

Utah's Ecosystems

Who Belongs at ONC?

Post-visit activity, grades 3-6

Objectives

Students will learn about ONC's ecosystem and how ecosystems interact even in smaller locations.

Materials

- Ogden Nature Center map available at (One map per student, or students can work in small groups to share one map as a reference).

<http://www.ogdennaturecenter.org/facilities/onc-map>

Background

The Ogden Nature Center has some, but not all, of the ecosystems that occur in Utah. As shown on the map, there are ponds/wetlands, some forest-like areas, and some semi-arid desert areas (deserts that receive 10-20 inches of precipitation annually). But it is in the valley, rather than the mountains, and it is not an arid desert (fewer than 10 inches of precipitation annually).

The Nature Center encompasses 152 acres -- large enough to support mammals such as deer, but not large enough for a mountain lion or black bear.

Procedure

1. Have students study the map and recall their trip to the Nature Center. Make sure they look at the map's legend to find the symbols for such features as ponds, wetlands, trees, pastures, trails, etc.
2. Ask them what they remember about the trip and about the characteristics of the natural areas they saw. Make a list on the board. As a group, try to determine what kinds of ecosystems the Nature Center has.
3. Tell students how much space the nature center has (152 acres). Then, have them work in small groups to do some research to figure out what Utah animals could find enough food, water, shelter and space at the Nature Center, and which ones wouldn't.

The Utah Conservation Data Center has photos and information on Utah plant and animal species:

<http://dwrcdc.nr.utah.gov/ucdc/>

4. Have each group report to the class on what they determined. As an optional addition, students could draw or cut out and paste pictures of the animals that could live at the Nature Center onto their maps.