

Session 5
Watershed SOS
Learner's Guide



Jump into some action-oriented, solution-based learning focused on the protection and restoration of our watersheds.



Today's Big Question: How can we protect and restore our watershed?

Introduction

In the last session, we learned that there are many activities going on that have harmful impacts on this essential biological system. But there is much hope for our watersheds!

Happily, today, we are going to learn many things we can do differently to help protect the watershed, and some actions we can take to restore health to damaged areas.

There are ways we can harvest wood from our forests that will not cause as much harm, especially if we take the time to understand the ecology of each area. In the *Mapping Our Watersheds* session, you learned about natural ecosystem mapping, an assessment tool that helps us understand the unique features and considerations of an ecosystem.

Shown below is an example of an Ecological Character Map of the Koksilah Watershed on Vancouver Island. It shows the different types of forest ecosystems in the area, as well as the soil characteristics and sensitivity. This kind of information mapping can help us make better assessments and decisions about human activities, and reduce impacts on the watershed.

Through generations of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, the care, protection, and sustainable practices around watersheds allowed many watershed areas to flourish prior to urban sprawl and climate change. All this knowledge contributes to our ecological literacy of our local watershed.

What other things can we do?

- We can plant gardens in urban areas that help to reduce flooding, and filter contaminants from run-off
- Your class can do "Storm Drain Marking" activities to help prevent contaminants from being released into the watershed
- We can use specific local indigenous plants to help quickly regenerate natural riparian ecosystems that protect waterways and create good fish habitat

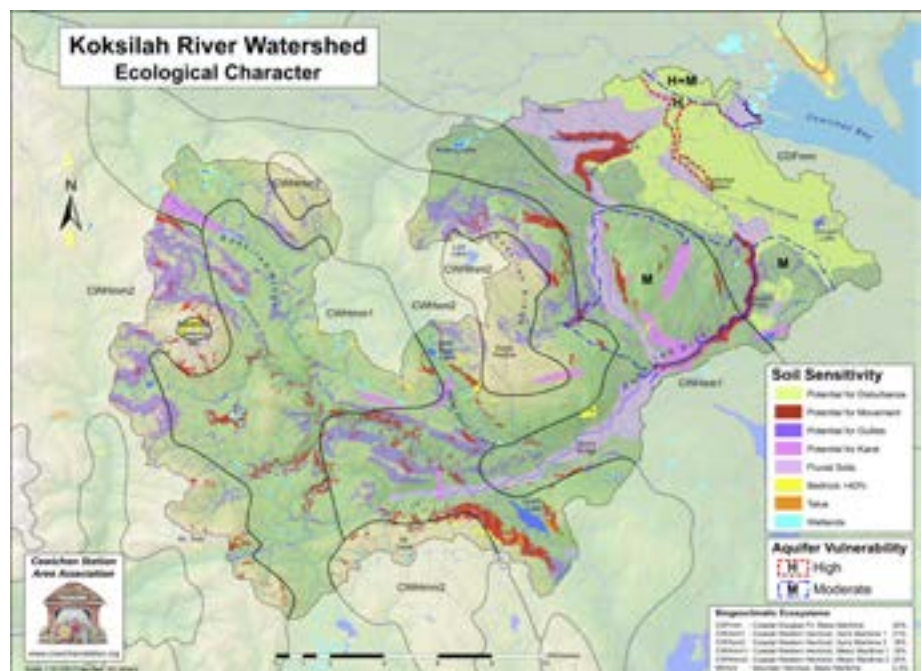


Image courtesy of the Cowichan Station Area Community Association



Activity 1: Watershed SOS

In our activities today, we will explore the following words and terms.

Your Words and Terms

- › Ecological literacy
- › Ecological restoration
- › Selective forestry
- › Rain gardens
- › Decontamination
- › Mitigation
- › Local Indigenous words for 'willow' and/or 'red-osier dogwood'

In your group, research your vocabulary word(s) and prepare to share what you have learned with the class, using the following method:

Steps

1. Research the terms: create a bulleted list of key notes defining your word or term and how it impacts the watershed.
2. Think about a simple image that demonstrates your word.
3. On a piece of chart paper:
 - › Put your word or term in big letters at the top
 - › Draw your image on the left side of the paper, leaving room on the right.
 - › Write your bullets notes on the right side of the paper.
4. Share with the class!

On the following page there is a table for you to draw and record what you learn about other groups' words and terms as they share. One side is for the image and one for the bullet notes. Don't forget to label with the word or term itself.

My word or term: _____ **Image:** _____

Key notes: _____

Word/Term:	Notes:
Word/Term:	Notes:
Word/Term:	Notes:
Word/Term:	Notes:
Word/Term:	Notes:
Word/Term:	Notes:
Word/Term:	Notes:



Activity 2: Watershed Reflection

Here you are, learning about your watershed AND doing some incredibly valuable ecological stewardship and restoration while you are at it!

In the next session of this *Best Water Ways* place-based learning project you will participate in an active riparian restoration in your community.

Importantly, you will also create your own unique way of sharing what you are learning and doing. Communicating about your learning helps you to gain a better understanding of the ideas and information covered in the sessions. Your sharing is a powerful way to spread awareness about the health of our watersheds and how people can help preserve and restore them.

This “Watershed Reflection” time is the perfect opportunity for you to think about communicating with others effectively about what you’ve been learning.

The following planning guide has been developed to help you consider, choose, and plan what and how you want to communicate about your riparian restoration experience.

Basically, you are going to choose something about the *Best Water Ways* learning experience that has really stood out for you, and decide how you want to communicate about it. Think of this as an independent mini-project nested within the larger *Best Water Ways* place-based learning series.



Planting native species in a riparian area is a great restoration activity for learning groups.

Photo: Stephanie Cottell

Shout Out and Share! Planning Guide

Step 1: What

Answer the following exploratory questions. Answering these questions will help you decide *what* you want to communicate about the Riparian Restoration activities.

1. What specific parts of the learning projects are you finding most interesting?

2. What has surprised you about what you have been learning in this project?

3. What do you think is the most important information or concept that you've learned?

4. What do you think it would be like to communicate on one or two specific aspects of the Riparian Restoration activities?

5. What would it be like to communicate about the activities as a whole?

Looking back over your answers above, does something jump out at you about what you would like to communicate about this project? Chat with your teacher or classmates if you think it would be helpful to you.

I would like to communicate about:

Step 2: How

Answer the following exploratory questions. Answering these questions will help you decide *how* you want to communicate about this project.

1. How do you like to communicate—verbally, or through writing? If it's writing, is it creative writing or more technical writing? Do you like to interview experts? Do you like to do visual/graphic communication or a mix of methods?

2. What do you think would be some effective ways to communicate about this project?

3. What kinds of resources and tools do you have available to use for this communication? Can you access a camera or video-recorder? Art supplies?

4. What way of communicating would you most enjoy?

Looking back over your answers above, what jumps out at you about how you would like to communicate about this project? Chat with your teacher or classmates if you think it would be helpful to you.

I would like to communicate through:

Step 3: Who

Answer the following exploratory questions. Answering these questions will help you decide *who* to connect with to help with your communication element. Please note you might decide you don't need to connect specifically for this element.

1. How could my communication element benefit from connecting with a mentor?

2. Who would be helpful to connect with regarding my communication element?

Looking back over your answers above, does something jump out at you about who you would like to connect with about this project? Chat with your teacher or classmates if you think it would be helpful to you.

I would like to connect with:

Step 4: Plan

Now that you have a clear idea of *what* you want to share, *how* you want to share it, and *who* to connect with for input and mentorship (if anyone), it's time to plan your process.

Planning Questions

1. How is timing related to what and how I want to share about the riparian restoration activities?

2. What kinds of additional equipment or material will I require and when? (Examples: camera, poster paper, materials)
