



In The News

Current Events in Earth & Space Science

Summaries for the Classroom

The February 28, 2013, Florida Sinkhole

A devastating sinkhole occurred in Florida on February 28, 2013, raising questions and concerns about this incredible phenomenon. Around 20% of the U.S. lies in areas susceptible to sinkhole events, highlighting the need for research and to be informed about this hazard.

Articles to Share with Students

CNN – A Loud Crash, Then Nothing: Sinkhole Swallows Florida Man

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/03/01/us/florida-sinkhole/index.html>

EarthSky – What Causes Sinkholes?

<http://earthsky.org/earth/what-causes-sinkholes>

Live Science – Why Sinkholes Are Eating Florida

<http://www.livescience.com/27659-florida-sinkhole.html>

Huffington Post – Florida Sinkhole: Authorities Hope To Get Better Look At Sinkhole That Swallowed Man After House Removed

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/04/florida-sinkhole_n_2805116.html

General Information

National Geographic – Sinkhole Science: A Primer

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/03/130305-florida-sinkhole-science-causes-world/>

U.S. Geological Survey – The Science of Sinkholes

http://www.usgs.gov/blogs/features/usgs_top_story/the-science-of-sinkholes/

U.S. Geological Survey – Fact Sheet on Sinkholes

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2007/3060/pdf/FS2007-3060.pdf>

The New York Times (text and video clips) – Sinkholes, Which Swallow Homes, Cars and People, are Not So Rare

<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/02/sinkholes-which-swallow-homes-cars-and-people-are-not-so-rare/>

NPR – Earth Provides Little Warning Before “Catastrophic” Sinkholes

<http://www.npr.org/2013/03/01/173271243/earth-provides-little-warning-before-catastrophic-sinkholes>

Questions for Classroom Discussion

- What is a sinkhole? How does a sinkhole form?
- Why are sinkholes a common problem in Florida?
- What is “sinkhole season”? Why does it occur?
- Can sinkhole formation be triggered by human activity? Explain.
- Is your home at risk of falling into a sinkhole? Why/why not?
- What are some consequences that people may face as a result of sinkholes, especially in areas like Florida?
- Should humans continue to build homes and businesses on land that is at a high risk of ground collapse from a sinkhole? Why/why not?

Tags

Sinkhole, natural hazard, Florida

Big Ideas

From the Earth Science Literacy Principles

- Big Idea 1. Earth scientists use repeatable observations and testable ideas to understand and explain our planet. (1.1)
- Big Idea 3. Earth is a complex system of interacting rock, water, air, and life. (3.4, 3.6,)
- Big Idea 8. Natural hazards pose risks to humans (8.1, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5)

From The Big Ideas in Earth and Space Science (ESBD)

- The Earth System (1)
- The Hydrosphere (11)
- The Nature of Science (22, 23)

Compiled March 07, 2013, by L. Guertin