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PATIO TALK: "Voices of Canyonlands"

THEME: When we stop to listen to the voices of all the plants, animals and natural features of a special place, we are inspired to use our own voices to share, defend and protect that special place.

TALK OUTLINE:

1. Opener: ask audience members to think of a special place that they like to go to. Ask for volunteers to describe their special place by a word or two. (2 min)
2. Introduction: my name, first year at Canyonlands, high school English teacher (1 min)
3. Read page 1-2 of *When Clay Sings* and intro the idea of everything in Canyonlands having its own voice. Inhabitants and visitors listened to these voices and then used their own voices to tell others about this place. (3 min)
4. Ask audience, "What are some of the voices you might hear around here?" (If they have trouble, remind them: "voices" don't always make noise; everything they *see* and *feel* has a voice, so what will they *see* and *hear* in Canyonlands?; etc) (2 min)
5. Go through the items on the chart (page 2) one by one. (15 min)
6. Closer: Read lines 1-15 of Vivekan Don Flint's poem "Canyonlands" to audience. Encourage them to listen to the voices of this special place, Canyonlands, as they are exploring today, and to think about how they will use their voices to share what they hear with others. (5 min)
7. Questions & Jr. Ranger book signings (3 min)

MATERIALS:

--books: *When Clay Sings*, *Desert Solitaire*, and *The White Crack*

--pictures: Ancestral Puebloan pottery; AP rock art; John Wesley Powell; Edward Abbey; print of *Canyon Sunrise*

--quotes (printed large): Powell quote, Abbey quote, and visitor quotes from magnetic poetry board

	<b>Natural element</b>	<b>Human listener</b>	<b>“Voice” they used to communicate what they heard</b>	<b>Effect</b>
	desert animals	Ancestral Puebloans	Pottery & rock art	We know what they loved and valued about this place, and are inspired to respect nature as they did.
<b>Technique for presenting to audience:</b>	<i>elicit different examples of desert mammals</i>	<i>Explain that they made their home here 1000 years ago</i>	<i>Show pictures of pottery &amp; rock art and invite audience to interpret: what did the animals depicted “say” to them?</i>	<i>Explain this idea.</i>
	river	John Wesley Powell	Journals: “Here we have our first experience with canyon rapids...we thread the narrow passage with exhilarating velocity, mounting the high waves, whose foaming crests dash over us, and plunging into the troughs, until we reach the quiet water below; and then comes a feeling of great relief...” “We have an unknown distance yet to run; an unknown river yet to explore. What falls there are, we know not; what rocks beset the channel, we know not; what walls rise over the river, we know not....”	He inspired more people to explore and get to know this special part of the country.
<b>Technique for presenting to audience:</b>	<i>Elicit the two rivers that converge in Cany. Nat’l Park</i>	<i>Show picture, ask if anyone knows who he is, and explain: explorer down the Colorado to the Grand Canyon</i>	<i>Ask audience volunteer to read his words (in the voice of a brave explorer)</i>	<i>Explain this idea.</i>
	sun	Edward Abbey	Books like <i>Desert Solitaire</i> : “The sun reigns, I am drowned in light....In the glare of this brilliant emptiness, in this arid intensity of pure heat, in the heart of a...great silence and grand desolation... all that men have made [is annihilated] to a spasm of whirling dust far out on the golden desert.”	He inspired people to appreciate the beauty of this harsh landscape and to want to protect the wilderness of this area.
<b>Technique for presenting to audience:</b>	<i>Ask audience what the Moab sun says to them</i>	<i>Show picture; explain that he lived here in the wilderness as a park ranger at Arches and in the canyon lands 40 years ago</i>	<i>Read to audience and deconstruct together: the sun’s voice, to Abbey, told him that man, compared to wilderness, was small and insignificant and that nature was powerful.</i>	<i>Explain this idea.</i>
	Canyons	Harriet Peck Taylor	Paintings: <i>Canyon Sunrise</i> et al	people are able to see the rock as beautiful and inviting.
<b>Technique for presenting to audience:</b>	<i>Elicit from audience</i>	<i>Explain: An artist who is alive and painting today</i>	<i>Show painting and ask audience, “What do you think the canyons say to Harriet?”</i>	<i>Explain this idea</i>
	All of the above	Visitors to Canyonlands Nat’l Park	Sentences formed w/ magnetic poetry at Jr. Ranger station	Current visitors use their voices to share what Canyonlands “told” them, and hopefully they take that message home.
<b>Technique for presenting to audience:</b>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Ask: Who do you think the most powerful listeners are today? (Answer: you!)</i>	<i>Explain that visitors form sentences at my station and I record them. Ask audience members to read a few quotes by kids and their families.</i>	<i>Explain this idea, eliciting from audience as much as possible.</i>

*When Clay Sings*

Pg 1:

There are  
desert hillsides  
where  
ancient  
Indian pottery  
still lies  
half buried  
in the sand  
and lizards  
blink at  
other dusty lizards  
that were painted  
on those pots  
a thousand years ago.

Pg2: