

# Fourth Grade

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## John Muir in California

**Unit Concept:** *John Muir, an immigrant to California, encountered environmental problems and found solutions.*

**Objective:** In two 45- to 50-minute sessions, students listen to key events in John Muir's life and plot locations on a California map.

**Preparation:**

1. Find a copy of a book about John Muir (see Resources), preferably *John Muir, At Home in the Wild*, by Katherine S. Talmadge, in the Earth Keepers series.
2. Make a copy of the following pages, entitled John Muir's California, for each student.
3. Make an overhead transparency of the map.

**Procedure:**


4. Create a class list on the board or on chart paper using students' ideas about what John Muir accomplished in California. Add to this list as students learn about Muir.
5. Distribute the maps and read about John Muir from the John Muir's California page. Use passages from literature to augment the lessons.
6. Plot the places on the map with pictures and names, using the overhead transparency as a master and giving verbal cues.

**Extensions:**

7. Read some of Muir's stories about the places identified on the map, using the Resources for Fourth Grade.
8. Use a large commercial map of California to locate and identify places named after John Muir. Ask students to retell stories to younger "buddy" students on John Muir Day.
9. Take conservation action at your school. Create a map of the school yard and plot places to protect. Plant and weed flowerbeds and plant and care for trees. Plant a butterfly garden with native flowers to attract butterflies.

# John Muir's California

## DIRECTIONS:

- A. Read about these California landmarks visited by John Muir.
- B. Locate each place on the map and label it with the number, name and date. Add the symbol from the map legend if there is one. **Example:**  1. Yosemite National Park, 1849
- C. On the back, write journal entries John Muir may have written about how a problem was solved.

### 1. Yosemite National Park

Muir lived in Yosemite, northeast of Fresno, for ten years when he first came to California in 1849. Years later, he visited the high country surrounding Yosemite Valley and saw sheep overgrazing the meadows and timber being cut. He wrote and spoke about his concerns, and Yosemite National Park was established in 1890.

### 2. Mount Ritter (13,157 feet)

In 1872, when much of California was still unexplored, John Muir was the first to climb Mt. Ritter, northeast of Fresno. He was inspired to preserve wilderness areas as his life's work.

### 3. Yuba River

In the 1850s to 1870s, many forests were being cut down. In 1874, during a strong wind storm, John Muir climbed a tall tree near the Yuba River, southeast of Chico, and swung in the storm. He decided to protect forests so others could enjoy nature's wild moods.

### 4. Inyo Earthquake

In 1872, Muir was awakened by an earthquake centered northeast of Bakersfield. Muir watched rocks and trees tumble down the sides of the valley and shouted, "A noble earthquake!" He believed that Yosemite Valley was formed by the scraping motion of glaciers, and that the earthquakes caused rockslides.

### 5. Mount Shasta (14,162 feet)

In 1888, John Muir and a friend were caught in a snowstorm on the volcano, Mt. Shasta, north of Chico. Muir led many other trips to encourage people to experience nature's wildness.

### 6. Yosemite Valley

In 1889, when he returned and saw the valley being harmed by grazing and development, Muir led an effort which added Yosemite Valley to Yosemite National Park.

### 7. Sequoia National Park

The giant sequoia trees, largest trees on earth, were being cut down in the Sierra, southeast of Fresno. Muir helped establish Sequoia National Park in 1890 to protect the Giant Forest and other groves of big trees.

### 8. Muir Woods National Monument

A valley of coast redwoods was going to be logged. In 1905, Congressman William Kent bought the land just north of San Francisco and donated it to the U.S. Government. President Theodore Roosevelt made it a national monument, named after John Muir.

### 9. Hetch Hetchy Valley

The officials of San Francisco needed more water for their growing city and wanted to make the Hetch Hetchy Valley, located in the northern part of Yosemite National Park, into a reservoir. John Muir fought the plan in Congress, but lost. The dam was built in 1914.

### 10. John Muir National Historic Site

John Muir lived with his wife, Louie, and two daughters, Wanda and Helen, on a ranch in Martinez from 1880 to 1914. Up in his "scribble-den," he wrote many articles and books on conservation and natural history. The house was designated a National Historic Site in 1964.






### 11. Kings Canyon National Park

After Muir died, his followers wanted to preserve an area he wrote about. They wanted to name the area east of Fresno "John Muir National Park." The park was established as Kings Canyon National Park in 1940.



John Muir's  
**California**

LEGEND

 Volcano	 John Muir's Home
 Park	 Earthquake
 River	

# Resources for Fourth Grade

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## John Muir's California

1. **Yosemite**—Shirley Sargent, *John Muir In Yosemite*, Flying Spur Press, 1971. A free leaflet about the park is also available from National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, Yosemite, CA 95389.
2. **Mt. Ritter**—For Muir's classic description of his first ascent in 1872, see Edwin Way Teale's *The Wilderness World of John Muir*, pp. 246-250. A booklet with historical illustrations reprinting Muir's 1880 *Scribner's Monthly* description of this climb, is entitled "In the Heart of the California Alps," published by Outbooks, Box 2006, Olympic Valley, CA 95730 [(916) 583-5315] (also available from John Muir National Historic Site).
3. **Yuba River**—See Muir's description of his exciting experience in a wind-storm (Dec.1874) in Edwin Way Teale, *The Wilderness World of John Muir*, Houghton Mifflin, p. 181.
4. **Inyo Earthquake**—See Muir's exciting description of the 1872 Inyo Earthquake, in Edwin Way Teale, *The Wilderness World of John Muir*, Houghton Mifflin, p. 165-169, taken from Muir's Our National Parks. A longer version may be found in Stetsons, *The Wild Muir*, pp. 73-81, excerpted from Muir's *The Yosemite*.
5. **Mt. Shasta**—For Muir's exciting account of his adventure atop Mr. Shasta in an 1875 snowstorm, see Teale's *The Wilderness World of John Muir*, pp. 251-265.
6. **Yosemite Valley**—"The Fight for Reclamation" of Yosemite Valley from the state to the federal government is described in Chapter 9 of *John Muir* by Eden Force. Innumerable writings about Yosemite Valley today are available.
7. **Sequoia National Park**—Compare Sequoia trees (largest) to Coast Redwood trees (tallest). Free descriptive brochure available from national Park Service, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park, Three Rivers, CA 93721. Check your library for many other references.
8. **Muir Woods**—Free descriptive brochure available from National Park Service, Muir Woods National Monument, Mill Valley, CA 94941. Also: *Muir Woods* by Jim Morely (Berkeley: Howell/North Books, 1968).
9. **Hetch Hetchy Valley**—The definitive account of the campaign to protect Hetch Hetchy is in Holway Jones, *John Muir and the Sierra Club*, Sierra Club Books, 1965. For a brief description explaining both the history and current issues, see article by Carl Pope in *Sierra* magazine, Nov.-Dec., 1987. For a full unit plan for this age group on the Hetch Hetchy controversy, past and present, see *A Child's Place in the Environment*, Unit 4, Lesson 13.
10. **John Muir National Historic Site**—Free descriptive brochure from National Park Service, John Muir National Historic Site, 4202 Alhambra Ave., Martinez, CA 94553. Also available for a small charge from the Site is a 15 page booklet with large color photographs of the Site, *John Muir National Historic Site* by Ariel Rubbisow.
11. **Kings Canyon National Park**—A reprint of an 1891 Century magazine article by Muir, published by Outbooks, Box 2006, Olympic Valley, CA 95730 [(916) 583-5315] described "A Rival of the Yosemite: The Canon of the South Fork of Kings River, California."