

# Teaching with Primary Sources Lesson Plan

**Title:** Effects of Human Interaction on the Environment: a look at the history of the conservation movement in order to understand the development of current environmental policy

**Grade Level:** 12th grade

**Time Frame:** 3-5 class periods

**Subject:** Environmental Science/Ecology

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**School District:** Right Way Academy, Waynesburg, PA

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## Pennsylvania Academic Standards

4.6.12 A. Analyze relationships among components of an ecosystem

Understand how biological diversity impacts the stability of an ecosystem

C. Analyze how human action and natural changes affect the balance within an ecosystem

4.7.12. C. Identify laws and agreements or treaties at a national level regarding threatened or endangered

## Objectives:

Students will understand the chronology of the development of current environmental policy

Students will apply skills and analyze the series of events that led to the conservation movement in the United States and understand who the significant figures were.

## Learning Activities

**Focus Activity:** Question students as you view this photo. (Click on the image to enlarge it.) What do you see? Which components are biotic? Which are abiotic in the photo? Can you guess the time period that this photo was taken? How did you guess? (woman's clothing) Is there anything unusual about this photo? (Woman of this time period in the woods?) Introduce the fact that



the roots of the environmental movement in the United States started in the 1850's. This movement was highly influenced by authors like Henry David Thoreau, who wrote about caring for nature and human interaction in nature. Before continuing, have students define the definitions of preservation and conservation. Make sure they understand the difference between these two terms. Read the children's book (but Oh so entertaining to adults) "She's Wearing a Dead Bird on her Head" by Kathryn Lasky. This book is a representation of the beginning of the Audubon Society in America- a private environmental group that had influence on the passage of the first Migratory Bird Act. Question for understanding; Audubon Society- conservationist or preservationist? Time frame that book took place? Do you think that these women, alone made Congress pass the Migratory Bird Act? (Leads to next activity)

**Inquiry Activity:** Have the students explore this Library of Congress detailed [time line of the history of the conservation movement](#).


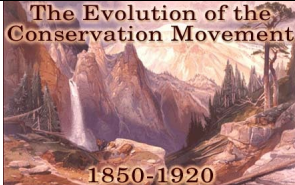
Students will read through this timeline (1847-1920) and find items that relate to previous lessons along with some new items that show the history of some current environmental laws in the United States- like the migratory Bird Act. Direct students to take notes on environmental laws. Have them note; name of law, date the law was implemented. Have students also note when governmental organizations were established.

**Application Activity:** Discuss what students read. Ask for comments? Did the students learn anything new? Were they surprised by any material? What made Thoreau start to write about man's effect on nature? Why do you think Thoreau was so influential? (He was a writer not a scientist.) Do you think that the women in "She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head" alone made Congress pass the Migratory Bird Act? Why or why not. Why do you think the momentum of the environmental movement stopped in the 1920's? (Great Depression)

**Assessment:** 1. Question for understanding throughout activity.

2. [RAFT writing assessment](#)

## Image Table

Thumbnail Image	Title	Library of Congress URL
	Miss Margaret Motti: taken in woods near mouth [of] Socateau..	<a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/consrvbib:@filed(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a30700))">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/consrvbib:@filed(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a30700))</a>
	The Evolution of the Conservation Movement 1850- 1920	<a href="http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html">http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html</a>