

Activity 13: Whooping Crane Campaign



Summary

Students design a campaign to educate people about Whooping Cranes.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how personal actions can impact Whooping Crane restoration
- Develop a plan for improving or maintaining some part of the local environment and identify their roles in accomplishing this plan
- Formulate a plan for educating people about Whooping Cranes

Standards

Environmental Education D.8.5, D.8.6, and E.8.1

Materials Needed:

- Poster-size sheets of paper
- Flyer-size sheets of paper
- Illustration materials such as markers or colored pencils

Background:

One of the most important parts of protecting and restoring a threatened or endangered species is education. For recovery efforts to be successful, people first have to be aware that a species is at risk of going extinct. Then people need to understand what factors are putting the species at risk. Lastly, people need to understand how they can help prevent a species from disappearing forever. By learning about threatened and endangered species, people can get excited about the prospects of helping them recover, take action to help the recovery process, and help spread the word.

The many efforts at work in bringing back the Whooping Crane are inspirational, and the camaraderie and hard work can serve as an educational example in many ways. Whooping Cranes can serve as a **flagship species** to educate people about the importance of conserving wetlands and the species that use them. A flagship species is a species that people generally react positively to and want to protect. Flagship species are often associated with the protection of a habitat, and all of the other species that live within that habitat benefit as well. Using the Whooping Crane to help conserve wetlands would make it a flagship species.

It is also important to educate the public about what to do if they see a Whooping Crane. One way to prevent Whooping Cranes from becoming accustomed to people is to keep your distance. Humans should avoid getting within 100 yards of a Whooping Crane, but even that may be too close. If a Whooping Crane moves as a result of human presence, no matter the distance, it is too close. It is best to stay out of sight of the cranes, such as by staying in a car. Using binoculars or a spotting scope is an excellent way to get a closer look

at Whooping Cranes from a distance.

Procedure:

- 1) Have students brainstorm ideas of how they can help raise awareness about threatened and endangered species in their area. What can they do to specifically help Whooping Cranes? Is there wetland habitat in their community that they can help to conserve or restore? What can they do to help teach people in their community about wetlands and Whooping Cranes?
- 2) Divide students into small groups and tell students they are now members of a campaign team to educate people in their community about Whooping Cranes. Each group should come up with a slogan for their campaign and a detailed plan of what they will do to raise Whooping Crane awareness in their community.



- 3) Each group should design a poster with their slogan on it and include graphics. Each group should also create a small flyer for distribution to the public. The flyer can include any information and images that students think are important to share with their community. Remember, a picture says a thousand words!

Extensions:

- 1) Organize a day for students to go out and educate people in their school or community about Whooping Cranes. Students should take copies of their flyers and posters for distribution. Students can create educational poems, skits, or short stories to share with their audience.
- 2) Have students design informative materials to educate their peers about a threatened or endangered species. Assign each student a different species to research. Students should create a class presentation and one-page informational handout for the other students in the class about their species.