

River Tour

Objective: To educate participants about the importance of rivers

Abstract: Canada is a land of rivers. Not only are rivers used for traveling, swimming and fishing, they also provide a source of livelihood for many people. Unfortunately, the wellbeing of Canada's rivers (and the creatures that live in them) is threatened by dams, diversions, pollution and development. By educating your community about rivers, community members will become more aware of their local river and will treat it with greater respect.

Number of Participants: at least 5 to plan (more is great!)

Total Hours of Planning Time: 4-5 hours

Total Hours for Participants: 1 hour (it's best to keep the tour under an hour so as not to lose interest)

Appropriate Age of Participants: 7+ (you can adjust your plans to fit a wide range of ages)

Materials:

- Paper
- Map of the area
- Marking tape
- Resources to make fact sheets and small speeches about different areas of river ecosystem

Action Plan:

1. Look at your river area and maps and decide what topics you would like to focus on. Stick to the basics, as it is difficult to cover every issue in only one hour. Some ideas for your tour:

Plants and animals: teach your group about the different plants and animals that live in or around the river and what their roles are.

Habitats: teach your group about animal habitats and why they need to be protected (from human interference).

Ecosystem: teach your group about the function of the river and its different parts (including animals, habitats, and environmental concerns like pollution).

2. Establish a date. Planning your tour around “Canadian Rivers Day” (held annually on the second Sunday in June) could help raise the profile of your event.
3. Create your own map of the area with landmarks and areas that you want to talk about.
4. Prepare short speeches or activities about each area of the river (using resources and glossary provided below). Ensure your script is interactive to keep participants engaged.
5. Decide whether participants will take the tour by land or water (e.g. on foot, by bicycle, by canoe).
6. Just before the tour, travel the route (to ensure it’s navigable) and mark each landmark with some sort of environmentally-friendly sign.
7. On the day of the actual tour, depending on group size you can:
 - a) Have organizers stationed at each landmark to talk to groups as they walk/canoe through the area, or
 - b) Have organizers (in pairs) lead smaller tour groups through the area, stopping at each landmark
8. At each landmark tell the tour group about the area (e.g. shoreline, river, vegetation) and about the issues relating to the area (e.g. erosion, pollution, invasive species). Ask and answer questions to keep people interested.
9. After the tour, provide refreshments for your participants.
10. (Optional) Create a quiz based on the information participants have learned, and offer small prizes.
11. Share your experience by uploading your project report onto the online Project Database at:
<http://www.janegoodall.ca/members-project-registry.php>

Resources to get you started:

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) – Canada's national river conservation program
With detailed information about Canadian rivers
<http://www.chrs.ca/>

Canadian Rivers Day
http://www.chrs.ca/RiversDay2008/RiversDay_e.htm

Great Canadian River Locator
<http://www.greatcanadianrivers.com/rivers/maps/home.htm>

More information about rivers in Canada
http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/nature/rivers/e_rivers.htm (Includes Provincial Government links)
<http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/learningresources/facts/rivers.html>

An introduction to world rivers

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/rivers/>

Basic overview of river habitats and ecosystems

<http://www.rivernetwork.org/river-habitat.php>

More about rivers

<http://internationalrivers.org/en/node/288>

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Glossary of river terms:

River:

Body of fresh water that runs through a region, usually draining into an ocean or lake.

River Components:

- *River bank* – piece of land located beside river, home to many unique species of plant and animal
- *Riverbed* – bottom of river, home to many plants and animals
- *Fresh water* – lower salinity level than salt water found in oceans
- *Estuary* – place where a river mixes with/connects to an ocean
- *Groundwater* – located underground, often source for river water

Erosion:

The movement of soil and nutrients down a riverbank and into the river. Erosion leads to the collapse of riverbanks and an overload of nutrients in the river.

Invasive Species:

A species that is not native to the ecosystem. It often overtakes native species.

Habitat:

Where living things grow, feed, and reproduce. A river's habitat includes life in and around the water.

Ecosystem:

The interactions among living creatures and their physical environment.

Common River creatures:

- Fish
- Beaver
- Birds

Research animals that are unique to your particular region

Contact:

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