A Trail To Every Classroom (TTEC)
Curriculum Development Tool

UNIT DESIGN COVER SHEET

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School name, state and town: Rockbridge County Schools, Lexington, VA

Title: Your Backyard as a Natural Resource

Abstract/Vignette: Students will understand that their backyard is a natural resource. Students will understand that the Appalachian Trail is a valuable natural resource corridor.

Grade level(s): Please check all that apply.

- K-2
- 3-5
- 6-8
- 9-12
- College and Lifelong Learning

Discipline: Please check all that apply.

- Art and Music
- Health and PE
- Foreign Language
- Literature and Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies and Geography
- History
- Technology

Year Developed:

Period (month, week, year):

Teaching environment:

- In the Classroom (indoors)
- On the Trail
- In the Community
- Online/Virtual
A Trail to Place-based Service Learning Curriculum

**Start Here!**

- What is the main idea you want your students to come away from the unit knowing? Students will understand that their backyard is a natural resource. Students will understand that the Appalachian Trail is a valuable natural resource corridor.

**Big Idea**

What is the main idea you want your students to come away from the unit knowing? Students will understand that their backyard is a natural resource. Students will understand that the Appalachian Trail is a valuable natural resource corridor.

**State Standards/Outcomes**

Which elements of the state framework of standards does this unit address? What are the skills and outcomes you are working towards?

- VS.2 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the geography and early inhabitants of Virginia by:
  - locating Virginia and its bordering states on maps of the United States;
  - b) locating and describing Virginia’s regions: Coastal Plain, Piedmont, Blue Ridge Mountains, Valley and Ridge, and Appalachian Plateaus;
  - c) locating and identifying water features important to the early history of Virginia.

- Science 4.8 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the natural resources of Virginia.

**Essential Questions (Content)**

What are the essential questions that will help guide students toward understanding the Big Idea?

1. Why is it important to protect our natural resources?
2. What are the purposes/benefits of a big corridor (natural resource) such as the Appalachian Trail?
3. What are ways that we can promote awareness of this resource?

**Skills and Habits of Mind**

What are the academic or life skills students will gain from this unit? What habits of mind do you expect them to demonstrate? Think all disciplines.

- Problem-solving skills
- Team cooperation skills
- Technology skills
- Research skills
- Teaching skills
- Hiking skills
- Map skills
- Understanding of natural resources

**Community Opportunities**

What opportunities or needs exist in your school or community that could be addressed by a student project related to your big idea for learning?

1. I want the school comfortable utilizing our outdoor classroom more.
2. There is a need to create citizens concerned with the natural environment. To value it, they must feel connected to it.
3. ATC has a specific need for public awareness to create future stewards of the trail.

**Youth Voice**

How will you guide your students to express ideas, be involved in project decisions, and evaluate outcomes?

1. Invite a through hiker to speak to the students and plant the seed for a public awareness need.
2. Carousel brainstorming session for ideas.

**Partnerships & Benefit(s)**

Who are potential community partners that could assist you in this project? What are the potential benefits for your class and your partners of working together?

- Potential Partnerships: Our local ATC club, ATC Education and Outreach Coordinator (Jack Noll), Washington and Lee Outing Club, Rockbridge County Schools Foundation, Boxerwood Gardens and Nature Center (Elise Sheffield).

**Benefits:**

- Students will be empowered because they will be involved in a project with a real application, service learning is known to be an effective strategy to instill life-long learning, ATC will benefit from public awareness created, and students will develop a connection to local places related to the Big Question.

**Project**

What project(s) could your class undertake that would actively engage your students in learning about this theme? What could the final product be?

- **Year 1:** Create an informational video podcast on the specific natural resources found on a local section of the trail.
- **Year 2:** Integrate or combine the podcast into a questing exercise (hikers could download the quest from the ATC website).

**Resources**

Describe resources (books, articles, materials, supplies) you will use to support this unit?

1. Virginia SOLs (Standards of Learning)
2. AT maps
3. Transportation
4. Digital video camera
5. Computers
6. Internet software
7. Natural resources curriculum unit (teacher created)
8. Internet access for information about resources described on podcast

**Models**

How will students understand where they’re supposed to get? What exemplars of student work will they see? What opportunities will there be for them to critique each other’s work?

1. Students will be shown good and bad examples of student created and professional video podcasts.
2. Students will be involved in creating a rubric, through teacher guidance, that can be used to critique their podcast before publication. This critique could involve field-testing the podcast.

**Reflection**

How will reflection be built in to your curriculum and activity(ies)?

- During the project, time can be set aside for various reflection activities such as the "graffiti" technique described by Marshall Welch (TTEC Institute, July 13-118, 2008).

**Final Celebration**

How will you celebrate the success of your unit and share its results with the school and community?

During our annual Earth Day celebration, special attention will be given to the ATC as a natural resource. The video podcast can be "aired" for parents and other fair visitors to view.

**Your Evaluation of the Unit**

How will you evaluate the unit and make note of what worked well and what could be improved? How will you analyze and interpret project outcomes?

1. This unit can be evaluated by informal surveys of our local ATC club. Have they received any positive or negative feedback?
2. Formal surveys of parent participation can be conducted. How many parents visited the AT after this project was completed?
3. Evaluation of natural resource exams and student projects. Did they acquire content knowledge?

**Student Assessment**

How will you assess student learning? How will you know if they have met the goals for the established outcomes?

Students will be assessed by using the Head, Heart, Hands model described by Marshall Welch (TTEC Institute, July 13-18, 2008).

Students will be responsible for a graphic or written product that answers these three domains about the ATC podcast project.
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