Focus:

Identify the different ways that western and Aboriginal science classify wetlands based on what can be harvested there, the type plant life, the wildlife that travels there, soil conditions and water levels.

Curriculum Connection:

5.10-1 Recognize and describe one or more examples of how people classify wetlands

Teacher Preparation:

1. Differentiating Types of Wetlands

In this class, we will talk about how different cultures classify wetlands. The first classification scheme we looked at was living and non-living. Now, we will look at how the ways those different cultures will classify wetlands, based on their values.

Classification from the natural resource standpoint is the grouping of habitats or natural features into categories with similar characteristics, properties, or functions.

Western scientists classify five different kinds of wetlands in Alberta. For example, wetlands may be classified by their biology, the chemistry, the physical characteristics, and for many other reasons, depending on the interest of the person who is looking. Western scientists look at:

» Amount of water

» Permanence of the water

» The types of plant and animal communities that they support

The Aboriginal scientist will also classify different types of wetlands. For example, a Dene person may see wetlands based on utility or values. The question they ask is: what can be harvested at this type of wetland? What animals do I know will be there? Or, sometimes wetlands are a meeting area for cultural reasons. The Aboriginal scientist will look at a wetland and classify it by:

» Whether the water is drinkable

» Their quality as a harvesting site for animals, and its function as a place of rest for animals

» What plants can be harvested from the area (such as medicine, roots and food)

» If they have served as a meeting place, swimming hole, annual gathering site, or for other cultural reasons (such as being a burial site)

2. Review Wetlands Identification PowerPoint prior to presenting to the students.

Key Learnings:

» Specific types of wetlands identified based on what can be harvested, the type plant life, the wildlife that travels there, soil conditions and water levels

» Wetlands support over 250 species of birds, 42 species of mammals, 22 species of fish, as well as a great diversity of plant life and wildlife

» Wetlands act as "nature's kidneys" and clean the water for us

Materials and Resources Required:

» Wetlands Identification PowerPoint

» Wetlands Identification Worksheet

Did You Know :

The word for Water in the following languages:

Cree- nipî
Nakota (Stoney)- minee
Chipewyan- Tu
Blackfoot-Aohkíí (yi)

Launch:

Show the Wetlands Identification PowerPoint to the class and discuss the unique characteristics of the type of wetland on each slide. Discuss what it is that people look at when they are trying to figure out what kind of wetland they are identifying. Point out the visual clues on the slides of the PowerPoint that will help the students identify the type of a wetland.

Activate:

Distribute a copy of the Wetlands Identification Worksheet to each student. Remind the students of the information found on each type of wetland from the PowerPoint presentation.

Have students work individually, or in pairs, to complete the worksheet. The student will be required to draw a visual representation of the unique characteristic(s) of each wetland in the space provided under each labeled wetland section. The students will then write at least 2-3 characteristics that make the identification of the specific type of wetland possible.

Connect:

Each student, or pair of students, will partner with another student (or pair of students) to share the visual and written information that they have included in their Wetlands Identification Worksheet. The students will discuss the work that they have done to solidify their individual understandings of what identifies each distinct wetland type as a pond, slough, marsh, bog, muskeg or fen.

Note to Teacher:

Students may wish to do additional internet research into each type of wetland to help support their learning.

Bogged Down in Wetlands Worksheet

NAME: _____

MUSKEG

What might a western scientist see here?	What might an Aboriginal scientist see here?

SLOUGH

What might a western scientist see here?	What might an Aboriginal scientist see here?

Bogged Down in Wetlands Worksheet

Answer key

MUSKEG

What might a western scientist see here?	What might an Aboriginal scientist see here?
- water that is filtered by the vegetation around it - peat	- water that is filtered by the fields - drinking water for tea - medicines - a place that animals can shelter and drink - a hard place to travel through

SLOUGH

What might a western scientist see here?	What might an Aboriginal scientist see here?
- water moving through an area - water that is a bit more permanent because it moves	- medicines - a drinking source for animals - water moving providing a way to travel