



## Living River of Words

### Riparian and Wetlands Habitat Exploration

Grades: 3- 12

**Description:** Field study portion of a Living River of Words Arts and Science program. Students rotate through three sessions during the two – three hour field study trip.

#### Riparian and Wetlands Habitat Exploration

This is an opportunity to visit Tucson area riparian habitats and learn how important these places are for people and wildlife. Using binoculars and hand-lenses students make observations and work in small groups to understand the interrelationships between plants and animals and the environment.

#### Objectives:

- Students experience the lush riparian habitat along the Santa Cruz River or other wetland habitat.
- Review and discuss the source of the water in this habitat (effluent, groundwater, natural source).
- Students learn about and discuss the concept of habitat.
- Students use binoculars and hand-lenses to make observations of animals and plants.
- Students look for and record sightings of wildlife and signs of wildlife.
- Students discuss the connections that plants and animals have with a focus on their first hand observations of wildlife utilizing plants as part of habitat (food, shelter).

#### Description of Activity:

1. Instructor introduces the concept of habitat and provides an overview of the field day.
2. Binoculars are passed out to each student. The instructor provides a brief tutorial and practice session on how to use the binoculars.
3. The entire group (or in smaller groups if staffing permits) takes a walk stopping at various points to take advantage of sightings of wildlife and/or signs of wildlife. As appropriate hand lenses are used to take a close up look.

4. Along the way the instructor gathers the group to discuss how their sightings illustrate plant and animal interactions or elements of habitat.
5. After the walk the group gathers to review and discuss their discoveries and put into context of the location and topic of wetland habitat. Each student records their observations on the worksheet.

**Duration:** Field trip session rotation 30 - 60 minutes

**Vocabulary:**

Habitat, riparian, aquatic, wetland, effluent

**Equipment and Materials:**

Riparian and Wetland Habitat Discovery Worksheet

Clipboards and Pencils

Binoculars

Hand Lenses

**Linked to Arizona Academic Standards:**

**Science:** SC0304-S1C1-01,02; SC03-HS-S1C2-01; SC05-S1C302,03;SC0508-S1C3-05; SCHS, S1C2-01; SC0304-S1C4-03; SCHS-S1C4-03,04; SC0304-S1C3-01,02,04; SC0607-S4C3-01,02;SCHS-S4C3-01,02