Why is This Place a National Park?

**Topic:** Florida’s National Parks

**Grade Level:** middle through high school

**Time to teach lesson:** 2-3 days

**Social studies concept or theme:** Enable students to acquire and organize information about the National Park system.

**Overview:** Students will use the Geographic model to research and organize information about National Parks.

**Objectives/ Goals:** Students will:
1. label the National Parks on a map of Florida.
2. distinguish the type of site each national park services.
3. describe human features of a national park.
4. describe natural features of a national park.

**Materials:**
Map of Florida
list of National Park Service sites in Florida
Geographic Model worksheet
resource books from school or public library
websites:
   http://usparks.about.com/blpkfl.htm
   http://www.np.gov

**Procedures:**

**Initiating activity:** Ask the class if they have ever visited a national park. Pose the following question: Why should we set aside some of our public land under the jurisdiction of national park service?

**Strategies:**
1. Have students label the eleven sites in Florida under the jurisdiction of the national park service.
2. Have students brainstorm why places are set aside for protection. Have students include human and natural features. Ex: What type of plants and animals are located there? Did a famous event take place there? Did a famous person live there?
3. Divide students into eleven groups to research the eleven National Park sites in Florida. Students should use the geographic model to research location and physical characteristics, cultural characteristics and the history of the park’s designations.
4. Each group will design a campaign poster describing the significance their park site and why it should be preserved.
5. Group posters should be placed around the room allowing students to inspect the posters
in a “walking tour.” Students should take notes individually about each site.
6. Teacher will lead students in a whole group discussion on the merits of each site and allow groups to defend the value of their site and why it should be preserved.

**Culminating Activities:** Students will write an essay ranking Florida’s national parks according to their significance and defend their rankings.

**Evaluation:** Student posters, note taking, student generated rubric for walking tour and essay.

**Sunshine State Standards:**
SS.B.2: The student understands the interaction of people and the physical environment.
LA.A.2.3.5: The student locates, organizes, and interprets written information for a variety of purposes, including classroom research, collaborative decision making, and performing a school or real-world task
SS.B.2.3.2: The student knows the human and physical characteristics of different places in the world and how these characteristics change over time.
SS.B.2.3.3: The student understands how cultures differ in their use of similar environments and resources.

**FCAT benchmarks:**
**Reading Skills:** Students will:
- read and organize information for multiple purposes.
- use reference materials.
- use persuasion techniques.

**National Park Service sites in Florida:**
Big Cypress National Preserve
Biscayne National Park
Canaveral National Seashore
Castillo de San Marcos National Monument
De Soto National Memorial
Dry Tortugas National Park
Everglades National Park
Fort Caroline National Memorial
Fort Matanzas National Monument
Gulf Islands National Seashore
Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve

**Extensions:** Visit a national or state park in your area and discover the unique features of your area. Invite a park ranger or city planner to visit your classroom, students can conduct interviews on public land use in their county. Adopt a Park- design a project to assist a park in your area through litter pick up, etc.
Geographic Model Worksheet

Application on the Geographic Model to ________________________________

I. Location & Physical Characteristics
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 

II. Population & Cultural Characteristics
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 

III. Historical Background
    1. 

IV. Major Economic Activities and Land Use
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 
   6. 

V. Problems and Prospects