

**Focus:**

Students develop a sense of responsibility to restore and protect the wetlands in Alberta.

**Curriculum Connection:**

**5.10-10** Identify individual and group actions that can be taken to preserve and enhance wetland habitats

**Key Learnings:**

- » We can all contribute to the restoration and preservation of wetlands
- » As citizens in a democratic society, we can influence government to implement policy and legislation required to protect wetlands

**Educational Setting:**

- » Classroom/ Computer Lab

**Teacher Preparation:**

1. Book the computer lab if computers and printer are not available in the classroom.

**Materials and Resources Required:**

- » DVD/online video "My Rubber Boots" [www.sacredrelationship.ca/videos/](http://www.sacredrelationship.ca/videos/)
- » Computers, printer

**Launch:**

View the video originally viewed in Lesson Plan 1 of this unit: “My Rubber Boots”.

Discuss with students

- (1) Suzanne’s message of the importance of wetlands and
- (2) the level of destruction of our wetlands that has already happened in Alberta. Facilitate a discussion regarding how they feel about the state of Alberta’s wetlands? Does it concern them? If so, why?

Have students brainstorm individual actions that each of them might take to help preserve, protect or enhance wetlands in their own home area or with Alberta overall.

Agencies or organizations that students can review include (but are not limited to):

- » Alberta Environment
- » Wetlands organizations (such as Ducks Unlimited)
- » Wetlands websites, such as <http://www.wetlandsalberta.ca/>

**Activate:**

Divide the students into small groups or partners. Ask the students to research organizations or agencies (local or Provincial organizations) that work for the protection of wetlands environments. Students will also research the name and contact information for their local MLA and their MP.

Once students have completed their research, discuss with them the actions they could undertake to protect wetlands. For example:

1. Would they like to write to their MLA or MP? Letters to government representatives can appeal for policy and legislation changes to protect wetlands from further destruction and to enhance remaining wetlands.
2. Would they like to contact a wetlands advocacy group? Letters to environmental agencies might offer ideas for new strategies. Or they might simply offer more support through a student action event.
3. Would they like to write to a business or industry that affects wetlands? Letters to industries that are currently engaged in activities that are threatening or destroying wetlands may focus on a request for the business's commitment to preserving wetlands and/or offering to meet to learn together how better operations can protect and restore wetlands in the area.
4. Would they like to organize a clean-up day of a local wetland? If so, they would need to involve local Indigenous and Western scientists to help them to understand the history of the local wetland and how to care for the wetland properly. The students can also invite seniors groups to help, which provides an opportunity to make other community connections as well.

Students will draft letters that clearly present their idea/argument, as well as what change they would like to see or what they would like to do to help. Students can also consider inviting local Aboriginal people to collaborate on the planning and hosting of the awareness activity to bring multiple perspectives to the importance of wetlands.



### DID YOU KNOW :

SOME SCHOOLS HAVE ADOPTED LOCAL WETLANDS AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEANING AND PRESERVING THE WETLANDS AS A PART OF THEIR SCHOOL CURRICULUM. THE ENTIRE SCHOOL LEARNS ABOUT WETLANDS BY DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP WITH A SPECIFIC WETLAND AREA. THE CLASS SPENDS TIME OUTDOORS AND CAN TAKE NOTE OF THE CHANGES THEY SEE FROM SEASON TO SEASON, AND FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

### Connect:

Students are encouraged to attempt to bring people together to take action in their letters. The objective is to support students to call upon Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of all ages to work together for the protection of wetlands in Alberta; in this way, they can be empowered to make change even at their young age.

### Note To Teacher

Action and collaboration within the community is the goal of this lesson. It will be important to ensure that the students are making contacts in an appropriate and safe manner as they will be communicating with people that they do not know.

As well, this lesson may take more than one class period depending on how far the class decides to go with their wetlands protection actions.