

GALLERY RESOURCE GUIDE

Natural Regions

Grades: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, World Geography

Academic Standards:

Science: 3.2.6, 4.2.2, 4.2.6, 4.3.2, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 7.2.7, 8.2.6, 8.3.9

Social Studies: 3.3.5, 3.3.9, 3.3.13, 4.3.4, 4.3.5, 4.3.8, 4.3.12, 6.3.3, 6.3.13, WG.3.3, WG.4.4

Overview:

Plant and animal species adapt over generations to fit their environments. Because Indiana's landscape has changed over centuries, species adapted, moved from the region, or became extinct. Explore three of the twelve distinct natural environments from around the state. Discover original species in the area by feeling their fur, listening to their distress calls and examining their teeth. Read about the impact humans have had on habitats belonging to animals like muskrats, mountain lions, black bears and coyotes. Walk through replicas of distinct natural regions and observe changes. Discover how an ecosystem is balanced in Indiana's natural landscape.

Gallery Highlights:

- > **Kankakee Marsh:** As one of America's largest freshwater marshes, this land teems with all kinds of life. See a marsh and then walk on a recreated example. Listen to the croaking sounds of different frog species that live in the marsh. Species to identify: Blanding's turtle, muskrat, elk, American bittern, American elm, big white waterlily, pickerel weed, boneset.
- > **Tipton Till Plain (Historic):** As a sub-region of Indiana's largest natural region, this flat terrain had such extensive forests that the dense shade virtually blocked all sun from the forest floor. Listen to animal calls, observe predator/prey relationships and explore an animal encyclopedia. Species to identify: paw-paw, white tailed deer, mountain lion, passenger pigeon, American beech, sycamore, white ash, poison ivy.
- > **Shawnee Hills Escarpment:** This extremely rocky region is defined by its Mississippian-age limestone, which escaped the glaciers that flattened northern Indiana. Learn about Short's Goldenrod, a critically endangered species of wildflower found only in Indiana and Kentucky. Species to identify: black bear, cave cricket, Indiana bat, shagbark hickory, great horned owl, columbine, marginal shield fern, French's shooting star.
- > **Tipton Till Plain (Modern):** Unlike the historic rendering of the Tipton Till Plain earlier in the gallery, the modern section reveals how human settlement has changed this landscape. Pollution and development destroyed the region's natural beauty, while invasive species upset the delicate ecosystem. Species to identify: domestic cat, white tail fawn, coyote, emerald ash borer, honeysuckle, sugar maple, white ash.
- > **Soundscape Ecology:** Discover a branch of science that studies how organisms contribute and respond to their acoustic environments in an immersive soundscape created by experts from Purdue University.

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continued

Key People, Events or Terms:

- > Ecosystem
- > Extirpation
- > Extinction
- > Deforestation
- > Habitat
- > Predator
- > Prey
- > Omnivore
- > Carnivore
- > Herbivore
- > Invasive Species
- > Plain
- > Marsh
- > Prairie

Workshops, Lesson Plans, and Special Events:

- > Gene Stratton-Porter gallery encounter
- > On Expedition educational workshop
- > Paleozoic Fossils Lesson Plan
- > Wild Indiana Workshop

Discussion Points:

- > All living things need the basics to survive: food, shelter, and water. Indiana was once covered in forests, wetlands, and prairies. When an environment is changed drastically, some species cannot survive and will either find other places to live or become extinct. Discuss some of the impacts and changes that have occurred in Indiana's environment that have resulted in losing habitat and species.
- > Marshes (wetlands) are saturated, poorly drained landscapes that are flooded from time to time or even permanently. Unfortunately, until 1977, wetlands were seen as a "wasteland" and were drained. What benefits does a wetland provide and who benefits from it?
- > Teeth can reveal an animal's diet and distinguish it as a carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore. Discuss what kinds of teeth a deer, black bear, and mountain lion would have and identify which is a carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore.