

### Note to Educators

The USDA Forest Service’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. For more than 100 years, our motto has been caring for the land and serving people. The Forest Service recognizes its responsibility to be engaged in efforts to connect youth with nature and to promote the development of science-based conservation education programs and materials nationwide.

*Investi-gator* is a science education journal to be used by students in grades 4-6. *Investi-gator* contains articles describing environmental and natural resource research

conducted by Forest Service scientists and their cooperators. These are scientific journal articles that have been reformatted to meet the needs of elementary school students. The articles are easy to understand, are graphically interesting, contain glossaries, and include hands-on activities. The goal of *Investi-gator* is to stimulate critical reading and thinking about scientific inquiry and investigation while teaching about ecology, the natural environment, and natural resources. In this issue of *Investi-gator*, you will find articles about the Southwestern United States written in the scientific method format.

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### The Format of an *Investi-gator* Article

Each *Investi-gator* article follows the same format. *Investi-gator* articles are written directly from a published science article, and all have been reviewed by the scientists for accuracy. The articles in this journal contain the following sections, which you may introduce to your students as they read:

**Meet the Scientists:** Introduces students to the scientists who did the research. This section may be used in a discussion about careers in science.

**What Kind of Scientist Did This Research?** Introduces students to different kinds of natural resource science careers.

**Thinking About Science:** Introduces something new about the scientific process, such as a scientific habit of mind or procedures used in scientific studies.

**Thinking About the Environment:** Introduces the environmental topic being addressed in the research.

**Introduction:** Introduces the problem or question being addressed by the research.

**Methods:** Describes the methods used by the scientists to collect and analyze their data.

**Findings:** Describes the results of the analysis.

**Discussion:** Discusses the findings and places them into the context of the original problem or question.

**Reflection Section:** Presents questions aimed at stimulating critical thinking about what has been read or predicting what might be presented in the next section. These are placed at the end of each of the main article sections.

**Number Crunch:** Presents an easy math problem related to the research.

**Glossary:** Defines potentially new scientific or other terms to students. The first occurrence of a glossary word is **bold** in the text.

**Citation:** Gives the original article citation with a Web link to the original article.

**FACTivity:** Presents a hands-on activity that emphasizes something presented in the article.

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### National Education Standards and Evaluations

At the back of the journal, you will find a section that enables you to identify the national education standards addressed in the article. Evaluation forms for both educators and students are available on our *Natural Inquirer* website. We welcome any feedback, so please visit <http://www.naturalinquirer.org> and complete the online evaluation or comment forms. In addition, you may contact Dr. Babs McDonald at the address below with any comments you have.

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(Please put “Educator Feedback” in the subject line)

### Educator Resources

From the *Investi-gator* Web site, you can order more editions and read and download generic lesson plans, word games, and other resources to help you use *Investi-gator* in your classroom. You may also visit <http://www.naturalinquirer.org> to find more generic lesson plans that can be used with *Investi-gator* articles.