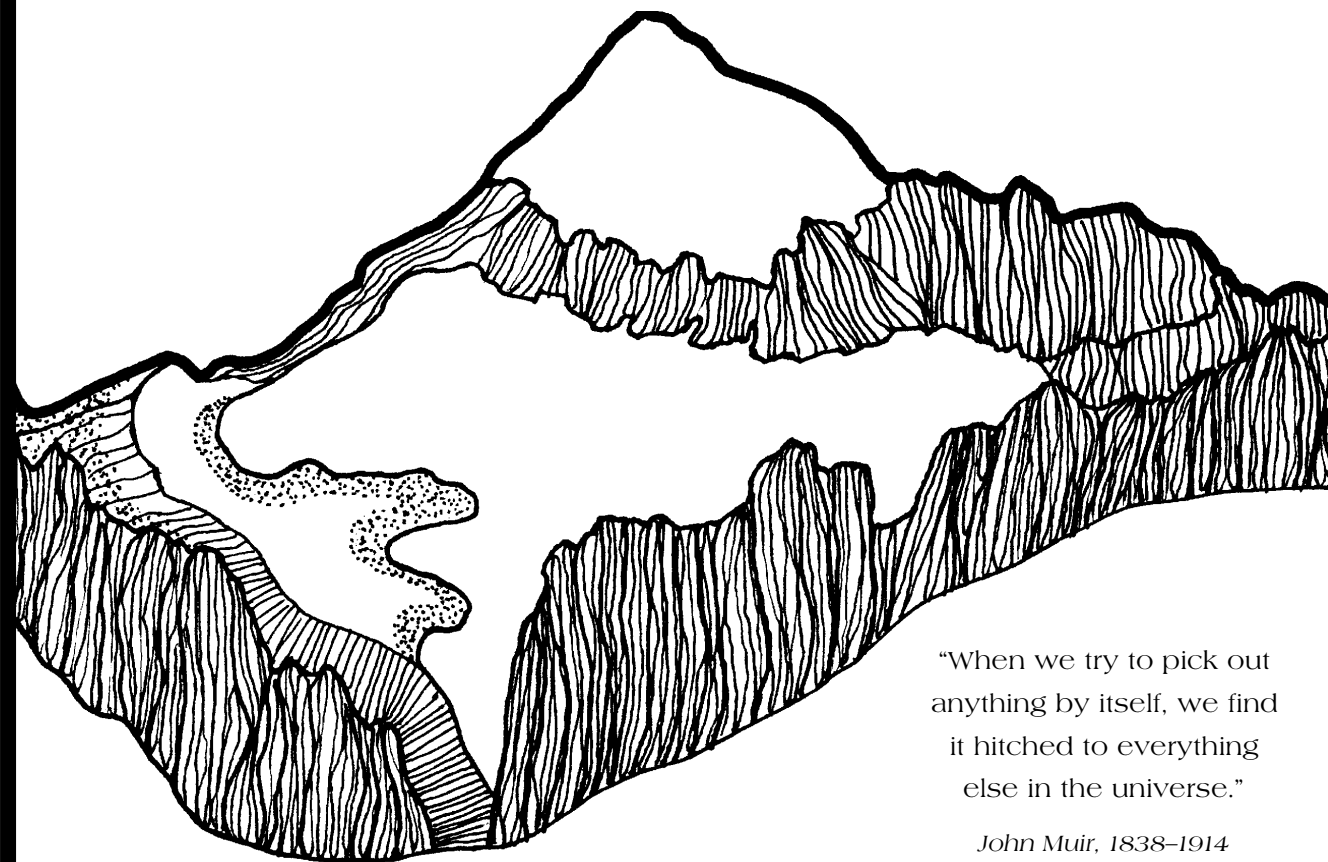


# JOHN MUIR DAY

## Study Guide



“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”

*John Muir, 1838–1914*

John Muir Day  
April 21

*Sierra Club California and California Department of Education*

# A Note to the Teacher

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*“The Governor annually shall proclaim April 21st to be ‘John Muir Day.’”*  
California Government Code Section 6714

*“. . . All public schools and educational institutions are encouraged to observe . . . April 21 of each year as John Muir Day . . . and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises . . . stressing the importance that an ecologically sound natural environment plays in the quality of life for all of us, and emphasizing John Muir’s significant contributions to the fostering of that awareness and the indelible mark he left on the State of California.”*

California Education Code Section 37222 (a)(2) and (b)(2).

## Celebrating a Lifetime of Conservation

The *John Muir Day Study Guide* was prepared to help teachers commemorate John Muir Day each April 21 with their classes, implementing Education Code Section 37222. In addition, the guide is produced with the idea that it may be used throughout the school year, integrated with a variety of curriculum topics, to set a tone of caring about our environment. The goals of John Muir Day and this study guide are:

- **Raise awareness** of John Muir as “conservation’s exemplar,” a person whose values and actions virtually led to the modern environmental movement, and whose vision is still being followed today.
- **Increase understanding** through examples of Muir’s scientific endeavors and observations. His experiences contain an element of adventure as well as careful scientific observations, encouraging students to learn about their biophysical environment and to understand the impact we make upon it.
- **Take action** through illustrating Muir’s life and achievements, and helping students to make decisions and solve current environmental challenges in their community, state, nation, and world.

Please listen to your students for their views and interests to guide you, as well. Use the ideas for younger students for the older grades, if they have not been exposed to John Muir before.

Learning about John Muir’s life can serve as a launching pad to environmental studies through earthquakes, glaciers, trees, fossils, geology, resource management, biodiversity, air quality, urban and regional planning, and even astronomy, as we “hitch” up to everything in the universe!

Above all, we encourage you to personalize this unit and make it *yours*. We have incorporated extension ideas in each lesson plan, so feel free to explore John Muir’s life and legacy further when your students ask, “When are we going to learn more about John Muir?”

# Schoolwide Activities

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Sponsor a **John Muir Day Celebration** at your school, public library, park, or community center. Invite a speaker, plant and care for trees, put on a skit portraying John Muir, or show a conservation video. Invite a local actor or teacher to portray John Muir.

Combine the recognition of John Muir with **Earth Day** activities for the week before or after Earth Day (April 22). Wear a different color each day to represent elements of the earth, and make friendship bracelets with different colored beads: yellow/sun, blue/water, clear/air, brown/earth, green/plants, and black as a reminder not to pollute.

Display a copy of the Governor's John Muir Day Proclamation. Write to Governor's Office, State

Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814. Ask your county board of supervisors and city council or mayor to issue a John Muir Day Proclamation, written by your students. For sample forms, contact Sierra Club California (see Evaluation, page 32).

Sponsor a **poster contest** or display artwork that depicts John Muir on one of his adventures, such as crossing a glacier with the dog, Stickeen, climbing Mount Ritter, or climbing a tree during a wind-storm. Display original nature-related artwork by students. Exhibit students', teachers', and community members' work at school or at the library, shopping center, museum, or park for John Muir Day and Earth Day or History Day events.

## Biographical Timeline of John Muir's Life

- 1838 Born April 21 in Dunbar, Scotland.
- 1849 Emigrates to Wisconsin.
- 1860 Exhibits inventions at Wisconsin State Agriculture Fair.
- 1861 Enters the University of Wisconsin.
- 1863 Leaves University of Wisconsin.
- 1867 Temporarily blinded by eye injury. Once his sight is restored, decides to commit his life to nature study. Sets out on a 1,000-mile walk from Kentucky to the Gulf of Mexico.
- 1868 Travels to California. Visits Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada, "the most divinely beautiful of all the mountain chains I have ever seen."
- 1871 Undertakes intensive study of glaciation in the Sierra. Ralph Waldo Emerson visits him in Yosemite.
- 1874 Begins series of articles entitled "Studies in the Sierra," which launch his successful writing career.
- 1879 First of many visits to Alaska.
- 1880 Marries Louie Wanda Strentzel, April 14; moves to Martinez, California, to help manage family orchard business.
- 1890 Succeeds in campaign to create Yosemite National Park.
- 1892 Helps found Sierra Club to "do something for wilderness and make the mountains glad." President until his death in 1914.
- 1903 Tours Yosemite with President Roosevelt.
- 1904 Completes trip around the world.
- 1911 Travels to South America and Africa.
- 1913 Loses campaign to save Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite.
- 1914 Dies December 24, in Los Angeles.

Source: Sierra Club

## Unifying Concept

John Muir, explorer, scientist, and author, studied ecosystems worldwide and expressed his views, helping establish the modern conservation movement.

### Conceptual Matrix and Table of Contents

Grade Levels	Grade Level Section Title	Grade Level Concept	Description of Lessons	Page Number
K - 1	John Muir: Long Ago and Now	John Muir showed he cared about nature by writing, drawing, and speaking to others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Sort Natural Objects</li> <li>◇ Listen to Stories</li> <li>◇ Make a Booklet about John Muir</li> </ul>	Teacher Guide: 4 Student: 5
2 - 3	John Muir: One Person Who Made a Difference	John Muir had many experiences which gave him the vision to save wilderness areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Make Observations</li> <li>◇ Write in Journals</li> <li>◇ Make a Booklet about John Muir</li> </ul>	Teacher Guide: 6 Student: 7–8
4	John Muir in California	John Muir, an immigrant to California, encountered environmental problems and found solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Read About Events in John Muir's Life</li> <li>◇ Plot Locations Important to John Muir on California Maps</li> </ul>	Teacher Guide: 9 Student: 10–12
5	John Muir in the United States	John Muir, an immigrant to the United States, spoke out about his experiences and his visions for conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Read Examples of John Muir's Work</li> <li>◇ Compare John Muir's Life to Our Own Lives</li> <li>◇ Write About Nature Persuasively</li> </ul>	Teacher Guide: 13 Student: 14–15
6	John Muir: Around the World in 76 Years	John Muir traveled around the world to compare and contrast natural phenomena and to speak out about preserving ecosystems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Play the "John Muir Day Game"</li> <li>◇ Create a Timeline</li> <li>◇ Plot Locations Important to John Muir on a World Map</li> </ul>	Teacher Guide: 16 Student: 17–19
7 - 9	John Muir in Yosemite	John Muir's vision led to the establishment of the National Park System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Identify Different Perspectives on Valuing the Environment</li> <li>◇ Participate in a Simulated Historical Debate</li> </ul>	Teacher Guide: 20 Student: 21–23
9 - 12	John Muir's Vision Lives On	John Muir's vision for the preservation of an ecologically sound natural environment persists today.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Identify Issues and Values Concerning National Parks</li> <li>◇ Research and Debate Yosemite's General Management Plan</li> <li>◇ Develop Personal Responsibility on a Local Issue Through Citizen Action</li> </ul>	Teacher Guide: 24 Student: 25–29
			Resources	30–31
			Acknowledgments	32
			Evaluation	32

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URL:[http://ice.ucdavis.edu/John\\_Muir/](http://ice.ucdavis.edu/John_Muir/).

(Information Center for the Environment, University of California, Davis)

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## Evaluation

What do you think about the John Muir Day Study Guide? Please send your written comments to: Sierra Club, Attn: John Muir Day Study Guide, P.O. Box 3543, Visalia, CA 93278 or e-mail your responses to: [harold.wood@sierraclub.org](mailto:harold.wood@sierraclub.org)

	<b>Appropriate</b>		<b>Easy to Understand and Use</b>		
	yes	no	yes	no	
1. Are the grade level topics:	yes	no	yes	no	
2. Are the student materials:	yes	no	yes	no	
3. Is the teacher information:	yes	no	yes	no	
4. Are the resources:	yes	no	yes	no	
5. Grading 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) how would you rate the John Muir Study Guide?			1	2	3 4 5
6. What worked successfully for you and your students?					
7. What recommendations would you make for a revision?					