



Making a difference...together

Education and Appreciation Garnered through Listening and Exploring - E.A.G.L.E. Beach

Educators Guide

Program at a Glance

On this interactive program, we invite participants to explore the cultural significance of seashore plants and creatures, through a First Peoples lens. The cultural uses, lessons and values linked with seasonal harvest, hunting, fishing and gathering by First Peoples will amaze students. We begin with a traditional welcome and territory acknowledgement



then share the history and importance of the site to the First Peoples. We will explore rocky and sandy beaches and look for specific seashore plants and creatures, detailing how they are harvested and during which season. Through hands-on engaging activities and the oral tradition of storytelling, students will develop an understanding of how First Peoples use available resources in a respectful and sustainable way.

In this program, your students will...

- Observe seasonal changes on the beach.
- Discover the unique value that all living things have.
- Explore the beach and see how it provides many resources to First Peoples.
- Develop an understanding of why First Peoples feel it necessary to apply cultural ceremonies and protocols to hunting, fishing and, gathering.
- Learn and appreciate how First Peoples pass down their knowledge through cultural gatherings and storytelling.

Curriculum Connections

Our place based school programs directly relate to the K-5 science & social studies curricula. Below you will find some big ideas, curricular competencies and content that will be addressed on your program.

Big ideas from BC Curriculum: Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives

Science:

Living things have life cycles adapted to their environment. (2)

Living things are diverse, can be grouped, and interact in their ecosystems. (3)

Social Studies:

Local actions have global consequences and global actions have local consequences. (2)

Indigenous knowledge is passed down through oral history, traditions, and collective memory. (3)

Content from BC Curriculum: Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives

- First Peoples knowledge of life cycles. (2)
- Sustainably gathering plants and hunting/fishing in response to seasons and animal migration patterns, i.e.: clam gardens, seasonal rounds, etc. (2)
- The interconnection between living and non-living things in the local environment. (3)
- Our sacred responsibility to care for the local environment, i.e.: stewardship. (3)
- Information shared from the local First Peoples community and Elders (3)
- Recognize the importance of sharing knowledge through storytelling, songs and art for the benefit of future generations.

Curricular Competencies from BC Curriculum:

- Demonstrate curiosity and a sense of wonder about the world
- Observe objects and events in familiar contexts
- Safely manipulate materials to test ideas and predictions
- Consider ethical responsibilities when deciding how to conduct an experiment
- Experience and interpret the local environment
- Identify First Peoples perspectives and knowledge as sources of information
- Compare observations with those of others
- Express and reflect on personal experiences of place

Suggested Pre-Trip Activities

- Share personal stories and experiences about visiting the beach (i.e.: beachcombing)
- Explore traditional stories of the beach from an Indigenous Perspective.
- Draw a picture of your favourite beach creature and describe why you like it.

Follow-up Activities

- Write a paragraph and/or draw a picture that reflects your favourite part of the program.
- Plan and host a gathering for another class where the students have an opportunity to share what they have learned with other students.

Background Information on Indigenous Perspectives

Indigenous Peoples of this area have lived on these lands for countless generations and always with a sense of coexistence and interconnection. This relationship with the land, deeply rooted in harmony, respect and gratitude inspires the belief that all natural resources are considered to be gifts versus an entitlement.

Cultural protocols demonstrating a commitment to conservation were firmly established. From hunting and harvesting to fishing and gathering, these guidelines always ensure respect and gratitude for all 'gifts' from the environment. The protocol of taking only what is needed is faithfully applied today, evidenced by the culturally modified cedar trees in several Regional Parks.

When Indigenous Peoples look out from the shore to the sea they are always reminded that we should never take for granted the many gifts around us.

The following are examples of applied protocols:

- Saanichton Bay has been the site of ceremony and celebration for the Tsawout Nation for countless generations. Acknowledging the seasonal harvest from the Salish Sea's bounty is still an annual practice and includes the area surrounding Island View Beach Regional Park.
- Prior to the arrival of Europeans, hunting on Mount Work was an annual event, with the cultural protocol to wait until the ground was one colour. This was to ensure a wounded animal could be easily tracked and a life would not be wasted. Black Tailed Deer still abound in Mount Work Regional Park.
- The Great Blue Heron, known as SNEÆE to the Scia'new Nation, were netted in marshy areas like Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. The greyish blue feathers were used to accent regalia and the leg bones could be fashioned into flutes and whistles. The cultural protocol is to use everything, leaving a minimum behind for scavengers.

- Some of the trees in Francis King Regional Park are over 800 years old and to the Lək'wəḡən Peoples, cutting down a tree of this age is equivalent to removing a history keeper from the forest. Therefore, ceremonies were performed to acknowledge the life of the tree before it became a canoe or house-post.
- Following the trails left behind by bears, deer and elk, guided Indigenous Peoples of this territory to fresh water, medicine and trap lines. Leaving these pathways was deemed to be disrespectful to animals relying on the under-brush for homes and food.

When the 'Newcomers' arrived, the impacts on Indigenous ways of being and knowing were devastating.

- Forests of trees were cut down indiscriminately, without consideration for the habitats of animals or surrounding plants
- Diseases spread widely throughout the province decimating the populations
- Governance structures that had stood the test of time began to collapse
- Cultural practices, protocols and the speaking of Indigenous languages were outlawed.

Excerpt from Author, Diane Silvey's book - The Kids Book of Indigenous Peoples in Canada

"Cultural Renewal

Despite repeated attempts to ban traditional practices and assimilate Aboriginal People, Aboriginal culture did not disappear. Rather, it was held in sacred trust by the elders, who are now helping to rekindle traditional concepts and practices.

Today, centuries-old traditions - dances, songs and feasts - are being passed along to the young, providing them with a sense of cultural pride, community and purpose in life.

Traditional Aboriginal culture was based on spirituality, which was meant to be a guiding force in a person's life. Attempts to destroy this force have failed. The cultural bonds of Aboriginal peoples have not and never will be broken."

Additional Resources

Teacher References

Turner, Nancy Royal BC Museum Handbook, Plant Technology Of First Peoples in British Columbia. Royal BC Museum 2017

Turner, Nancy J. and Hebda, Richard J. Saanich Ethnobotany, Culturally Important Plants of the WSÁNEĆ People. Royal BC Museum 2012

Stewart, Hilary. Indian Fishing, Early Methods On The Northwest Coast. Douglas & McIntyre 2013

Wall Kimmerer, Robin Braiding Sweetgrass – Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants. Milkweed Editions 2013

Student References

Silvey, Diane. The Kids Book of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. Kids Can Press 2005