



wildsight

TEACH THE COLUMBIA

Citizen engagement

Guiding questions

How can residents of the Columbia Basin build a connection with the watershed? How can a member of the public have a voice in decision making processes that affect the basin? What can I do with my new knowledge of the Columbia River Basin?

Learning goals

Students will review and reflect on what they have learned about the Columbia River Basin, its history, and some of the current issues that will affect its future.

Students will consider ways they can grow their personal connection with the watershed.

Students will consider opportunities and challenges for members of the public to be involved in key decision making processes that will affect the basin's future.

Students will practice taking action by writing and sending an email to the government officials involved in either the Columbia River Treaty negotiation or the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative.

Materials

- Contact List (see page 3)
- Letter Template (see page 4)

Preparation

- Print out Contact List (appendix 2)
- Distribute devices for each student to write an email (students will need access to appropriate email accounts), or provide materials for them to write a letter

Instructions

Total time: **95 minutes**

1. Ask students to review what they have learned so far about the Columbia Basin throughout the curriculum (depending on how many Teach The Columbia lessons you've done with them or what they've learned elsewhere). Get students to pair up, explain a few points they remember to their partner, and choose a module or lesson that they found most interesting or that they'd like to learn more about. **10 minutes**
2. Specifically considering the current issues and decision making processes that students have learned about (e.g. Columbia River Treaty negotiations, reintroducing salmon to the Upper Columbia) ask the class to brainstorm two lists: **15 minutes**
 1. Reasons it can be challenging for members of the public to get involved
 2. Ways they think it could be possible to get involved. Supplement their list with the list of opportunities provided in the appendix.
3. Watch the **video with Kathy Eichenberger**, focusing on why citizen engagement is important, plus discussion. **20 minutes**
4. Explain that the class is going to practice taking a concrete action to get involved by writing a letter or sending a short email to either the government officials involved in the Columbia River Treaty negotiation or the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative. Share the templates provided in appendix 3. Prompt students to write 2-4 paragraphs about something they learned, something they have a question about, or an opinion they've developed about the issues at hand. **20 minutes**

5. Get students to swap their draft with another student to proofread and share editing suggestions for a final draft. Get students to incorporate the peer feedback and then send their emails to the email addresses or mailing addresses provided: columbiarivertreaty@gov.bc.ca, info@columbiariversalmon.ca. 20 minutes

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation
Columbia River Treaty
PO Box 9314 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC
V8W 9N1

CRSRI Secretariat c/o
#101, 3535 Old Okanagan Hwy
Westbank, BC V4T 3L7

6. Encourage students to do more through the citizen engagement suggestions included as extensions. 5 minutes

Extensions

Opportunities for citizen engagement with Columbia Basin issues:

- Learn more through independent research. Resources include:
 - Explore the **B.C. Government Columbia River Treaty website** and follow on social media
 - **Sign up for the B.C. Government's Columbia River Treaty e-newsletter**
 - Explore the **Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative website** and follow on social media
- Participate in an education program such as Wildsight's **Columbia River Field School**.
- Pursue a post-secondary course of study in a related field.
- Attend public information and consultation events hosted by government agencies or other kinds of conferences/events.
- Reach out to the government officials who represent you or who are playing a role in shaping your future. Share your thoughts or ask for a casual

conversation (sometimes called an “informational interview”).

Curriculum links

Social studies 10
Social studies 11

Appendix

1. Definitions of terms

Citizen Engagement: “Citizen engagement is a form of interaction between citizens and their governments. It can happen at any stage of the development or implementation of government policy and the delivery of public services, or be triggered by events in local areas. It can lead to a range of outcomes, including more effective services and more responsive and accountable states.” - *Participatory Methods*

Watershed Management:

Watershed management is the term used to describe how communities and governments manage activities within a river basin to ensure that its resources are used in a sustainable manner that is beneficial for all plants, animals, and humans within its boundaries.

Appendix 2

Contact List

Here is a list of useful contacts for staying connected to ongoing watershed events, processes, and issues, with a focus on the Columbia Basin in Canada. Explore the “contact” feature in each website to find contact information.

- Columbia River Treaty Local Governments Committee: crtlgc.ca
- Get updates from the Columbia River Treaty BC Government page: engage.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty
- Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee: engage.gov.bc.ca/columbiarivertreaty/columbia-basin-regional-advisory-committee/
- **Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative**
- Wildsight: wildsight.ca
- Columbia Basin Trust: ourtrust.org
- Upper Columbia United Tribes: ucut.org
- **Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission**
- Columbia Wetlands Stewardship Partners: www.wetlandstewards.eco/
- Regional District of East Kootenay: rdek.bc.ca
- Regional District of Central Kootenay: rdck.ca
- Regional District of Fraser- Fort George: rdffg.bc.ca
- Regional District of Columbia-Shuswap: csrd.bc.ca
- Regional District of Kootenay Boundary: rdkb.com

3. Letter Template

Dear _____,

Introduction: (add more if needed)

Introduce yourself, where you are from, what school you are from, what grade you are in, and what you have been learning about in class.

Complete the following three prompts in 2-4 paragraphs:

Something I learned about the Columbia River Treaty or the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative (depending on who you are emailing):

Something I have a question about involving the Columbia River Treaty or the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative (depending on who you are emailing):

An opinion I have developed about issues within the Columbia River Treaty or the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative (depending on who you are emailing):

Conclusion: (add more if needed)

Thank you for your time and your hard work on these important topics.

Sincerely,
Your Name