Columbia River Field School 2022
Application Guide

This document is meant as a guide to help you write your application to Wildsight's 2022 Columbia River Field School. We recommend that you read through the entire application before you start working on it so you can plan your time appropriately. We also recommend that you save your draft responses in this document until you are finished with them. When you are ready to submit your final responses, cut and paste them into our "Google Forms" website at the following link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWX7S5VxYLWF55Mrfo-oTHqZJ3UZxnoxlU0cF2MM4R5wis5Q/viewform

The online application form is split into different sections, which you will fill in one at a time. The first part helps us gather basic personal information about you. The application questions (i.e. what your application will be evaluated on) will follow in the next parts. At the end, you will be asked to provide a reference.

Please note that answers to application questions cannot be written by anyone other than the student who is applying to participate (including your parents

Field school trip dates are June 30th - July 14th. To be

eligible, you must live in the Canadian Columbia Basin region and be 15, 16, 17, or 18 years old on June 30th. We will provide accepted students with an information packet to help them prepare for the trip.

You can contact CRFS Program Manager Graeme Lee Rowlands by email at fieldschool@wildsight.ca. You can also leave a voicemail for Graeme at 250-427-9325 extension 230. Feel free to reach out with any questions!

Part 1: Personal Information

1. What is your full name?

2. How can we contact you? Please provide BOTH an email and a phone number.

3. What is your date of birth (you must be 15, 16, 17, or 18 years old on June 30th)?

4. Please provide the names and contact information of your parent(s)/guardian(s) including BOTH their phone numbers and emails.

5. What social media do you regularly use/see, if any? This information is unrelated to our application review process but will help inform our outreach efforts next year.

6. Where do you live?

7. What is your current school?

8. What do you identify as your racial/ethnic/cultural background? Prefer not to answer is an acceptable response.

9. Do you identify as Indigenous? Prefer not to answer is an acceptable response.

10. What are your preferred gender pronouns?

11. What is your COVID-19 vaccination status? All CRFS trip leaders will be fully vaccinated. It is strongly recommended that students are fully vaccinated. You may be required to take a COVID-19 test before or during the trip. We are continually monitoring COVID-19 related public health guidance and will base other risk management practices on the most current standards. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

12. Do you have any physical, mental, or medical conditions/disabilities that could require accommodation (i.e. would require doing things differently during the trip)? If so, please describe them and we will reach out to strategize about how to best support your participation.

13. Please note that there is a zero tolerance policy for substance use which includes alcohol, marijuana, other drugs, cigarettes, and any kind of vaping. If you have concerns about your ability to follow this policy for the duration of this 15-day trip, please explain and we will reach out to discuss this with you. If not, just write "no concerns".

14. Please note that behavior or language during the trip that is violent, disruptive or makes anyone feel unsafe or unwelcome will not be tolerated. This includes racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory language. Language referencing sexual activity or substance use is also not appropriate for this program. Students that are not able to hold themselves to this standard may be required to leave the trip at great inconvenience to trip leaders, themselves, and their parent(s)/guardian(s) who will need to come pick them up wherever we are. To let us know that you understand this policy, please write "I understand" below.

15. Do you have any canoe experience? If so, please describe it. Please note that none is required and this will not be used to evaluate your application.

16. Do you have any camping or backcountry camping experience? If so, please describe it. Please note that none is required and this will not be used to evaluate your application.

17. The field school is very expensive to run and made possible by the generous support of our funders. To help cover a minor portion of trip costs, we ask that participant families pay a course fee. Our suggested contribution is $800-$1,000. If this is a barrier, please let us know. We will do our best to provide financial aid (up to 100% if necessary). If you are able to contribute

more than the suggested sliding scale, doing so will help us reduce the cost for other families. All food, transportation, and specialized gear for the trip will be provided. What level of course fee are you able to contribute? We will reach out to you if needed.

Part 2: Application Questions

1. How did you hear about the CRFS? What sparked your interest in applying?

2. What is an important place in your life (within the Columbia River Basin)? Why? What are some of the qualities of that place?

3. Participating in the CRFS will be fun and rewarding but will not always be easy. Please describe a challenging moment in your life that required you to be patient, resilient, collaborative, adventurous, and/or self motivated in order to be successful. What did you learn from this experience?

4. Out of the following themes — geography, ecology, hydrology, technology, economics, politics, history, culture, and canoe and camping skills — that make up the Field School's curriculum, which 2 or 3 interest you most? Why?

5. What do you feel is unique about a youth perspective? How might people your age think differently than older people? Why is it important for young people to participate in the decisions that are made about where they live?

6. Do you have any ideas or plans for what you want to do, both in the short term and the long term, after completing Grade 12? Why do you think you are interested in pursuing these things?

Part 3: Reading Response

Prompt:

The following is an excerpt from a book published in 2016 called "A River Captured: The Columbia River Treaty and Catastrophic Change" by a local writer, researcher, and speaker named Eileen Delehanty Pearkes (more information at https://www.edpearkes.com/book/a-river-captured/).

Please read it carefully, consider the questions below, and then do your best to express what you think. It's important to note that there are no "right" or "wrong"

answers to these questions. Your response will only be evaluated on how thoughtful it is.

Reading:

“The mountain landscape of the upper Columbia River basin brims with the power of flowing water. Water burbles, roars, pools and turns. It transports minerals from high mountaintops to valley floors. It washes nutrients into flood plains. It carries fallen trees like matchsticks. It rolls boulders and scrubs gravels clean. The water cycle begins in winter, with abundant snow that forms mountains of its own, in drifts that soften the granite spires and glisten in the sharp sun during the coldest season. In spring, hundreds and thousands of seasonal and year-round streams go to work, draining their liquid charge down the rocky flanks, transporting newly melted snow to the valley bottoms. The transfer of energy that fills the air during the mountain-melt season is at once effortless and astonishing.

By early summer, the melt has subsided. By midsummer, most of the seasonal streams have gone bone dry. The year-round creeks are sighing rather than roaring. The quiet rhythms of water storage settle in.

When did I notice the reservoirs? I can’t really say. A handful of years after I arrived in the region, I looked beneath the surface of the striking beauty and abundant water of the upper Columbia River watershed. What I found surprised me: I live in one of the most intensively developed hydro-power regions in North America. The use of water for electricity has a long history, with one of the earliest hydro-power generators on the continent constructed here in the 1890s. Today, over a dozen major dams and generating stations store and convert water’s natural power into electricity, providing 50 per cent of the power used in the entire province of BC. Several dams date to the first great period of hydro-electric development in North America, between 1890 and 1930, when private, corporate interests developed the lower Kootenay River west of Nelson, BC. But the biggest projects – and the most ecologically damaging ones – were constructed between 1964 and 1984 by the BC government, under the auspices of an international agreement with the United States: the Columbia River Treaty. Dams and the treaty are woven tightly into the fibres of our regional identity.

The upper Columbia watershed gives birth to the fourth-largest river in North America. This unique interior rainforest is a womb for abundant winter snow and copious rain in the shoulder seasons. The rest of the Columbia’s vast watershed terrain – to the south and west, stretching into the United States – is equally commanding in its variety and scope. The great river links the west slope of the Continental Divide with the Pacific Ocean, encompassing portions of seven US

states and one Canadian province, and forming a land mass roughly equal to the size of France. Its watershed also contains a dizzying array of ecosystem types – from desert to rainforest – and hosts a myriad of tributary rivers of various sizes, lengths and power of their own. The American portion of the river's 2000-kilometre (1,240-mile) run is, like its Canadian cousin, also intensively developed for hydro-electricity. But it is the Canadian portion that is wettest and most alive with the water that gives the Columbia basin its power. North of the international boundary, this 15 per cent of the entire watershed provides up to 40 per cent of the Columbia's international water volume. In dry years, that share can climb to 50 per cent.

Since 1964, the Columbia River Treaty has tightly governed the upper Columbia watershed's river management, with Canada annually providing 15.5 MAF (million acre-feet) of stored snowmelt. The reasons for this storage are twofold: 1) to make greater, more efficient use of the annual surge of water in creating year-round electricity; and 2) to protect urban and agricultural communities from the annual flooding that is a natural component of a snow-charged system. The Columbia River Treaty has long been hailed as a model of cooperation between two countries, and to a certain extent that has been true. For several decades now, the treaty has been peacefully implemented by a trans-boundary Permanent Engineering Board (PEB) that has been remarkably collegial. The treaty's in-built principle of sharing downstream power benefits between both countries has resulted in both benefiting economically from the hydro-power efficiencies. This shared economic benefit is a principle of fairness built into the life of the treaty, expressed by what is also known as the Canadian Entitlement.

The Canadian Entitlement (CE) lies at the heart of the catastrophic ecological and social change caused by the Columbia River Treaty in Canada. As this close look at treaty history will demonstrate, Canada's interest in maximizing the initial monetary benefits of the CE influenced the design of the system ultimately chosen by the two countries. The Columbia River Treaty's power-producing principles – including the CE – will continue in perpetuity unless there is a mutual agreement to make changes. If one side wants to terminate the treaty, it must give ten years' notice, and even then certain provisions would continue after termination.

On the surface, all is well and all will continue to be well for infinite peaceful cooperation between the two countries. But there is always something going on beneath the surface of any body of water. Including, and perhaps most especially, beneath reservoirs.

The second of the two main principles of the treaty's management, flood control, will change. In 1964, the US paid Canada US$64.4-million to protect mostly

American urban and agricultural communities from spring flood for 60 years, up to September 16, 2024. After that period, the treaty dictates, the US must first call upon its own reservoir system to provide the flood control it needs, before asking Canada to use its extensive reservoirs in the upper Columbia region for that purpose. It is the finite, 60-year flood control provision in the treaty that has opened the eyes of many people to potential changes in the entire treaty structure. Lots of people are talking about the river now: government officials, water policy experts, academics, engineers, resource managers, and tribal and First Nations leaders on both sides of the boundary, as well as many other residents of the upper Columbia region. The voices of residents – of those whose lives were transformed by the advent of the CRT storage system – form the heart of this story of a river captured.

I had already been following the CRT's history across the upper Columbia landscape for several years before I noticed that the water's calm, controlled surface was being agitated by the possibility of renegotiation. As a cultural historian deeply interested in landscape, I grew even more curious about the system of dams and why they existed. At times, as I studied the history of how the treaty came to be, I felt immersed in an uncontrolled stream swollen by spring snowmelt. I clutched at imagined shoreline branches or exposed roots, trying not to get pulled under by the treaty's serpentine policy details, by its political secrets or by its uncomfortable truths. I will admit to nearly drowning myself in engineering reports, economic valuations, maps of transmission lines, old photos of farms flooded into reservoirs, and headlines filled with a spirit of congratulations about the treaty at last being ratified, or with the careful posturing of government leaders.

I will also admit that I wondered all along why I even wanted to know. History tells two stories of the Columbia River Treaty. One of a model international agreement of cooperation and mutual advantage between two countries. Another, beneath the surface or largely forgotten, of an ecosystem and a way of life upended by corporate greed and betrayal. The widely praised national and international benefits of CRT water impoundment do not extend to the region that provides them. The landscape is a handmaiden for the whole system of dams, profitable hydro-generation and copious irrigation supply.

The development of water resources in the upper Columbia region offers some universal truths about the North American settler culture. It is not the first story of modern humanity's often paradoxical relationship with the natural world and its resources, nor am I idealistic enough to assume it will be the last. We live in a time when prosperity seems all too dependent upon use and abuse of the resources we hold as a common good. This story exemplifies the short-term view that often governs our choices. As I journeyed from one corner of the upper Columbia basin to

another, I learned to ask three questions: what has changed in the landscape where I live, who changed it, and why?

Wherever you live, I encourage you to do the same. In the answers to these questions may well lie the key to our future.

Reading Question 1. In this excerpt, Delehanty Pearkes (the author) says that dams and the Columbia River Treaty "are woven tightly into the fibres of our regional identity." But she also suggests that many people in the region are unaware of the history of how the rivers have been transformed from flowing naturally to being tightly controlled by people. Did you read anything in this excerpt that you had not previously learned in the time you've lived in the Columbia Basin? What did it make you think about?

Reading Question 2. Delehanty Pearkes also suggests that, with the renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty, things are starting to change. More people are learning the history of the Columbia and other rivers where they live and how these histories have shaped their own lives. How do you think the Columbia River (including its tributaries) and its dams influence your life today? How might your life be different if you lived before the dams were built?

Part 4: Reference

Please list one person who can be contacted as a reference to speak to your character and as to whether you would be a good fit for this program. This could be a teacher, counsellor, school administrator, coach, employer, elder, or other relevant adult (as long as they are not immediate family). Please provide their name, how you know them, and their contact information (both phone and email, if possible). Please note that not all references will necessarily be contacted.