

GRADE 7 SCIENCE/ELA: ECOSYSTEMS

GRASSLAND CHAMPIONS

OUTCOME

- IE7.4 - Analyze how ecosystems change in response to natural and human influences, and propose actions to reduce the impact of human behaviour on a specific ecosystem.
- CC7.1 - Create various visual, oral, written, and multimedia (including digital) texts that explore identity (e.g., Exploring Thoughts, Feelings, and Ideas), social responsibility (e.g., Taking Action), and efficacy (e.g., Building a Better World).

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- Grasslands are one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world.
- Saskatchewan has lost over 80% of its natural grasslands.
- Most of the Species at Risk in Sask (90%) are grasslands organisms.
- The North East Swale in Saskatoon is an ancient river channel that has grassland & high biodiversity.

ACTIVITY: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

1. Visit the North East Swale & gather media to use for your campaign (pics, videos, etc).
2. Research the importance of grasslands ecosystems and Saskatoon's North East Swale.
3. Brainstorm ways to educate others as to why the North East Swale is worth conserving.
4. Educational opportunities include: 1) Poster campaign 2) Leaflet distribution 3) Assembly for Earth Day 5) Short educational video to share with school. 6) Social media campaign.

TOP TIPS

1. Simple message with bold images are the most eye catching.
2. To put up posters in the city- stamp with the date, attach with packing tape & use designated stands. See bylaws.
3. Make sure audio is clear on videos. Keep them short.
4. To save on ink for poster/leaflet production- eliminate coloured backgrounds, instead print on bright paper.
5. Make school assembly dynamic- combo of images, videos, skits, audience participation, etc.

MATERIALS

Depends on campaign chosen.

HEALTH/SAFETY

- For leaflets & posters, consider breaking into small groups supervised by adult volunteers.
- Assign designated routes with maps for reference.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

1. What can we do to protect our endangered ecosystems?
2. How do we get society to care about all living things?

HOME CONNECTION

- Talk to your families about the importance of the Swale. Consider taking them to visit the space!

EXTENSIONS

1. **MATH (P7.1)**- Have the students represent key facts with charts/tables (ex. Habitat loss over time).
2. **ART (CP7.6)**- Have students film short videos featuring the North East Swale.
3. **SOCIAL STUDIES (DR7.1)**- Have students create maps that represent key issues pertaining to Grasslands..

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TAKING IT FURTHER

1. **EXPERTS-** Book a Meewasin guide or other naturalist to help identify sounds, smells and critters you may find crawling in the grass.
2. **FIELD TRIPS-** Compare your schoolyard to a more natural space with a visit to the Grasslands, North East Swale or other wild habitat!

RESOURCES

1. Website- Swale Watchers.
2. Document- Grasslands Info and graphics.
3. Video highlighting the Swale.
4. Article - StarPhoenix- Swale

DID YOU KNOW?

Meewasin has held several biodiversity studies at the North East Swale and they found 200+ plant species, 100+ bird species and numerous mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects, including several rare, endangered or culturally significant species!