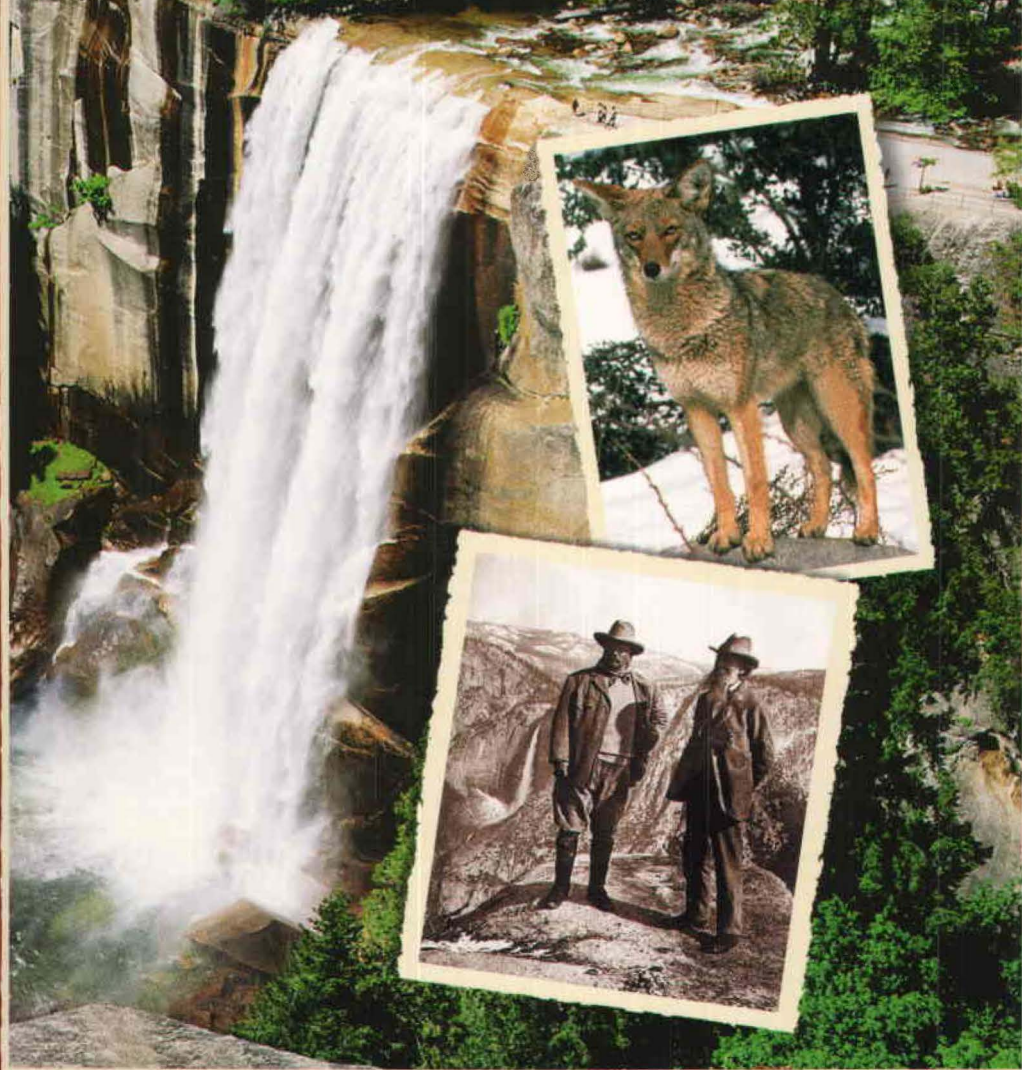


Biography

# John Muir

## Friend of Nature

BY RICHARD BRIGHTFIELD



# Read to Find Out

Read to find out how one man's great work helped to protect our national parks.

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## STRATEGIES & SKILLS AT A GLANCE Comprehension

- Strategy: Make Inferences and Analyze
- Skill: Identify Cause and Effect

## Vocabulary

- gift, kindhearted, produce, schoolhouse, sturdy, tend, yearned

## Vocabulary Strategy

- Word Parts: Word Families

## CONTENT-AREA VOCABULARY

Words related to John Muir  
(see *glossary*)

## NATIONAL CONTENT STANDARDS

### Science

- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives

Word count: 731\*\*

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\*\*The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.



# John Muir

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# Introduction

Yosemite **National** Park in California is one of the most beautiful places in the United States. It has rugged mountains and high waterfalls with their bases wrapped in rainbows.

There are trails for hiking, grounds for camping, and fast-flowing waters for river rafting.

The coyotes howl and the birds sing while bears and deer walk among the trees.

One man who came to the United States as a boy helped to save Yosemite's natural wonders for you to enjoy. His name was John Muir.

Coyotes can be →  
found in Yosemite.

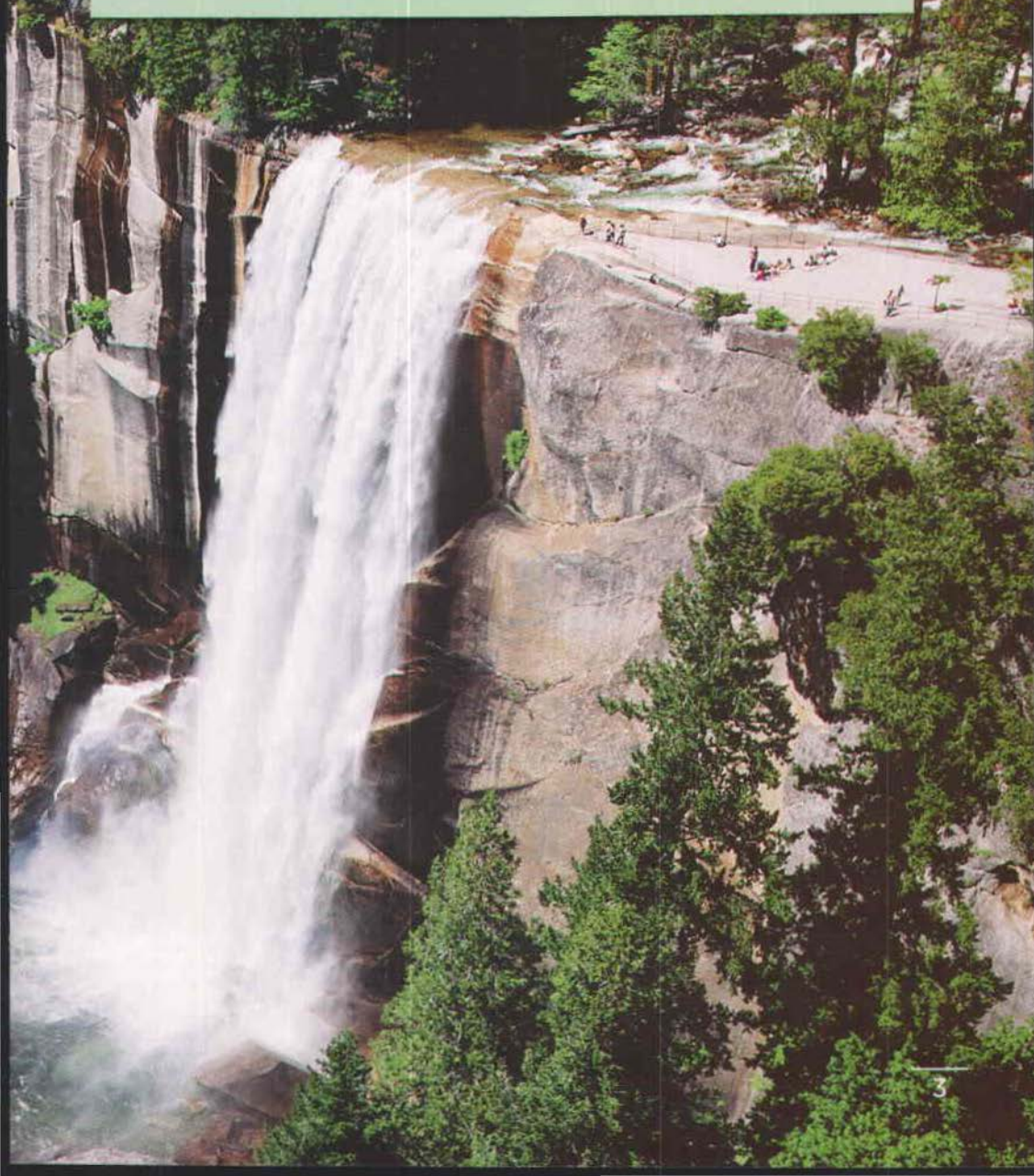






➡ People enjoy all kinds of activities in Yosemite National Park.

➡ The Vernal Falls in Yosemite National Park is a wonderful sight.





## Chapter 1

# The Early Years

John Muir was born in a small town in Scotland in 1838. His family moved to the United States when he was eleven. They moved to what is now Wisconsin and set up a farm there. They were pioneers.

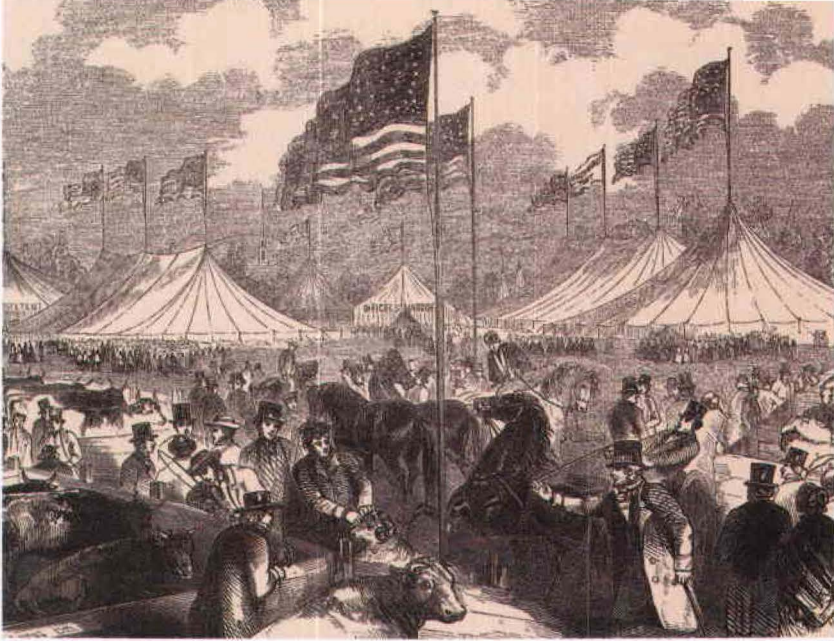
Muir went to school in a small schoolhouse. He liked being a schoolboy. The rest of the time he worked on the farm. He was busy from sunup until sundown. But Muir yearned for more. He knew he didn't want to tend the farm all his life. Muir liked to read and he read often. He also liked to invent things. He made a special thermometer. And he made something he called his "early-rising machine."

***Muir once said:***

***“ It's always  
sunrise  
somewhere. ”***







👉 Muir brought his invention to a state fair like this one.

This machine was sort of an early alarm clock. At a set time, the bed would tip and toss the sleeper out of bed.

Muir took his machine to the state fair to exhibit it. A long line of boys lined up for a separate turn on the machine. Each would lie down and pretend to be asleep. Then the bed would tilt and toss the boy out of bed. Muir's early-rising machine was a big hit!

Muir won a prize and made front-page news. Soon he was offered a number of jobs. Instead he left for college.

In college Muir studied both **geology** and **botany**.

Muir's geology teacher taught that many mountain valleys had been carved out by **glaciers**. Few people believed this at the time. Muir studied glaciers and helped to prove that his teacher was right.

Muir wanted to study in the wild. First he went to Canada and hiked through the wilderness there. He wrote in his journal and took samples of plants.

## **What Does a Geologist Study?**

Geologists study rocks and earth. They want to know how the forces of nature, like earthquakes and erosion, formed the landscape.





## What Does a Botanist Study?

Botanists study plants. They learn where plants live and how they grow.



Later, in the United States, he walked a thousand miles from Kentucky to the Gulf of Mexico. On the trip Muir became very ill. Luckily his kindhearted family sent him a gift of money. With it he went to California. Once he got there, his health improved.

☞ This is the Muir Glacier in Alaska. It is named to honor John Muir.





## Chapter 2

# On the Trails

So again Muir took off for the mountains. After a while, he reached Yosemite in California.

Muir fell in love with this spectacular place. Its natural wonders awed him.

Muir hoped to preserve the beauty of areas like Yosemite. He wanted them to stay just as they were. He wanted to keep people from building on them.

## Yosemite National Park

Yosemite National Park covers about 760,000 acres of eastern California. It is named after the Yosemite nation of Native Americans who once lived there. Over 60 kinds of animals, 200 kinds of birds, and 1,300 kinds of plants live in Yosemite. It has some of the highest waterfalls in the world.

This is a view of the →  
Yosemite National Park  
from Glacier Point.



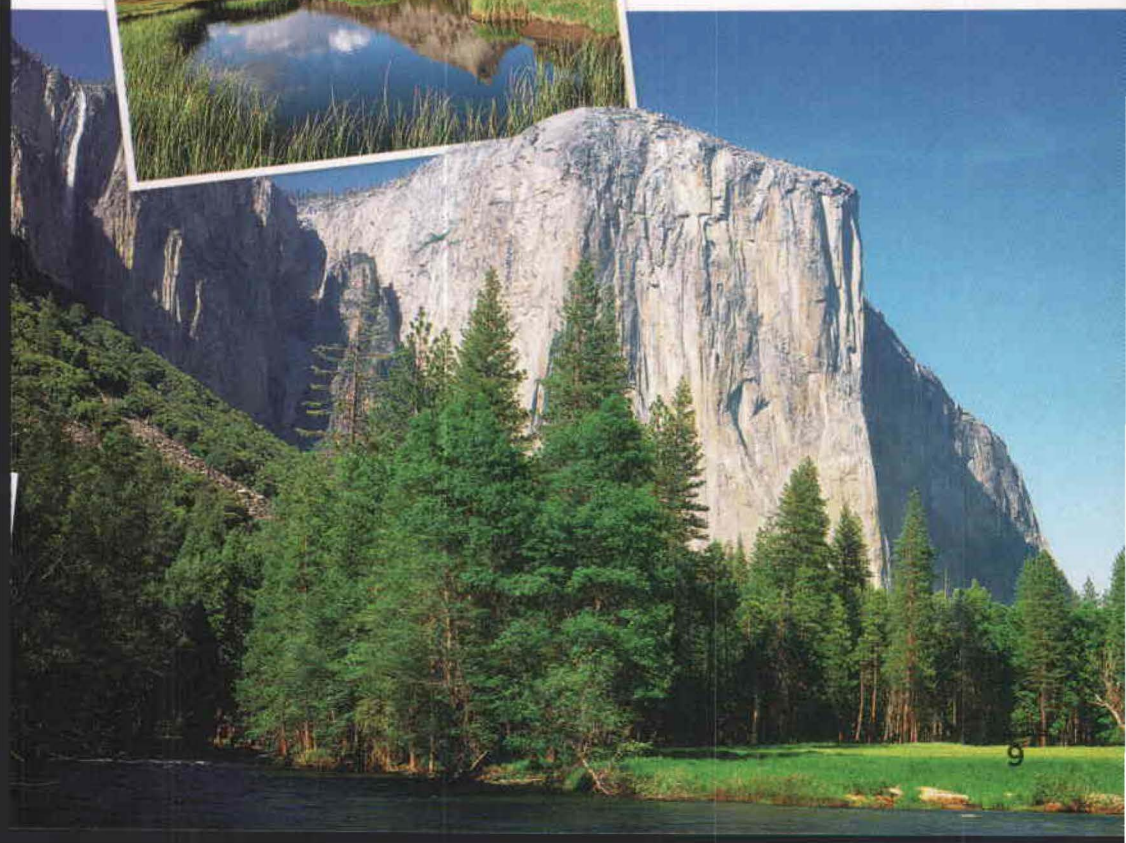


Muir began writing magazine articles about the dangers that could hurt Yosemite. He wrote about many other beautiful places in the United States. People were chopping down the sturdy trees to produce roof shingles. Sheep and cows were eating all the plants. Muir wanted to protect natural places.

📍 Cathedral Rocks



📍 El Capitan





## Chapter 3

# Making a Difference

Muir was lucky. He found someone who would help him save Yosemite and other great places. This person was none other than Theodore Roosevelt, the President of the United States.

Roosevelt read Muir's articles. The two became friends. Roosevelt became a big supporter of Muir's goal to protect nature.

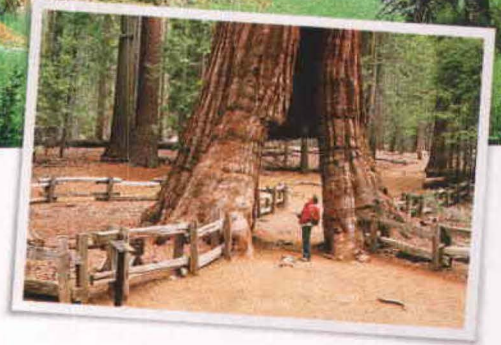
President Theodore Roosevelt and Muir enjoy Yosemite's beauty.







📍 Redwoods in  
Sequoia National Park



In 1906 a law was passed that allowed a president to save places of historic importance. Teddy Roosevelt used this law to create 18 such places. They included the Grand Canyon, the Petrified Forest, and the Great Sequoias.

## The Sierra Club

Muir and his friends founded the Sierra Club to “protect the land, forests, and watersheds of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.” Muir was its first president. The club still works to help protect our wildlife.

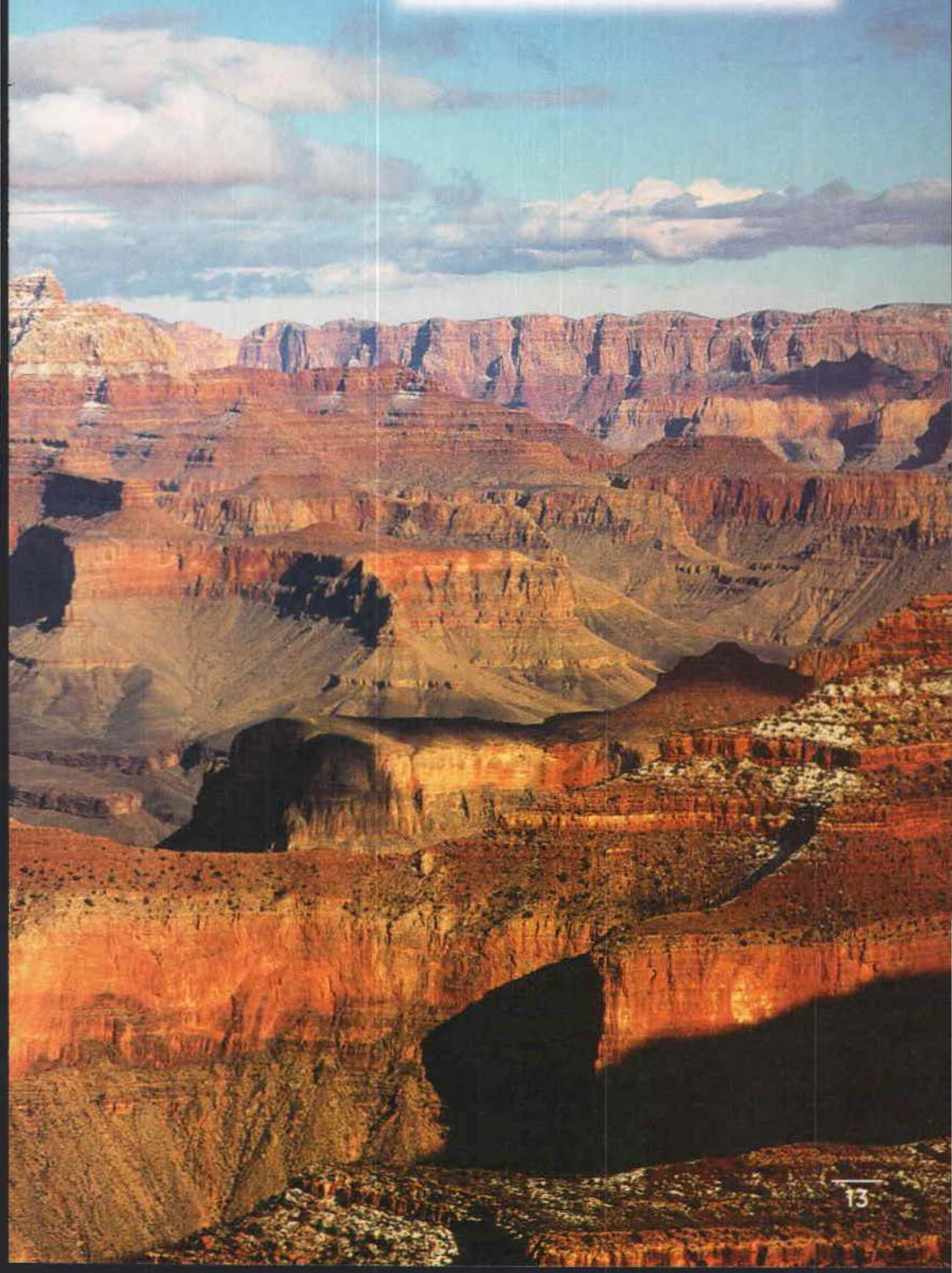
John Muir’s efforts to protect nature helped lead to the founding of the National Park Service. This organization helps to protect and preserve the natural wonders of this country.

**Some National Parks  
from Largest to Smallest**

Park	State	Size in Acres
Yellowstone	Idaho, Montana, Wyoming	2,218,823
Everglades	Florida	1,398,800
Yosemite	California	760,917
Carlsbad Caverns	New Mexico	46,755



The Grand Canyon is another beautiful national park.



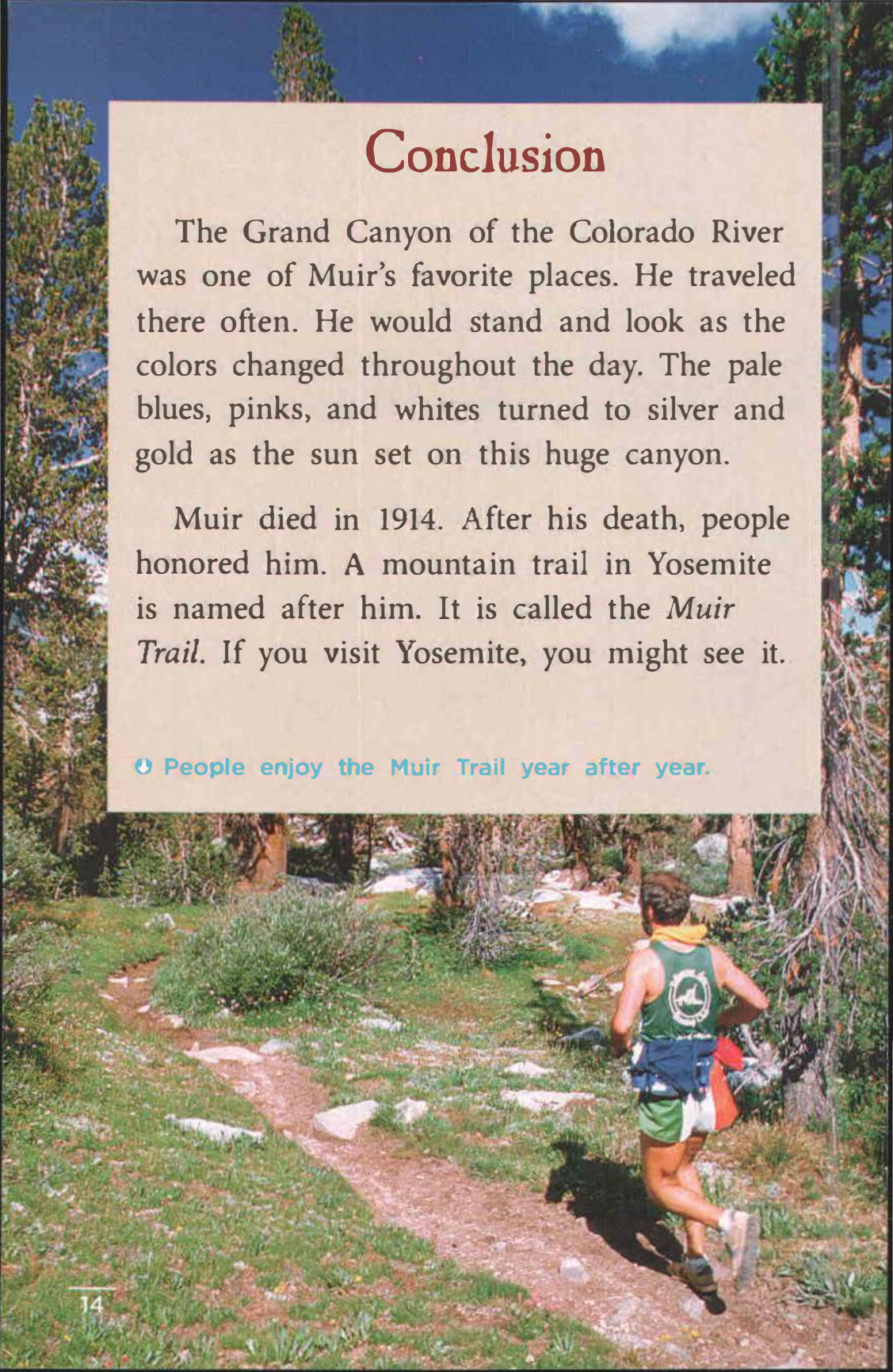


## Conclusion

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado River was one of Muir's favorite places. He traveled there often. He would stand and look as the colors changed throughout the day. The pale blues, pinks, and whites turned to silver and gold as the sun set on this huge canyon.

Muir died in 1914. After his death, people honored him. A mountain trail in Yosemite is named after him. It is called the *Muir Trail*. If you visit Yosemite, you might see it.

👉 People enjoy the Muir Trail year after year.





# Glossary

**botany** (*BOT-uh-nee*) the study of plants  
(page 6)

**erosion** (*i-ROH-zhuhn*) a wearing, washing, or eating away of something, such as rock and soil (page 6)

**geology** (*jee-OL-uh-jee*) the science that deals with the study of the earth (page 6)

**glacier** (*GLAY-shuhr*) a huge piece of ice in very cold areas (page 6)

**national** (*NASH-uh-nuhl*) having to do with our country united under one government (page 2)

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# Comprehension Check

## Summarize

Use a Cause and Effect Chart to record causes and effects from the book. Then use the information to summarize the book.

Cause	→	Effect
	→	
	→	
	→	

## Think and Compare

1. Turn back to page 6. What causes mountain valleys to form?  
**(Identify Cause and Effect)**
2. What kinds of hikes or nature walks have you taken? What did you see and do on the trails? **(Apply)**
3. A trail and a glacier have been named to honor Muir. What other ways do people honor others for their good deeds? Can you suggest a new way to honor people? **(Evaluate)**



# Literacy Activities



## Keep a Journal

Go on a walk outdoors. Keep a journal of what you see. Describe what you see and how you feel.



## A National Park

Choose one national park and find out more about it. Where is it located? What sights would you expect to see there? What makes it special? Present your findings to the class.

# John Muir

## Friend of Nature

John Muir hiked through the wilderness and saw its beauty. He wanted to save it for people to enjoy forever. He worked hard to make this happen. This is his story.



3.5 Week 2

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