

## Inspired by the River

### Background Information on the Fraser River:

The Fraser River was named after Simon Fraser (1776-1862) who explored the river in 1808 on behalf of the North West Company in search of a navigable route for fur trading. Simon Fraser believed that he was traveling on the Columbia River to its ocean outlet. It was another explorer, David Thompson, who later named the river after Simon Fraser.

First Nations people had lived along the Fraser River for thousands of years before Simon Fraser's arrival. Some of the archaeologists estimate up to 9000 years before. (A site under the Alex Fraser Bridge has been dated back that far).

The Fraser River starts as a trickle at Mount Robson (Headwaters) and ends in the Strait of Georgia in the Pacific Ocean. There are many tributaries that add water to the Fraser, including the Thompson River (22% of the total water flow).

The Fraser River is 1 375 kilometers long. If it was stretched out across Canada, it would span the distance between Vancouver and Regina, Saskatchewan. The Fraser River is the fifth largest river in Canada. It is less than 15 000 years old.

The characteristics and landscapes of the Fraser River change from the beginning of its journey to its end. As you exit the Headwaters and enter the Upper Basin region, the river's sediment load increases creating more turbulent waters with the water appearing grey or brown in colour. The river then passes through the Drylands with low vegetation as a result of little rainfall and hot temperatures. In the Canyon, the river is squeezed between the Coast and the Cascade mountain ranges increasing the speed and creating many impressive rapids.

The point at which the fresh water of the Fraser River meets the salty water of the Pacific Ocean is called the estuary, (also sometimes called "between land" by the First Nations people because as the tides ebb and flow, the estuary changes from land that is covered with water to dry land). Other estuaries include the mouths of great rivers such as the Amazon, the Nile and the Mississippi.

The Fraser River Estuary is as rich in its biodiversity as it is an ideal habitat for many organisms. A habitat can be defined as a place where an organism can get food, water and shelter. The major habitat types along the Fraser River include: brackish and freshwater marshes, salt marshes, tidal flats, sloughs, and flood-plain forests among others.

The Fraser River watershed is also home to 60% of BC's population, approximately 2.7 million people. S watershed is an area of land that drains all the water into one main river. The Fraser River watershed is also called a drainage basin, since it collects so much water and drains such a large area (25% of BC's area).

## Program Overview:

Through visual and dramatic arts, students become inspired by the Mighty Fraser River, collaborate to create a river mural, and use drama and play to explore their personal connections to the river.

This 90 minute program begins outside where students can see for themselves all of the different activities happening along the river. There they will be able to collect patterns that are later used to build a river mural. Students then discover their connections to the river through drama and games and discover that the Fraser River an important ecosystem, means of transport and trade and as a home for two thirds of British Columbia.

## Program Objectives

- To examine the river's surroundings and gain inspiration from it.
- To express ideas through creative expression
- Discover all the different way that we use the river
- Discover the importance of the river as an environmental entity; as a home for humans and a habitat for animals

## Helpful Vocabulary

**Contrast:** the state of being strikingly different from something else

**Conservation:** preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife.

**Dredging:** clean out the bed of (a harbor, river, or other area of water) by scooping out mud, weeds, and rubbish with a dredge.

**Ecosystem:** a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

**Estuary:** the tidal mouth of a large river, where the tide meets the stream.

**Habitat:** the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.

**Pattern:** a repeated decorative design.

**Perspective:** a particular attitude toward or way of regarding something; a point of view.

**Population:** all the inhabitants of a particular area.

**River basin:** the portion of land drained by a river and its tributaries

**Ro-Ro's:** vessels designed to carry wheeled cargo, such as cars, trucks, semi-trailer trucks, trailers, and railroad cars, which are driven on and off the ship

**Transport:** a system or means of conveying people or goods from place to place by means of a vehicle, aircraft, or ship.

**Tributary:** a river or stream flowing into a larger river or lake.

**Watershed:** an area or ridge of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins, or seas.

## In- class activities:

### Pre-visit:

1. Look around the classroom to try find patterns. Some classmates may be wearing patterned clothes. What makes a pattern? (repeats 3 times)
2. Students should be able to recognize the Fraser River on a map. Have students identify the major cities and tributaries found along the Fraser River.

### Post visit:

1. Either as a class, or individually, draw a segment of the river. Include some of the things you can remember noticing happening along the river. Include different modes of transport, animals, industry, and recreational activities along the river.
2. During the program, we spoke about goods such as shoes and bananas that are brought to us by boats that use the Fraser River. Look for the tag on things you own or wear and see how many different countries they come from.

## From Pollution to Solution Word Search Activity

T	B	T	X	T	I	Y	S	Q	Z	L	K	L	I	W	I
W	F	U	M	J	S	T	R	E	A	M	R	P	H	V	E
E	H	Z	F	F	P	C	E	K	C	C	A	X	L	X	C
L	X	X	O	C	I	P	O	L	L	U	T	A	N	T	L
B	C	B	Z	Q	L	N	O	V	Y	H	N	E	R	H	Y
A	E	X	I	J	B	M	D	C	C	O	A	C	E	A	N
N	A	A	U	Q	S	X	A	O	I	N	R	K	S	B	O
I	V	T	G	L	O	K	A	T	N	O	A	F	A	I	S
A	F	F	O	N	U	R	A	R	U	N	B	G	R	T	B
T	Y	D	F	F	A	V	Z	N	M	E	E	I	F	A	O
S	G	N	I	M	R	A	W	L	A	B	O	L	G	T	R
U	U	D	Y	E	K	S	A	L	M	O	N	H	L	I	V
S	X	X	S	Y	R	T	S	U	D	N	I	A	R	Y	W
R	Y	N	K	Q	X	G	C	N	C	X	U	W	W	N	P
L	O	S	R	E	T	T	I	L	G	W	T	J	B	A	U
C	O	H	I	J	X	D	C	H	E	M	I	C	A	L	C

chemical  
 conservation  
 findonnelly  
 fraser  
 globalwarming  
 habitat  
 industry

litter  
 pollutant  
 robson  
 runoff  
 salmon  
 stream  
 sustainable

**RIVER  
SCHOOL**  
PROGRAMS

AT THE FRASER RIVER DISCOVERY CENTRE