

1 Primary/Elementary Teacher Script Flint RiverQuarium Introduction

Background

Slide 1 - This is the outside of the Flint RiverQuarium. Why was it named this? (Student suggestions) It is an aquarium but aquariums are usually inside – like you have in your home or at school. Aquariums can be small or very big. Parts of the Flint RiverQuarium are open to the outside. It is beside the Flint River, and tells the story of the river, so they took off the “A in aquarium, added the word “River” and made up a new word. They also used a picture for the “Q.” Can you tell what it is? (turtle)

How do you use water? (student answers) Water is very important for all life. Every living thing needs water. People also use water to run factories and farmers need water to grow crops and raise animals. The same water that we use was around during the time of the dinosaurs. It is reused as it goes through the water cycle.

Deep under the ground below our schools and houses are many caves that are filled with water. The water gets into the caves when it rains and soaks into the ground. These water-filled caves are called aquifers. If you live in the country and have a well, the water comes from the aquifer. Cities have larger wells that pull up water from the aquifers for people to use.

Slide 2 - A real blue hole is a place where the water that is underground bubbles up to the top of the ground. The water is very cold because it has been under the ground. It is very clear because it is very clean, but not clean enough to drink. The Creek Indians called blue holes “skywater.” Why would these areas be called blue holes and/or skywater? (The water is very clear and reflects the blue sky.)

Slide 3 - The Flint RiverQuarium has a blue hole but it is not real. It is like a giant swimming pool made to look like a blue hole. Some of you may have heard about Radium Springs in Albany or gone swimming in a blue hole in your town that is real. They built this so that everyone could see what a blue hole is like and find out about the animals that live in and around blue holes. You will get to see the blue hole from the top, side, and the bottom – all without getting wet! This blue hole has over 100 animals. What are some animals that you think might live in a blue hole? (alligators, fish, turtles, etc.)

Slide 4 - Anytime you have animals, they have to be taken care of. How do you take care of pets? (Student answers.) The animals at the RiverQuarium are not pets, but they do need care. Can anyone think of how they take care of these animals? (Feed, make sure they are healthy, keep their area clean.) In a real blue hole the fish would hunt for their food. At the Flint RiverQuarium, people feed the fish so the fish won’t have to eat each other. On very rare occasions they might eat each other.

Slide 5 - Water in a real blue hole is very cold. Fish that live in blue holes need cold water. The Flint RiverQuarium has special machines to cool the water to keep it the right temperature. The water also has to be filtered to keep it clean.

Exhibit Information

Slide 6 - When we begin the tour, the first thing we will see is the surface of the blue hole. You look through big windows to see it at our Skywater exhibit.

Slide 7 - When you go into the next part, you will see pictures of the whole Flint River.

FLINT RIVER QUARIUM

Slide 8 - It begins as a little trickle near the airport in Atlanta. It gets bigger and bigger as it flows south and as streams and runoff from the rain add to it. By the time it gets to Albany it is a big, beautiful river. From Albany the Flint River joins with the Chattahoochee River as they go into Lake Seminole. The water then flows to the Apalachicola River, Apalachicola Bay, and then into the Gulf of Mexico. Have any of you been to Panama City? The ocean there is the Gulf of Mexico.

Slide 9 - You will see smaller aquariums that show each place the river goes and the types of fish that live there. The water changes from the river to the gulf. Can you think of what the difference would be? (fresh to saltwater.)

Slide 10 - A side door leads outside to a part of the blue hole. Alligator snapping turtles live here.

Slide 11 - You will also see land animals and plants in the exhibits.

Slide 12 - The next area is Discovery Slough our hatchery. What do you think that is? (a nursery for animals.) i.e. a female fish lays eggs. The eggs hatch and the baby fish grow. When they are big enough the fish are put into the bigger aquariums.

Slide 13 - Then we will go down a ramp to the bottom of the blue hole. A giant window lets us see inside. It is 8 inches thick! (Show ruler) The water here is 22-24 feet deep! That is like 6-8 of you standing on top of each other. It is a little bit dark in this area so that you can see the fish better.

Slide 14 - Then we will go to Discovery Caverns, a hands-on kid area. You will get to predict the weather, turn faucets to direct water, crawl through a pretend cave, use a stream table to change the way water flows, and play a water game where you can win points for saving water.

Slide 15 - The next stop is the World of Water. Exhibits have fish and animals from other aquatic ecosystems (mainly rivers) around the world. They even have piranhas! (Explain if needed).

Slide 16 - As we leave the exhibit area we will be on the other side of the blue hole where the alligators live. See how many you can find.

Slide 17 - Next door is the Adventure Center. It has special exhibits we will learn about. It also houses the Imagination Theater where movies are shown.