

## **“Sapelo” a Georgia Outdoors Production Educator Guide**

### **Synopsis**

First settled by the Native Americans, then by European explorers, pirates, and wealthy Southern plantation owners, Sapelo Island is rich with the history of North America. Off the Georgian coastline, Sapelo is also the home of one of the most important wetland ecosystems in the world.

“Sapelo” a Georgia Outdoors Production, explores the history of the island and the legacy of the people who live there. Narrated by host Sharon Collins, “Sapelo” is filled with history and the fading culture of a simple life lost in modern times, as well as the immense environmental importance of the island.

### **Pre-viewing Questions**

1. Locate Sapelo Island on a map. What is it near? How would you get there?
2. Has anyone ever heard of Sapelo Island? If so, how many people have been there?

### **Post-viewing Questions**

#### *Part 1*

Hog Hammock is a fading community. What do you think would influence people to move back to the town? Would these ideas affect the environment in a negative way?

#### *Part 2*

What makes the community on Sapelo Island different from other modern communities? What can we learn from Hog Hammock that we can apply to our own lives?

#### *Part 3*

Microbes are some of the smallest organisms in the world, but humans do not know much about them. It is theorized that they provide crucial functions to the success of an ecosystem. How does this tie-in to the notion that every aspect of an ecosystem is important, no matter how small? Should we invest more money into research on microbes?

#### *Part 4*

Biologists believe that the same chemicals that are contaminating dolphins are also contaminating seafood that millions of people eat on a regular basis. If you were the government, what would you do to prevent people from ingesting

potentially dangerous chemicals, if anything? Do you think the current efforts are enough?

### *Part 5*

The poet Carl Sandberg wrote, “the people know the salt of the sea and the strength of the winds lashing the corners of the earth. The people take the earth as a tomb of rest and a cradle of hope.” How does this apply to Sapelo Island?

## **Quiz Questions**

### *Part 1*

1. Where is Sapelo Island located? What is the only way onto the island?  
(On the Georgian coastline. By ferry.)
2. Many of the people who live on the island are direct descendants from what group of people in the 1800's?  
(Slaves)
3. Why do the inhabitants of Hog Hammock fear about the future?  
(Hog Hammock will not exist as a community because of a lack of jobs and young people.)

### *Part 2*

1. Evon Grovener learned the tradition of straw basket weaving when she was a girl. In an effort to pass the tradition on to her children, what did she tell them to do in order to make spending money?  
(Weave a basket and sell it.)
2. People have lived on Sapelo Island for how many thousands of years?  
(Four thousand.)
3. Thomas Spalding, a famous plantation owner, grew what crops on Sapelo Island?  
(Rice, sugar, cotton.)

### *Part 3*

1. What insect had always been a significant problem on Sapelo Island and what deadly disease did they carry?  
(Mosquitoes, yellow fever)
2. After the Civil War, the plantation industry collapsed. What industries took its place instead?  
(Lumber/shipbuilding/seafood canneries)
3. During the Great Depression, Sapelo Island was sold to tobacco giant R.J. Reynolds. What did Reynolds do to influence the future of the island?  
(He opened a research laboratory on Sapelo.)
4. Why are Professor Melissa Booth and her students from the University of Georgia conducting experiments and research on Sapelo Island?  
(They are studying microbes to see how they affect the ecosystem.)

### *Part 4*

1. Laurie Schwakey, a dolphin researcher, found that human contaminates in the water. What level were they?  
(Extremely high)
2. The contaminates found in dolphins were banned in the 1970's, but they still remain in ecosystems after a long time. What is this type of contaminate called?  
(Legacy contaminate)
3. What were the biologists doing when they were digging up mud in the marsh?  
(Gathering data to base future contamination/environmental changes from.)

#### *Part 5*

1. Why would people come to Sapelo who do not live there?  
(Learn about slave culture/visit the Reynolds mansion/learn about the environment)
2. What is so remarkable about the Hog Hammock community? How is it a unique place?  
(Open-ended question. Many possible answers.)

### **Vocabulary**

**Barrier Island** - Barrier Island is a coastal landform and a type of barrier system, are relatively narrow strips of sand that parallel the mainland coast. They usually occur in chains, consisting of anything from a few islands to more than a dozen.

**Baseline** - A baseline is a line that is a base for measurement.

**Ecosystems** - An ecosystem is a biological environment consisting of all the organisms living in a particular area, as well as all the nonliving (abiotic), physical components of the environment with which the organisms interact, such as air, soil, water and sunlight.

**Estuary** - An estuary is a partly enclosed coastal body of water with one or more rivers or streams flowing into it, and with a free connection to the open sea

**Legacy Contaminant** - Legacy Contaminant refers to substances whose use has been banned or severely restricted by government agencies for many years.

**Pristine** – Pristine is something original, pure; uncorrupted, fresh, clean, and unspoiled.

**Salt Marsh** - A salt marsh is an environment in the upper coastal intertidal zone between land and salt water or brackish water, it is dominated by dense stands of salt-tolerant plants such as herbs, grasses, or low shrubs.

**Silt** - Silt is granular material of a size somewhere between sand and clay whose mineral origin is quartz and feldspar. Silt may occur as a soil or as suspended

sediment (also known as suspended load) in a surface water body. It may also exist as soil deposited at the bottom of a water body.

**Tidal Creek** - A tidal creek, tidal channel, or estuary is the portion of a stream that is affected by ebb and flow of ocean tides, in the case that the stream discharges to an ocean, sea or strait.

**Yellow Fever** - Yellow fever is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes.