



TEACH THE COLUMBIA

Social and Cultural Impacts of Dams

Lesson 2-4

Guiding questions

Was the government's approach to building dams and removing people from the area to be flooded fair? Why or why not? How could it have been done differently?

Learning goals

- Consider the social and cultural pros and cons of building dams as well the pros and cons of different ways of operating dams
- Learn some of the local history of river development
- Consider farming as a means of relating to the watershed
- Consider Indigenous connections to the watershed
- Compare conflicts of interest between different groups of people/activities/livelihoods
- Reflect on how these conflicts have been approached in the past and how they might be better approached in the future

Materials

- [United By Water](#) (password: Columbia) - film by the Upper Columbia United Tribes
- [A River Captured](#) (p 187-207)
- [Map of Indigenous communities and salmon habitat](#) (from the Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission)

Preparation

- Print copies of [A River Captured](#) (p 187-207)
- Download or buffer film (depending on internet quality)
- Print copies of the Indigenous communities and salmon habitat map

Instructions

Total time: This lesson is in 2 parts, 75 minutes and 90 minutes

Part 1: Arrow Lakes (75 minutes)

1. Pair and share: Building from the lessons 2-2 and 2-3, prompt students to brainstorm a list of social/cultural pros and cons of damming rivers. For example, how could the creation of hydropower jobs (a pro) or the loss of valley bottom land (a con) affect the cultural fabric of communities and the social lives of residents? 10 minutes
2. Students read the intro to the "Taking a Stand, Standing in the Way" chapter of *A River Captured* (pages 187-192). Briefly, discuss the overall history as a class before delving into the specific stories that follow. 15 minutes
3. Break students into 5 groups, and assign each group a case study to read from *A River Captured* (pages 192-206. Cases are 2-4 pages each) 5 minutes
4. Students read their case study, discuss in their small group, and then summarize what happened to the rest of the class 30 minutes
 - a. Larry and Coreen Greenlaw: pgs 192-193
 - b. Ryder and Daisy Havdale: pgs 193-195
 - c. Oliver and Helen Beurge: pgs 195-199
 - d. Mary and Angus Bajowsky: pgs 200-204
 - e. The Morton Family: pgs 204-206
5. Class discussion/written reflection: What surprises them when learning about the Arrow Lakes case studies? How do they think the government handled the process? What would they have done differently? In this case, do the social/cultural pros outweigh the cons? Why or why not? 30 minutes

Part 2: Ceremony of Tears (90 minutes)

1. Introduce the history of the blockage of salmon from the upper Columbia Basin by Grand Coulee Dam in the 1930's and other dams built in later years. Locate Grand Coulee Dam on the [Indigenous communities and salmon habitat map](#). Get students to follow the Columbia River and its tributaries upstream from and discover how many Indigenous communities were impacted by the lack of passage for migratory fish. Students to hypothesize how this would have impacted those people. 15 minutes
2. Students watch the film [United By Water](#) (password: Columbia) 60 minutes
3. Group discussion/individual reflection: How did the loss of salmon impact the Upper Columbia United Tribes? What could have been done differently by the American and Canadian governments? As we look towards the future and try to address the losses caused by the dams, how should Indigenous peoples be involved in the decision making processes? 15 minutes

Extensions

1. Do some of the other Teach the Columbia lessons that build on these topics, especially lessons 3-1 (Mock Columbia River Treaty Negotiation), 3-2 (Reservoir Water Levels Role Play), and 3-3 (Bringing the Salmon Home)
2. If you also did lesson 2-2 ("Dams Mechanics and Benefits from Hydropower"), consider debating the pros and cons of dam using the four corner debate strategy (a few examples online include [this one](#) and [this one](#))
3. Get copies of [A River Captured](#) by Eileen Delehanty Pearkes and learn more about the history of the Columbia River Treaty.
4. Create a visual timeline of the flooding of the Arrow Lakes valley using the articles and historical images provided in appendix 1-3 (or from other sources). If students made a general Columbia Basin history timeline for Lesson 1-3, consider comparing it with the specific Arrow Lakes timeline for this activity.
5. Create a reconciliation art or education piece that is dedicated to commemorating the Ceremony of Tears and the impacts of losing salmon on Indigenous peoples. Share with the school.

Curriculum links

[Science 10](#)
[Social studies 10](#)
[Social studies 11](#)
[Human Geography 12](#)
[Physical Geography 12](#)
[Earth Science 11](#)
[Environmental Science 11](#)

Appendix

- [Images and history from Our Coloured Past: The Arrow Lakes in the Age of Colour Photography](#)
- [Exhibition tells stories of B.C. communities lost to flooding after dam construction](#)
- [Stories Beneath the Surface Online Exhibit](#)
- [Canada-based efforts to restore salmon to the upper watershed](#) (also see TTC lesson 3-3)
- [U.S.-based efforts to restore salmon to the upper watershed](#) (also see TTC lesson 3-3)
- [Cultural impacts of fish blockage and Indigenous rights](#) (pg 19-22)