What is a Wetland?

Specific Learning Outcomes
K-2-01: Use appropriate vocabulary related to their investigations of colours.
K-2-03: Compare and contrast colours using appropriate terms.
K-2-07: Explore to identify and describe colours found in their environment.

General Learning Outcomes
K-0-1a: Ask questions that demonstrate a curiosity about living things, objects, and events in the immediate environment.
K-0-2b: Compare gathered ideas and information to personal knowledge.
K-0-4e: Participate in cooperative group learning experiences.
K-0-4f: Verbalize questions during classroom learning experiences.
K-0-9c: Express enjoyment of science-related classroom activities.

Vocabulary
wetland, sun, light, soil, plant, water, colour

Summary

Students are introduced to wetlands by engaging their imaginations and exploring the main ingredients that make up a wetland.

Materials

- *Paper for each student*
- *Colouring utensils*
- *Bowl of water (blue bowl if possible)*
- *Potted plant*
- *Draw a sun on the board OR use a desk lamp (switched on)*
- *Accompanying pictures (print image or project onto a screen)*
- *2 metre sticks (optional)*

Procedure

Warm Up

Give each student a piece of paper and distribute colouring utensils. Ask students what do they think of when they hear the word 'wetland.' You can break down the word and have the students brainstorm what a wetland could look like and include (could there be water, or land in a wetland?). Have them draw what they think a wetland looks like, then have students hold up their pictures to show the group.

The Activity

Ask students to sit together in a circle. Show students the bowl of water, the potted plant and the sun drawn on the board OR the lamp (which is turned on); have students identify each (water, plant, sun/light), describing the colours that make up each object.

Explain that the water, the soil, the plant, and the light are all special ingredients that make up a special place called a wetland.

A wetland is an area of land that holds shallow water, with a maximum depth of two metres. The water makes the soil very moist, so plants who need moist soils will grow in and around the water; this is why a wetland can not be deeper then two metres, because otherwise these kinds of plants drown and do not receive enough sunlight. The water moves slowly across because there are so many plants that slow the water down, absorbing some of the water like a sponge and filtering it as it moves through.

Extension: Show a picture of a wetland, and ask students to describe what they see, and what colors are in the picture. Ask the students if the colors that are in the picture are similar to the colors they see when looking at the bowl of water, potted plant, and light/sun.

Wrap Up

Conclude by explaining that as a class you will be exploring a wetland on your field trip to Oak Hammock Marsh. Oak Hammock Marsh is a place much like the places seen in the story. Through various activities, students will be exposed to many different animals that call wetlands home.

Extension: Prior to your conclusion, have students go back to their drawings of what they thought a wetland was, and ask if there is water, plants, soil, and a sun in their picture. Encourage students to add these ingredients to their picture if they were not yet included.

Animal Highlight — the Mallard

On the cover of this section, and in the insets, you will see pictures of Mallards. The Mallard is a very popular type of duck, which is a kind of bird. Mallards live in many parts of the world, including wetlands around southern Canada (including Manitoba).

The male Mallard has a bright green head, with a white ring around its neck, and a brown chest. The female Mallard has a mix of brown and white feathers. Both have a yellow bill and orange webbed feet. Mallards have two wings, which have a bright blue stripe on the middle of the wings, known as the speculum.

Mallards are great swimmers, moving forward by paddling their webbed feet. Occasionally, Mallards will walk on land, but they prefer swimming or flying. Mallards eat by skimming their beaks along the surface of the water while swimming, which is known as dabbling. This helps them gather up small floating plants and other tiny water creatures for food.

To learn more about the mallard and other birds, visit ***Cornell Lab's All About Birds*** *website at* ***www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Mallard/id.***

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