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## Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire

### Script/Facilitation Support

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#### Materials Needed:

- Student Handouts Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire  
 Student Handouts Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire
- Slides Projected in slideshow mode when students enter the class.  
Note: slides are animated to slowly provide written text - they will appear on click  
 Lesson Slides: Stewards of the Land - Cultural Fire

#### Day 1:

**\*Allow for 10 minutes for lesson introduction (slides 1-6 and Student Handout Page 1).**

Slide 1:

Pass out student handouts then read aloud the following:

*In this lesson, we will explore the important role that fire has played in Indigenous cultures, particularly through the practice of cultural burning. We'll examine how fire was traditionally used to maintain healthy ecosystems, and how colonial policies disrupted this practice. By understanding the relationship between fire, the land, and Indigenous knowledge, we'll also discuss how restoring these practices can help heal the land and foster a more sustainable future.*

Slides 2-3:

Read aloud slide content - students could volunteer to read from the bulleted lists.

Slides 4-6: Prompt students to fill out "Part 1: Understanding Vocabulary" handout while reading aloud these slides.

**\*Engage: Allow for 25 minutes for Part 2: Regeneration activities (slide 7 and Student Handouts pages 2-4)**

Slide 7:

Read aloud slide content. Watch Video: Regeneration (5 minutes). After the video, prompt students to read the Poem, "Regeneration". Provide a few minutes to read silently, read together with a learning partner, or choral reading. Remind students to place a check mark to the right of each stanza that shares traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).

Make sure students have at least 15 minutes to complete comprehension questions. Encourage students to work with a learning partner to complete the questions. Roam around the classroom, interacting with student pairs about their responses, directing them

to refer to the poem for evidence in their responses. Provide a 5 minutes left reminder before going on to Part 3.

Slide 8:

Read aloud slide content to sum up this section.

**\*Explore: Allow for 20 minutes for Part 3: Working together to Steward with Fire (slides 9-12).**

Slide 9:

Read aloud slide contents. Students may volunteer to read slides.

Slide 10:

Read aloud slide contents and watch video, “Banned for 100 years, cultural burns could save sequoias | Save the Redwoods League.”

Slide 11: (8-10 minutes)

Read aloud slide contents. Engage students to offer responses to the essential questions.

What is Indigenous or traditional ecological knowledge?

*Indigenous or traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is the understanding that Indigenous peoples have developed over thousands of years about how to live in balance with nature. It includes practices, beliefs, and wisdom related to land management, plant and animal life, and ecosystems. This knowledge is passed down through generations and is often based on observation and experience.*

How can traditional cultural burning practices conserve plant and animal life and help keep Tribal cultures alive?

*Cultural burning practices help maintain healthy ecosystems by preventing overgrowth, reducing dangerous wildfires, and promoting the growth of certain plants and trees. These burns can also create habitats for wildlife, like animals that thrive in open spaces. For Tribes, fire is an important part of their culture and traditions, helping to preserve their identity and spiritual connection to the land.*

What is the difference between prescribed burning and cultural burning?

*Prescribed burning is when fire is intentionally set by professionals, like forestry services, to manage land, reduce fuel for wildfires, or promote certain plant growth. Cultural burning, on the other hand, is a practice rooted in Indigenous traditions, where fire is used as a tool to regenerate the land, maintain ecosystems, and support cultural practices. Cultural burning is done with a deeper spiritual connection and a focus on community health.*

What can we do to promote cultural burning and respect cultural traditions?

*To promote cultural burning, we can support policies that give Indigenous tribes the ability to conduct burns without the need for state approval or partner with them to burn collaboratively. We can also educate people about the importance of cultural burning and its role in ecosystem health. Respecting cultural traditions involves listening to Indigenous communities, learning from their knowledge, and advocating for their right to practice cultural burning on their lands.*

## **Day 2: Burning ie Resilience**

**\*Allow for 10 minutes for lesson introduction (slides 12-17).**

Slide 12:

Pass out student handouts then read aloud the following:

*In our previous lesson, we explored the important role that fire has played in Indigenous cultures, particularly through the practice of cultural burning. We will continue our learning today, uplifting the voices of Cultural Fire Practitioners, to understand how burning for resilience isn't just to restore the land— it's to heal the Native people as well.*

Slides 13-14:

Read aloud slide content - students could volunteer to read from the bulleted lists.

Slides 15-17:

Read aloud slide contents. Quick review. You can choose to not project the slides during the vocabulary and read the definitions to see if students guess the correct terms.

**\*Explain: Allow for 25 minutes for Part 3: Cultural Fires are “Good Fires” (slides 18-19 and Student Handout page 5)**

Slides 18:

Read aloud slide contents. Prompt students to take notes during the short film using student handout page 5.

Slide 19:

After the video, provide students 5 minutes to talk to a learning partner to share and discuss the notes they wrote from the film.

**\*Explain: Allow for 20 minutes for Part 4: Colonial Impacts to the Land (slides 20- 22 and Student Handout page 6 and 7).**

Slide 20:

This slide is intentionally animated to provide students time to make a prediction about the data of the bar chart. Allow students a few minutes to talk with a learning partner about their predictions before revealing the answer.

Slide 21: (at least 15 minutes)

Read aloud slide contents. Direct students to read the timeline and answer questions on pages 6 and 7 of student handouts.

Slide 22:

Read aloud slide content to summarize learning.

### **Day 3: Fire on the Land**

**\*Allow for 10 minutes for lesson introduction (slides 23-28).**

Slide 23:

Pass out student handouts then read aloud the following:

*In our previous lesson, we explored the important role that fire has played in Indigenous cultures and how the US Policy of fire suppression has created conditions that increase catastrophic fires. Today, we are going to analyze the difference in fire behavior between cultural fire application and catastrophic fires.*

Slides 24-25:

Read aloud slide content - students could volunteer to read from the bulleted lists.

Slides 26-28:

Read aloud slide contents. The vocabulary slides are animated to provide the definitions, offering an opportunity for students to offer the correct term before the term is revealed.

**\*Elaborate: Allow for 25 minutes for Part 5: Fire on the Landscape (slides 29- 34 and Student Handout page 8)**

Slide 29:

Read slide contents. Allow students a few minutes to talk with a learning partner about their observations. Offer an opportunity for a few students to share with the class.

Slide 30:

Read slide contents. Prompt students to provide a brief description of the images on page 7 of the Student Handout. Before advancing to the next slide, provide students an opportunity to respond to this question:

*“How might fire react in each of these spaces? Do you think that fire responds the same or would it respond differently?”*

Slide 31-34:

Read slide contents. Continue to provide a few minutes for students to caption the images on page 8 during slides 31 and 32.

**\*Elaborate: Allow for 20 minutes for Part 6: Working Together - Senate Bill 310 (slides 35 and student handout pages 9-11).**

Slide 35: (5 minutes)

Read aloud slide contents. Prompt students to read the short commentary and work with a learning partner to answer the corresponding questions.

#### **Day 4: Restoring Fire for the Land**

**\*Allow for 20 minutes for lesson introduction (slides 36-41 and student handout page 12).**

Slide 36:

Pass out student handouts then read aloud the following:

*As we conclude our exploration of fire’s vital role in Indigenous cultures and ecosystems, it’s time to reflect on the lessons we’ve learned. Throughout this unit, we’ve discussed the history of fire suppression, the importance of cultural burning, and the challenges faced by Indigenous communities in managing their lands. Now, you will have the opportunity to connect this knowledge to your own thoughts and opinions.*

Slides 37-38:

Read aloud slide content - students could volunteer to read from the bulleted lists.

Slides 39-41:

Read aloud slide contents. The vocabulary slides are animated to provide the definitions, offering an opportunity for students to offer the correct term before the term is revealed. Prompt students to complete fill in the blank vocabulary assignment on page 12 of Student Handouts. This should take 5-10 minutes.

**\*Evaluate: Allow for 15 minutes to introduce Part 7. Final Reflection Assignment: Restoring Fire for the Land (slides 42-46 and Student Handout pages 13).**

Slide 42 :

Read aloud slide contents. Prompt students to follow along on page 13 before advancing to slide 43.

Slides 43-46:

Read aloud slide contents, or ask for students to volunteer to read writing prompts. Make sure students understand the directions for the writing assignment. Pausing between slides to allow time for students to ask clarifying questions is a good practice. Providing a link to the google slides in google classroom or with a QR Code will help ensure students have digital access to all the content they will need to develop their essay. Making sure students have access to all their students handouts for the lesson will contribute to their success as well. There are no slides to review the rubric, however, students should review it to understand what they will be graded on.

Students should be given the remainder of the class period to draft an outline for the essay. Additional class periods may need to be given to develop the essay. Below is an outline for students who need additional support to get started (a printable copy is included in the Answer Key link).

### **Outline for Final Reflection Essay: Restoring Fire for the Land**

This outline is a guide in creating a thoughtful and comprehensive reflection on the role of fire, Indigenous knowledge, and environmental health. Use specific examples from the lessons to support your statements/opinions.

#### **Introduction**

- Briefly introduce the topic of fire and its role in Indigenous cultures, fire suppression history, and the importance of cultural burning.
- State the purpose of the essay: to reflect on the knowledge gained from the lessons about fire management, environmental health, and Indigenous rights.
- Preview the key points you will discuss in your essay.

#### **Paragraph 1: The Role of Fire in Land Management and Ecosystem Health**

- Discuss your thoughts on how fire should be integrated into land management for maintaining healthy ecosystems.
- Explain the benefits of fire for plant and animal life, as well as the long-term health of the land.
- Relate these ideas to lessons learned about fire as a tool for land regeneration (cultural burning vs. fire suppression).

#### **Paragraph 2: Cultural Burning vs. Modern Fire Suppression**

- Reflect on the difference between cultural burning (as practiced by Indigenous communities) and the modern approach of fire suppression.
- Discuss why cultural burning practices were essential for ecosystem health and how suppression policies caused harm.
- Explore how modern fire suppression practices contributed to catastrophic wildfires and their consequences.

### Paragraph 3: Fire as a Tool for Healing the Land

- Analyze whether fire can be a tool for healing the land.
- Provide your opinion on the effectiveness of fire as a restorative tool and why it can (or cannot) restore balance to ecosystems.
- Use examples from Indigenous practices and class discussions about ecological restoration through fire.

### Paragraph 4: The Impact of Colonial Fire Suppression on Indigenous Communities and the Environment

- Discuss the historical impact of colonial fire suppression policies on Indigenous communities.
- Explore how these policies disrupted Indigenous peoples' ability to manage land and maintain their traditions.
- Explain how the suppression of cultural burning harmed the environment and led to issues like megafires.

### Paragraph 5: The Importance of Supporting Indigenous Sovereignty

- Reflect on the importance of supporting Indigenous sovereignty, particularly in relation to cultural practices like fire management.
- Discuss why it is essential for Indigenous peoples to have the autonomy to manage their lands, including the practice of cultural burning.
- Consider how respecting sovereignty is key to protecting Indigenous traditions and promoting sustainable land management.

### Body Paragraph 6: Actions for Preventing Wildfires and Restoring Environmental Health

- Discuss your opinion on the most important actions that should be taken to prevent wildfires and restore environmental health.
- Suggest actions on a larger scale (government, communities, individuals) that can help manage fire risk and promote ecosystem health.
- Explain how the passing of SB 310 fits into these efforts and how it represents a step toward reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

### Body Paragraph 7: Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and Practices

- Reflect on the importance of reconciling with Indigenous peoples and their cultural practices in addressing current environmental challenges.
- Discuss how historical mistreatment of Indigenous communities (including fire suppression) has contributed to today's environmental issues.
- Explain how reconciling with Indigenous knowledge, especially cultural burning, can help restore ecosystems and promote a healthier future.

### Conclusion

- Summarize your key reflections on fire's role in land management, the need for cultural burning, the importance of sovereignty, and how we can work to heal the land.

- Emphasize the importance of reconciling with Indigenous peoples and supporting their cultural practices as a way to address environmental crises.
- End with a final thought on how this lesson has changed your perspective on fire, land management, and environmental stewardship.