



Cultural Burns © Jackie Fawn

Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire



NASMC
Native American
Studies
Model Curriculum

Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire

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Grade Level: 9-12


Subjects: History, Ethnic Studies, English Language Arts, Science


Time Frame: 4 class periods of minimum of 55 minutes

Links:

 Lesson Slides: Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire

 Script/Facilitation Support: Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire

 Student Handouts Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire

 Regeneration Poem Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire.pdf

Answer Key: Student Handouts Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire

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Materials Needed:

- Projector, speaker, and screen for whole class view and teacher facilitation of slides
- handout pages 1-3
- Pencils

Curriculum Themes

- ☒ History
- ☒ Cultural Strengths
- ☒ Law/Government
- ☒ Relationship to Place
- ☒ Cross Curricular Integration



Lesson Overview

This multi-lesson series explores the deep historical and cultural relationship California Native Tribes have with the land, focusing on how cultural burning continues to be used as a vital component of land stewardship. Students will gain insight into the significance of fire in Indigenous cultures and how it was essential for maintaining ecosystems and cultural practices. Through a combination of poems, videos, imagery, timelines and readings, the lessons will highlight the ongoing efforts by Native peoples to restore their relationship with the earth and their traditional fire practices.

The series begins with an introduction to Indigenous land stewardship, where students will learn about the role of fire in managing the land, including how fire helps regenerate important plants like acorns, which are vital to Indigenous cultures. Students will have the chance to compare and contrast the Indigenous and colonial views on land management, especially fire suppression. As the series progresses, students will understand how Historical US suppression policy has created a devastating impact that began in 1850, which criminalized Indigenous fire practices.

Students will learn about the efforts of Indigenous groups to work, such as the Karuk and Yurok Tribes, to revive cultural burning as a tool for ecological restoration. This will lead into discussions of living in balance with nature, a stark contrast to the Western concept of nature as a resource to be exploited.

By the end of the lesson series, students will understand how Indigenous practices like cultural burning can heal the land and how these practices challenge the commodification of nature prevalent in Western conservation. Ultimately, the series aims to show students why it is crucial to respect and include Indigenous voices and knowledge in addressing today's environmental challenges.

Learning Goals

- Contrast Indigenous and colonial approaches to land management, especially regarding fire suppression policies.
- Comprehend how Indigenous peoples view the Earth as a gift to be cared for, versus the Western commodification of nature.
- Articulate why including Indigenous knowledge in conservation and climate change efforts is essential.
- Develop an appreciation for Indigenous knowledge and support Indigenous rights in environmental discussions.

- Reflect on students' own relationship with nature and how societal values influence environmental stewardship.

Background for Educators

As you guide students through this lesson on Indigenous relationships with the land, take time to create a learning environment that welcomes diverse perspectives and encourages respectful dialogue. Many students may not fully grasp the environmental consequences of commodifying nature and may have little awareness of how the colonization of the United States has deliberately prevented Indigenous communities from living in balance with the land. This lesson series offers an opportunity to shift students' understanding of nature, from something to be exploited to something to be respected and nurtured. Students may not be aware how normal it is in the United States to be unaware of the colonial disassociation with responsibility to protect the health of the Earth.

Students may come from a cultural context that values consumption, so it's crucial to create a safe space where they can explore these new perspectives without shame. The goal isn't to make them feel guilty, but to help them see there are alternative ways of interacting with the Earth—ways that prioritize reciprocity and stewardship. Acknowledge any discomfort students may feel as they reflect about beliefs, and normalize that discomfort as part of their learning journey.

Respect for Indigenous knowledge is key. It's important to show care for the sacredness of these teachings and to avoid treating them as a novelty or something to be appropriated. Center Indigenous voices and experiences, but don't hold Native students to an expectation to speak for their communities.

Encourage empathy, curiosity, and compassion as students engage with complex topics like colonization, environmental degradation, and reclamation of cultural practices. Highlight the efforts of Indigenous Tribes in restoring traditional fire practices as part of environmental healing. Students should leave the lesson feeling empowered, not guilty, and inspired by the ways Indigenous wisdom can help heal the Earth.

Curriculum Standards

CCSS Science Grades 9-12

- HS-LS2-6. Evaluate claims, evidence, and reasoning that the complex interactions in ecosystems maintain relatively consistent numbers and types of organisms in stable conditions, but changing conditions may result in a new ecosystem.

- HS-LS2-7. Design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity.

History and Social Science 9-12

- HSS-10.4.2 Discuss the locations of the colonial rule of such nations as England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Portugal, and the United States.
- HSS-10.4.3 Explain imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized and the varied immediate and long-term responses by the people under colonial rule.
- HSS-PoAD.12.3.2 Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.
- Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills
 - Chronological and Spatial Thinking
 - 1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
 - 4. Students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.
- Historical Interpretation
 - 4. Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.
 - 5. Students analyze human modifications of landscapes and examine the resulting environmental policy issues.

English Language Arts

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2.a: Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2.b Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2.e Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2.f Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Theme for Ethnic Studies: Native cultural resurgence and self-determination.

Teacher Directions

Before the lesson, print Student handouts (linked above) and have Lesson Slides (linked above) projected on the classroom screen for student view. If a classroom projector and/or screen is not available, the slides could be linked to a google classroom or online student platform (use of slides are required for this lesson). Lesson Slides are animated to gradually provide information, so make sure to present using “slideshow” mode. Content will appear on click.

Use Teacher Script (linked above) to support facilitation of the lesson (summary below).

Day 1: Regeneration

- Allow for 10 minutes for lesson introduction (slides 1-6 and Student Handout Page 1).
- ❖ Engage:
 - Allow for 25 minutes for Part 2: Regeneration activities (slide 7 and Student Handouts pages 2-4)
- ❖ Explore:
 - Allow for 20 minutes for Part 3: Working together to Steward with Fire (slides 9-12).

Day 2: Burning ie Resilience



- Allow for 10 minutes for lesson introduction (slides 12-17).
- ❖ Explain:
 - Allow for 25 minutes for Part 3: Cultural Fires are “Good Fires” (slides 18-19 and Student Handout page 5)
- ❖ *Explain:
 - Allow for 20 minutes for Part 4: Colonial Impacts to the Land (slides 20- 22 and Student Handout page 5 and 6).

Day 3: Fire on the Land

- Allow for 10 minutes for lesson introduction (slides 23-28).
- ❖ Elaborate:
 - Allow for 25 minutes for Part 5: Fire on the Landscape (slides 29- 34 and Student Handout page 7)
- ❖ Elaborate:
 - Allow for 20 minutes for Part 6: Working Together - Senate Bill 310 (slides 35 and student handout pages 8-10).

Day 4: Fire on the Land

- Allow for 10 minutes for lesson introduction (slides 23-28).
- ❖ Evaluate:
 - Allow for 15 minutes to introduce Part 7. Final Reflection Assignment: Restoring Fire for the Land (slides 42-46 and Student Handout pages 12-13).
 - Students should be given the remainder of the class period to draft an outline for the essay. Additional class periods may need to be given to complete the essay.

Scaffolding/ELD Strategies

Universal Design for Learning:

Engagement: Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:

- Create cooperative learning groups
- Provide feedback that is frequent, timely, and specific
- Provide feedback that encourages perseverance, focuses on development of efficacy and self-awareness, and encourages the use of specific supports and strategies in the face of challenge

Representation: Consider the following method to support with multiple means of representation:

- Offer alternatives for auditory or visual information
- Pre-teach vocabulary and symbols, especially in ways that promote connection to the learners’ experience and prior knowledge
- Allow the use of Text-to-Speech and screen readers

- Embed visual, non-linguistic support for vocabulary clarification (pictures, videos, etc.)
- “Chunk” information into smaller elements

Action and Expression: Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:

- Provide options for Physical Action
- Provide spell checkers, grammar checkers, word prediction software
- Provide sentence starters or sentence strips

For additional ideas to support your students, check out the resources below:

- UDL Guidelines at CAST (2018) <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>
- Oakland University ENGAGEMENT: Universal Design for Learning Principle [ENGAGEMENT: Universal Design for Learning Principle TEACHING STRATEGIES](#)
- Oakland University REPRESENTATION: Universal Design for Learning Principle [REPRESENTATION: Universal Design for Learning Principle TEACHING STRATEGIES](#)
- Oakland University ACTION AND EXPRESSION: Universal Design for Learning Principle [ACTION & EXPRESSION: Universal Design for Learning Principle TEACHING STRATEGIES](#)

Multilingual Learner Supports:

Emerging: Consider the following method to support with emerging students:

- Pre Teach vocabulary
- Use group work and peer learning to allow students to learn from each other.
- Repeatedly model how to say or write a new word or phrase, and give students many opportunities to practice.

Expanding: Consider the following method to support with expanding students:

- Encourage students to practice using new vocabulary in conversation or group discussions, guided by structured prompts or pair work.
- Use context to help explain new vocabulary.

Bridging: Consider the following method to support with bridging students:

- Incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities around a single topic, allowing students to see the language in multiple forms.
- Gradually introduce more complex texts (e.g., short stories, informational texts) with supports like glossaries or simplified summaries to aid comprehension.

Reaching: Consider the following method to support with bridging students:

- Encourage students to review and give feedback on each other’s writing or projects.
- Reinforce academic vocabulary across content areas. Provide opportunities for students to use this language in writing and speaking.

For additional guidance around scaffolding for multilingual learners, please consult the following resources:

- English Learner Toolkit of Strategies
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/ujkdc2xp1dqjzrlq55czph50c3sq1ngu>
- Providing Appropriate Scaffolding
<https://www.sdcoe.net/educators/multilingual-education-and-global-achievement/oracy-to-olk/it/providing-appropriate-scaffolding#scaffolding>
- Strategies for ELD <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/dcp15ymah51uwizpmmt2vys5zr2r5reu>
- ELA/ELDFramework
<https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/resources/6537/ela-eld-frameworkHMONGHISTANDCULTSTUDIESMODELCURRICULUM> 9
- California ELD Standards
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/vqn43cd632z22p8mfzn2h7pntc71kb02>

Additional Resources for Teachers

- Videos:
 - Controlled Burns Prevent Wildfire | Firelighters: Fire is Medicine | Full Film | Local, USA. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AskCYsXWKpA>
 - Requires small donation:
 - Elemental: Reimage Wildfire PBS KEET
<https://www.pbs.org/video/elemental-reimagine-wildfire-g7dglw/>
 - Fire Tender. PBS KEET <https://www.pbs.org/video/fire-tender-o32m04/>
- Short Printables:
 - Indigenous Peoples Burning Network (IPBN).
<https://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/FireLearningNetwork/RegionalNetworks/Documents/IPBN-Poster-Apr2016.pdf>
- Research:
 - Prehistoric fire area and emissions from California's forests, woodlands, shrublands, and grasslands. Scott L. Stephens, Robert E. Martin, and Nicholas E. Clinton
<https://www.sierraforestlegacy.org/Resources/Conservation/FireForestEcology/FireScienceResearch/FireHistory/FireHistory-Stephens07.pdf>
- Learning Toolkit:
 - Teaching Tool! A Classroom Guide to Cultural Burning & Good Fire. Redbud Resource Group.
https://www.redbudresourcegroup.org/post/teaching-tool-a-classroom-guide-to-cultural-burning-good-fire?utm_campaign=31089747-a68b-4c65-8ea2-0496ca801c8e&utm_source=so&utm_medium=mail&cid=d395bfd9-8ca8-4a0e-a045-4cee2f219fd3



References

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<https://www.savetheredwoods.org/redwoods-magazine/indigenous-perspectives-are-crucial-for-conservation/>
- “This one fact will completely change how you think about California wildfires”. PC Gabrielle Lurie. San Francisco Chronicle.
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2022/california-wildfire-history/#0>
- “Regeneration” © Yáamay: An Anthology of Feminine Perspectives Across Indigenous California
- “Banned for 100 years, cultural burns could save sequoias”. Kristina Malsberge.
<https://www.savetheredwoods.org/redwoods-magazine/autumn-winter-2024/banned-for-100-years-cultural-burns-could-save-sequoias/>
- Banned for 100 years, cultural burns could save sequoias. Save the Redwoods League.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVCdMBcMVK8>
- U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit. NOAA.
<https://toolkit.climate.gov/case-study/karuk%E2%80%99s-innate-relationship-fire-adapting-climate-change-klamath>
- Permission to Use “How Indigenous Cultural Burns Could Strengthen California's Wildfire Resilience.” The News Movement. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdp-B-ApFC4>
- John Blanchard and Jenny Kwon. Sources: Central Oregon Fire; Brandon Collins, UC Berkeley professor; Nature Conservancy; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Department of the Interior; Project Wildfire Permission to Use “This one fact will completely change how you think about California wildfires”. PC Gabrielle Lurie. San Francisco Chronicle.
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2022/california-wildfire-history/#0>
- “California can right a historic wrong by recognizing tribal authority for cultural burns” by Russell Attebury on September 18, 2024 in CalMatters.org.
https://calmatters.org/commentary/2024/09/wildfire-cultural-burn-california-tribes/?fbclid=IwY2xjawGFDLRleHRuA2FibQlxMQABHbT4_MmvYD_8Hvak4IzISr7NhLWnUZ2k2x_gvCAk-zJCtZ8sf_pAbzTQSw_aem_io0-A_18BHqdMLwtJOni-A

California Native American Studies Model Curriculum

The California Native American Studies Model Curriculum (NASMC) will support the design and development of open-source lesson plans, primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist California K-12 educators in teaching about California Native American Studies. Per AB 167, the NASMC is defined as lesson plans,



primary source documents, planning resources, teaching strategies, and professional development activities to assist educators in teaching about Native American Studies. The traditional cultural knowledge within lessons, including Native language, art, media and stories, are owned by the respective Tribal nations, Native knowledge keepers, artists, producers and authors of the curriculum as indicated in each lesson.

