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SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL
TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY
EARLY LEARNING CURRICULUM
One with the Watershed Excerpt for Lesson Three

The Second Teaching:

THE VILLAGE OF THE SALMON PEOPLE:

The Form that catches the Rain.

Excerpt from *One with the Watershed* (pgs. 26-27)*

“I will show you how to put on Salmon eyes for your visit to our country, and you will see in a new way. You will ask:

Where does the rain go when it falls? What catches and holds the sun? How do the trees and grass breathe? How do I belong in all this?

When human beings build a village, what do they put in it?

-water runs through their houses, so they can drink and wash dishes and flush toilets and take showers.

*water runs through the home of the salmon peoples, so we can have a nest to grow in, so rivers can flush pollution out of our redds, so we can have oxygen bubbles in our water and keep cool and free of parasites.

-heat and cool make human homes comfortable.

*the watershed receives heat from the sun, stores it in carbon, in wood, in stone and then releases it, in a circle of life.

-when people go home, we know where they are. This is not a strange environment, but a place they understand.

*In the village of the salmon people, we understand where the thick plants overhang a creek and keep the water shaded and free of silt, so the place is safe and comfortable.

-a village is full of stores, services, providing what we need. There are many ways for people to share with each other.

*In the village of the salmon people, there are many complicated ways for fish to share with the stone flies and human beings. An example is the way a bunch of reeds in a wetland can help filter and clean metals and salts from highway runoff.

What other ways can we compare the watershed to a village?

How do you think we salmon see our home or village differently from the way we see the same hills and forests?

This watershed is where the waters flow together. We all live in a watershed of some kind. Because all water seeks its level by flowing downhill through the watershed, the smallest little creek flows together with others into a stream which again joins others to become a river, which finally reaches the sea. Unless we could live someplace perfectly flat, we are where water flows.

THE SECRET OF THE FLOWING WATERS-

The third Tale told by the Salmon People.

Excerpt from *One with the Watershed* (p. 31)*

The journey we salmon make down the river where we are hatched is full of risks and adventures. We are lucky to travel with all our brother and sister fingerling salmon. The journey we make circling the ocean is something of a mystery. We keep it that way. This is our salmon secret. To learn about it you must put on your salmon eyes...

When our nests are disturbed, we can't live there. It is as if somebody went into your bedroom and turned your bed upside down, forcing you to sleep on the ceiling. If our cold, shaded pool is rebuilt, replanted, or restored it is like falling into a deep, comfortable quilt made just for you. We are not so different, except you don't care as much about flowing...

One more thing about flowing; the river goes through many places. It starts up in the melting snow and rocky slopes and ends in low valleys, swamps and finally its mouth, where it enters the salt water. Imagine flowing water as a giant circle, with evaporation rising from streams and lakes. Then the rain falling is how the circle comes back to Earth and closes. Imagine our salmon journey as a great circle, like water. We go from the watershed to the ocean and back again, over a period of three to five years.

The stories for this lesson are based on the **One with the Watershed, a Salmon Homecoming Story-based Curriculum for Primary Environmental Education, Presented by the Tribal Communities of the Pacific Northwest, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, and the Seattle Aquarium, produced with a Title II grant and a traditional story retold with the permission of T. Richard Baker of the Squamish Nation.*