Vaya to the Playa
Kindergarten
Figure E5.3 - Projected annual water demand and existing water supply in Texas (millions of acre-feet)

Figure E5.5 - Annual volume of recommended water management strategies (millions of acre-feet)

• The relationship of Americans and nature is changing.
• Trend is to see wild as something that is best viewed at zoo or on a plasma TV.
• “These trends pose a nationwide problem, since overwhelming evidence shows the physical, psychological, and social well being of humans depends on contact with nature.”

From: The Nature of Americans National Report p. 3

• Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods
• Texas Children in Nature
• Nature of Americans
To understand deeply we have to see the connections!

“Playas play an important role in aquifer recharge, and the City’s partnership with Playa Lakes Joint Venture will greatly assist with our water conservation efforts as we continue to implement the City’s Master Water Assurance Plan,” stated Mayor Lansford. “I am excited the City of Clovis is partnering with PLJV to encourage playa restoration and education regarding the importance of playas in our area.”
What does this have to do with you?

You lay the foundation!
What if we asked students to …..

• make observations about organisms in local ecosystems,

• use their observations to make connections between the abiotic and biotic factors that make up those ecosystems,

• examine how humans’ and organisms’ use of resources have changed over time,

• make predictions for the future based on what they have discovered and learned.

I’ve seen so many things here. Lizards, birds, and more. I’ve studied things, seen things, and even become a naturalist. My dream was to become a rocket scientist. My mom may have changed that. Nature is so beautiful. The dogs have their homes.

The finches, cocky, fly around and shown me this and more. What I go on to fifth, I’ll always remember this place. Who knows, I might become a naturalist.

If plants didn’t photosynthesize we wouldn’t get the oxygen or food we depend upon. Plants are something we cannot live without. They are a part of the Web Of Life which cannot be broken or we will die.

To study nature, to see animals interact, to see plants photosynthesize soothes the soul. When your soul is soothed you will see the true values of nature.

To see nature give knowledge and inspiration from a different point of view is a reward of its own kind.
What if...you and your students could learn about a place where they could start to find out that...

• Science excites!
• Connections matter!
• There is joy in nature!
The I-20 Wildlife Preserve and Jenna Welch Nature Study Center

• Mission:
  • Our mission is “to ensure conservation of and provide access to Midland’s wildlife preserve for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.”

• Purpose:
  • Our purpose is to make accessible to the public 87 acres for conservation of the wetland, eco-tourism and recreation, and educational opportunities for the citizens and visitors of Midland.
  • The I-20 Wildlife Preserve handles the day-to-day operations of the preserve.
  • Education is handled through the Jenna Welch Nature Study Center
An Opportunity to Protect

• Loooong history
• Greatly altered by human activity
• Ephemeral cycle
An Opportunity to Educate......

• Starting Out Wild
• Vaya to the Playa
• Investigating Ecosystems
• Resource Management Exercise
• Independent Research and Citizen Science

• NOT a field trip!
• Aligned to all state and national standards
• Supported curriculum
• Best practices in STEM, STEAM, STREAM!
• If you can dream it, when can do it!
What I-20 is no longer...

I-20 Wildlife Preserve
Jenna Welch Nature Study Center

Playas: True or False

• Playas are only found in Texas.  T or F
• Playas recharge the Ogallala Aquifer.  T or F
• Playas contain water all year.  T or F
• Playas contribute economically to the High Plains region.  T or F
• Playas are very low centers of biodiversity.  T or F
• Our playa is the 12th largest playa in Midland Co.  T or F
Vaya to the Playa
K-2

• Push in program
• Built around an integrating theme which develops science observational skills
• Incorporates other elements of depth and complexity
• Student journal, Big Book and playa jar are left in class
• K: Patterns
• First: Cycles
• Second: Relationships
• Extension activities for all levels
Vaya to the Playa
Kindergarten
What is a Wetland?
Our Playa is an urban playa!
Vaya to the Playa
First Grade
The I-20 Wildlife Preserve
What’s Wrong?
I-20 WILDLIFE PRESERVE
& JENNA WELCH NATURE STUDY CENTER

Vaya to the Playa
Second Grade
Relationships
Our Playa Has Long Relationship with Humans
Sources


• MISD. The Midland Kit

• The Nature of Americans  https://natureofamericans.org/

• Texas Aquatic Science Curriculum. 2018.  https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/resources/aquatic-science

