4.1 *GRÜNES BAND DEUTSCHLAND*—GERMANY'S GREEN BELT

How can countries protect land and threatened species?

C3 Framework Indicator	**D2.Geo.5.3-5.** Explain how the cultural and environmental characteristics of places change over time.
Staging the Compelling Question	Students will learn about the former Inner Border between East and West Germany and its transformation into an environmental conservation called the „Green Belt." Habitats and species found in the Green Belt will be examined.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What was the Inner Border between East and West Germany?	What is the German Green Belt?	What habitats and plant and animal species are protected in the Green Belt?
Formative Performance Task	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**
After viewing a video, students will list five words that describe the Inner Border space, and then describe what they think the Inner Border looked like at the end of the Cold War.	After viewing the two videos, Green Belt Germany and NBC News, students will take on one of three roles: list all of the good things learned about the Green Belt; describe all of the problems and difficulties; or summarize how the video made them feel.	Student pairs will create a presentation highlighting the habitats and plant and animal species that live in the Green Belt.
Featured Sources	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**
Source A: *Walled In: The Inner German border*	**Source A:** *Green Belt Germany* **Source B:** *A Green Belt Has grown along the Former Border between East and West Germany* **Source C:** *Traces of the Past along the German Green Belt*	**Source A:** Handout 4.1.1

Summative Performance Task	**Argument:** Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical or contemporary sources, while acknowledging competing views.
	Extension 1: Research the National Nature Monuments. What sites are designated as such, and what protections does this provide? How are sites selected? **Extension 2:** Research five of the green belts listed. Create a presentation to share with classmates.
Taking Informed Action	**Understand:** Cities and towns use land-use planning to retain areas of largely undeveloped, wild, or agricultural land surrounding or neighboring urban areas.
	Assess: Contact your local planning board for information on how your city or town is working to retain these open areas.
	Act: Reach out to a local environmental or conservation group to determine how you can support positive land use.

COMPELLING QUESTION

- **How can countries protect land and threatened species?**

INQUIRY OVERVIEW

Students will learn about the former Inner Border between East and West Germany and its transformation into an environmental conservation called the „Green Belt." Habitats and species found in the Green Belt will be examined.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

In the shadow of the former Iron Curtain that divided Europe for decades, a vast strip of land that once stood for oppression has become a symbol of renewal. The German Green Belt (*Grünes Band Deutschland*) is a project of the BUND (German Federation for the Environment and Nature Conservation), one of Germany's largest nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to protecting the environment.

The Inner German Border was formally established following WWII, on July 1, 1945, and was the boundary between the Western and Soviet occupation zones of Germany. On the Eastern side, it was one of the world's most heavily fortified areas. The Inner German Border ran the length of Germany, from the Baltic Sea to Thuringia, and was notorious for its 870-mile network of walls, barbed wire, guard towers, and shooting devices, all patrolled by 50,000 armed East German guards. This no man's land, which remained inaccessible to farming and hunting for 40 years, was able to thrive naturally and is now home to an exceptional wealth of species and ecosystems (many of which are endangered).

Less than a month after the German Democratic Republic (GDR; East Germany) opened its border with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG; West Germany) on November 9, 1989, organizers began working to create the Green Belt. The organizers included the BUND and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), who took inventory of the species and habitats along the Green Belt to prove the value of this untouched land. In 2002, Mikhail Gorbachev endorsed the Green Belt initiative on his visit to Germany. He became the first person to buy a "Green Belt share," which opened the doors for people to give money to the project.

The Green Belt encompasses countless interlinked ecosystems with an abundance of species. In collaboration with individual states, the BUND and BfN were able to create regions in which conservation and nature tourism worked together to create a system of land management that would ensure preservation. Today, the Green Belt has an area of 68 square miles, 146 different biotopes, and over 5,000 plant and animal species (with more than 1,200 of them on the Red List, such as wildcats and arnica). More than 60 percent of the area is covered by endangered habitat types.

The federal government, states, and conservation organizations have joined forces to protect the Green Belt and develop it into one of the most valuable nature reserves in Europe. Something that once divided Germany is now a symbol of national unity.

The German Green Belt is part of the European Green Belt, which runs along the former Iron Curtain from Finland to the Danube Delta of the Black Sea.

To learn more about the Berlin Wall and the Cold War, see **Inquiry 2.5**.

➤ Sources

- BUND Naturschutz. (2021). Grünes Band: Arche Noah für Tiere und Pflanzen. https://www.bund-naturschutz.de/natur-und-landschaft/gruenes-band.
- BfN. (2021). The German Green Belt. https://www.bfn.de/en/activities/protecting-habitats-and-landscapes/the-green-belt/germany.html.

TIME: Two to three 45-minute classes

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- Green Belt Habitat and Species Presentation (**Handout 4.1.1**)
- BUND. (n.d.). *Traces of the Past: Along the German Green Belt*. bund.net. Retrieved October 28, 2021, from https://www.bund.net/fileadmin/user_upload_bund/publikationen/gruenes_band/gruenes_band_traces_of_the_past.pdf.
- BUND Germany. (2018, August 15). *Green Belt Germany*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dj2h8vUmB6M
- DW News. (2009, June 30). *Walled in: The Inner German Border | DW English*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwQsTzGkbiY. (10:39)
- Green Belt. (2021, May 6). *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_belt.
- NBC News. (2021, May 27). *A Green Belt Has Grown Along the Former Border Between East and West Germany*. NBCNews.com. https://www.nbcnews.com/video/a-green-belt-has-grown-along-the-former-border-between-east-and-west-germany-1121547331897.

www.goethe.de/top/letsexplore

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Ask students: Imagine that an area of your city or state has been divided by walls with a large area between them that no one has been allowed to enter for nearly 40 years. What do you think that area would look like? Do you think animals would live there? Why or why not?

SUPPORTING QUESTION 1

What was the Inner Border between East and West Germany?

➤ Formative Performance Task

View the video Walled In: The Inner German Border, starting at 5:27. Ask students to make note of the following:

- Location of the wall
- Length
- Location of no man's land
- Tracks used by vehicles in the death zone

After viewing the video, ask students to write down five words that describe the Inner Border space. Next, ask students what they think the Inner Border looked like at the end of the Cold War. List their responses for **Task 2.**

➤ Notes

- The first 5:27 of the video is about the Berlin Wall. The rest of the video is about the border wall that ran the length of Germany between East and West, the Inner Border.
- A diagram of the Inner German Border (1960) is available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=inner+german+borders+diagram+1960&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image.

➤ **Resource**

- DW News. (2009, June 30). *Walled In: The Inner German Border | DW English*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwQsTzGkbiY. (10:39)

? SUPPORTING QUESTION 2

What is the German Green Belt?

➤ **Formative Performance Task**

View the two videos Green Belt Germany and NBC News. Prior to viewing, divide the class into three groups and assign each group a hat (to function as a lens through which to watch the video).

For this Six Thinking Hats activity, the group of students with the yellow hat will list all of the good things they learned about the Green Belt. The group with the black hat will describe all of the problems and difficulties. The group with the red hat will summarize how the video made them feel. Each group should then share.

As a class, compare the Green Belt to the descriptions of the Inner Border from **Formative Performance Task 1.**

Teachers may wish to read with the class the online Traces of the Past along the German Green Belt, which provides descriptions of the Inner Border wall and its defenses, what it looks like now, and conservation efforts.

➤ **Resources**

- BUND Germany. (2018, August 15). *Green Belt Germany*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dj2h8vUmB6M.
- BUND. (n.d.). *Traces of the Past: Along the German Green Belt*. bund.net. Retrieved October 28, 2021, from https://www.bund.net/fileadmin/user_upload_bund/publikationen/gruenes_band/gruenes_band_traces_of_the_past.pdf.
- de Bono, Edward. (2019, April 27). Book Summary—*Six Thinking Hats® by Edward de Bono*. Readingraphics [website]. readingraphics.com/book-summary-six-thinking-hats.
- NBC News. (2021, May 27). *A Green Belt Has Grown Along the Former Border Between East and West Germany*. NBCNews.com. https://www.nbcnews.com/video/a-green-belt-has-grown-along-the-former-border-between-east-and-west-germany-1121547331897.

? SUPPORTING QUESTION 3

What habitats and plant and animal species are protected in the Green Belt?

➤ **Formative Performance Task**

Working with a partner, students will create a presentation highlighting the habitats and plant and animal species that live in the Green Belt. **Handout 4.1.1** contains guidelines and suggested resources.

➤ **Resource**

- Green Belt Habitat and Species Presentation (**Handout 4.1.1**)

☑ SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK

How can countries conserve land and protect threatened species?

Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources, while acknowledging competing views.

EXTENSION (OPTIONAL) TASK 1

A section of the Green Belt in Thuringia has been designated a National Nature Monument. The primary objective of a National Nature Monument is to protect specific outstanding natural features and their associated biodiversity and habitats. The Green Belt Thuringia was designated as the third National Nature Monument in 2018. As a result, for the first time, a coherent part of the Green Belt in Germany of over 474 miles (763 kilometers) and over 16,000 acres (6,500 hectares) is uniformly put under protection. Through the designation of National Nature Monument, the national importance of this unique national habitat network and the symbolism of the former divide into two geostrategic power blocs (Iron Curtain) are emphasized.

Research National Nature Monuments. What sites are designated as such, and what protections does this provide? How are sites selected

EXTENSION (OPTIONAL) TASK 2

There are notable examples of green belts around the world. Go to the website, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_belt, where a list of green belts around the world can be found. Research five of the green belts listed. Create a presentation to share with classmates. Your presentation should include:

- Name and date created
- Location and size
- Habitats and plant and animal species found
- History of location
- Restrictions, if any

Share what you learn with a local nature conservation group.

➤ Resource

- Green Belt. (2021, May 6). *Wikipedia.* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_belt.

TAKING INFORMED ACTION

Understand: Cities and towns use land-use planning to retain areas of largely undeveloped, wild, or agricultural land surrounding or neighboring urban areas.

Assess: Contact your local planning board for information on how your city or town is working to retain these open areas.

Act: Reach out to a local environmental or conservation group to determine how you can support positive land use.

CONCEPTS LIST

- Green Belt
- Habitat
- Species
- Biodiversity
- Conservation
- Inner Border
- Death strip
- No man's land
- National Nature Monument
- Iron Curtain