



John Muir: Lessons in Sustainability

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[Commons.wikipedia.com](https://commons.wikimedia.org/)

A Little About John Muir (1838-1914)



www.sierraclub.org

“The battle for conservation will go on endlessly. It is the universal warfare between right and wrong” – John Muir

- ▣ Inventor
- ▣ Scientist
 - Botanist
 - Glaciologist
- ▣ Agriculturist
- ▣ Naturalist and conservationist
 - Explorer
 - Writer
 - Leader and political activist
 - Father of the National Park Service
- ▣ Family man

Creating the Course

- ▣ Interests in sustainability and Muir
- ▣ 2009 John Muir Trail hike
 - Interviews of NPS rangers
 - Photography and journaling
 - Presentation for NMSU National Parks class
- ▣ Reading
- ▣ Desire to develop a Viewing a Wider World course



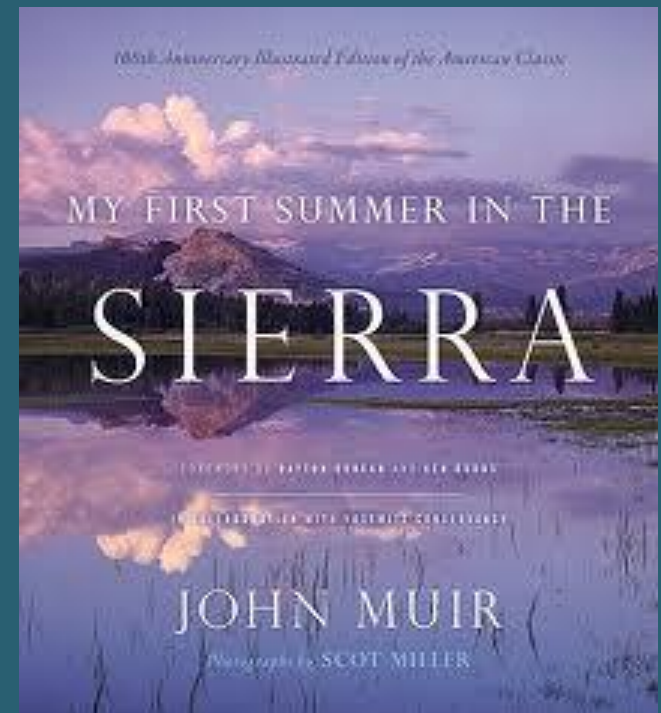
www.hikejmt.com



Fin Dome, Kings Canyon NP

Units of Study

- ▣ Course Introduction
- ▣ Defining Sustainability
- ▣ Youthful Pursuits
- ▣ Inventor and Emerging Scientist
- ▣ God and Nature: The Evolution of Muir's Faith
- ▣ Yosemite and the Range of Light
- ▣ Muir's Nature Writings and the Nature Writers He Admired



Units of Study (cont.)

- ▣ Agricultural Experiences and Sustainable Agriculture
- ▣ Field Trip to the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument
- ▣ The Role of the Sierra Club and Conservation Organizations
- ▣ Sustainability Activities in Las Cruces and at NMSU
- ▣ The Hetch Hetchy Political Battle
- ▣ Backpacking the John Muir Trail
- ▣ Toward a Conceptualization of Sustainable Living Personally and Globally



Getting in the mood to sketch on the field trip

Resource People

- ▣ Unitarian Universalist minister emerita
- ▣ Local artist
- ▣ English professor
- ▣ Three sustainable agriculture faculty
- ▣ Former historian for the NPS
- ▣ Conservation movement historian
- ▣ Sierra Club and Audubon Society local representatives
- ▣ Las Cruces City Council member
- ▣ Two campus sustainability representatives
- ▣ Nutritionist
- ▣ Student Outdoor Recreation Programs representative



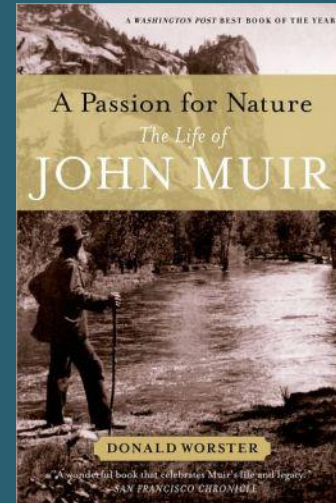
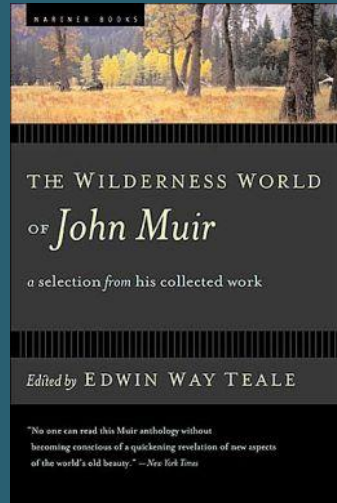
SIERRA
CLUB

Audubon



City of Las Cruces
PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

Required References



- ▣ Muir, J. & Teale, E. W. (Ed.). (1954). *The wilderness world of John Muir*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- ▣ Worster, D. (2008). *A passion for nature: The life of John Muir*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Evaluation

- ▣ Three quizzes (30%)
- ▣ Pencil sketch and descriptive passage of a nature scene (10%)
- ▣ Pre and post sustainability philosophy statements (7.5%+15%=22.5%)
- ▣ Research project related to one or more themes from the class
 - Presentation (10%)
 - Paper (22.5%)
- ▣ Professionalism (5%)
- ▣ Detailed rubrics



Opuntia by Blake Stogner

Student Performance (n=32)

- ▣ Class average (88%)
- ▣ 15 As, 13 Bs, 3 Cs, 1 D, and 1 F (quit coming)
 - Quiz average (86%-inflated a bit by extra credit)
 - Pencil sketch and descriptive nature passage (92%)
 - Pre and post sustainability statements (81% and 91%, respectively, n=31)
 - Research project (91%)
 - Professionalism (-5.5 to 5 range)



Garnet Lake and Mt. Ritter
Ansel Adams Wilderness, JMT

Student Evaluations of Teaching



- ▣ 4.83/5 on 27 student evaluation of teaching indicators (n=26)
- ▣ Nothing below a 4.5/5
- ▣ Class 1 '5s' for the course
 - Was well organized
 - Assignments contributed to the achievement of course objectives
- ▣ Class 2 '5' for the course
 - Increased my knowledge in the subject area

The Future

- ▣ Learning to play John Muir
- ▣ Continued study of his life, writings, the authors he read, and sustainability references
- ▣ Travel to Muir's haunts
- ▣ With TAs, go larger on enrollments
- ▣ Do they really need the extra credit on quizzes?



Pictures from the John Muir National Historical Site
Alhambra Valley, CA



Thank You!



Up Lyell Canyon, Yosemite NP

“Keep close to Nature's heart...and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.”
- John Muir

Questions?



“The mountains are calling and I must go” – John Muir