



Post-visit: *River Canoeing*

Classroom Activity

Brief Synopsis

Silent sports like river canoeing gives the chance to experience the outdoors in memorable and inspirational ways. As recreators, we also have a responsibility to be good stewards of the water so that others may have the opportunity to experience nature in the same way. In these activities students will reflect on their silent sport experiences and their role as concerned citizens.

Ages: Designed for 5th–8th grade

Vocabulary: Inspiration, Observation, Recreation, Reflection, Stewardship, Silent Sport, Water trail

Outcomes:

1. Students will reflect on their canoeing experience. Students will be exposed to the various reasons for silent sport participation.
2. Students will practice creative writing techniques.
3. Students will become aware of the environmental pressures on recreational areas like canoeing routes.

Activity 1: *Silent Sport Inspiration*

Subject: Creative Writing

Time: 30 Minutes

Materials:

- Paddle Whispers excerpt
- Pencil
- Paper

Activity 2: *River Stewards*

Subjects: Environmental Science, Geography

Time: 60 minutes

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Access to Internet

Minnesota Academic Standards:

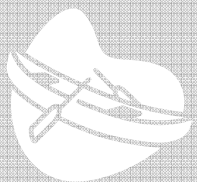
Science: 6.II.D.1&3.

Language Arts: 6 & 8. III.A.3.

Physical Ed: 6.1.2, 6.5.5,

6.6.1,2,4, 7.1.2, 7.5.1,3,

7.6.1,3, 8.3.4, 8.5.1,3, 8.6.1



Activity 1: *Silent Sport Inspiration*

Background: Silent sports describes an array of outdoor activities that rely solely on self-propulsion. Popular silent sports include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, cycling, hiking, running, paddling, rowing, climbing, and multi-sports like triathlons and biathlons. The number of “silent sporters” is ever increasing and the reasons for participation are numerous as well.

Procedures:

1. With the class discuss the definition and examples of “silent sports.”
2. Read an excerpt from “Paddle Whispers” by Doug Wood.
3. Have class reflect on their canoe trip in order to write a poem, prose, etc. based on their experience during class or based on other silent sports they have participated in.

Discussion:

- Allow students to share their writings with the class.
- What are some common observations, feelings, experiences among the class?
- What value do silent sports or outdoor experiences have to the class? To communities? To society?
- How do make silent sport opportunities available?

Activity 2: *River Stewards*

Background: Many rivers that people recreate on (especially in MN) are considered “impaired waters,” rivers in which the water quality is degraded. In this activity, students will determine the level of impairment for Minnesota rivers and their recreational use.

Procedure:

1. Visit the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Water Trails Database at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/index.html>. Click on the “Location Map” in the “Find a Water Trail” box near the bottom left of the page. Assign or allow each student or pairs of students to choose a water trail to research.
2. Pass out *River Stewards* worksheet with map for students to complete.
3. Have students present their map with research findings to the rest of the class.



Discussion

- How many waterways were impaired?
- What was the most common type of impairment?
- How does impairment affect recreation?
- What can we do as stewards to improve the health of watertrails?

Extension:

- Have group compile the data from their maps on one larger map to see the scope and potential patterns of impairment in the state.

Alternate Activities:

- Storm Drain Stenciling: Does a river or stream run through your community? Remind your neighbors that their curb and gutters lead straight to that water source by painting them. Stencils and tips for storm drain painting projects can be found at:
⇒ www.surfridersantacruz.org/storm_drain.html
⇒ www.ngsednet.org/community/resource_uploads/Storm%20Drain%20Painting%20II.doc
- Public Service Announcements: Have students create a public service announcement about river stewardship.

Teacher Tips

Activity #2:

- The river maps on the MN Pollution Control Agency website (<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/tmdl-archives.html#2008>) that students will use to research their water trail impairment are categorized by drainage area. Familiarize yourself with the drainage areas the 30 MN water trails lie in. This will help you, help students find the correct impairment map.

Resources:

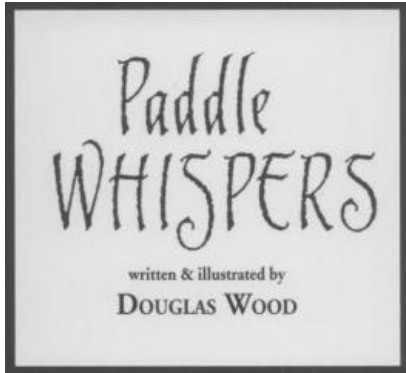
- <http://www.experiencelifemag.com/issues/november-2005/fit-body/silent-sports.html>
- <http://www.doitgreen.org/article/recreation/silentsports>

Recommended Fiction:

- *Paddle to the Sea* by Holling C. Holling - Elementary
- *One-Dog Canoe* by Mary Cassanova - Elementary
- *Paddle Whispers* by Douglas Wood - Middle School



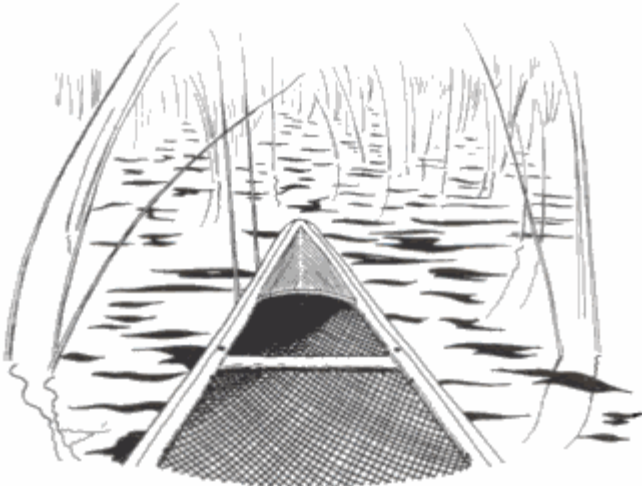
Selected excerpts from:



From green-black walls of forest begin to float the first madrigals—white-throated sparrows and hermit thrushes and veeries. A heron flaps ahead into the mist, settles, moves again. A kingfisher swoops close by, then rattles from a dead branch.

The sun climbs over the pines. Over the spruces. Over Saganaga, Kabetogama, Nistowiak, Namew, Athabaska. And ten thousand other places with no name.

The North Woods calls. The river pulls, the **paddle whispers**. I listen. And gradually . . . gradually the mist burns away.



Riverbanks lined with green trees, fragrant grasses: A place not sacred? Where?

—ZEN FOREST SAYINGS

From where the loon calls, an outlet. A phantom river lost in fog and bulrushes. Finally, a break in the rushes, an almost imperceptible current swirls past a great boulder, a black finger of water points into the mist.

*The **paddle whispers**,
the canoe glides . . .*



But how to truly explore this land of poetry and storms and solitude, of lakes and islands more beautiful than dreams? I want to listen more deeply than ever before to its secrets and catch its meanings, and at the same time, perhaps, my own.

Yet such things can't be sought out or thought out, captured or even discovered. They come, if they come at all, quietly, unplanned, almost unnoticed. Like the rustling of an aspen in the wind, tracks on the beach left by small creatures in the night, or a shaft of sunlight slanting down through a vaulted cathedral of pines.

These will be my landmarks. And perhaps through the accumulation of them, a whole landscape will emerge.

The bark is soon gone, and I have created . . . have arrived at . . . a new surface. How far would I have to go, I wonder, before running out of surfaces? Out of horizons? To the heartwood? To the quark? To the quasar?

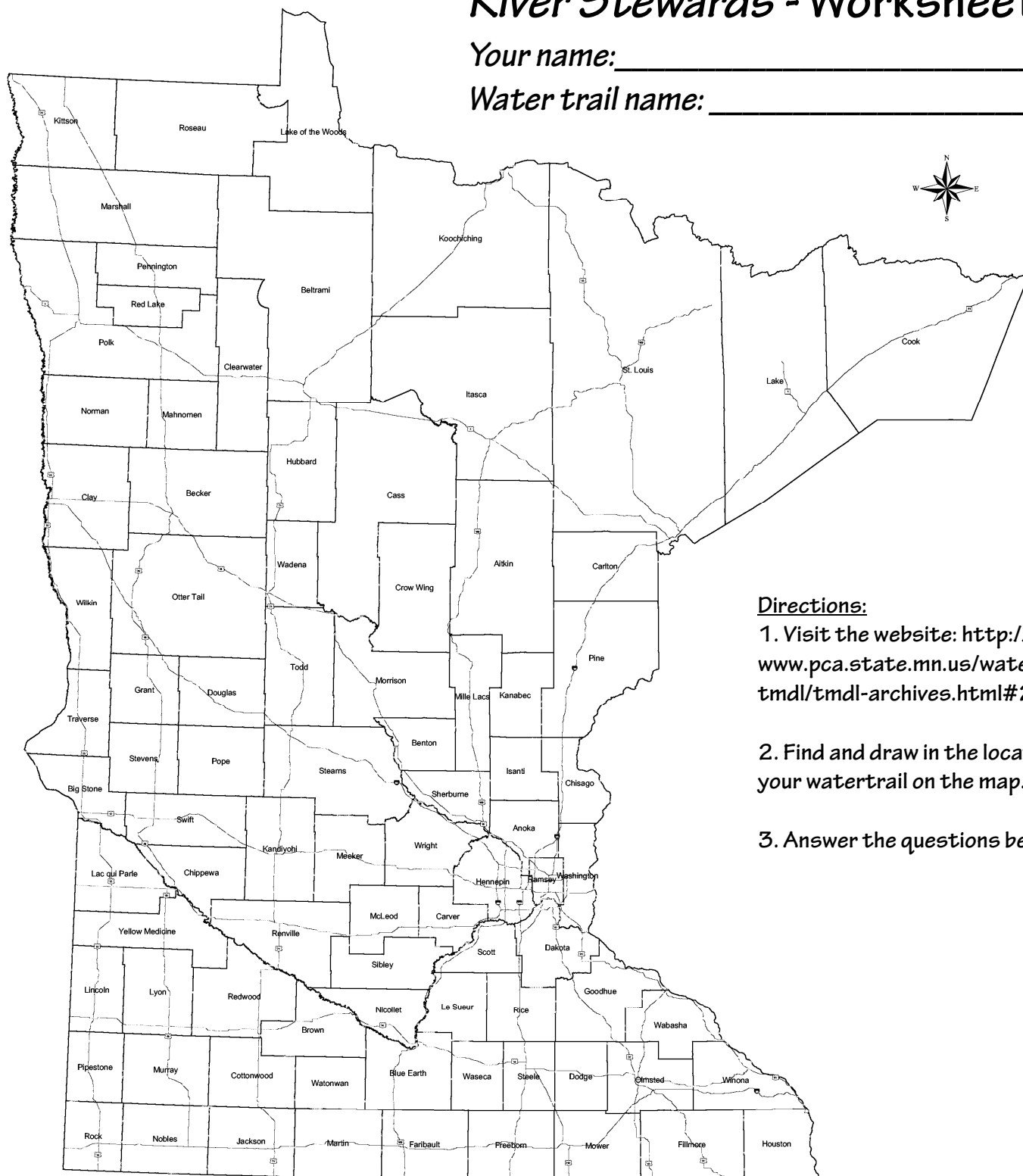
I whittle off a few more shavings and stuff them into my pocket, tinder for the evening fire. I untie the canoe and push off from shore, pointing the bow toward a distant island.

Under every surface is another surface; beyond each horizon, a wider horizon. I whittle. I explore. And sometimes just rest. In the cool, scented shade of mystery.

River Stewards - Worksheet

Your name: _____

Water trail name: _____



Directions:

1. Visit the website: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/tmdl-archives.html#2008>
2. Find and draw in the location of your watertrail on the map.
3. Answer the questions below.

What type of impairment does your watertrail have, if any? Ex: fecal coliform, ammonia, turbidity, etc.

Is recreation affected by the impairment?

What do you think is the source of that impairment?