

Birds' Eye View of River Unit

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Grade 3, South Royalton School

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Essential Question	What is a river and what is its connection to us? (<i>We conceive of this unit as a year-long thematic course of study integrated where possible with our year-long social studies focus on "What is a community?"</i>)
Enduring Understanding	The river serves many purposes and plays many roles in our community. We form a relationship to the river through our actions and inactions, and through the river's impact on our lives.
Introductory Lesson	#1: Rivers around the world: What do rivers do for people? What are ways that people use rivers? OUTCOME: Identify ways people use rivers (e.g. transportation, recreation, power, health/survival, food, etc.)
Formative Lessons	#2: Our River/Our Creek: document the waterways that border and bisect our school campus through physical maps, event maps, data collection (e.g. animals, plants, water quality). <i>This is ongoing throughout the unit.</i> OUTCOME: Students will trace the path of the White River to Long Island Sound on a map. Students will make maps of the creek on our campus. Students will create event maps based on nature walks along the White River and the campus creek. Students will create data on tables on the evidence of plants, animals, and water quality related to our campus creek.
	#3: Research our campus "creek": Is it a creek? What is the difference between creeks, streams, and rivers? Research the creek's name. If it doesn't have a name, contact town Selectboard about naming it. OUTCOME: Create illustrated definitions of creeks, streams, brooks, rivers. Write letters to the Selectboard about naming the creek.
	#4: What is the community of our river? What is the animal community? What is the plant community? <i>This is ongoing throughout the unit.</i> OUTCOME: Document animal tracks with sketches, plaster casts. Make illustrated lists of plants found along the river with bark rubbings, leaf collections. Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count in February. Take a look at aquatic bugs with aquatic bug kit from Stroud water Resource Center.
	#5: Treasures of our place: people as treasures, natural resources as treasures, special places as treasures. OUTCOME: Students create a treasure box filled with symbols of personal treasures or actual treasures (e.g. photos of special people, drawing of special place).

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	Students collect rocks from favorite places along the creek or river and study the characteristics of their rock treasures.
	#6: Research community use of the river. OUTCOME: Students will interview other students, their own family, and a community member about how and why the river is a part of their lives.
	#7: River Stories, River Reflections: the river as muse. <i>This is ongoing throughout the unit.</i> OUTCOME: Students will write reflection journals, poetry, stories from the river's point of view, an animal's point of view.
Culminating Activity: Summative Assessment to Essential Question	<p>*Service Learning Project: Students will learn how to do riparian planting from Emily Miller at the White River Partnership. Students will do some riparian planting in the White River watershed (site chosen in Rochester as requested by WRP).</p> <p>*Students will create a brochure for the school community about riparian planting: Why is it important? How do you do it? What are the tools and vocabulary you need to know and understand it?</p>