



# FOREST HISTORY CURRICULUM

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# INDIGENOUS RELATIONSHIPS TO THE LAND ON THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA

## LESSON SUMMARY

### Inquiry Description

The purpose of this lesson is to convey to students the importance of forest management and to introduce them to the rich history of Indigenous forest management on the Olympic Peninsula. This inquiry is meant to answer the larger compelling question of *“How do person-plant interactions shape the cultural and physical landscape?”* This is done by examining three supporting questions. *“How did the Indigenous people’s connection to the forest shape their way of life and the physical landscape?”* *“How did the ‘Stevens Treaties’ change ownership and management of forest lands on the Olympic Peninsula?”* *“What traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) can be used to inform forest management today?”*

In the first part of the group inquiry, students will be provided with a collection of materials that indicate how Indigenous peoples actively managed the forests of the Olympic Peninsula. They will learn how the forest played directly into the “Lifeways” of Indigenous traditions and daily life. They will also learn about one specific forest classification and one culturally significant plant.

In the second part of the group inquiry, the students will learn about the treaty-making process, the terms of each relevant treaty, and how the removal of Indigenous peoples shaped the forests of the Olympic Peninsula and vice versa. The treaty process is included to incorporate a crucial curriculum component and to show the effects of reservations on the health and resilience of ancestral lands.

This lesson will have students working together in small groups, interpreting a variety of primary and secondary sources, and contributing to a group project. Using Project Based Learning (PBL), students will learn about the forests of the Olympic Peninsula and their significance to Indigenous people. They will illustrate the effects of “Stevens Treaties” on both the people and the forests.

Either as a continuation of group collaboration or as an individual project, students will design a campaign poster or infographic that will demonstrate their understanding of the interconnected nature of human and plant interactions on the Olympic Peninsula. In this “Call to Action,” students will champion a specific conservation and/or restoration effort using contextual knowledge of the region’s ethnobotanical and anthropogenic history. The goal is to give their audience a greater appreciation for the forest and inspire them to take an active role.

This lesson plan is intended for three days but can be easily adapted for a week-long “mini-unit” with in-class project work. The slides do not include “Part Three” instructions so that the project can be omitted to condense this lesson into a shorter time frame.

This lesson can be applied as:

- Geography – Comparative maps and forest ecosystems
- Washington State History - Stevens’ treaties and creation of reservations
- Government and Current Events – The evolving role of Indigenous communities in climate change
- History and Geography – How the environment is shaped by people, and how people are shaped by their environment

Teachers should review the slideshow presentation, images, and list of suggested materials recommended for an overview of the information being introduced.

## Getting Curious

As we know, people learn best when they see the relevance of new information. Students may struggle to relate to the history of Indigenous forestry. Here are some ideas that could help pique their interest and open their minds:

### A Unique Opportunity of Our Time

Interactions between Native and non-Native communities across the world are growing, largely due to the environmental threats of global climate change. Sacred practices that have been passed down from generation to generation in Indigenous communities are being offered as a solution. We live in an exciting time to be given the privilege and opportunity to learn from and cooperate with Indigenous people for our shared benefit.

### The Mental Health Benefits of Connecting to Nature

We are only beginning to understand the influence our environment has on our mental and physical health. At a time when less time is spent outside and more time is invested in virtual spaces, this relationship between humans and nature is more relevant now than ever before. This [Earth.Org](#) article explores the relationship between caring for the environment and positive mental health outcomes.

## Standards

### Washington State Social Studies Standards

- C3.6-8.4 Explain elements of the agreements contained in one or more treaty agreements between Washington tribes and the United States.
- G1.6-8.3 Analyze maps and charts from a specific time-period to understand an issue or event.
- G2.6-8.3 Explain and analyze how the environment has affected people and how human actions modify the physical environment, and in turn, how the physical environment limits or promotes human activities in Washington state in the past or present.
- G2.6-8.6 Analyze how the environment has affected people and how people have affected the environment in the United States in the past or present.
- H1.6-8.4 Analyze a major historical event and how it is represented on timelines from different cultural perspectives, including those of Indigenous people.

## Learning Goals/ Objectives

Supporting Question: How did the Indigenous people's connection to the forest shape their way of life and the physical landscape?

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify at least one forest type on the Olympic Peninsula and describe its unique characteristics
- Identify one forest resource and explain its cultural significance
- Explain one treaty and its impact on the balance of nature and human interactions on the Olympic Peninsula
- Describe one effort being made to restore and conserve forest land for future generations

## Suggested Materials

- Multi-media to play sound clip
- Two large document envelopes for each group (14 in total)
- Highlighters
- Poster making supplies (optional)

## Focused Inquiry

### Compelling Question:

How do person-plant interactions shape the cultural and physical landscape?

### Staging the Question:

1. The teacher should have students brainstorm and list elements that make up forests and share experiences students may have had with forests. The challenge is to broaden the definition of what makes a forest - to see more than just the “trees”.
2. Using [The Balance of Nature PowerPoint](#), the teacher can lead a discussion about the many types of forests and the many elements that make up a forest.
3. Introduce students to the geography and tribal regions of the Olympic Peninsula. The teacher will guide students in drawing and labeling forest zones and the seven major tribes on the peninsula.
4. Discuss how most of the names are anchored to some geographical feature important to the tribe and why that might be significant.
5. Divide students into groups and give them their Part One packets. The teacher should make sure that students are familiar with the terms on slide 7 before releasing them. There's an opportunity to draw some cross-curricular connections:
  - a. **ELA Connection:** Greek and Latin Prefixes (source: merriam-webster.com)  
Eco – Habitat or environment. Latin oeco- household, from Greek oik-, oiko-, from oikos – home.  
Ethno – Race, people, or cultural group. From the Greek “ethnos” meaning people, nation, or tribe.  
Anthro – Study of humans. From the Greek word Anthropos, meaning human or man.
  - b. **Life Sciences Connection:**  
Ethnobotany  
Anthropogenic  
Erosion  
Consumption/Conservation
6. The students will divide the materials and compile a list of ways in which the environment has shaped the tribe and the tribe has shaped the landscape.

### Class Discussion

Have students from each group share an image from their packet and describe what they observed. Have a blank map projected on the board and have each group label their tribe's territory. (This can be repeated for the tribal reservations.)

**Supporting Questions :**

- How did Indigenous people's connection to the forest shape their way of life and the physical landscape?
- How did the 'Stevens Treaties' change ownership and management of forest lands on the Olympic Peninsula?

**Formative Performance Task:**

**Part One:** Using a graphic organizer and provided research materials, students will work in groups and specialize in a specific tribe, forest type, and natural resource that pertains to one of the following tribes:

- Makah
- S'Klallam
- Skokomish
- Squaxin Island
- Lower Chehalis
- Quinault
- Quileute

**Part Two:** Students will explore and describe the impact of treaty-making through discovery using articles and resources found on [HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org):

- Treaty Text
- Maps
- Images
- Primary Sources

Divide students into six groups (preferably 4-6 students per group). They will divide and share the materials in their envelope/packet.

**Teacher note:** *Because of the information density in these packets, it is recommended that each group have the materials printed and be allowed to highlight key information (practicing close reading strategies). The text materials often have bolded text staggered with unbolded - this is to assist students who are overwhelmed by large text blocks. When printing B&W, it is best to choose grayscale so that the exhibit banners don't get too dark.*

Part One packet includes:

1. A blank map of the Olympic Peninsula (to color and label)
2. Tribal Lifeways Article
3. Forest Ecosystem Profile
4. Tree Profile
5. Images (4)
6. Captain George Vancouver Travel Log

Part Two packet includes:

1. Impact Article - Land/Tribal Impact and Settler Perspectives
2. Treaty Text (HistoryLink)
3. The Dawes Act Overview (HistoryLink)
4. Map with reservations
5. Images (3)
6. Indian Affairs Reports, 1870 & 1871

**Teacher note:** Students will be using the same map from part one and will make amendments during part two.

**Class Discussion Opportunity** - Project a Venn diagram on the board and have students share or fill in the similarities and differences between native and settler perspectives of the forest landscape.

### Featured Source(s):

#### HistoryLink

[“Stevens, Isaac Ingalls \(1818-1862\)” \(File 5314\)](#)

[“Elementary Level: Makah Whaling \(File 10739\)”](#)

[“South Puget Sound Tribes Sign Treaty of Medicine Creek on December 26, 1854” \(File 5254\)](#)

[“Olympic National Park” \(File 20802\)](#)

[“Ceremony marks start of demolition of Elwha River hydroelectric dams on September 17, 2011” \(File 11011\)](#)

[“Agriculture in Washington 1792 to 1900” \(File 20523\)](#)

[“Modern plant communities in the Puget lowland begin to thrive around 7,000 years ago” \(File 20236\)](#)

[“Salmon Recovery in Washington” \(File 23069\)](#)

[“Bridge construction project unearths Tse-whit-zen” \(File 7343\)](#)

[“Aberdeen — Thumbnail History” \(File 7390\)](#)

[“Port Angeles — Thumbnail History” \(File 8210\)](#)

[“Clallam County - Thumbnail History” \(File 7576\)](#)

[“Port Townsend — Thumbnail History” \(File 10752\)](#)

[“Shelton — Thumbnail History” \(File 9591\)](#)

### Summative Task (Part 3):

Students will design a poster or infographic to inform and enlist support for their chosen tribe’s environmental project using their historical research as context (in a style similar to the [Duwamish “Real Rent” Campaign](#)).

**Teacher Note:** It is important to the represented tribes that the projects focus on the goals and objectives that the tribe has for their environmental project. Students should not come up with their own goals and objectives for why the tribe is doing it. In this way, it is not only respectful to the tribe but beneficial to students when they utilize approved sources and cite them.

Ideas/Inspiration for projects include but are not limited to:

- Animal/fish Habitat Restoration
- Clean Water Campaign
- Prairie Restoration/fire ecology
- Animal Habitat Restoration
- Dam removal or salmon run installation
- River and stream training for erosion repair

**Teacher Note:** This project is an excellent opportunity to practice citing sources and how to format different kinds of sources. The final slide has a list of sources by category that can be left up for students to use.

**Supporting Question #2:** What traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) can be used to inform forest management today?

**Formative Performance Tasks:**

- Students will engage in structured research to discover and describe efforts on the part of tribes to restore and protect forested land.
- Students will evaluate and synthesize information from their research to make a poster or infographic that will both inform and enlist support for an environmental restoration or conservation campaign.

**Featured Source(s):**

[Olympic National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

[Climate Change Impacts to Tribal Rights and Resources - Northwest Treaty Tribes](#)

[National Museum of the American Indian](#)

**Teacher note:** *It is at your discretion to limit students to their assigned tribes for this, but it may be beneficial to include the local tribe or any other tribe that students may have a personal connection to (within or outside of Washington).*

**Suggested Sources for Structured Research:**

[Northwest - Tribes & Climate Change](#)

[Projects – WECAN | Washington Coastal Hazards Resilience Network](#)

[Northwest's freshwater mussels now 'screaming' for help](#)

[Chehalis Basin Strategy | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)

[Environmental Programs | Quileute Tribe](#)

[Division and Restoration: A Brief History of Forestry on the Quinault Indian Reservation](#)

[Quinault Division of Natural Resources \(QDNR\)](#)

[Skokomish River Estuary Restoration Helps Salmon and Steelhead Return Home | NOAA Fisheries](#)

[PRISM Project Snapshot - Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office](#)

[Puget Sound Restoration Fund - Squaxin Island Kelp Bed Restoration](#)

[S'Klallam Habitat Restoration](#)

[Quileute Water Monitoring Program](#)

**Argument:**

After students conclude their research they will produce an argument that addresses the following prompt:

You are a newly hired employee of the Department of Natural Resources for a tribe on the Olympic Peninsula. You have been tasked with creating a campaign for one of their current projects. You must create an engaging, attractive, and informative visual aid to be shared with the public. Your job is to get people inspired to help.

This can be an individual or group project.





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