

CENTRE FOR EDUCATION, LAW AND SOCIETY

LOGO

CURRICULUM SERIES
CASE STUDIES AND SIMULATIONS FOR
STUDENTS, GRADE K-12

TITLE: *STREAMSIDE SETBACKS AND THE COQUITLAM CASE*

THEMES: *LAND USE, HABITAT PROTECTION, LOCAL POLITICS*

SUBJECTS AND GRADES: *CIVICS 11, SOCIAL STUDIES 11, GEOGRAPHY 12,
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 11 & 12*

SYNOPSIS: *Students work as teams of journalists to explore the changes made to the regulations around determining how close to a salmon bearing stream developers can build. Their goal is to write an article for publication.*

Rationale for CELS Curriculum Series

- The Centre for Education, Law and Society supports an approach to education which prepares students for active and responsible citizenship.
 - The *Curriculum Series: Case Studies and Simulations for Students, Grade K-12* provides reality based activities which allow students to explore and practice the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with participatory citizenship.
 - Each activity is fully integrated with the British Columbia IRPs.
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Streamside Setbacks: The Coquitlam Case

To the Teacher

In this activity, your students will work in groups to research an actual case in which the City of Coquitlam changed its regulations around how close they could develop to fish-bearing streams. They will work as a team of student journalists who have received a grant from the Canadian Association of Journalists to engage in investigative reporting around a local affairs issue. The students will determine what information they need, how to get it, and who is responsible for what. They will then write up the article and edit it themselves.

Your role is to facilitate their investigations, pointing them to particular resources if they require it. The students should be able to do most of this work themselves. They will practice:

- critical thinking including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions,
- problem solving
- effective research skills, including accessing information, assessing information, collecting data, evaluating data, organizing information, presenting information and citing sources
- negotiation
- effective written, oral, and graphic communication skills

Once they have written their pieces, they can be “published” in a class magazine so that students have a chance to see the directions taken by other groups and discuss the similarities and differences with their own work. This may contribute to a publishing activity if there are several projects / articles from other activities that the class would like to publish.

Extension Activities:

#1 If the class is interested in the mechanics of determining streamside setbacks, they can check the resources which explain the methodologies and try them out themselves. They can also look in to organizing a workshop with the Pacific Streamkeepers Federation (<http://www.pskf.ca/index.html>). They can also investigate the policies and procedures of resource management in Canada. This activity is suited particularly to a geography class or an environmental sciences class.

#2 Although it might be possible to interview some of the stakeholders in the Coquitlam case, the best bet is a role-playing activity to practice interview skills. The process of preparing questions and asking them in a simulated activity will provide them with some experience which they can later use if they decide to engage in active civic participation of their own. Some possible roles are included in the Photocopiable Handout.

Ask the students to decide who will do the interviewing and who will be interviewed. The interviewers create the questions. The interviewees prepare reasons for their positions. They may also take on the attitudes suggested in the role cards. The various attitudes represented provide the type of unpredictability typically encountered in such situations.

#3 In this extension, students get the opportunity to practice their skills again, but this time with a focus on a current or developing civic issue. As well, they can take a position and get actively involved in the public debate by joining public meetings, submitting letters to city councils, writing to newspapers, joining demonstrations etc. It is also an opportunity to explore what kind of action is the appropriate action in a given situation.

IRP Connections

Civics 11 – Directly addresses all of the goals of Civic 11. Meets PLOs in each of the Curriculum Organisers: Skills and Processes of Civic Studies, Civic Deliberation, Civic Action and Informed Citizenship.

Geography 12 - PLOs

The Nature of Geography (Themes)

It is expected that students will:

- apply the following geography themes to relevant issues: human and physical interaction (the way humans depend on, adapt to, and modify the environment)
- explain how an understanding of geographic knowledge, skills, and attitudes can assist in daily decision making

The Nature of Geography (Systems)

It is expected that students will:

- identify the social, economic, cultural, and political components of human systems
- explain how physical and human systems interact within an ecosystem

Social Studies 11 - PLOs

Skills and Processes of Social Studies

It is expected that students will:

- apply critical thinking including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, and defending a position to make reasoned judgments about a range of issues, situations, and topics
- demonstrate effective research skills, including accessing information assessing information collecting data evaluating data organizing information presenting information citing sources
- demonstrate effective written, oral, and graphic communication skills
- demonstrate skills and attitudes of active citizenship, including ethical behaviour, open-mindedness, respect for diversity, and collaboration

Politics and Government

It is expected that students will:

- demonstrate understanding of the political spectrum
- explain how Canadians can effect change at the federal and provincial levels

English Language Arts 11 & 12

- **Comprehend and Respond (Critical Analysis):** It is expected that students will draw reasoned conclusions from information found in various written, spoken, or visual communications and defend their conclusions rationally.
- **Communicate Ideas and Information (Composing and Creating):** It is expected that students will employ a variety of effective processes and strategies, including the use of electronic technology, to generate, gather, and organize information and ideas.
- **Communicate Ideas and Information (Improving Communications):** It is expected that students will enhance the precision, clarity, and artistry of their communications by using processes that professional authors and presenters use to appraise and improve their communications.
- **Self and Society (Working Together):** It is expected that students will use language to interact and collaborate with others to explore ideas and to accomplish goals.

Additional PLOs addressed in Extension Activity #1

In both Civics 11 and Social Studies 11, students will practice the skills and processes of critical thinking and researching. They will also further examine the balance between the individual and common good and how this plays out in practice.

In Geography 12, students will practice skills and processes associated with The Nature of Geography, Systems of the Earth (Gradation Processes), Resources of the Earth (Nature of Resources), Resources of the Earth (Management of Resources), Resources of the Earth (Sustainability of Resources).

Streamside Setbacks: The Coquitlam Case For Students

Synopsis

In 2006, there was a vote in the Coquitlam City Council on changing the regulations for streamside setbacks. These regulations govern how close developers can build to streams, particularly fish bearing streams. The city had been following the Streamside Protection Regulation (SPR) and a motion had been made to change to the provincially developed Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR).

Sounds like some pretty routine municipal affairs, doesn't it? The kind that warrants a sentence in the local newspaper?

But a week before, angry voices were heard at Coquitlam City Hall. Over 150 people packed a public hearing which went on past midnight. Over 30 speakers addressed the council, including residents, environmental professionals and representatives from local associations and the provincial government. As well, over 50 submissions on the issue were received by the city from these and other stakeholders, including neighbouring municipalities.

The gallery was packed on the night of the vote. The atmosphere was tense. There were obviously some pretty strong feelings around the issue. Why? What's the big deal? Well, that's what you're going to find out.

Brainstorm: What might be the issues here? Why are people so worked up about this? Consider the following possible connections: political, environmental, legal, economic.

Your Group Task: You are a team of student journalists who have received a grant from the Canadian Association of Journalists to engage in investigative reporting around a local affairs issue. The best stories will be published in Media Magazine. You have chosen to investigate this story because it provides just what you are looking for: controversy, conflict and politics. You are interested in not just the final vote, but also what led up to it.

Step 1

Getting the information: What information do you need? From whom? How can you get it?

Step 2

Determine your roles. Who will investigate what or whom?

Step 3

Do some research on your area of responsibility. Where can you get the information you need?

Extension Activity #1

- Contact the Pacific Streamkeepers Federation (pskf@direct.ca) and ask about workshops on measuring streamside setbacks. Go to a creek or stream and determine how far the setbacks would be if you use SPR or RAR. What's the difference in setback?
- Information on how to measure using the SPR can be found at: <http://www.pskf.ca/program/new.html>
Click on October 12, 2001, The Streamside Protection Regulations. Or go to <http://www.pskf.ca/publications/SPR%20Guide%20Draft%20July.pdf>
- Information on using the RAR can be found at: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/habitat/fish_protection_act/riparian/riparian_areas.html
- As well, you can do some research on the connections between habitat protection and resource management. Check out the Wild Salmon Policy at DFO and habitat protection and resource management at the BC Ministry of Environment.

Step 4

Report to your team. What did you learn? What's important? What questions do you still have? Where will you go next to get the information you need?

*** Keep repeating Step 4 till you feel you have enough information. ***

Extension Activity #2: Journalists will typically do more than research from print sources, they will also conduct interviews. Choose the people you would like to interview and set up a series of simulations in which students take on the role of various stakeholders.

Each group could be responsible for carefully researching the position of one of participants, and one group member could take on playing the role. Groups would then prepare a number of questions for each of the stakeholders represented. These interviews could be taped and transcribed. If there were 7 groups, there would be 7 potential interview candidates. Groups you could draw upon include: councilors, municipal officials, provincial officials, federal officials, residents, environmental professionals, local streamkeeper volunteers. See the role cards for possible characteristics of the stakeholders.

Step 5

Decide - what will be the focus of your piece? You've investigated very complex issues, and there are a number of possible approaches to your report. What do you think deserves most attention?

Step 6

Write up your report in about 1000 words. As a group, you can determine the various roles you will play. One option is to outline your paper and then divide the sections between you. Another is to each write your own and then choose from amongst them or select sections from each. Alternatively, you can have two writers and two editors. Whatever you decide to do, remember to revise, revise, revise.

Step 7

Submit for publication.

Step 8

Compare the different stories. What did different groups choose to focus on? What was included and what was left out? Be prepared to explain your choices.

Extension Activity #3

Choose a hot local topic, investigate it, form your opinion and write it up for publication OR prepare a presentation. Present at a public meeting or submit to the city council.

SOURCES OF AND LINKS TO INFORMATION

Federal: Department of Fisheries and Oceans http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/home-accueil_e.htm

From there students can search for information on fish habitat protection. They can also check the Pacific Salmon section for the Wild Salmon Policy (2005).

Information on the DFO's position on the RAR can be found at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities website, where two joint letters dated March 23 2006 from the province and the DFO are available.

<http://ubcm.fileprosite.com/contentengine/launch.asp?ID=1652&Action=bypass>

Provincial: Ministry of the Environment

The Environmental Stewardship Division includes information on the RAR in the Fish and Fish Habitats section. Most useful is the legislation itself and the FAQs document.

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/habitat/fish_protection_act/riparian/riparian_areas.html

Municipal: Union of British Columbia Municipalities

Information is available at: <http://ubcm.fileprosite.com/contentengine/launch.asp?ID=1652&Action=bypass>

Municipal: City of Coquitlam

There are a couple of pages showing what the RAR is and how it is calculated at:

<http://www.coquitlam.ca/Business/Developing+Coquitlam/Northeast+Coquitlam/Opportunities+for+Public+Participation+in+Northeast+Coquitlam+Neighbourhood+Planning+Processes.htm>

Click on Board 22 and 23 under "March 2006 Revised Version of the Preferred Land Use Concept Plan & Servicing Proposals"

Students can also access council meeting minutes on-line. Very keen students can go to the city clerk's office and ask for copies of the public hearing minutes.

A very interesting letter written by the Coquitlam City Manager to the provincial government in regards to the change to RAR can be found at the British Columbia Stewards for Streamside protection website:

www.bcssp.ca/letters/coquitlam.pdf

Environmental

The Pacific Streamkeepers Federation has a guide to the SPR (<http://www.pskf.ca/program/new.html>)

There are also links to letters written to the Coquitlam City Council, the DFO and the Provincial government from a number of naturalist and streamkeepers groups available at: <http://www.bcssp.ca/letters.html> And

<http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:2aK9MfUZ2W4J:www.vcn.bc.ca/cwg/voice/CWGletter-RARmotion-Feb1-06.pdf+como+watershed+group+coquitlam+riparian+areas+regulation&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=ca>

Media:

Coquitlam NOW articles: March 8th 2006, March 22 2006, May 19th 2006, May 26th 2006, May 31st 2006

Vancouver Sun article: February 13th 2006

NOTE: All of the information on the websites was available as of 28th February 2007. Because information can be removed from websites, please check that these are still available in advance of starting this activity with your class.

Interview Subjects: Role Cards

The names have been changed in order to allow for more freedom in character development. The attitude suggestions here in no way reflect the attitudes of the real people in these positions.

Once you have your role, do some research on the position of your character and be prepared with reasons for your opinion.

<p>Glenn Devoir: Council Member You support the change to RAR. You believe the SPR is like stealing from property owners. You have nothing against the environment, but you believe that we can't stop progress. The economy depends on development. <i>Attitude during interview:</i> You are jovial, you talk a lot, and you're a bit patronizing</p>	<p>Maurice Conner: Council Member You oppose the change to RAR. You don't think SPR is perfect, but that it is preferable to RAR. You believe that the environment must be protected. <i>Attitude during interview:</i> You are helpful and friendly but you obviously have strong feelings about the issue. But you have to be careful not to display your negative feelings toward some of your fellow councilors.</p>
<p>Baljit McKay: Mayor You oppose the change to RAR. You have heard strong opposition from neighbouring municipalities and you are worried about strains to those relationships if RAR is adopted. <i>Attitude during interview:</i> You are careful not to say anything that could be taken the wrong way; you are polite but not particularly forthcoming – very much a politician.</p>	<p>Rebecca Chan: DFO Officer – Ottawa You represent the government position which is that RAR is an effective regulatory framework and will protect salmon habitat. But you are a bit unclear on the details – say that you'll have to check and email answers to the questions. <i>Attitude during interview:</i> Be polite but a bit hurried</p>
<p>Carlos Alonso: DFO Field Officer – British Columbia You are opposed to the change and are quite angry that Ottawa has agreed to it. However, you have to be careful because you work for the DFO. <i>Attitude during interview:</i> Not very informative, maybe start to say something and then stop. But use lots of facial expressions that show your feelings.</p>	<p>Francis Singh: Provincial Environment Officer You are primarily concerned with the procedures around the RAR. You work with municipalities and developers to help implement the regulation. You are not interested in politics. <i>Attitude during interview:</i> You are brusque, dismissive, and too busy to waste much time on students</p>
<p>Brent Vin: Local Streamkeeper You are totally against the RAR and are very angry that the city is considering it. You have been a volunteer streamkeeper for 10 years, working to enhance and protect the streams and creeks, and have been involved in the re-introduction of salmon to a creek running through Coquitlam. You think that particular creek is threatened by the RAR. <i>Attitude during interview:</i> You are quite passionate, occasionally a bit angry, and have no patience for opposing views.</p>	<p>Margaret Tanaka: Local Resident and Property Owner You are in favour of the change to RAR. It seems to you to protect streamsides adequately, and also allows property owners to develop their own land. You own land in an area which will soon be developed, and there is a creek running through your property. You could see a significant profit if RAR is adopted. <i>Attitude during interview:</i> You are very reasonable and well-meaning, but not very well-informed as to the specifics of the RAR or the SPR.</p>

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