

Synopsis: *Animal Vegetable, or Mineral: Debating the Use of Natural Resources in Michigan's Upper Peninsula*

A fifth grade field trip to Ottawa National Forest in Michigan's Upper Peninsula sparks a debate about how to best use Michigan's natural resources. Fifth-grade rock collector, Lukas Lahti, discovers a piece of native copper in the forest. He thinks a new copper mine ought to open. Laurie Penhale is concerned for the preservation of the forest. Andrew Lesar and Peter Manley wonder about a copper mine's impact on their fur trapping work with their fathers. And our narrator, Billy Cranbrook, suggests there could be some good lumber from the forest. Ms. Lacko's students confront their conflicting interests when they consider whether the starting of a new copper mine in Ottawa National Forest is good or bad for Michigan's economy and the Upper Peninsula. The class comes to learn that stewardship means more than taking what you want out of the natural resources of our state.

Major Themes:

Forestry. A visit to a national forest allows students to learn about what rangers and foresters do. Designating an area as a national forest means more than hikers and campers only. The forestry service undertakes the care and maintenance of the forest using its resources for the benefit of people and the natural habitat of trees and animals.

Stewardship of Natural Resources. Michigan's Upper Peninsula is blessed with incredible natural riches. Students learn about how to consider balancing the competing goods of using the resources for economic benefit while not overusing them so that the resource is depleted or destroyed. Students also consider that the various stakeholders in our states natural resources are more than just the humans.

History of use of the natural resources of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The development and extraction of Michigan's natural resources brought many new people to Michigan. These immigrants joined with the Native Americans to create the melting pot of the UP's population.

Related 4th Grade GLCE Requirements:

R.NT4.0.3 Analyze characters' thoughts and motivation through dialogue, various character roles, and functions including hero, anti-hero, or narrator; know first person point of view and identify conflict and resolution.

R.CM4.0.1 Connect personal knowledge, experiences, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in text through oral and written responses.

R.NT4.1.4 – Narrative Text. [Analyzing the meaning, themes, human experience, and textual effects in quality literature.]

G5.0.1 – Assess the positive and negative effects of human activities on the physical environment of the United States.

P3.3.1 – Compose a brief essay expressing a position on a public policy issue in the

United States and justify the position with a reasoned argument.

P4.2.1 – Develop and implement an action plan and know how, when, and where to address or inform others about a public issue.

H3.0.3 – Describe how the relationship between the location of natural resources and the location of industries (after 1837) affected and continues to affect the location and growth of Michigan cities. (G, E)

Characters: (The first four are characters for communication)

Lukas Lahti – Lukas is a self-assured, somewhat brash 5th grader, who collects rocks and comes from a Finnish family of copper miners collector.

Laurie Penhale – is an “outdoors girl.” She loves forests and trees and spends her free time with her father in the Ottawa National Forest. She is also 5th grader, whose family heritage is part Cornish miners and part Ojibway.

Billy Cranbrook – Is our narrator. A 5th grader, he comes from lumber family. His heritage is Croatian.

Peter Manley – Is a 5th grader who has a generally positive outlook on life. He fur traps with father (Finnish).

Ms. Kirta Lacko – is our Finnish 5th grade teacher.

Ranger Penhale – is Laurie’s father and the forest ranger, who guide the students on their field trip through the Ottawa National Forest. His ancestors were the Cornish copper miners.