system is "to establish a system of national parks that represents each of Canada's distinct natural regions." First-time visitors to the site can use the Introduction area to learn more about the system, and there's also a Planning Your Visit link that's quite helpful. The basic document that most users will want to check out here is titled "National Parks System Plan" and it offers a broad overview of the 39 national parks in Canada. Visitors can learn about parks such as Aulavik, Prince Edward Island, and others by clicking over to the Find a National Park area. Naturalists and scientists can use the Species at Risk area to learn about what the Canadian government is doing to protect species such as the whooping crane and the seaside centipede lichen. Finally, the site is rounded out by the Managing Human Use link which talks about their long-range plans to ensure that the parks maintain a balance between visitors and conserving the natural areas. *

Fiji Reef

<http://fijireef.ning.com/>

On this website, visitors are presented with the question: "Why Reef?" Of course, they are then directed to Dive in and Explore. It's a wonderful invitation, and this site, created by the Field Museum in Chicago, is a delight for the generally curious. The site is a digital community for teens and scientists interested in marine conservation, and it includes captivating videos, blog

posts, and information about those who contribute to the site. Visitors will need to create a profile to access the content on the site, but that will only take a minute or two. The strongest aspect of the site is the community component: visitors interact with other members via the blogs, the photo comments section, and other forms of communication available here. *

Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology

<http://www.ice.mpg.de/ext/>

The Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology is based in Germany and their work encompasses a wide range of inquiry into the relationships between everything from bugs and symbiotic bacteria to odor activation in drosophila. Visitors can wander through the News area to get a sense of the ongoing research projects and overall mission. In the Institute area visitors can learn the basics of chemical ecology, the management of the Institute and their cooperative agreements with other like-minded organizations. The Departments area contains information about separate research groups, which are focused on entomology, bioorganic chemistry, biochemistry, and molecular ecology. Scientists and others will want to look over the Publications area, as it contains hundreds of research papers which can be searched by department, year, or citation number. Finally, visitors can also search available job openings. *

Ocean Tracks

<http://www.oceantracks.csiro.au/>

How are marine animals moving around when they are deep below the ocean's surface? It's a fascinating question, and one that has driven the work of part of Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). On this website, visitors can see the "tracks" of selected marine animals tagged by CSIRO and partner agencies. It's an amazing experience, and visitors just need to download a small plug-in to get started. Some of the marine animals here include white sharks patrolling Australia's southern coast and bluefin tuna on their oceanic migrations. The About area is a great way to learn about the research and technology involved with this complicated endeavor. Also, visitors can check out the low-tech/accessible version of the site if they are so inclined. *

Nonprofit & Research Organizations

AP Environmental Science Online Course

http://www.eoearth.org/article/AP_Environmental_Science_Online_Course

Offered up as part of The Encyclopedia of Earth project, this fine set of materials provides students and educators with items to be used with an AP Environmental Science course. However, the quality of the materials makes them useful to a range of science educators. Visitors can dive right into the Table of Contents, which consists of six units, including Environmental Quality, Global Changes, and Natural Resources. Each area includes a set of objectives, complemented with meaningful explanations of each concept, accompanied by graphs, charts, and other illustrative materials. Interested parties can also take advantage of a

range of external websites which are offered here as source material for more detailed exploration. *

Down to Earth: Herblock and Photographers Observe the Environment

<http://myloc.gov/exhibitions/herblock-down-to-earth>

The prologue to this fine digital collection crafted by the Library of Congress notes that "Environmental issues affect everyone on planet Earth - the quality of the water and food we consume, the air we breathe, and the parks we enjoy." The images included here are meant to complement an ongoing in situ exhibit at the Library, and they include images from the famous editorial cartoonist Herblock and well-known photographers like Sam Kittner and Ansel Adams. Visitors can read the About area to get a bit of background on the exhibit and then check out the "Exhibition Items" area. Here they can view all 39 items, which include dramatic images of environmental degradation and Herblock's witty and poignant India ink drawings which made him famous around the world. *

U.S. Forest Products Lab Centennial Oral History Project

<http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FPLHist>

This remarkable project includes digital audio recorded interviews with 52 current and former employees of the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin. These persons were interviewed as part of an oral history project undertaken by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Oral History Program in cooperation with the Forest Products Laboratory. It's worth noting that the facility was the first of its kind focusing principally on the study and research into the physical properties and resource utilization of wood. The intent of the entire project is "to document the Forest Products Laboratory's history in their work to promote healthy forest and forest-based economies through the efficient, sustainable use of...wood resources in Wisconsin." Visitors can search the collection as they see fit, or just browse through the interviews. Each interview comes with abstract information about each segment of the interview, and a brief biographical sketch of the interviewee. *

Weed to Wonder

<http://www.weedtowonder.org/>

Human ingenuity never ceases! This wonderful website from the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory tells the story of how a common Mexican weed (teosinte) was slowly manipulated by humans until it transformed into corn. As an introduction, users might want to start by watching a 2 minute and 50 second video of maize plants growing at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. After that, it's a good idea to look over the six separate sections here, which include Domestication, Hybrid Vigor, Genome Sequencing, and Jumping Genes. Each area contains explanatory text, photos, primary documents, and thoughtful explanations of complex scientific ideas. *

National Science Foundation: Resources for STEM Education

<http://www.nsfresources.org/topic.cfm?topic=IM>

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has created this useful set of resources related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) for educators and others interested in these fields. Here visitors can look over the resources, which include full-text books, pamphlets, and an interactive website. First up is the book "Worms, Shadows, and Whirlpools," which represents a new way to think about science education for young children. Another resource, "World Watcher," is a website that offers a "supportive scientific visualization environment for the investigation of scientific data." Finally, the site also has a link to the innovative "Whyville" site. This site was created by James Bower of the California Institute of Technology to create a place where tweens can engage as virtual citizens in a safe online community, create their own avatars, and also hang out with others interested in science, civics, government, and more. For many more high-quality resources, click on See All and the bottom of the page.*

The Smart Grid For Institutions of Higher Education And The Students They Serve

<http://php.aaas.org/programs/centers/capacity/documents/SmartGrid.pdf>

How can higher education institutions bring more students into the world of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)? This thoughtful research paper from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) attempts to answer that very question. It was funded as part of the National Science Foundation's Diversity and Law Project and authored by a team that includes Arthur L. Coleman and Katherine E. Lipper. The 105-page report contains four primary sections and five appendices. The sections include "Enhancing Connectivity: Key Components of Maximized Collaborative Success" and "Structuring Operations and Responding to Users." The paper offers some concrete suggestions for creating meaningful pathways to success and adopts a running comparison between the electrical Smart Grid and the Smart Grid for institutions of higher education and the students they serve. *

U.S. Federal and State Government Agencies

California Geological Survey-Educational Resources Center

<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/information/Pages/EdResCenter.aspx>

The Survey's Educational Resources Center site features California geology maps, teachers' aids, and "California Geology 101." This last resource is an interactive index of online geologic field trip guides and related sites. The resources include an exploration of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, replies to questions posed by the "Earthquake DOC," and a glossary of rock and mineral terminology. The maps should not be missed either, as they include a fault activity map of California and a detailed map of the Golden State's geomorphic provinces. *

USDA PLANTS Database

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service has created this remarkable database to provide standardized information about the vascular plants, mosses, liverworts, hornworts, and lichens of the United States and its territories. As there is a wealth of information here, first-time visitors may wish to start with the I Want to... area. Here they can make their way through shortcuts that include "See a list of the plants in my state" or

"Search for and view images of plants." On the left-hand side of the page, visitors can look over topics that include Cover Crops, Documentation, and Culturally Significant. Moving on, the News area contains links to newly released resources, such as the annual National Wetland Plant List and the plant hardiness map. Of course, visitors should not miss the Image Gallery, which contains over 40,000 plant images available for general use. *

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Environmental Health

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/environmentalhealth.html>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a wide range of materials at its disposal, and does a great job of bringing these resources to the general public, journalists, and fellow scientists. This particular section of the fine CDC site brings together items related to environmental health. The items are arranged chronologically and date back to October 2011. The fact sheets, papers, and other documents here include "Lead in Toys," "After a Flood," "Green Holidays," and "Earth Day." Visitors can search for items of interest, sign up for email updates, and also follow the CDC on a range of social media. As a whole, these are great resources that visitors will find accessible, compelling, and well-written. *

NOAA: Images, Visualizing Data, Marine Geology & Geophysics Division

<http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/image/>

The National Geophysical Data Center at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has a wide range of educational materials designed for oceanographers, private industry partners, and a range of other users. This particular corner of the site brings together dozens of resources that deal with seafloor topography, sediment thickness, natural hazards, and unique animated dives to ocean floor features. This last collection is quite remarkable, as it allows visitors to dive into the Mariana and Puerto Rico Trenches in a way that would be impossible without some rather expensive equipment. Moving along, the Crustal Age of the Ocean Floor area is an absolute wonder, featuring high-quality images of the earth's tectonic plates. Additionally, the Globes and Global Relief Images area includes short videos of rotating relief globes, along with a very cool global relief origami piece that can be printed out as a type of decoration or class project. The site is rounded out by a link to the Natural Hazards Image Database, which contains thousands of photographs documenting the effects of earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanoes. *

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

If you're interested in learning about forest conservation, geology, wetland restoration, and myriad other topics in Washington, this site presents a wealth of material to pique your interest. Visitors can click on over to the About area to learn about the Department's mission, its various boards and councils, and the commissioner. Moving along, the Science & Environment area contains six different sections dealing with geology, conservation, forestry, and marine science. Each section contains information about long-term projects in the thematic area, along with How-To... guides that answer commonly asked questions. Also, there is a range of publications within each area, including environmental impact reports and animal population studies. Finally,

the site features a complete listing of Meetings & Events and a link to an in-house blog. *

Energy.gov: Science Education

<http://energy.gov/science-innovation/science-education>

The Department of Energy has a range of educational initiatives, and this dynamic website is part of their work. The Science Education site provides materials for kindergarten through college level students, including specialized sections for different age groups. The main section of the site contains educational videos culled from different projects, along with news updates on everything from the annual Science Bowl competition to information about participating in the solar decathlon. Further down on the homepage users will find the Read More area, which contains links to three sections: Energy Saver, Energy Today, and Energy Tomorrow. Each of these areas contains links to the department's outreach efforts at educational institutions around the United States, along with embedded resources, such as materials on training seminars and related programs. Also, under the Mission Support area, visitors can look through more detailed sections such as the Office of Science Workforce Development Program and the regional program offices that deal with science education. *

NOAA: Great Lakes Eco-Region

http://www.education.noaa.gov/Freshwater/Great_Lakes_Eco-Region.html

The Great Lakes are vast, and provide fabulous laboratories for people to learn about everything from hydrology to cultural geography. This remarkable collection from NOAA brings together multimedia, lessons, real-world data, and background information about these bodies of water. The homepage features a meditative narrative essay that combines topographic description with general observations about the economic and other activities that take place in the general region. The Multimedia area contains a voluminous photo gallery, a fantastic "Listen to the Lake" podcast, and several Great Lakes webcams. Moving along, science educators will be delighted to learn about the Lessons and Activities area. Here they can download activities that include "Nab the Aquatic Invader," "Fish Life Cycle," and "Great Lakes Connection Model." Further along, the "Great Lakes Literacy Principles and Fundamental Concepts" document provides a framework for educators teaching about the Great Lakes. The site is rounded out by the Background Information area, which includes web diagrams of the Great Lakes food chains and information about migratory birds in the region. *

U.S. Department of Energy: Office of Science: Discovery & Innovation

<http://science.energy.gov/discovery-and-innovation/>

The Department of Energy has created this unique area within their Office of Science website to highlight the exciting stories of discovery and innovation sponsored in part by the Department. On the homepage, visitors can browse through recent stories that address nanoscience's role in creating "lithium-air" batteries and efforts to recycle waste heat into electricity. Each story is accompanied by images and detailed and lucid explanations of the research behind the discovery. The site also includes a fascinating area called Brief Science Highlights. Here visitors can read profiles of work on drug discovery aided by supercomputers

and the quest for new desalination technology. The site is rounded out by a section called Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Highlights. This area profiles recent innovations crafted by small businesses working in tandem with funds and partnerships via the Department of Energy. *

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Invasive Species

<http://www.fws.gov/invasives/>

The basic definition of an invasive species is "one that is not native to an ecosystem and which causes, or is likely to cause, economic or environmental health or harm to human health." The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is quite concerned with such species, as their primary responsibility is "the conservation of the nation's fish, wildlife, and plants." The materials here are divided into seven sections, including News and Resources, Laws and Regulations, and What You Can Do. This last section is a great resource for the general public, as it contains information on helping to prevent the spread of invasive plants, fact sheets on aquariums, and so on. Scholars and others will appreciate the Laws and Regulations area, which features the complete text of key laws and executive orders dealing with invasive species and their management. *

Acknowledgments

Items followed by a single * are adapted from The Scout Report, Copyright 1994-2013.

(<http://scout.wisc.edu>)

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