

Who Will Get The Last Drop?

Objective: Teach students about California's complex water system and the needs of the various stakeholders who depend on that water, using the Sacramento River as a case study.

Time required: This lesson requires one hour to view a video and approximately 30 minutes to one hour of group work in class following the video, with an optional writing assignment.

California State Science Standard: Grades 9 through 12, Earth Science Standard #9: The geology of California underlies the state's wealth of natural resources as well as its natural hazards. Students know the importance of water to society, the origins of California's fresh water, and the relationship between supply and need.

Materials: Video "The Sacramento River of Life"

Procedure:

- Introduce the topic, making sure to define the term "stakeholder."
- Before watching the video, divide students into five groups and assign each group one of the following stakeholder roles: *Farmer, Fisheries Biologist/Fish, Native American, Sport Fisherman, and Urban Developer.*
- Give each individual in the group a question sheet, which will help students focus their attention on the particular parts of the video in which their stakeholder group describes its water needs and perspectives on California's water system.
- Show the video "The Sacramento River of Life."
- Following the video, give students time for discussion in their groups and time to prepare a 2-3 minute group presentation about their stakeholder's needs and perspectives, which they will share with the rest of the class.
- Take the role of a representative from the Bureau of Reclamation, and ask each group of students to give a brief presentation stating why water is so important to their stakeholder group and why their group should "get the last drop" of water from the Sacramento River.
- To conclude, engage the class in a short discussion and have the class determine together which stakeholders should have priority when it comes to distribution of California's water (perhaps they will rank them 1 through 5.)

Reflection:

Have each student write a letter to the Bureau of Reclamation, or another policy-making body of their choice, presenting an argument for why his/her stakeholder group should "get the last drop" of water from the Sacramento River, including why water is important for this group and why it deserves the water more than other stakeholder interests.

Who Will Get the Last Drop? - Questions

Your group is going to play the role of one the following stakeholders: *Farmer, Fisheries Biologist/Fish, Native American, Sport Fisherman, or Urban Developer.*

Review the questions below before watching the video “The Sacramento River of Life” and take notes while watching the video. After the video your group will discuss the these questions, and will prepare a brief (2-3 minute) presentation of what your water needs are and why it is important that you be given your “fair share” of water.

1. Which stakeholder group do you represent?
2. Why do you need the river?
3. How long have you depended on the river?
4. Why do you care about the health of the river?
5. What changes to the river threaten your livelihood?
6. What changes to the river could lead to recovery or prosperity?
7. How do you propose the river should be managed?
8. What changes to the management of the river do you support/oppose?