Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art at Utah State University presents:

Utah Biomes & Art
What is a Biome?

A biome is a large **geographical area** characterized by the similarity in the plants and animals that live there.

There is an **interaction** within biomes between the plants, animals, climate, soil type, and geography found there.

**Utah has four biomes**: wetlands, forests, alpine, and deserts. Some areas of Utah boast **more than one** biome in the same geographic area.

**For example**: In Cache County Utah, where NEHMA is located, you can find wetlands, forests and alpine biomes.

**5th Graders**: Find special suggestions and tasks for you in the green boxes throughout the presentation.
Utah Biomes & Art

The biomes of Utah have inspired artists to create beautiful art. Carefully look at each piece of artwork and see how they help us learn about Utah’s Biomes.
As we look at some of this art from NEHMA’s collection, be inspired to create art of your own!

**Art Challenge:** Fold a blank piece of paper in half, and then in half again. Open your paper to see four quadrants on your paper. As you go through the presentation, you will create art in the quadrants; one for each of Utah’s biomes. Gather your favorite pencils, crayons, markers or paints and be ready to create your own biome-inspired art on your paper. Look out for more art-making suggestions along the way!
Wetlands

The wetland biome of Utah is found in areas where water covers the soil for most of the year.

- Wetlands help **filter water** and serve as a reservoir for water.
- **Plants** that live in a wetland have special adaptations. Many tall grasses live in wetlands.
- Plants have spongy leaves that **float** atop the water in a wetland.
- **Trees** are generally not found in wetlands in Utah because the ground is too saturated with water to support their weight and height.

Less than 1% of Utah is a wetland and about 75% of Utah’s wetlands are located near the Great Salt Lake.

5th Grade: How do wetlands filter water? Why are wetlands so important for other waterways? Do some research and draw a layer map or diagram showing how wetlands support other environments.
What **elements** of Utah’s wetlands do you see in these pieces of art from NEHMA’s collection?

What **colors** do you see that remind you of wetlands?

Have you ever been to Utah’s **wetlands**? What do you remember of your visit?

In one quadrant of your folded paper, use your art supplies to **create your own** art inspired by wetlands and NEHMA’s art. What will you include? Try adding birds, fish, insects and other wetland wildlife to your art!
Alpine

The alpine biome of Utah is found above the tree line at about 10,000 feet. The soil in the alpine is very rocky and has little nutrients.

- Alpine biomes exist at the tops of mountains, where snow lasts almost all year long.
- The alpine has high winds and little precipitation in the form of rain.
- Plants in the alpine are usually less than 12 inches tall.
- The alpine plants often have tiny hairs on them to help keep them warm.
- The plants also need tough leaves to withstand the wind.

Few reptiles and amphibians are found in Utah’s alpine biome since temperatures tend to be too extreme for them to thrive.

5th Grade: Research the special plants that grow in alpine biomes. Draw the leaves of two different plants including their special features that help them survive in an alpine environment.
Alpine Art

How do these pieces of art represent Utah’s alpine biomes?

What kinds of trees and plants do you see?

How would you describe these artworks to someone who couldn’t see them?

If you were visiting one of these alpine habitats right now, what do you think you would see? What might you smell? What could you hear?

In another quadrant of your paper, create an alpine biome inspired by the alpine art in NEHMA’s collection!
Desert

The biome with the largest area in Utah is the **desert**. It is found predominantly in the southern and western regions of the state.

- Deserts have **dry rock**, and **sandy soil** that cannot hold much water.
- Days are **hot** and nights tend to be **cold**.
- There isn’t much rain or snow in a desert and plants and animals must adapt to survive on **very little water**.
- Some desert plants are **succulents** and store water in their stems or leaves.

Approximately 33% of Utah is true desert. The biggest deserts are in Southern Utah and the Great Basin.

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5th Grade: Do some research about rocks and rock formations in Utah’s deserts. How were they formed? Draw or paint your favorite Utah rock formation.
Desert Art

What **shapes and forms** do you see in this art remind you of desert landscapes?

When you think of the desert, what do you think of? What **colors** would you see in the desert?

In the third quadrant of your paper, create a piece of art that **represents** what the desert means to you!
The forest biome accounts for about 25% of Utah. Generally, forest areas have all four seasons and extremes of both hot and cold temperatures.

- There is enough rain to support abundant plant life.

- The soil is nutrient rich due to the high plant and animal life in the area.

- Dense vegetation is found with many trees, shrubs, and low-lying plants that fill the area.

- Trees are both deciduous and coniferous and have bark to protect against cold winters.

Forests in Utah are most often found in along mountain ranges and in high mountain valleys.

5th Grade: What are some features of trees found in forests? Find a forest tree outside or online and make a detailed drawing, labeling its features.
Forest Art

What kinds of **trees and plants** do you see in these artworks of Utah’s forests?

What kind of **animals** do you think live in these habitats?

Can you see any animals in the **art**?

Using the last part of your paper, **create** your own forest art.

How are these forest artworks **different** than the art from the other biomes?

How are they the **same**?

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Glen Wessels, *Dead Pine*, 1954
Watercolor on paper, 20 x 15 in.
Gift of Paule Anglim

Ansel Adams, *Winter Storm*, 1959
Gelatin silver print, 9 x 6 in.
Museum Permanent Collection

Mabel Pearl Frazer, *Untitled* date, unknown
Graphite and watercolor on paper, 15 x 22.5 in.
Gift of Mark Peterson
Questions to Consider

- What did you learn about the biomes by recreating them in art?
- What about your biome pictures is different from the art from NEHMA?
- Which biome would you like to visit? Explore Utah using maps, Google Earth and other online resources to discover which of Utah’s biomes are near you.
- Keep creating biome art! Use as many tools as you can to make different artworks and share Utah’s biomes with your friends and family.

**Art Idea: Make your own map!**
Use sidewalk chalk to draw an outline of Utah on the ground. Add elements of the biomes and landscapes in the correct areas of the state to make a biome map.

**Art Tools:**
crayons, pencils, markers, paint, clay, paper, recycled materials, tape, glue, scissors or even Legos!
Thanks for joining us!

Check out more amazing art from NEHMA’s collection online at:

collection.artmuseum.usu.edu
**Common Core**

**Science**

3rd - **Standard 2**: Students will understand that organisms depend on living and nonliving things within their environment.

**Objective 1**: Classify living and nonliving things in an environment.

**Objective 2**: Describe the interactions between living and nonliving things in a small environment.

4th - **Standard 5**: Students will understand the physical characteristics of Utah's wetlands, forests, and deserts and identify common organisms for each environment.

**Objective 1**: Describe the physical characteristics of Utah's wetlands, forests, and deserts.

**Objective 2**: Describe the common plants and animals found in Utah environments and how these organisms have adapted to the environment in which they live.

5th - **Standard 5**: Students will understand that traits are passed from the parent organisms to their offspring, and that sometimes the offspring may possess variations of these traits that may help or hinder survival in a given environment.

**Objective 1**: Using supporting evidence, show that traits are transferred from a parent organism to its offspring.

**Objective 2**: Describe how some characteristics could give a species a survival advantage in a particular environment.

**Fine Arts**

3rd - **Standard 3.V.CR.1**: Elaborate on an imaginative idea and apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies to investigate personal ideas through the art-making process.

**Standard 3.V.CR.2**: Create a personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

**Standard 3.V.R.1**: Speculate about processes an artist uses to create a work of art, and determine messages communicated by an image.

**Standard 3.V.CO.1**: Develop a work of art based on observations of surroundings.

4th - **Standard 4.V.CR.2**: Collaboratively set goals and create an artwork that is meaningful and shows the intent of the makers.

**Standard 4.V.R.2**: Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.

**Standard 4.V.R.4**: Apply one set of criteria to evaluate more than one work of art.

**Standard 4.V.CO.2**: Through observation, relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding by inferring information about time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created.

5th - **Standard 5.V.C.1**: Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for art-making, and identify and demonstrate diverse methods of artistic investigation to show an approach for beginning a work of art.

**Standard 5.V.C.2**: Experiment with and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice demonstrating quality craftsmanship.

**Standard 5.V.R.1**: Compare one’s own interpretation of a work of art with the interpretation of others, and identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery.

**Standard 5.V.R.2**: Interpret art through analyzing characteristics of form and structure, contextual information, subject matter, visual elements, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.

**Social Studies**

3rd - **Standard 1**: Students will understand how geography influences community location and development.

**Objective 2**: Describe how various communities have adapted to existing environments and how other communities have modified the environment. Describe the major world ecosystems (i.e. desert, plain, tropic, tundra, grassland, mountain, forest, wetland). Identify important natural resources of world ecosystems.

4th - **Standard 1**: Students will understand the relationship between the physical geography in Utah and human life.

**Objective 1**: Classify major physical geographic attributes of Utah.