

Title

Pe'Sla Past & Present: A Spiritual Connection to the Homeland

Grade Level

9-12 Social Studies

Theme

The importance and connection of history and culture on present day events and issues.

Duration

2-3 days

Goal

Students will analyze and discuss multiple sources regarding the purchase of Pe'Sla and draw connections from the Oceti Sakowin history and significance of Pe'Sla.

Objectives

Students will be able to relate the causes and consequences of the history of Pe'Sla and its significance to the Oceti Sakowin tribes to the subsequent events and legacy of the more recent purchase of Pe'Sla.

South Dakota Standards

9-12.W.1.1.A. (Evaluation) Relate the causes and consequences of historical events to subsequent events and their legacy in current conditions.

Cultural Concept

Tribalism and the spiritual connection to the Oceti Sakowin homeland

Cultural Background

The Oceti Sakowins were created from the Black Hills and Pe'Sla is where the Morning Star in the form of a meteor fell to Earth, killing a great bird that had murdered seven women. The Morning Star placed the Seven Spirit Sisters in the sky. They are also known as the Pleiades constellation. The meteor cut a wide open spot deep in the heart of the forested Black Hills. For millennia more than 60 indigenous nations have come to the high prairie to gather medicine and participate in sacred rituals. (*Twin Cities Daily Planet news website*)

In late November 2012, a coalition of Oceti Sakowin tribes purchased approximately 1,945.52 acres from the Reynolds family for \$9 million, or approximately \$4,626 per acre. This land represents a large portion of the area called Pe'Sla in Lakota, and more commonly referred to as Reynolds Prairie in English. (*Indian Country Today online article*)

Student Activities

- 1) Students will watch the film *Lakota Star Knowledge* to understand the story of why Pe'Sla is important and sacred to the Lakotas.
- 2) Summary Activity: Following the film, students will create a visual depiction of the creation story of Falling Star using just a poster paper and colored pencils.
- 3) Discussion: When they complete the visual, students will get in groups and they will present their posters/ visual depictions to their groups. Students may ask questions and give feedback to the presenter.
- 4) Lecture/ Teacher presentation: Teacher will show a map of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 where the Black Hills was included and promised to the Lakotas. Then, will also show a map of Lakota lands in 1877 when the U.S. government broke the treaty and illegally seized the Black Hills.

- 5) Reading: Students will receive numerous news articles regarding the purchase of Pe'Sla by the coalition of Oceti Sakowin tribes. They will read the article assigned to them.
- 6) Summary: They will summarize the article that they read.
- 7) Comparing/ Contrasting and Sharing Point of View: Students will get in groups with other students who read a different news article and they will present the information they read and complete a chart or list comparing and contrasting all the news articles based on what the point of view or perspective was of the article. Did different news sources present the news differently? What were some consistencies throughout the news stories?
- 8) Critical Thinking Reflection: Students will get into groups of 4 or 5 to complete a silent discussion (also known as write-a-rounds or quick writes) answering four different questions. They will have two minutes to answer each question on paper or a Google Doc and then pass the question on to the next student. (See Assessment section for the questions for the silent discussion.)
- 9) Open/ Free Discussion: After students have answered all questions they will read through all the responses to their original question and discuss it in a group.

Resources

Film: *Lakota Star Knowledge*, blank paper for visual depictions, colored pencils, computers with internet access (if they read the articles online), students will need paper to answer questions for silent discussion, area to show questions (either on board in front or on paper to students), map of Fort Laramie Treaty of 1968, and students will use all or some of the following news articles:

Indian Country Today <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/11/30/tribes-reach-9-million-goal-and-purchase-sacred-site-pe-sla-146015>

Huffington Post http://www.huffingtonpost.com/georgianne-nienaber/pe-sla-lakota-auction_b_1823451.html

South Dakota Magazine <http://southdakotamagazine.com/pe-sla-preserved>

South Dakota Peace and Justice Center <http://sdpeacejustice.wordpress.com/2012/12/05/pe-sla-or-the-ironies-of-history/>

Daily Mail UK <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2214482/Pe-Sla-Sioux-tribes-9m-bid-buy-sacred-land-South-Dakotas-Black-Hills.html>

The Guardian <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/aug/16/sioux-campaign-buy-back-black-hills>

CBS News <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/tribes-raise-9m-to-buy-sacred-south-dakota-land/>

Assessment

The final assessment will be the Silent Discussion questions. Each students will answer one question at a time. No talking during the given answer time. Students will have approximately two minutes to write their answer for a question. Then, students will pass the question on to the next student in their group. Each student will then answer the next question, and could either answer the question themselves or add to a discussion from the previous student's answer. You could create or your own questions or use the following.

- 1) Why do you feel the U.S. government seized the Black Hills, including Pe'Sla from the Lakotas? Was it justified? Why or why not?
- 2) What makes something sacred? What is something that is sacred to you? What would you do if someone took that sacred thing from you?
- 3) Is it fair that the coalition of Oceti Sakowin tribes had to purchase Pe'Sla from the Reynolds family? Was the price fair? Why or why not?

- 4) What do you feel are some alternatives to the Oceti Sakowin tribes purchasing the land? What else could have been done?
- 5) What do you think would have happened to Pe'Sla if the Oceti Sakowin tribes had not purchased the land? Would it lose its significance? Would the Oceti Sakowins still have access to it? Make some predictions.

References

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- Mcqueeney, K. (2012, October 08). Sioux desperately trying to raise \$9million to buy back South Dakota land 150 years after it was taken from them. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2214482/Pe-Sla-Sioux-tribes-9m-bid-buy-sacred-land-South-Dakotas-Black-Hills.html>
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- Pe' Sla Preserved. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://southdakotamagazine.com/pe-sla-preserved>
- Pe'Sla (or, the Ironies of History). (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://sdpeacejustice.wordpress.com/2012/12/05/pesla-or-the-ironies-of-history/>
- Tribes raise \$9M to buy sacred South Dakota land. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/tribes-raise-9m-to-buy-sacred-south-dakota-land/>
- Tribes Reach \$9 Million Goal and Purchase Sacred Site of Pe' Sla. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/11/30/tribes-reach-9-million-goal-and-purchase-sacred-site-pe-sla-146015>
- Twin Cities Daily Planet. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/blog/dick-bernard/pesla-heart-heart-sacred-black-hills-site-now-hands-great-sioux-nation>

Developer

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