

Names Upon the Mountains

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Summary

Students examine the concepts of conservation and resources, examine tribal place names, and become familiar with conservation efforts of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Grade level

Third

Time required

60 minutes

Materials

Map of the Flathead Reservation

Map of the Mission Mountains

[Panoramic photo of the Mission Mountain range](#)

[Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness document](#)

[Salish Place Names document](#)

Montana state maps (or your state's map) – one per group

The book, *Names on the Face of Montana*

[Squaw Bill](#)

[Word map](#)

Goals

By completing this lesson, students will

- 1) learn the meaning of the concepts of conservation, resources and ecosystem,
- 2) become aware of Tribal conservation efforts on the Flathead Reservation,
- 3) gain knowledge of the length of tribal inhabitation in Montana through exploring tribal place names in the Mission Mountains,
- 4) learn about the significance of conserved areas in Montana and
- 5) develop skills in inquiry based learning.

Science standards addressed

National Science Standards

- Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry
- Organisms and environments
- Types of resources
- Science in personal and social perspectives

American Indian Science Standards

- Elements of the pre-contact North American environment and how changes to them were brought on by the arrival of Europeans in North American, such as the effects of the fur trade on animal populations and its subsequent effect on Indian life
- Observations and understandings of nature and ecological relationships traditionally formed an essential base of knowledge among American Indian cultures
- Various forms of scientific and technological work currently engaged in by American Indian men and woman and in what ways their fields require the process of problem identification, design and solution
- Local challenges in medicine and environmental protection and how traditional Indian knowledge, practices and philosophies have been and continue to be called upon for solutions

Teacher tips

To prepare for the lesson, complete the following tasks:

- Print out the panoramic display of the Mission Range
- Display Flathead Reservation and Mission Mountain map; become familiar with the place name locations
- Write tribal place names on sticky notes
- Locate a reference book on place names in your state if it is not Montana
- Gather resources on state or national parks that can be used by students for research of these areas
- Become familiar with the information in “The Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness” document, written by Tom McDonald

Background Information

There are numerous public areas around the state of Montana that have been conserved as wildlife refuges, state parks, national parks, national forests, state forests, etc. The legal conservation of these areas signals the recognition of their aesthetic, historical, cultural and/or environmental significance. Similarly, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have chosen to conserve a large mountainous tract of the Flathead Reservation, known as the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness. Read Tom McDonald’s document “The Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness” for further details about this beautiful area.

Oral history of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes tells of the people being here from “time immemorial”. Tribal creation stories tell of how geographic landforms came to be and how tribal homelands were made ready for human habitation. Many of these stories resulted in a place name that reflected the characters or actions from the story. Other place names reflect a characteristic or particular resource of that area. Tribal place names define a very old tribal world, predating by hundreds of years the contemporary names we know of today.

Twelve Salish place names are highlighted in the Mission Mountains panoramic photo and listed in the “Salish Place Names” document. This is not a comprehensive list, but

rather a sampling to support student understanding of the length of inhabitation of the tribes in their homeland, as well as their relationship with and attachment to the land.

Many geographic sites and areas in Montana and other states have the term “squaw” as part of their name. Squaw is a derogatory term that is offensive in particular to Indian women. In 1999, the state of Montana passed legislation to remove this term for all state place names. Several sites in the state have been renamed, but may be still awaiting a new name. Tribal representatives, as well as other state agencies, have been included in the renaming process, but anyone is permitted to submit a name for consideration. In this lesson, students choose a name and send a written recommendation to the committee who reviews and selects the new place names.

Procedure

Engagement

- 1) Give student groups state maps and instruct them to locate four places on the map with an interesting name. Have each student research the origin of one place name and record it in their journals.
- 2) Have students present their findings. Assist other students in using the map key to locate the site.

Exploration

- 1) Use a word map to build a class definition of the word *conservation*.
- 2) Brainstorm a class list of types of conserved areas (national parks, state forests, wildlife refuges). Give each group a state map and ask them to locate and identify two conserved areas. Instruct them to find the answers to the following questions about each area using texts, web sites, etc.
 - What is the significance of the area’s name?
 - What type of *ecosystems* and *resources* are found there that make the area important for conservation?

Explanation

- 1) Have students report on the conservation areas they researched, while classmates locate the sites on their maps.
- 2) Discuss the characteristics that make an area an important conservation area. Generate a class list of these characteristics. Reinforce the concepts of conservation and resources in the discussion.
- 3) Show students the Mission Mountain panoramic photo, and locate it on the wall map of the Flathead Reservation. Discuss the history of the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness and the Tribes’ management of the area.
- 4) Explore the photo with students, clicking on areas so students can view the pictures. Ask students to write down descriptions of the places that they saw in the Mission Mountains in their journals. Have them share their descriptions with the class. Ask students to suggest place names appropriate for the areas. Give them the actual place names and their significance.

Elaboration

- 1) Share with students that many geographic areas in the state of Montana and in other states have the term “squaw” as part of their name. Give the history of and read the Squaw bill to the class and discuss the reasons “squaw” is viewed negatively.
- 2) Using the state map, locate one of the sites that has not yet been renamed, and work in pairs or groups to come up with a new name. Have the class vote on the one that they like the best. When the class has selected a name, write a letter with the students telling how and why the name was selected and send it to the committee who reviews and selects the new names.

*If your class is not in Montana, you may want to see if your state has any sites with a place name including the term “squaw”.

Evaluation

- 1) As students are working to create the new name, ask them what should influence their choice, and what information might they want to help them determine the new name.
- 2) Ask students to choose one of the following questions and answer it in their journals
 - Think of an area that you feel should be conserved. Explain why you think it is important to conserve it, and what types of changes will occur if it is conserved.
 - What types of things should the Tribes be considering in managing the Mission Mountain Wilderness? What kind of activities should be allowed in this area?

Resources

Cheney, R. (1983). Names on the face of Montana. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing.

Salish Place Names in the Mission Mountain Range

The Salish place names, going from the northern end to the southern end of the range, are listed below.