ACTIVITY: Learning about the Basin

Materials:

- Handouts of Cartographic Information for each student (Pages 14-15).
- Transparency of the Watershed Map of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin (Base map). Refer to Appendix A.
- Handout of the Watershed Map of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin for each student. Refer to Appendix A.
- Transparencies of the features of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin (elevation, vegetation, soil, cultural, historical, land use, rainfall, and geologic formations). Refer to Appendix A.
- 8 Louisiana road maps
- Butcher Paper; Markers; Pictures

Procedure:

1. Distribute and review the handout Cartographic Information.

2. Place the transparency of the Watershed Map of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin on an overhead projector, and sequentially lay each of the following eight transparencies over the base map. Identify the basic features and discuss with the students what new information is added to the base map. Add color to transparencies for more impact.

Features:

1. Elevation (high to low)  
2. Vegetation (forest, swamp, marsh)  
3. Soil (types)  
4. Cultural  
5. Historical  
6. Land use  
7. Rainfall  
8. Geologic formations

Discussion Questions:

- What does this added information tell you about the area?
- How is this related to other information given?
- How would you find this information if you did not have a map?
- What is the connection between soil types and vegetation?
- What is the connection between geologic formations and elevations?
Where would you expect to find cities?

Is there any connection between where cities are built and where elevation, vegetation or specific soils are found?

Where would you build roads?

3. Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Give each group of students a current road map of Louisiana. Ask them to focus their attention on the Lake Pontchartrain Basin area. (You may even have them mark this area on their map).

Discussion Questions:

- What is the map scale of the road map?
- How is this map different from the map presented on the overhead?
- What additional information does this map contain?
- What information was presented earlier that was not contained in the road map?
- What use or purpose would the two maps have? Are they the same or different?

4. Distribute the Watershed Map of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. Direct each group of students to construct a map of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. They may consult their road maps and the transparencies for additional information. Students may use their own symbols for places or things in the Basin. A map may focus on a theme, e.g., camping, swimming spots, types of seafood, or even restaurants!

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

Map:

- Does the map communicate a main idea or theme?
- Is the map visually appealing?
- Does the map contain all of the typical elements, such as map scale, contour lines, rivers, elevation, etc.?
- Are all the features clearly indicated?
- Are there any creative or individualized elements in the map, such as birthplaces, favorite fishing spots, schools, etc?