

NEWS BREAK

Article: **The power of a logjam: A vision of the Northwest's rivers of old ELWHA**

Section: **NW, C1**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, November 17, 2024** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

****Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will learn about the importance of reintroducing logjams into the Elwha River in order to heal it and restore its salmon habitat, which existed in the past. They will discuss how Indigenous knowledge of NW tribes play a role-and how learn how they are linked to the salmon.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

And slower water during high flows doesn't scour salmon egg nests; it is allowed to **meander** across its flood plain — instead of flooding it.

Meander Guess:

Meander Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. In their natural state, _____ rivers are a braided mess of forested islands, jammed with downed wood and surging with salmon.
2. Now work is underway to restore the lower Elwha to a version of its past — in part by building giant _____.
3. “We have been trained to see rivers wrong,” said Mike McHenry, biologist for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. So far, the tribe has built about _____ logjams here, returning wood obstructions to the river’s life cycle 10 years after two hydroelectric dams were removed from the watershed.
4. The jams further rebuild the resilience of the river, especially in consideration of the effects of _____, said Jamie Michel, habitat manager for the tribe.
5. Bigger _____ and more intense _____ are expected in winter, with more precipitation coming as rain rather than snow.

6. The jams rebuild the complexity of the river with stacks and heaps and jumbles of wood that do what?
7. This glorious mess — heaps of giant logs everywhere, the river braiding around them, splitting into quiet side channels, digging pools and sopping the banks — this is what all the rivers here used to look like. There, they had acted like _____, grabbing even more wood from the flow. Eventually, a solid mass stacked and rafted and dug deep into the bottom, and the river cruised around, over and through it. These stable points became the anchor for the next old-growth forest that would grow and fall into the flow, in an unending cycle of goodness, built on logs big enough to persist for many centuries.
8. _____ on logjams in rivers including the Queets revealed logs buried deep in river banks that had persisted anywhere from several hundred to several thousand years.
9. “It takes _____ for this process to get going, and when we come in and log things like the Elwha Valley, a lot of damage was done historically,” Abbe said.
10. The \$350 million dam removal project on the Elwha completed in 2014 was the first step in _____ this river, unstopping its flow for the migration not only of fish, but sediment and logs coming down from the mountains to the sea.
11. The jams now are helping to reconnect the river to its flood plain, and boost the river’s ability to recover its natural capacities for nurturing what?
12. The tribe counted more than 1,000 Chinook redds, or _____, in the river this spawning season. Steelhead came back some 2,500 strong (compared with 200 to 400 before dam removal), lamprey are squiggling back to the river in record numbers, and even pink and chum salmon are starting to make a comeback, McHenry said.
13. Tribal fishermen like what they see too, in a river that today can once again support a small _____ and subsistence fishery for coho. Because if it matters, whether it’s a birthday, a funeral, an honoring or a naming, salmon is always on the table.
14. Damming the river and depleting its salmon runs threatened not only the salmon’s survival but what?

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?

“The relationship with these beings has been disconnected,” he said of salmon. “We are finding our way back to who we are.” In this way, dam removal on the Elwha and the logjam projects aren’t just engineering feats — they are integral to cultural renewal. “Salmon was our family, our relative, our understanding of salmon is as a

relation, not a resource,” Fernandes said. “We call ourselves salmon people. As the salmon go, we go.”

- What do you feel after reading Fernandes’ statement? Why is salmon so respected in Native culture? Do you see their connection to place, to their environment, their culture and their people? How is everything interwoven?
 - The article mentions the concept of "cultural renewal" in relation to the Elwha River project. Explain how restoring the river can be seen as a way to preserve the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe's culture.
1. The passage describes how past practices like damming and removing large wood from rivers negatively affected salmon populations. Explain how these practices caused this negative effect.
 2. Is it ethical to intervene in natural processes like river formation and restoration? Should humans take an active role in shaping the environment, or should we let nature take its course?
 3. How does the knowledge and perspective of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe contribute to the river restoration project? What role does Indigenous knowledge play in environmental stewardship?
 4. What role do government policies and regulations play in river restoration? How can effective policies be developed to promote sustainable river management?
 5. How might climate change affect the success of the Elwha River restoration project? What additional challenges or opportunities does climate change pose for river restoration efforts?

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