

W.A.T.E.R WORKSHEETS

PARK CONNECTIONS: MATCH THE USER WITH THE

A lesson for discovering the ^{FEATURE}benefits of green stormwater parks for people and place

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Green stormwater parks can be considered green spaces that serve two key purposes. It captures stormwater from the streets to help reduce localized flooding while also recreating native Sonoran Desert habitats that bring local plants and wildlife right into your neighborhood. These parks often include benches, walking paths, and informative signs, providing a relaxing space for visitors to gather, recreate, and learn about the local environment.

(<https://www.pima.gov/3450/Stormwater-Parks>) Parks and green spaces can significantly enhance any urban environment or neighborhood and increase community members' health, wellness, and connection to the place. However, with such a diverse group of people living near and using the park, do they truly benefit everyone? Consider the different types of park users—bird watchers, nearby residents, joggers, pet owners, and young people—and how they interact with various park features like trees, paths, and open space. Consider other important elements such as native plants, shade, benches, or accessible entry points and pathways. How do park features benefit those who use the park? Consider certain wildlife (birds, insects, mammals) too. What features invite or foster inclusion, equity, and visitation, and for which user group? How might others feel excluded, such as people with various abilities, disabilities, ages, or maybe even yourself? The "Park Connections: Match the User with the Feature" activity aims to match key park features with different park users to highlight equity and resilience in green stormwater parks.

SUGGESTED CURRICULUM APPLICATIONS

- History
- Social Studies
- Government and Civics
- Art
- Health & Wellness

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

- Understand a green stormwater park's primary purposes and essential needs.
- Identify the key elements of a green stormwater park that attract and cater to the needs of diverse user groups.
- Examine green stormwater parks' design and maintenance strategies to ensure they are welcoming, equitable, and inclusive for diverse user groups.
- Identify changes to green stormwater parks that could boost usage and enhance understanding of their purpose, community care, and stewardship needs.

ACTIVITY VITALS

- **Activity Time:** 45 minutes
- **Subject Areas:** History, Social Studies, Government and Civics, Art, Health & Wellness
- **Grade Levels:** 9th-12th grade
- **Skills:** Critical thinking, Identification, Investigation, Empathy, Equitable Practices, Social Understanding, Design
- **Key Vocabulary & Concepts:** accessible entry points and pathways, diversity, empathy, equity (equitable practices), green space, green stormwater, inclusion, park, park features, physical activity, stewardship, universal design
- **Jobs and Careers:** multi-use park design, community engagement, human services, land management.

LET'S GET STARTED

THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE DONE USING A VARIETY OF MAPPING TYPES - VISUAL, WRITTEN, COLLAGE, MUSIC, OR OTHERS MODES OF EXPRESSION

ACTIVITY MATERIALS

- Clipboards & pencils
- Blank paper or printed sensory mapping templates
- Colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- Optional: Field guides for identifying natural elements
- Optional: Small containers for collecting natural items (leaves, soil, etc.)

ACTIVITY PROCEDURE

Preparation (Before the Activity)

1. Introduce the "Park Connections: Match the User with the Feature" activity.
2. Provide students with the worksheet: Park Connections, a clipboard, and a pen. Explain how to complete the worksheet (See Steps 1-3).
3. Walk along a park path and identify a few key park features to use as examples for your students. Discuss any potential park user groups that may use the park feature. Discuss the benefits gained by the user group. This will prompt students to conduct the activity and complete the worksheet independently, with a partner, or in a small group.

Step 1: Students explore and identify park features

- Explore, discover, and get to know the many park features. Walk around the park.
- Identify 5-10 park features and mark them on the worksheet.

Step 2: Students match park features with park user group

- Consider the potential park user group for each of the 5-10 features identified.
- Write the type of user next to its feature on the worksheet.

Step 3: Students consider or discuss the multiple benefits of each feature

- Include all the potential benefits of each feature on the worksheet.

Step 4: Reflection and Discussion

- Include all the potential benefits of each feature on the worksheet.
- Ask students to present a park feature they identified and marked on their worksheets.
 - Discuss the user group and benefits gained from the park feature.
 - Are there multiple benefits per feature? Or multiple user groups per feature?

Ask reflection questions:

- Did any feature dominate? Is there a feature missing?
- How might a feature that is beneficial to one user group be a detriment to another user group?
- What are some common user groups that may not visit this park? Why?
- Did anything surprise you about what you noticed?

STUDENT WORK + DATA SHEETS

Sensory Mapping Template *Observation & Reflection Questions*

EXTENSIONS:

Student-led development of a stormwater park using features that highlight:

- Nature, Aesthetics, People, Place Infrastructure

Using Universal Design principles*, students can modify the Park Connections activity to meet the needs of user groups with varying abilities. For example, consider park features that would invite these user groups to visit:

- People who are blind, sight-impaired, or low-vision.
- People who are deaf
- People who are elderly

REFLECTIONS



Do the park's features benefit wildlife or the environment? How?

Do existing park features benefit future generations of people living in this neighborhood? How?

Which park features demonstrate inclusivity or equity?

How might some groups feel excluded, such as people with various abilities, disabilities, ages, cultures, or maybe even yourself?