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Activities

The Great Sand Dunes

Name: _____ Date: _____

There's no better place to see the effects of wind erosion than Great Sand Dunes National Park in Colorado. In this Planet Diary activity, you'll take a virtual tour of the park to explore how the wind sculpted this national treasure.

Directions

- To see the majesty of Great Sand Dunes, start at Photos and Multimedia from the National Park Service. Explore the photo albums and webcams. Then learn how the Great Sand Dunes formed. Read the introduction, then continue to *Basic Geological Story*. Use the information in the first two paragraphs to answer Workspace question 1.
- Look closely at the photo of Lake Alamosa and read the paragraph to its right. Continue to the second photo and read its caption. Answer questions 2 and 3.
- Continue to the picture showing the direction of storm and predominant winds. Read the text, then answer question 4.
- Look at the next two pictures and read their captions. Answer question 5.
- The shape of the dunes changes as seasonal winds change. Watch this animation of Reversing Dunes. Then answer the last question.
- There's lots more to explore at Great Sand Dunes National Park. Check out these great links to the park's Geology, Hydrology, and Ecosystems.

Workspace

1. What happened to the San Luis Valley over time?

2. What feature was once found on the valley floor?

3. Explain what happened to the feature you mentioned in question 2.

4. What caused the sand dunes to grow vertically?

5. What three factors combine to make the Great Sand Dunes the tallest in North America?

6. Explain how seasonal wind reversals make the dunes even taller.

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