



MINNESOTA ZOO™
Changing how you see the world

Beavers Lodges

Grades 1-3

Onsite Activity

MN Graduation Standards supported:

Kindergarten Strand IV. G.

The students will understand that people have five senses that can be used to learn about the environment.

Grade 2 Strand IV. C.

The student will understand that organisms live in different environments.

Introduction:

Beavers live in each county of Minnesota. This is a credit to conservationists and the beaver for making a comeback as the beaver was near extinction in the 1930's. Beavers were one of the draws for Europeans into the Minnesota area. Early explorers followed the rivers and lakes into the interior of the United States and found a wealth of furs for hunting and trading. Europeans brought the beaver pelts back to Europe to be made into the felt stovepipe hats, which were the fashion for men.

During the summer, beavers forage far distances for their food. Beavers are herbivores, eating aquatic plants like pond weeds, water-lilies, cattails, and the soft tissue of new wood and bark of hardwood trees, including birch, aspen, willow, cottonwood, and alder.

In the fall, the beaver begin to build their lodge, a dome shaped home, by piling up parts of trees and filling in mud as insulation. The lodge is a two story home. The bottom is used for entry as the beaver come from underwater into the lodge and the top floor is used for living.

The beavers also store a cache of food close to their lodge so they can easily get food during winter.

From April to June, two to four kits are born. This family will stay together until the kits begin their second winter when they go off on their own. After they have learned how to build and maintain dams and lodges, they go looking for a mate and build a home for themselves.

Objectives:

Students will explore the animals' homes found at the zoo looking for their similarities and differences.

Links:

www.mnzoo.org/animals/minnesota-trail/beaver

www.dnr.state.mn.us/

www.geocities.com/bobarnebeck/lodges.html

www.enature.caom
(search under beaver)

Procedure:

1. Visit the beaver exhibit
2. Examine the beaver lodge. Try to locate the underwater entrance to the lodge.
3. Students should also note the beaver itself and how he is designed for his home and food.
4. Examine other animals' homes in the zoo by playing the "My Home" BINGO worksheet. The BINGO worksheet has different pictures of animal homes. Student can either draw the animal or write its name in the box.
5. After the field trip, students can compare their answers and see if they have a blackout BINGO. An alternative BINGO is furnished for the teacher to make their own BINGO or students could draw the animal's home in the order they desire.