

Activity 22: Take the Pledge



Ages:

4th grade and up.

Time:

This is an ongoing project that you will initiate in a 15-30 minute activity. For at least one month, the teacher will check in with the students weekly regarding their progress.

State Essential Learning Requirements

Civics: 4.1, 4.2

Materials:

Handout supplied.



Take the Pledge

1. Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4. Hand out the "Take the Pledge!" sheet. Give the groups a few minutes to review the sheet. Each student will pick at least two items from the list that they will practice for at least one month. Group members can decide to pick the same items if they would like, or each group member can choose separate items. Have them write out what each person is going to do on a group sheet. The teacher will collect the group sheets; the students will keep their pledges.
2. Ask the teacher to get back to them every week for at least a month. Was it easy, time consuming, worth while? What was the reaction from the students' family and friends? Is this something they could continue doing as a regular routine? Would it make a difference in the water quality in their community? How could they persuade other people to incorporate these practices in their lives?
3. Possibly, you can come back to the class in a month to see how they are doing on their pledges. If you cannot attend the class again, ask the students to send you a letter telling you how well the class did on their pledges.

Preparation:

-Make one copy of the handout for each student.

Overview:

Students will take a pledge to undertake two "salmon enhancing" activities for at least one month.

Objectives:

- To determine what actions you can take to save salmon.
- To practice two "salmon enhancing" activities for one month.

Critical Questions Addressed:

3. Recovery



Take The Pledge

Salmon and other fish are in decline in the Northwest. We must act now to save salmon and protect our quality of life. Salmon are one link in a complex food chain and depend on a healthy environment to maintain their populations. If salmon disappear, so will other species, and our quality of life will change. The decline of salmon is a warning to us to act now to maintain and restore the natural environment which sustains us.

Many positive changes can take place in your own home. Choose two of these actions and stick with them! (Choose two of the bulleted items.)

Reduce the amount of water you use in your home. We use an average of 90 gallons per day per person.

- Take shorter showers or use less water when you take a bath. A five-minute shower, using a standard showerhead, can use up to 35 gallons of water as well as the energy to heat it.
- Install a low flow showerhead in at least one of your bathrooms. They are inexpensive and reduce flow by at least 25%.
- Flush the toilet only when necessary. Ever hear that saying, "if it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down"?
- Install a low-flow toilet or place one or two half-gallon plastic bottles in your toilet tank to reduce water use for each flush. You could save 12,000 gallons of water a year.
- Don't let the water run in the sink while shaving, brushing your teeth, or washing your face and hands.
- Water your lawn and garden only when necessary. Use water-efficient sprinklers, drip irrigation systems, and timing devices to aid absorption by the soil. These items are widely available at garden and hardware stores where they can be purchased at a low cost.

Don't Hurt Salmon With Your Car!

Cars are the biggest contributor to air pollution and one of the biggest to water pollution.

- **Use less water for washing your car (or your parents' car)** Wash your car only when necessary, with a bucket and a hose with a shut off nozzle. Wash one section at a time and rinse quickly. Use a hose that is high-pressure, low-volume, and has a pistol grip nozzle (hoses and nozzles are inexpensive and available at your local hardware store.)
- **Dispose of all auto wastes safely.** More than 2 million of the 4.5 million gallons of used oil discarded annually in Washington state end up in Puget Sound! If you change your automotive oil, take it to a recycling location. Call 1-800-RECYCLE for information on where to take used oil, tires, antifreeze, degreasers, and brake and transmission fluids.
- **Drive Less!** Take public transportation, use a bike, walk, or car pool.

Conserve Energy. The less energy you use, the less demand on dams to create energy.

- Turn off lights and equipment (such as computers) when not in use. Use "task lighting" whenever possible: at desks, for reading or in food preparation areas.
- Consider switching to compact fluorescent lights in some areas of the home. These bulbs are 3 to 4 times more efficient and last 8 to 15 times longer than incandescent.



Take the Pledge Possibilities

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and dispose of things properly.

- If you're not already doing so, begin recycling at least one of the following in your home: paper, plastic, glass, metal, an or newspapers. Call 1-800-RECYCLE for information on how to recycle.
- Re-use paper and plastic bags for lunches, etc.
- Use a reusable cup for coffee and other beverages instead of getting a new paper or Styrofoam cup every time you buy a latte or a soft drink.
- Buy products made from recycled materials.
- Start a compost. Call 1-800-RECYCLE for more information.
- If you have a pet, scoop their waste into a bag. Flush the waste down the toilet and reuse the bag.

Cut Down on the Use of Hazardous Items.

- For cleaning tasks, use "elbow grease" and non-hazardous alternative cleaners like vinegar, salt, or baking soda where these are effective.
- Use the least toxic product you can find and buy only what you need.
- Dispose of hazardous wastes properly. Call 1-800-RECYCLE for the closest place to dispose of your batteries, solvents, paints, car care products, pesticides, etc.

Action Projects

- Stencil Storm drains: "Dump No Waste, Drains to Stream". Call 1-800-RECYCLE for details. Storm drains are not sewers. Typically the water that storm drains carry is not treated before being directed to surface or groundwater.
- Identify your stream. Let people know that there's a stream in your neighborhood. Signs name the creek or stream and serve as reminders of the important role our local creeks play as a home to fish and other wildlife. Call your local conservation district or WSU Cooperative Extension agent.

