

The Role of Government and Responsible Citizenship

Overview

Students will use the social studies inquiry process to investigate the issues and challenges associated with balancing development with environmental stewardship in their community from various perspectives, including the levels of government responsible for addressing the issue. After examining various media reports and examining government responsibilities (federal, provincial, municipal), students will gain a better understanding of the different perspectives and challenges related to the issue of development in community. For the field study component, students will complete a site visit to the nearby conservation area (Mud Lake) with an environmental biologist. The culminating task will be a persuasive piece of writing or rant about the issue, a brochure or informational poster detailing a plan to manage the issue, or a report detailing the most convincing arguments on the issue.

Key Expectations - Ontario Social Studies Curriculum

Application: Governments and Citizens Working Together

B1.1 assess the effectiveness of actions taken by one or more levels of government to address and issue of national, provincial/territorial, and/or local significance

B1.3 create a plan of action to address an environmental issue of local, provincial/territorial, and/or national significance

Inquiry: Differing Perspectives on Social and Environmental Issues

All expectations are addressed (B2.1, B2.2, B2.3, B2.4, B2.5, B2.6)

Understanding Context: Roles and Responsibilities of Government and Citizens

B3.3 describe the shared responsibility of various levels of government for providing some services and for dealing with selected social and environmental issues

B3.5 describe key actions taken by different levels of government to solve some significant national, provincial/territorial, and/or local issues

B3.6 explain why different groups may have different perspectives on specific social and environmental issues

Cross-Curricular Expectations

Learning Activities

Activity	Key Learning and Resources
Introducing the Inquiry	<p>Examine inquiry questions: What is the best way to balance the demand for housing with the responsibility to protect the environment?</p> <p>Should government keep some land in a natural state for all citizens to use?</p> <p>What characteristics of Mud Lake (or any nearby conservation area or undeveloped public space) would be appealing to developers?</p>
Identifying Perspectives - Developer, Local Government	Read and discuss “KNL Tree Cutting Can Begin” Begin Reading Response - Identifying Perspectives
Identifying Perspectives - Wildlife, Wildlife Advocate, Local Government	Read and discuss “Tree Cutting Begins on KNL Lands”. Show video of tree cutting equipment in action.
Identifying Perspectives - First Nations	Read and discuss “Algonquins Chain Themselves to Beaver Pond Trees”
Identifying Perspectives - Environmental Group	Read and discuss article from comments section of local community newspaper.
Government Involvement	<p>Federal - Migratory Birds Convention Act - This act protects most species of birds in Canada. One of its key components only allows trees to be cut outside of nesting season.</p> <p>Provincial - Ministry of Natural Resources Endangered Species Act - This act provides guidance for developers who are likely to kill, harm, and/or harass endangered species.</p> <p>Municipal - Protocol for Wildlife Protection During Construction, Local councillor’s webpage Complete</p>
Balancing Development While Protecting the Environment	Examine the role of the National Capital Commission (NCC) in balancing development and protecting nature. Learn about the significance of the Greenbelt area.
New Housing Industry - Urban Sprawl and Other Issues	Read about and discuss urban sprawl, mosquito problems , and examine housing marketing . Key questions

	<p>Do developers use nearby nature to help sell their homes?</p> <p>What are some of the consequences of building near natural areas?</p> <p>What role should government play in managing development?</p> <p>What role should citizens play in managing development?</p> <p>Complete Government and Responsible Citizenship worksheet</p>
Field Study with Environmental Biologist	<p>Complete a site visit with a local environmental biologist. Students view the site using available maps (print or digital) and identify areas of potential concern. Once onsite, students examine the area to identify potential conflicts with endangered plants and animals and work to develop mitigating strategies.</p>
Culminating Task	<p>Students will create one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) a persuasive piece of writing or rant about the issueb) a brochure or informational poster detailing a plan to manage the issuec) a report detailing the most convincing arguments on the issue