

Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center's  
***Wilderness Investigations***  
High School

**Wilderness Profile #8**  
***South Fork Eel River Wilderness***

**Common Core Standard Connections**

Standards addressed will vary depending on how the teacher chooses to approach the lesson and/or activities.

**Teacher background:**

Combine 12,867 acres of wilderness with elevations between 1,100 and 4,083 feet, generally steep terrain, a few gentle slopes, reddish soil in its central section, unique vegetation plus rare and endangered species and you have the South Fork Eel River Wilderness (SFERW).

Located entirely in the state of California and managed by the Bureau of Land Management, this unique wilderness landscape was designated by Congress in 2006. A portion of the wilderness (Cahto Peak unit) is so pristine that it has been designated as a Biosphere Reserve, a National Natural Landmark, and a Hydrologic Benchmark. Though smaller than many, certainly less well-known, and visited by far fewer people, the South Fork Eel River Wilderness certainly represents many of the wilderness values set forth in the Wilderness Act of 1964.

**Instructions for the teacher:**

To help students become familiar with the South Fork Eel River Wilderness choose one or more of the following:

- Use information from *Teacher Background* and the *Student Information Sheet* to prepare and present a mini-lesson about this wilderness.
- If students have already started their *U.S. Wilderness Area Field Guide* (started in Wilderness Profile #1) have them add entries by choosing items from the list below:
  - Photocopy the *Student Information Sheet*, have students go through it and then create an informational essay that describes it.
  - Using the *Student Information Sheet*, have students choose one of the following creative projects:

- Research one of the fish or trees found in the wilderness. Create an original depiction of the item using watercolors, pencil, charcoal, or other visual art medium.
    - Make a *Field Guide to the Trees of SFERW*.
      - Use the wilderness map, included with this *WI Toolkit*, and have students list cities, landmarks, bodies of water, highways, etc. found in close proximity.
      - Have students choose one of the popular human activities and create a persuasive paragraph that attempts to convince the reader to try out the activity in this wilderness.
- Research the Bureau of Land Management (the agency that manages this wilderness). Find out who they are, what they do, their history, etc.
- Create a *U.S. Wilderness Area* classroom display or place on class webpage. Continue to add information as areas are increased.
  - Just a few wilderness areas are focused on as part of *Wilderness Investigations*. Have students choose non-focused areas to research, present and post on the bulletin board.
- For more information about the South Fork Eel River Wilderness go to [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).



**South Fork Eel River Wilderness**

(Photo by Bob Wick [BLM]; Used by permission)

**Wilderness Profile**  
***South Fork Eel River Wilderness***  
**(SFERW)**

**Student Information Sheet**



**South Fork of the Eel River**

(Photo by Bob Wick [BLM]; Used by permission)

**What's the story?**

- Designated as Federally protected wilderness in 2006 by Congress.
- Managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) the area has a total of 12,867 acres.
- Located in northern California near the Pacific Ocean.
- The landscape is varied with elevations between 1,100 and 4,083 feet, generally steep terrain, a few gentle slopes, reddish soil in its central section, unique vegetation plus rare and endangered species.
- Recreational activities include camping, hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing, photography, and picnicking.

- Interesting and sometimes unique plant species include coastal redwood, Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, chaparral, and sergeant cypress.
- Wilderness waters are home to chinook salmon, coho salmon, steelhead trout, and coastal cutthroat trout.
- In the Cahto Peak unit of the wilderness one of the Douglas fir watersheds is so pristine (in a pure or untouched state) that it has been designated a Biosphere Reserve and National Natural Landmark.