



Capture the Flag

A Riparian Warm Up Game

Marc Seifert

Time Frame:	Standards:
Up to 30 minutes	N/A – Warm Up Activity
Objectives:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science/Environmental Education warm up activity for team building and to allow time to set up the learning stations. 	
Background Information:	
<p>Capture the Flag Game: Water is the life blood of all living things and developing knowledge and interest in the youth of tomorrow is crucial to developing the skilled workers of tomorrow to design, invent, and develop the technologies to ensure clean rivers, streams, healthy habitats and still serving the water needs of society. This game is part of the field unit of river habitat and will function as a warm up and team building exercise.</p> <p>Capture the Flag, in one form or another, has grown to be a familiar and famous game loved by children of all ages worldwide. This version adds twists to incorporate nature connection, build teamwork, and still let everyone have tons of fun. This game can set the stage for the riparian (river) field experience at a stream or river park area.</p> <p>Purpose: This activity can help prepare the students' to help them get familiar with the stream/river area and get them ready for their understanding of proper rivers health and demonstrate its potential effects on human and wildlife habitats.</p>	
Materials:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open field or park, preferably adjacent to the river unit experience area ○ 2 Flags ○ 2 teams of students ○ Flags or chalk to create a neutral line in the middle of the playing field 	
Procedure:	
<p>How-To Play the Game:</p> <p>This version of capture the Flag is focused on developing new teams. The two teams will be selected on chance rather than following the natural team boundaries. Once the teams are selected, then the game can commence.</p>	



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Create the Playing Field:

In the simplest version, of the game, divide a large group into two teams. Each team has one side of a playing field for their territory. A neutral line divides the middle of the field, and if crossed, puts you in your opponent's territory where they can tag you. Each team also has a flag either hidden or visible (you choose) at the far edge of their territory. Optional, label the areas in relation to the respective part of the habitat, identify the flag by habitat names, like the riparian flag, and the watershed flag, etc.

The Game:

When in their own team's territory, students are safe. If tagged on the opponent's territory, they must go to Jail behind the opponent's territory. The goal is to get into the opponent's territory and move their flag back to the student's own side. Once this is accomplished this without being tagged by the opposition, the team wins a point. Based on age and time available, the winner can be the first to capture 1, 3, 5, or 5 flags.

Jail:

If you get captured (tagged) and put in jail, students can be freed if a member of their own team makes it all the way to the opponent's jail and tags them. Then the two have immunity to return to their own territory.

Assessment:

Ask students how they had to work together to capture the flag and how this relates to wildlife they pretended to be? Ask them if they learned about any habitat's (like the riparian zone, etc)? Ask the students if they were able to make new teams and what happened when the teams were made smaller as their members went to jail. Did the students learn to use the strengths and teams to do better at adapting?

Additional Information - options:

Increase the complexity, add content information, build on the need to build better teams, or other creative differences. An option in this habitat setting is to have the players use different "Animal Forms" instead of just plain running. The assignment adds a bit of Simon Says to the play and requires a Referee.

Examples include: Stalking on all Fours like a Cougar, Waddling on all fours like a Beaver, Running like a Coyote, hopping like a grasshopper, or Bounding like a Deer, etc.



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To keep the students on their toes or develop more cohesive teams, switch the animal forms several times in the middle of the game. If time is limited during the field trip, keep this activity simple and short to allow more time for learning stations. The variety is in the control of the educators and can be modified accordingly.

References:

<http://www.projectwild.org/>

<http://www.cdm.org/biosite/BioSITE-Curriculum/journal/River-Habitat-Intro.pdf>