



Jacoby Creek Land Trust

PO Box 33 • Bayside, CA 95524

www.jclandtrust.org

(707) 822-0900 • jclandtrust@yahoo.com



SMELLING SALMON

Grades: 3-9

Subjects: Science, Environmental Studies

Group Size: 5+

Duration: 60 min.

Setting: Outside or inside

Key Words: salmon lifecycle and habitat, watershed

Goals/Objectives: Students will simulate and discuss the lifecycle of salmon, identify habitat requirements of salmon during stages of its lifecycle, and understand how a salmon finds its way back to its native stream.

Background: In studying the life cycle of salmon, students are most curious as to how salmon can find their way back to the stream in which they were hatched. They are especially amazed that they can find their home stream after being out in the open ocean as many as six years. Scientists have conducted research in this area, and it seems almost certain that salmon use the smell of the water to find their home stream.

Materials & Prep: Paper cups, masking tape, pencil, paper towels, salmon species cards, and an assortment of smells (i.e. cloves, vanilla, peppermint, etc.). Construct a simulated "home stream" by crumpling up a paper towel, sprinkling or pouring a "smell" on it, and stuffing the towel into a paper cup. Invert another cup over this cup, and tape them together like this: . As you assemble these, avoid any visual differences. Punch holes in the end with the paper towel (the upper end). Write the name of your hypothetical or actual stream on the bottom end. Place around the room. Construct as many "streams" as needed, as well as salmon nametags (i.e., Chinook, Coho, Sockeye, Pink, Chum). You may also opt to gather a map of the area's streams and rivers, a jump rope, and numbered cards for salmon removal.

Activity:

1. Pass out the salmon nametags to students who will play the parts.
2. Let students become acquainted with their streams.
3. Have them identify their stream's name by looking on the bottom of the cup. Locate the streams on an area map and discuss any limiting factors they might encounter.



Jacoby Creek Land Trust

PO Box 33 • Bayside, CA 95524

www.jclandtrust.org

(707) 822-0900 • jclandtrust@yahoo.com



4. Send the salmon out to sea to feed and grow. While the salmon are feeding, change all the stream positions. As small feeding salmon, they encounter many hazards en route. They could get caught in turbines. Having them run through a turning jump rope could simulate this. If caught, they are eliminated. Or feeding salmon could be caught in gill nets or by other predators. Having extra students draw numbers for the fish they will take can represent this. In their journey home, they might encounter impassible fish ladders or high dams. To represent this place several streams on a high shelf or block the way to the stream. Then call all of the surviving salmon back to locate their stream. When they feel they identified their stream, let them check the stream name.

5. With a new group of salmon, proceed with the above-mentioned activities, but alter a stream(s) by polluting it. You can spray room deodorant on the cup, both heavily and lightly. Be sure to leave one or two streams unpolluted. Mix the positions of the streams again. It will be difficult for them to identify the heavily polluted streams.

* As you can see, this activity lends itself to many options and ideas. You can make it simple or more complex. Students are actively involved and are very enthusiastic throughout the activity. They begin to realize a few of the problems faced by salmon.